



Volume XVIII, Issue 4

Fall 2025

# 101<sup>st</sup> Scottish Rite Conference September 25-27

CONFERENCE  
Registration and  
Information



- 2 SGIG Message
- 6 Conference Schedule
- 10 Our Craft Adapting
- 19 King Solomon



## Sovereign Grand Inspector General Orient of Virginia

Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33° GC

My Brethren,

The months of June and July were spent supporting the Rite Care programs at Longwood University, James Madison University, Old Dominion University, Radford University, and the Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center in Richmond. I appreciate the attendance of so many members and spouses during the various visits including several first-time attendees. As mentioned in my last message, the Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia donated \$164,000 to these entities for graduate and doctoral scholarships and support of annual Summer Camps. Articles and pictures of these visits are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Biennial Session of the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, United States of America, will be held August 18-20, 2025, in Washington, DC. The Monday public session and Tuesday night banquet will be held at the Washington Hilton Hotel. The conferral of the 33rd degree will be conducted on Tuesday morning at the Valley of the District of Columbia. The Orient of Virginia will have ten candidates attending the ceremony, which will be conducted by the Valley of Alexandria.



The Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia is scheduled for September 25-27, 2025, at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 5655 Greenwich Road, Virginia Beach. The Valley of Portsmouth has put together a quality agenda consisting of educational programs, entertainment, and speakers. The Valley of Norfolk will be conferring the KCCH ceremony on Saturday afternoon for twenty-one candidates. Looking forward to seeing you there as the conference embarks on a “new century” of service.

Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia to the Richmond Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center. L-R: Alan Adkins, SGIG; Susan Combee, Executive Director; Dan Frye, Board President.

*The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.*

**Ronald Regan**

### The Virginia Light ©

Published quarterly for the  
Brethren in the Orient of  
Virginia

Illustrious James D. Cole, 33°  
Sovereign Grand Commander  
of the Supreme Council, 33°,  
Ancient and Accepted  
Scottish Rite, SJ, USA

Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33°  
GC  
SGIG Orient of Virginia

Bro. Gerald L. Frey, 32° KCCH  
Virginia Light Editor

Copyright © 2021, The Orient of  
Virginia under the auspices of  
The Supreme Council, 33°,  
Ancient and Accepted Scottish  
Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, USA.

No part of this publication may  
be reproduced without  
permission of its Editor at :  
[virginalighteditor@gmail.com](mailto:virginalighteditor@gmail.com)

Deadline for next issue:

Winter	November 1
Spring	February 1
Summer	May 1
Fall	August 1



# Radford University Scottish Rite Day





# James Madison University Scottish Rite Day



A good contingent of members from the Valleys of Alexandria, Richmond and Shenandoah attended the Summer Camp at James Madison University on July 8, 2025. Twenty-four graduate students were recognized for their commitment at this year's camp. A power point presentation was given to highlight the activities of the five-week camp.



# Longwood University Scottish Rite Day



# Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia

Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach

Thursday, Sept 25, 2025

1:00 pm	6:00 pm	Registration (Foyer)
6:00 pm	11:45 pm	Hospitality Room open - Salon L
6:00 pm	9:00 pm	Top Golf Outing \$50 per person.

Friday, September 26

Smart Casual Dress for Friday's Proceedings (No Caps)

8:30 am	5:00pm	Registration Open
11:30 am	1:00 pm	Lunch for All - Hosp Room
1 :00 pm	2:00 pm	Educational Session 1
2:00 pm	3:00 pm	Educational Session 2
3:15 pm	4:00 pm	SGIG/Presidents/Secretaries/Treasurers
3:15 pm	4:00 pm	Conference President / Vice Presidents
5:00 pm	6:00 pm	Social Hour
6:00 pm	_____	Rite Care Banquet

Attire Men: Valley Polo Shirts/Business Casual

Ladies: Dress or Pantsuit

After Banquet Hospitality Rooms Open until 11 :45pm

Saturday, September 27

Coat and tie for Saturday's Proceedings (No Caps - unless specified)

8:00 am	1:00 pm	Registration Open
9:00 am	10:00 am	101st Annual SR Conference of VA
10:00 am	10:15 am	Break
10:15 am	11:30 am	SR Conference of VA (cont)
11:30 am	11 :50 am	Annual Mtg SR Foundation of VA
9:45 am	1:30 pm	Ladies Luncheon - Chrysler Museum
2:00 pm	4:30 pm	KCCH Investiture at Hotel
		Tuxedo for KCCH Selects and new 33rd; Coat and tie (with Caps) for all others.

5:00 pm	6:00 pm	Social Hour
6:00 pm	_____	Conference Banquet

Attire: Dark Suit for Gentlemen/  
Cocktail Dress for Ladies

After Banquet Hospitality Rooms Open until 11 :45 pm



Link to Conference  
Details:

Hotel Reservations  
Top Golf Outing  
Rite Care Banquet  
KCCH Investiture  
Ladies Luncheon  
Conference Banquet



# Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia

Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach



# Necessity of Sacrifice

Brother Ryan Yakstis

The world is moving at such a rapid pace. Every generation back to the Roman era has noticed the hustle and bustle of daily life, especially in the city. Philosophers since Ancient Greece have noticed how the world keeps falling further and further into disrepair and destruction. What can we do? We're a small contingent of good men trying to become even better, but can we really make enough of a difference in the world around us where two millennia of the brightest minds have noticed little to no real change in the human condition?

Yes. We can do what all of the most notable and well-loved leaders have done to usher in Light into the world.

We can learn to sacrifice.

The word "sacrifice" comes from the Latin "sacrum facere," or "to make holy." Sacrifice entails choosing to let something you love go, so that you may work towards something greater. This, again, requires one to "know thyself." You must continually search yourself and understand your drives and motives. You must discover what truly matters to you, and what you want to work toward. You must be able to determine what you love and, if necessary, to be willing to give it up so that you may pursue a higher cause.

The old adage "be the change you wish to see in the world" is especially true for us as Masons. We can sit around wishing the world would change, or we can take action to start changing the world by starting with ourselves, beyond simply learning another precept of morality or hearing another beautiful poem... and learning what matters enough to us to make genuine sacrifices for.

Sacrifice has a direct parallel to charity. Success is never a guarantee in life. Life is full of blessings and trials, and just as often as we find ourselves needing to humble ourselves to accept the relief offered by another, we will also just as often find ourselves in such a position to provide such relief to the truly destitute. We usually do when we attain some level of the kind of success that can lead us to our deaths through complacency and wretched self-indulgent habit.

Continued on page 9

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."



NECESSITY



# Necessity of Sacrifice

Continued from page 8

Again: comfort kills. From the *Holy Bible* 1 John 2:15-17:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” KJV

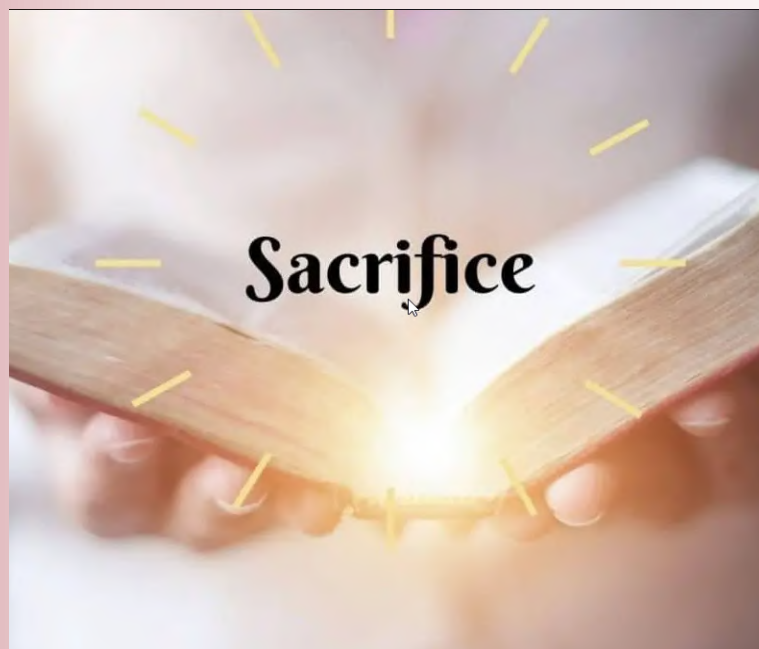
No matter your faith, we can learn from this: this life isn't forever, and charity extends beyond the grave. As Masons, we are expressly charged to engage in charity whenever necessary and possible. Learn to despise wealth of whatever form, and to give freely when you are genuinely able. We aren't always able to give of ourselves, but we should fight against our natural hesitations.

Often enough, those hesitations stem either from inertia or, worse yet, fear. If we are charged to not even fear death itself, why should we fear giving of ourselves? Not only is there work to do to improve our communities, but there is always work to do in our own hearts in keeping them soft and open to the genuine plight of our disaffected neighbors.

However, as in all things, definitely refine your ability to discern whether plights are genuine or not. As good men, there are always those who would take advantage of our giving hearts. We not only have to strike the balance of being miserly and not giving of ourselves our time and resources, but also in giving too freely, to those who would abuse our kind offices. We must not only temper the sacrifices we choose to make but also choose wisely and keenly not only what to sacrifice, but what to sacrifice for.

Because we don't live forever, but what we choose to sacrifice for, if truly worthy of those sacrifices, will.

The old adage “be the change you wish to see in the world” is especially true for us as Masons. We can sit around wishing the world would change, or we can take action to start changing the world by starting with ourselves, beyond simply learning another precept of morality or hearing another beautiful poem... and learning what matters enough to us to make genuine sacrifices for.





# Our Craft Adapting to Today's Society

Dr. John W. Mitchell, Jr. 32

The year 2003 proved to be challenging for me. My ninety-year-old mother, living alone in the family house according to her wishes, was starting to fail. We both knew it. I was the only family available to assist. So after work and on weekends, as often as possible, I drove thirty miles to help pay bills, sort her medications, buy groceries, and do the odd jobs that were no longer within her capabilities.

There proved to be a positive to this as we had a great deal of time to talk, to converse in a joyful and fruitful way about a life well lived. We spoke in a different way than we had when I was still her "little boy." We reminisced and talked philosophically with frankness and honesty.

One day I asked, "what is the greatest change you have seen during your lifetime?" She quickly responded: "communications." Indeed, that was a terrific answer when you look back to 1912, her birth year or "year of the Titanic" as she frequently reminded me. Telephones were not nearly as convenient to use, radio was still in the process of becoming mainstream and not found in many households, there was no television, computers, etc. Much communication came from newspapers or just word of mouth after significant delay.

As my age has advanced, I have contemplated how to answer a similar question should an individual of a younger generation ask it. Certainly, communications would continue to be a reasonable answer. But I am inclined to mention the change in civility that has occurred during my lifetime. In the forties and fifties, we were taught to respect our elders, and in the youth we said, "yes sir" or "yes ma'am." We held the door for ladies, raised our hands before speaking, kept our elbows off the table, and the like. We considered what others were saying without interrupting and had civil conversations when expressing differing opinions. In short, we were more polite, more respectful, more considerate and kinder to others.

It might be appropriate to point out that society in the forties and fifties did have many imperfections. Segregation and racism cast a shadow over America. Drug abuse was not as prevalent, but a higher percentage smoked. Many Americans lived in poverty as compared to our more affluent modern society. There are further examples, but people did treat each other with more civility.



Today's society is rampant with episodes of incivility. Teachers report on their students using electronic devices rather than paying attention in class. Many children sass and talk back to their elders. Drivers tailgate if they think we are not going fast enough, cut in line, curse you and flick you off for minor annoyances. If you express a

Continued on page 11

It is suggested that civility has waned due to a decline in the societal structure that has sustained moral norms. Change of family life is of particular import. More children are reared in one-parent families, or in a home where both parents work, which results in less time for moral teaching and the modeling of civil behavior. Pediatricians have noticed a decrease in parenting skills. Brought up by our ubiquitous welfare system, we have a generation of young folks that feel entitled to be spoon-fed by others, not taking responsibility for themselves. There is less attendance of religious institutions which have served as teachers of moral and civil behavior.



# Our Craft Adapting to Today's Society

Continued from page10

political opinion, you are sure to be rebuked, often with derogatory language. Our political leaders demean their opponents and even tear up copies of their speeches. I could list so many examples.

It is a wonderful change to enter a Masonic Lodge or Temple where Brothers smile and are happy to greet you. Everyone shows respect and kindness. Colorful language is not heard. And, of course, political differences are not discussed. Our Lodges provide peace and tranquility where the turmoil of outside life can be avoided and forgotten for a while. We can relax, recharge our batteries, and prepare to reenter the fray when we leave.

When we speak of civility, we are talking about much more than politeness and good manners. We are referring to the general way we treat each other as we go through the routines of daily life. We are civilized when we follow standards of behavior that promote positive relationships. We follow rules of behavior necessary for a shared community to prosper. If we are moral people, we recognize standards for the good of everyone. Thus, civility is more than good manners; it is a strong component of morality.

Many theories have been advanced to explain the decrease of civility and morality over the past five or six decades. Some suggest that technological advances play a large role. They explain that when we communicate by texting, emailing, or even speaking over the phone, we do not make eye contact or observe body language. These are important when attempting to understand others and give them proper consideration and respect.

Others suggest that civility suffers when we take part in activities without interacting with people. They point out that many drive solo when commuting to work or when running their errands. This makes them feel anonymous and isolated in an environment which requires less politeness and less consideration of others. It may lead to seeing other drivers as competitors. Also, they point to the long hours spent by many watching television and playing video games. This limits their interaction with friends and family and exposes them to violence and bad behavior.

Continued on page12

One day I asked, "what is the greatest change you have seen during your lifetime?" She quickly responded: "communications."

Indeed, that was a terrific answer when you look back to 1912, her birth year or "year of the Titanic" as she frequently reminded me.

Telephones were not nearly as convenient to use, radio was still in the process of becoming mainstream and not found in many households, there was no television, computers, etc. Much communication came from newspapers or just word of mouth after significant delay.





# Our Craft Adapting to Today's Society

Continued from page 11

Decrease in civility might be attributed to the political climate in our country. National political debates demonstrate crude discourse, mocking and name calling both in the legislative and in the executive branches of government. These are the leaders that our country looks to as examples of good behavior. Mass media stokes this atmosphere by sensationalizing the news and slanting reporting to fit their bias. All this promotes anger and emotional response, which leads to incivility.

It is suggested that civility has waned due to a decline in the societal structure that has sustained moral norms. Change of family life is of particular import. More children are reared in one-parent families, or in a home where both parents work, which results in less time for moral teaching and the modeling of civil behavior. Pediatricians have noticed a decrease in parenting skills. Brought up by our ubiquitous welfare system, we have a generation of young folks that feel entitled to be spoon-fed by others, not taking responsibility for themselves. There is less attendance of religious institutions which have served as teachers of moral and civil behavior.

When our nation suffers decreased civility among its citizens, our people lose respect for each other. The quality of our life deteriorates. High emotions and anger ensue. Violence is more prevalent. The fabric which holds our society together fragments and our democracy is weakened.

It will be interesting to look back on the COVID in a few years to determine how it has changed civility in our country. Attempts at mitigation with staying at home, social distancing, wearing masks, and more, have been ignored by some. Groups of teens and young adults collected on the beaches, a food-fest was well attended in Washington D.C., a few churches have continued to hold services, many people continue to travel, and some refuse to wear masks in the grocery store. But most of the population has been compliant. Staying home and communicating electronically has reminded us that we are all human and that we all share this beautiful planet together. Hopefully, we will remember this and treat each other with more compassion and respect when the crisis is over.

How to bring more civility back to our culture is a complicated question. Surely, we need to increase parenting skills and provide civility training in our educational programs. Our religious leaders are striving to find ways to reverse trends and bring people back to their places of worship where moral lessons can be taught. There are movements in our country to reintroduce respect and tolerance to our national politics and news reporting.

Freemasonry has an opportunity to play a role in these efforts. Our fraternity differs from service clubs, and organizations like the Chamber of Commerce in that our goal is to make good men better men through our ritual and degree work. We stress friendship, morality and brotherly love, and make these the foundation of our teaching and our endeavors. The charge at the end of the first degree instructs a new Brother to act "upon the square," and do "unto him as you wish he should do unto you." Further, it advises him to avoid censure or reproach in his outward demeanor. Lessons in civility are taught when the candidate stands in the Northeast corner in the Entered Apprentice Degree. Also, it is taught in the Fellowcraft Degree when he climbs the winding stairway and receives the Master's

A Mason knows that being civil to others is the right thing to do. If we have to question whether something is right or wrong, we just do not do it. Acting civil provides us with an inner peace, and helps us achieve a balanced life in moral harmony. It brings us a step closer to that equilibrium for which we strive.

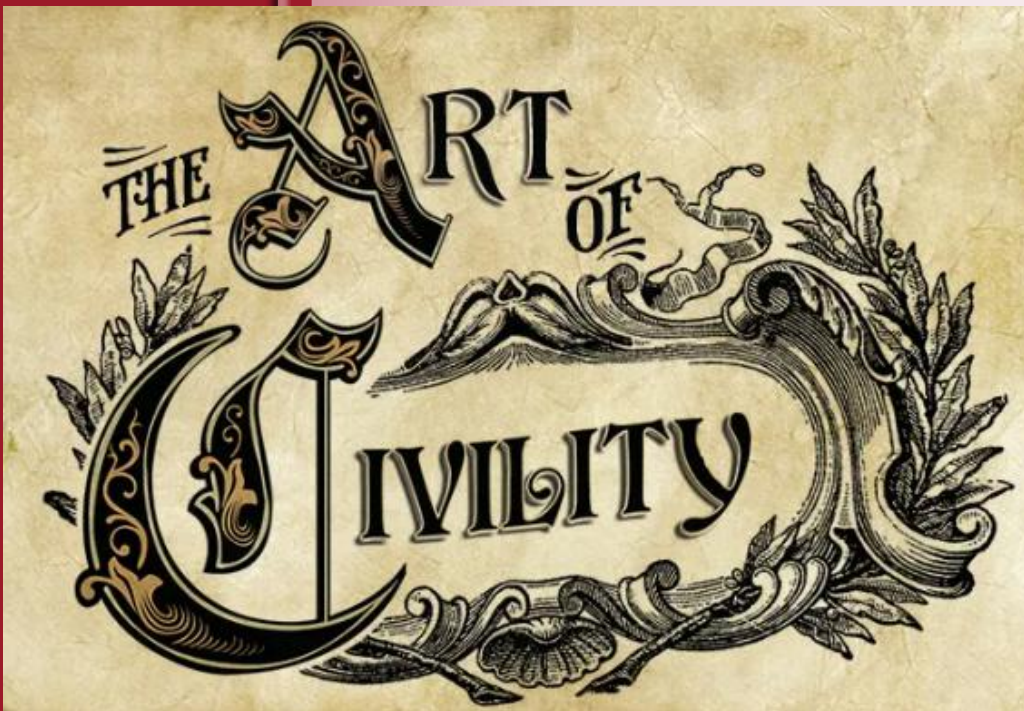


# Our Craft Adapting to Today's Society

Continued from page 12

presentation from the East. All this encourages being respectful, tolerant and civil to others.

Many of our Lodges sponsor youth programs which teach proper behavior, respect for others, and good citizenship. These groups raise the moral compass of adolescents at a formative time in their lives. It is difficult to replace the value of family experience and good parenting, but the DeMolay, Rainbow Girls, and Job's Daughters provide excellent guidance.



Freemasonry provides the type of training that is necessary to combat our national decline in civility. As such, we should bring our organization more to the forefront and make the public aware of our values and our teachings. We should strive to be models of kindness and civility. We might consider sponsoring programs in our communities to reward good citizenship and exemplary behavior. Also, we need to be sure we represent ourselves with these values in our communities. We should do this at all times, and most especially when we have a Masonic emblem on our car or clothing. In short, Masonry can be on the front lines of the war against incivility.

The Masonic teachings on morality, on the doing of what is good and right, should be what people call to mind when the public thinks of Freemasonry. It is our creed and our core belief. This should be our image rather than the picture of some occult, secretive organization which is the perception of so many. It should be common knowledge that the philosophy of our fraternity is a force in fighting against incivility.

A Mason knows that being civil to others is the right thing to do. If we have to question whether something is right or wrong, we just do not do it. Acting civil provides us with an inner peace, and helps us achieve a balanced life in moral harmony. It brings us a step closer to that equilibrium for which we strive.



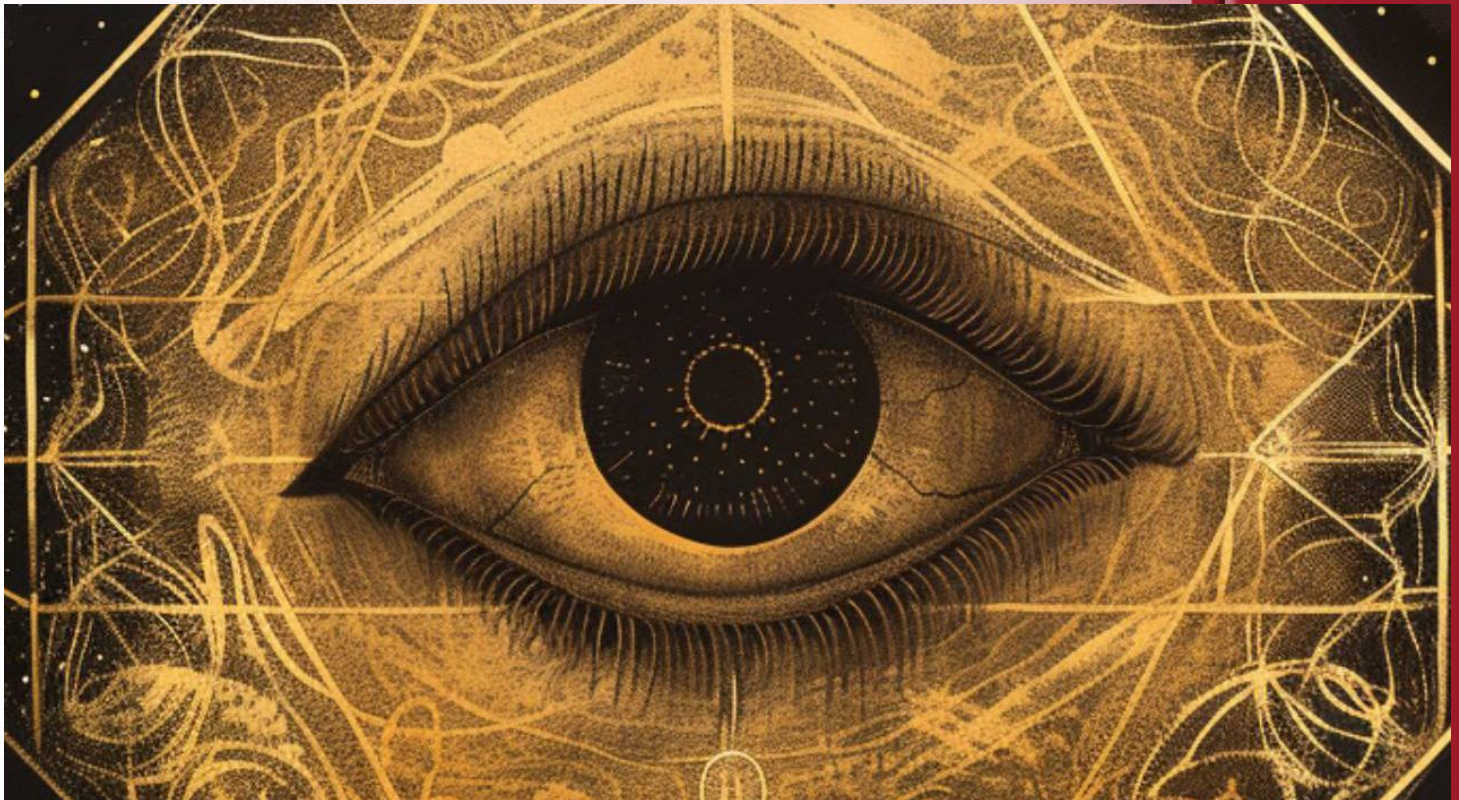
# Gnosticism and Freemasonry

Brother Brian M. Walaszczyk, 32<sup>o</sup>

Freemasonry derives its allegories and lessons from many religious and philosophical teachings, particularly within the “high degrees” taught in the Craft’s appendant bodies such as the Scottish Rite. Its teachings contain allegories and symbols derived from such sources as the Kabbalah, Christianity, Egyptian mythology, Chivalric orders, and other ancient mystery traditions. For example, in the 20th Degree, Master of the Symbolic Lodge, as conferred in Southern Jurisdiction, the candidate is exposed to knowledge taught by great sages such as Zarathustra, Hermes, and Confucius, and in the 31st Degree, Inspector Inquisitor, the candidate is exposed to certain lessons found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In this article, however, I will explore Gnostic influences and some possible Gnostic interpretations of Masonic symbolism.

Gnosticism is a name given to numerous religious and philosophical movements that flourished in the first and second centuries of the Common Era. Gnostic sects had different beliefs and legends just as Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, and other churches which interpret the Christian faith differently. The name Gnosticism is derived from Gnosis and means “knowledge,” or “insight.” Although Gnosticism’s exact origin is unknown, it is believed that some of Gnosticism’s early influences include the Corpus Hermeticum, the Jewish Apocalyptic writings, Platonic Philosophy, and the Hebrew Scriptures (Moore, 2020).

Continued on page 13





# Gnosticism and Freemasonry

Gnostic sects had different beliefs and legends just as Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, and other churches which interpret the Christian faith differently. The name Gnosticism is derived from Gnosis and means “knowledge,” or “insight.” Although Gnosticism’s exact origin is unknown, it is believed that some of Gnosticism’s early influences include the Corpus Hermeticum, the Jewish Apocalyptic writings, Platonic Philosophy, and the Hebrew Scriptures (Moore, 2020).

Continued from page 14

Basic Gnostic concepts are found in the Coptic text titled, *The Allogenes*, which translates to *The Foreigner* (note: “The Foreigner” is both the name of the book and the central character in the book), that was discovered in the upper Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. It is believed that the visionary protagonist of the *Foreigner* was Seth, and according to tradition, every Gnostic is a follower of “Sethian knowledge” (Barnstone, 2003). The first-century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus states that Seth’s children invented the wisdom concerned with the heavenly bodies and their order. Josephus wrote that “so that their wisdom would not be destroyed based on Adam’s prediction of the world being destroyed by fire and water, they erected two pillars, one of brick and one of stone. They inscribed their knowledge on the pillars so that if one were destroyed their knowledge would be discoverable” (D.D., 1823). Masons are taught the importance of the pillars at the entrance of King Solomon’s temple. These pillars may be symbolic of that knowledge that was preserved by the pillars erected by the children of Seth, which were created to withstand the destructive forces throughout the ages.

There are additional references to Sethian knowledge within Freemasonry. In the first Constitutions of the Freemasons, written shortly after the official formation of the first Grand Lodge of Freemasonry in 1717, James Anderson provided the first modern compilation of the history of the craft. In this official work, which was written by order of the Grand Master at the time, it was noted that Seth was the “prime cultivator of astronomy,” and he taught his children “geometry and Masonry.” This portion of the text is significant. According to the Constitutions, Seth’s ninth son Noah, and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japhet, were “all Masons true,” who brought anti-diluvium arts and traditions with them after the flood. Here we have a foundational document from the inception of organized Freemasonry stating that Sethian knowledge was passed down through Masonry via Noah and his sons, who were all Masons (Anderson, 2020). As noted below, it may be that Sethian anti-diluvium knowledge influenced the Kabbalah, Gnosticism, and in turn Freemasonry.

Additionally, the Graham Manuscript written circa 1726 indicates that the original Master Mason’s Degree dealt with Noah and not Hiram Abiff. Additionally, the term Noachide means “the descendants of Noah, and this was a term applied to Freemasons on the theory, derived from the ‘legend of the Craft,’ that Noah was the father and founder of the Masonic system of philosophy. And hence the Freemasons claim to be his descendants, because in times past they preserved the pure principles of his religion amid the corruptions of surrounding faiths” (Travers, 2020). Could this be interpreted that Masonry was derived from a Gnostic Sethian tradition passed through Noah and his sons?

An examination of the statement that Seth was the “prime cultivator of astronomy” may reveal a Gnostic interpretation of the Sethian legend that was deposited directly from Gnostic beliefs into Masonic ritual which is influenced by a study of the stars. Astrological symbols are gently hidden within the craft, and some of these ideas are explained in depth in our degree lectures. The comprehensive symbolism of Masonic Lodges, including their actual layout, the discussion of the sun’s travel throughout the day, the celestial and terrestrial globes, and the starry decked canopy, all demonstrate the importance of

Continued on page 16

# Gnosticism and Freemasonry

Continued from page 15

astronomy. Additionally, astronomy was important in the development of geometry, which is vital in Masonry.

An examination of the statement that Seth was the “prime cultivator of astronomy” may reveal a Gnostic interpretation of the Sethian legend that was deposited directly from Gnostic beliefs into Masonic ritual which is influenced by a study of the stars. Astrological symbols are gently hidden within the craft, and some of these ideas are explained in depth in our degree lectures. The comprehensive symbolism of Masonic Lodges, including their actual layout, the discussion of the sun’s travel throughout the day, the celestial and terrestrial globes, and the starry decked canopy, all demonstrate the importance of astronomy. Additionally, astronomy was important in the development of geometry, which is vital in Masonry.

Looking specifically at the text of the Foreigner, there is further information that may help us to interpret Freemasonry from a Gnostic perspective. The Foreigner claimed he was visited by an angel who told him that he would receive a revelation after 100 years. After the time passed, the Foreigner received the vision in which he learned the nature of the unknowable God. The Foreigner then revealed this vision to his son. According to the text, the Foreigner received his vision, or revelation, by luminaries, who told him that he has done enough to “hinder the inactivity” within him by searching for the incomprehensible (Barnstone, 2003). Using a Gnostic analogy, the Mason has “hindered his inactivity” by knocking on the door of the Lodge and thus actively began his search for light. The text details part of the revelation, which involved a dialog that explained the impossible ability to know all aspects of the infinite one and defined the “ineffable” God as the mediation of the “triple power” (Courses, 2015). Freemasons are familiar with the ineffable name of God, or lost word, and the utilization of the number three throughout our ritual.

The triple tau is also a well-known symbol of the Royal Arch. Thus, a way to interpret the symbolism within Masonry in a Gnostic context is to use the number three as a symbol of the triple power of the unknowable deity.

One overarching concept, common in most Gnostic sects, is the belief that the Gnostics were children of light who still contained a spark of the divine. Their goal was to become aware of the light and reintegrate with the infinite one in order to obtain a “Gnosis” or an awareness of their part of the divine (Courses, 2015). Pursuit of light is also an essential theme of Freemasonry. Masons are initiated and “brought to light” and continue in their constant search for more light. Viewed from a Gnostic perspective, the goal of attaining more light in Masonry is an attempt to better understand and become aware of a personal relationship with God. There are many parts of Masonic ritual that may be interpreted this way, including the fact that early in his Masonic journey, a candidate depends on others to assist him with communicating with God, but eventually he must do it on his own. This personal connection with Deity may be viewed as the same desire for light that the Gnostics sought. Just as The Foreigner became active in his search for God, so, too, the Mason, using the symbolism and allegories of the Craft becomes active in his search for

As with the Gnostic Foreigner, Masons are travelers in foreign countries who have the right to receive master’s wages. Therefore, one may view Masons not only as travelers but foreigners.

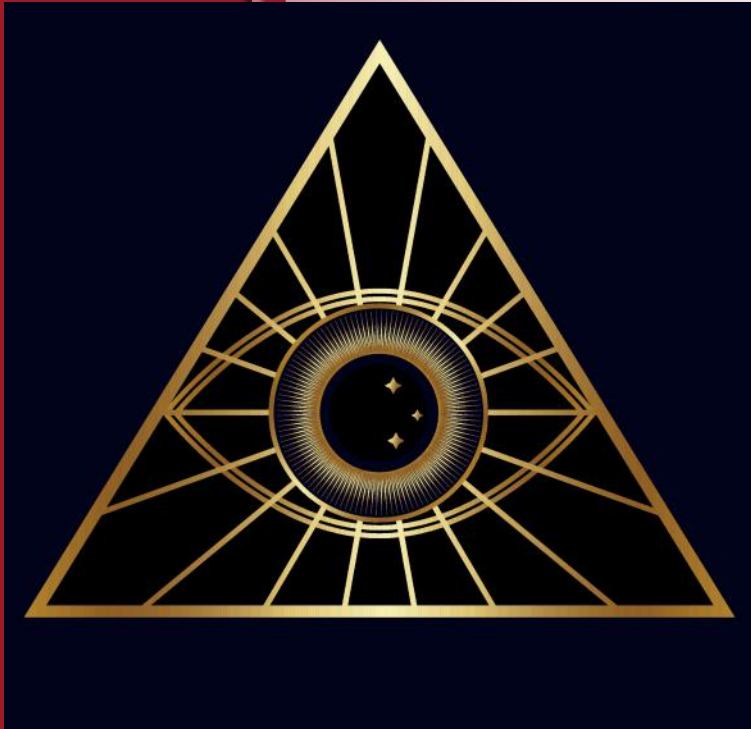
Operative masons travel to foreign countries to build beautiful cathedrals and structures using elaborate geometry, but speculative Masons travel in a more symbolic sense. While a Mason has the right to travel to visit foreign Lodges, including those located in foreign countries, a deeper meaning may be that Masons are travelers into foreign or new territories of personal understanding of the knowledge taught to them in the Craft and the geometry crafted throughout nature by the Great Architect of the Universe.

Continued on page 17



# Gnosticism and Freemasonry

Continued from page 16



light or the lost word.

The revelation that the Foreigner informs his son about the infinite God as self-knowledge, “Unknowable, and it is greater than what is good in its unknowability, having blessedness and perfection and silence - not blessedness or perfection or stillness, but something that is, that no one can understand, being at rest” (Courses, 2015). The revelation of self-knowledge is the same as the Delphic saying “Know Thyself,” which was proclaimed by many great sages, including Pythagoras, who is honored by Freemasons. This saying, often found at the entrance of ancient temples, is carved into the Tyler’s chair at the entrance to the temple room of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction. Indeed, Masonic Constitutions outside of Virginia use the theme “Know Thyself” in the Entered Apprentice Degree, and a portion of the Fellowcraft Degree’s ritual instills an immensely powerful lesson to the candidate, which cannot be revealed here. A Mason contemplates his own interpretation of the rituals and

lessons of the degrees he has received to become a better man by better understanding himself. This may be interpreted as the Gnostic principle whereby the Foreigner obtains knowledge of the ineffable God through contemplation and self-reflection.

As with the Gnostic Foreigner, Masons are travelers in foreign countries who have the right to receive master’s wages. Therefore, one may view Masons not only as travelers but foreigners. Operative masons travel to foreign countries to build beautiful cathedrals and structures using elaborate geometry, but speculative Masons travel in a more symbolic sense. While a Mason has the right to travel to visit foreign Lodges, including those located in foreign countries, a deeper meaning may be that Masons are travelers into foreign or new territories of personal understanding of the knowledge taught to them in the Craft and the geometry crafted throughout nature by the Great Architect of the Universe. They fit their minds as living stones in a spiritual sense, and throughout their Masonic journey, they are tasked to contemplate the beautiful ritual, lessons, and symbols presented to them in the ritual. By his own study and contemplation, each Mason will come to his individual interpretation of these allegories and symbols and, thus, smooth out the rough ashlar of their own being. They polish this stone with the working tools of the Craft. One example is mastering the ability to subdue their passions through temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. They learn to control their innate animal passions and desires in order to live a more moral life suitable for that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. This is where the true work of a Mason is conducted, and wages paid, and is a

Continued on page 18

# Gnosticism and Freemasonry

Continued from page 17

lifelong process. Therefore, we may view ourselves as foreigners just as the title and character of this ancient Gnostic text.

To summarize, we have interpreted many symbols and lessons in Freemasonry based upon a basic understanding of Gnostic principles and the text of the Foreigner. We found similarities in that the Gnostics were children of light searching for more light or Gnosis, while Masons are travelers in foreign countries searching for light and the lost word, which is to say, a deeper knowledge of one's self in order to build one's spiritual temple. This Gnostic interpretation of Masonic symbolism is one of many possible interpretations of our system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols, but each Mason must individually contemplate and interpret the symbols and allegories presented throughout their Masonic journey and may draw their insights from many different philosophies and traditions.

## References

- Anderson, J. (2020, March 18). The Constitutions of the Free-Masons (1734). An Online Electronic Edition. Lincoln, Nebraska, United States of America: The University of Nebraska.
- Arturo De Hoyos, 3. G. (2013). Albert Pike's Morals and Dogma of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Annotated Edition. Washington: Supreme Council, 33°, S.J. U.S.A.
- Barnstone, W. (2003). The Gnostic Bible. Boston and London: Shambhala. Britannica, E. (2020, May 24).
- Kabbalah. Retrieved from Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shabbetaianism> Courses, T. G. (Director). (2015). Gnosticism: From Nag Hammadi to the Gospel of Judas [Motion Picture].
- D.D., W. B. (1823). The Antiquities of the Jews. Philadelphia: William W. Woodward. Moore, E. (2020, May 24).
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved from Gnosticism: <https://www.iep.utm.edu/gnostic/> Scholem, G. (1960). Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and the Talmudic Tradition. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.
- Travers, V. J. (2020, May 25). The Noachite Legend. Retrieved from TR Welling: <http://www.trwelling.org/Legend%20of%20the%20Noachite%20Rite.htm>

## Main Features of Gnosticism

1. Intricate and obscure cosmology.
2. Syncretism: blending various religious world-views.
3. Fundamental questions of human existence.
4. Gnosis: secret knowledge as means of attaining salvation.
5. Dualism: spiritual/ material; soul/ body.
6. Docetic christology (some Gnostics).
7. Sense of non-belonging to the world.
8. Ethics: world-denying asceticism or extreme libertinism.
9. Three groups: spiritual (initiated Gnostics); psychic (ordinary believers); fleshy (unbelievers, those who will perish).



Gospel of Thomas  
Nag Hammadi Codex II



# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Dr. Michael Pobat, 32°

Unfortunately, there is not much written about King Solomon. Most of the information we have is derived from interpretations of biblical writings in the First Book of Kings and the Second Book of Chronicles. There are a variety of interpretations, so this research reflects an analysis and synthesis of the information and the story of King Solomon as constructed through an academic and Masonic research lens.

As Master Masons, we know of King Solomon as a result of our participation in the Master Masons Degree and the building of King Solomon's magnificent Temple. King Solomon plays a prominent role in the unfolding of the drama, deceit, and eventual death as seen in our Master Masons Degree.



But, after the drama concludes, and we celebrate the raising of our new Master Mason, the question we may all have is: who was King Solomon?

In summary, King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived and also one of the most foolish. God gifted him with unsurpassed wisdom, which Solomon squandered by disobeying God's commandments - and now the rest of the story....

And King David said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, "Long live King Solomon!"

The story of King Solomon begins with King David. David was among the greatest of earthly kings - maybe the greatest. From boyhood he performed many feats in battle - he killed lions and bears to defend his father's flocks and herds - he slew giants and conquered kingdoms - and he established a fortress for his people in Jerusalem. He sired a royal dynasty, fathering many sons to be

Continued on page 20



# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Continued from page 21

the princes of Israel, including Prince Solomon. Before King David dies, he appoints as king his son Solomon, who is 12 years old at the time, and not the oldest son, with these words:

"I go the way of all the earth. You shall be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes and His commandments and His testimonies. As it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn."

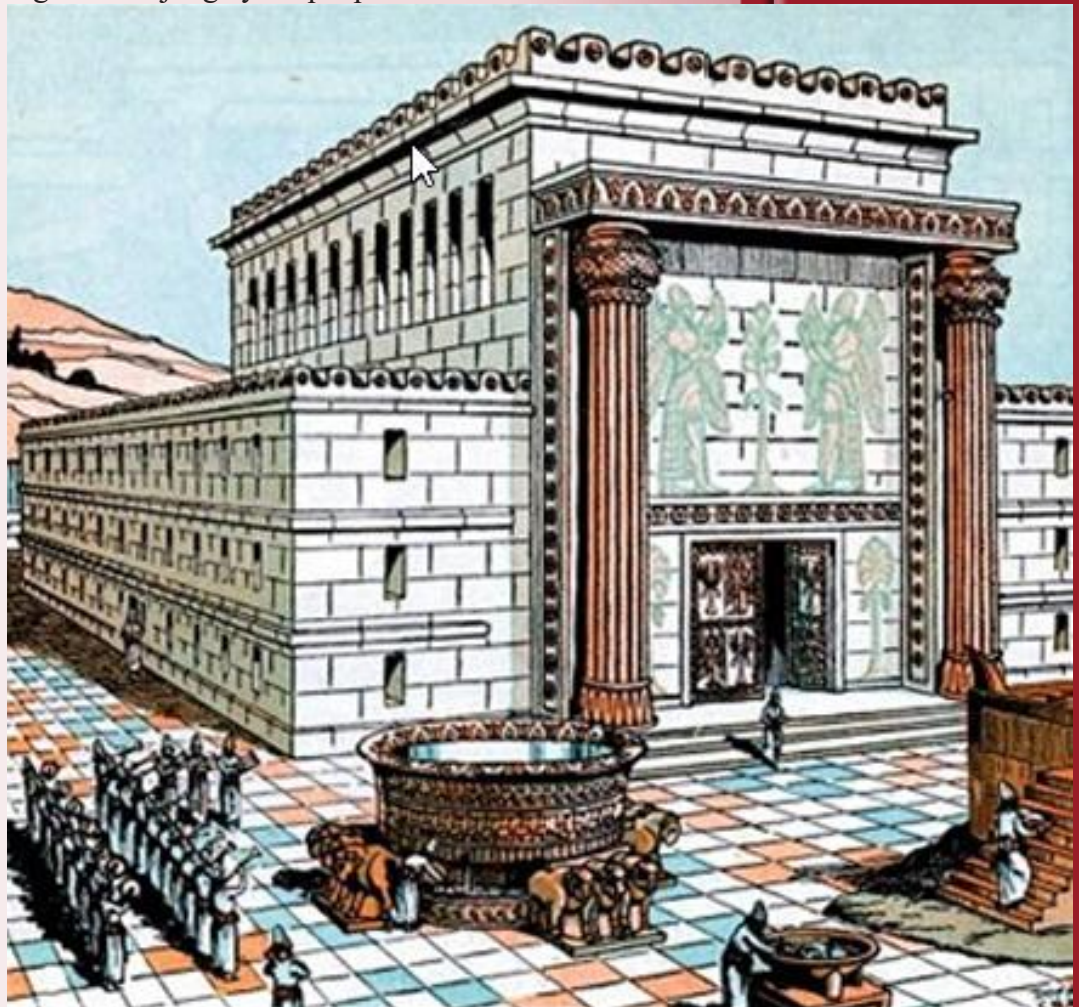
This classic blessing is often quoted by fathers to their sons on the day of their Bar Mitzvah. It restates the cardinal rule that has guided the Jewish people from the time of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai: in order to prosper keep the Torah.

Shortly after Solomon is anointed king, God appears to him in a dream in which He invites Solomon to make a request for himself. Solomon answers: "I am but a small child, give therefore your servant an understanding heart to judge your people."

His request pleases God who tells him: "Because you have not requested riches and honor but only that which would benefit all the people, I will give you not only an understanding heart like none other before or after you, but also riches and honor like no other king in your days."

Born in 848 BCE, Solomon dies at age 52 in 796 BCE, ruling as king for 40 years, the best years in all of Israel's history, 40 years of peace and prosperity. Solomon was the second son of King David and Bathsheba. His name means "peaceable" and even as a baby Solomon was loved by God. He is known as chacham mi'kol ha'adam, "wisest of all the men." The Bible relates that kings from all over the world came to hear his wisdom, which included not only Torah wisdom, but also wisdom in secular knowledge and science.

His fame spread through all the surrounding nations. He composed over 3,000 proverbs, and 1,005



Continued on page 19



# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Continued from page 20

poems. He discoursed about trees, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows from the wall. He also discoursed about animals, birds, creeping things and fish. Kings and men of all nations came to hear Solomon's wisdom.

As we all know, the crowning achievement of Solomon's reign is the building of the Temple which his father, King David, could only dream about. King David brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem's Mount Moriah, "the gate of heaven" -- but because he had been a warrior who had blood on his hands, he was not permitted by God to erect the Temple. However, this is left for his son to accomplish, which as we know, he does.

The Bible devotes several chapters to the construction of this most important building to the nation of Israel, the place of communion between the Jewish people and God. It tells

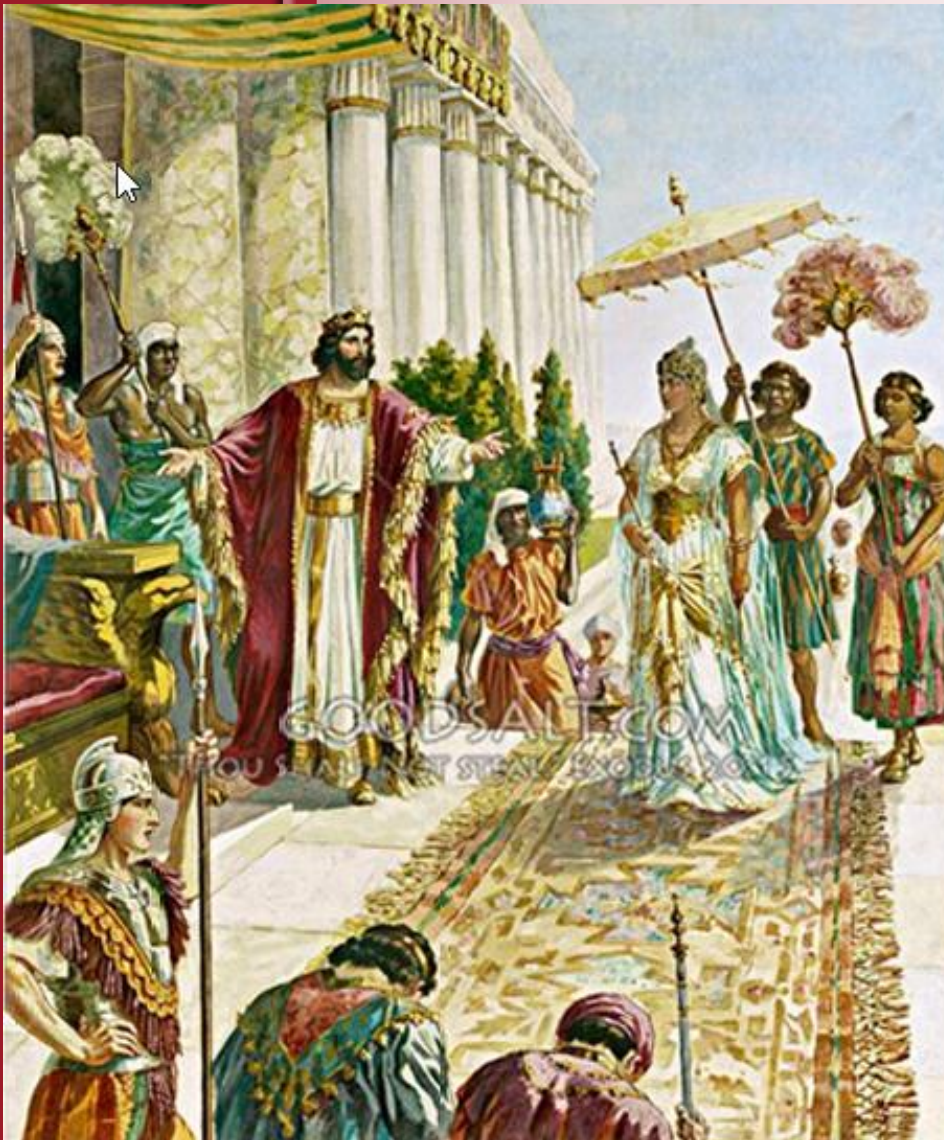
that the entire Temple both inside and outside, including floors and doors were overlaid with gold. Besides this there were bronze structures such as columns, an immersion tank, and basins. The magnificent structure took seven years to build.

When it is finished, Solomon dedicates the Temple:

"Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house that I have built? Yet have regard for the prayer of Your servant, and for his supplication, O Lord my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer, which Your servant prays before You today; that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may listen to the prayer .. of your people."

This is the pinnacle of Jewish history. Everyone is united. There is peace and prosperity. This is as good as it gets for Israel - the closest ancient Israel gets to achieving the Messianic ideal of creating an ideal nation that is alight to the nations. This is the zenith. So why doesn't this golden age last you may be asking?

Solomon makes one serious mistake. In  
Continued on page 22



# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Continued from page 21

violation of the Torah's prohibition, he takes too many wives. In fact, he has 700 wives and 300 concubines. If we go back to the Book of Deuteronomy where the idea that Jews would one day want a king is first discussed, Moses warns that the king should not have too many horses or too many wives. The great Torah commentator Rashi tells us that this means no more than 18, and that King David had only six.

The Torah placed limits on the number of wives and wealth the king could have so that he would stay focused on his responsibilities and not be distracted and corrupted by materialism and power. Solomon was certainly aware of these prohibitions but felt that his great wisdom and spirituality would enable him to handle these challenges and be an even greater king. Unfortunately, he did not foresee the problems that some of his many foreign wives would cause.

The first question is why did Solomon "need" so many wives? The answer has nothing to do with lust or love. Throughout history the overwhelming reason for marriage amongst nobility and royalty was to create political alliances.

The Middle East in Solomon's time is composed of many city-states, and all the kings of these city-states want to send their daughters to marry King Solomon and, in this way, form an alliance with him. Solomon may also have had an additional reason for his marriages to these foreign wives, and this was his way of bringing these nations closer to God.

There is a larger problem with having so many wives - not all of them were Gentile. As such, before they married the king, they had to convert to Judaism. But that leads to another question. The Talmud states: We (the Jewish people) will not accept converts in the Messianic Era, similarly, they did not accept converts, neither during the time of King David, nor during the time of King Solomon.

So how did King Solomon skirt this issue and still marry so many foreign women? The answer is that an exception was made for the future wives of the king and a special court was set up to handle their conversions. Since many of these weddings were arranged for political reasons, it is certain that some of the conversions were not entirely sincere nor did all of Solomon's wives completely abandon their native religious practices.

As with Moses and David, we again see the incredible level of accountability these great leaders are held to. For a wife of King Solomon, prophet, wisest of all men, King of Israel, to worship idols other than God is an inexcusable mistake that Solomon is held directly accountable for.

The Bible states: In his old age, his wives turned away Solomon's heart after other gods. This, of course, does not mean that King Solomon began worshiping other gods, but the Bible uses these harsh words because he did not prevent his wives from carrying on their previous religious practices. As a king, he is held responsible for the actions of those under

Certainly, King Solomon's greatest weakness was turning to worldly pleasures to satisfy his curious mind instead of the pursuit of God. He collected all sorts of treasures and surrounded himself with luxury. In the case of non-Jewish wives and concubines, he let lust rule his heart instead of obedience to God. The Bible ends Solomon's story relating that God was angry with him and told him: "Since you are guilty of this, and you have not kept My covenant and My laws ... I will tear the kingdom away from you ... But I will not do this in your time, for the sake of your father David. Instead, I will tear it away from your son ... I will give your son one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Continued on page 23



# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Continued from page 22

his influence.

In conclusion, during Solomon's long reign of 40 years, the Israelite monarchy, according to the Bible, gained its highest splendor and wealth. In a single year, according to the First Book of Kings, Solomon collected tribute amounting to 666 talents of gold which is equivalent to nearly 40,000 pounds. Solomon is described as surrounding himself with all the luxuries and the external grandeur of an Eastern monarch, and his government prospered. He entered into an alliance with Hiram King of Tyre, who in many ways greatly assisted him in his numerous undertakings. For some years before his death, David was engaged in collecting materials for building the temple in Jerusalem as a permanent abode for the Ark of the Covenant. Solomon is described as completing its construction, with the help of an architect, also named Hiram, and other materials, sent from Hiram King of Tyre.

One of King Solomon's greatest strengths was wisdom, granted to him by God. He was a prolific writer, poet, and scientist. His skills in architecture and management turned Israel into the showplace of the Middle East. As a diplomat, he made treaties and alliances that brought peace to his kingdom. One of the better-known stories of King Solomon's wisdom is when two women called upon him, asking him to determine which of the two of them should be awarded a disputed infant. Both mothers claimed to have given birth to the baby. Since they couldn't decide, Solomon came up with what sounded like a logical idea. He suggested the baby be cut in half and split between the two women. When one of the women immediately understood that the beloved child would be killed, she no longer cared whether she got to raise him. All she wanted was that he be safe. The other potential

mother didn't care, she wanted her piece. Solomon decided the real mother -- or at least the one who should be the real mother -- was the one who would rather give up her child than see it be destroyed.

Certainly, King Solomon's greatest weakness was turning to worldly pleasures to satisfy his curious mind instead of the pursuit of God. He collected all sorts of treasures and surrounded himself with luxury. In the case of non-Jewish wives and concubines, he let lust rule his heart instead of obedience to God. The Bible ends Solomon's story relating that God was angry with him and told him: "Since you are guilty of this, and you have not kept My covenant and My laws ... I will tear the kingdom away from you ... But I



Continued on page 24

# King Solomon

## Wisdom, Sex, Money, and Power

Continued from page 23

will not do this in your time, for the sake of your father David. Instead, I will tear it away from your son ... I will give your son one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

After Solomon died and was buried in the City of David, his son, Rehoboam succeeded him as king. Under Rehoboam's rule, Solomon's empire was lost and his kingdom was divided into two parts.

King Solomon's sins speak loudly to us in our materialistic culture. When we worship possessions and fame over a supreme being, we are headed for a fall. As a Master Mason these words ring true and remind us all, what is really important in life....hope, faith, charity, and brotherly love....the tenets of Freemasonry.

Fiat Lux....Let There Be Light!





# The Scottish Rite Research Society



**Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, and prayer are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.**

**Arturo de Hoyos,  
Ed., Albert Pike's  
Morals and  
Dogma.  
(Washington D.C.:  
The Supreme  
Council, 2011), 77**

The benefits of membership in the Scottish Rite Research Society are many. Some are intangibles, such as the potential for interaction and discussions with the brightest minds in contemporary Masonic philosophy and debate. The most important benefit is the availability of what we all came here for, which is more light in Masonry. This is manifest most particularly in SRRS publications and Masonic conferences.

The tangible benefits of membership in the SRRS include:

- Access to some of the most thought-provoking ideas in contemporary Masonic research
- A 10% discount on Society books and certain items bought at the House of the Temple or via the on-line Store
- The annual hardback volume of Heredom®, the preeminent publication of scholarly Masonic research
- The Society's quarterly research journal, The Plumblin®
- Early notice for upcoming conferences and meetings on issues of Masonic importance
- Your SRRS membership card and lapel pin SRRS Members may also receive:
- Special discounted offers on advanced sales throughout the year
- A bonus book or other item

## TO JOIN

There are two levels of membership in the Society. Annual membership \$52.00 or Life membership available for \$1,300.

In addition to receiving Heredom, The Plumblin, and discounts on Scottish Rite merchandise, SRRS members who pay their dues before the end of the year they are due occasionally receive an extra "bonus item" produced for that year. This is our way of saying "thank you" to members who stay dues-current.

Remember to visit the Scottish Rite Research Society section of the Store to see what products are available with your membership discount.

## On-line

Join us via our on-line Store and click on "Scottish Rite Research Society."

## By Telephone

Call the Scottish Rite Store toll-free at 1-866-445-9196, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please have your credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) information ready.



## The Eighteenth Degree

### “Knight of the Rose Croix”

#### Summary

This degree teaches that, in reality, what causes us to be immortal is affection; is love.

Only if one loves is he conscious that he lives, and that he therefore loves life. As Masons, we should practice virtue that it may produce fruit. We should have faith in God, mankind and ourselves. And we should be loving men. Masonry teaches that, so long as a man is loved, so long as he is remembered with love; he continues living in this way even in his grave. And a brother who conveys this image and this message

#### DUTIES:

Practice virtue that it may produce fruit.

Labor to eliminate vice, purify humanity. Be tolerant of the faith and creed of others.

#### FOR REFLECTION:

Do evil and calamity exist to provide an opportunity for the practice of virtue?

Do your attitudes and actions reflect faith, hope and charity.

#### IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

The constellations called Faith, Hope and Charity, the punishments and terrors of Hell, the rose, the cross, the pelican, the eagle.



The apron is white satin bordered with crimson on one side and black on the other. On the white side is embroidered the pelican side of the jewel. On the black side is a large red passion cross.

The cordon, worn from left to right, is of velvet or silk, crimson on one side and black on the other; it is plain on the crimson side. A red passion-cross is embroidered on the black side and worn over the heart. The colors of the cordon and apron, white and crimson, are symbols of light and the dawn of day and represent Faith, Hope, and Charity.





## The Eighteenth Degree “Knight of the Rose Croix”



Continued from page 26



The jewel is the compasses with points opened to sixty degrees and resting on the segment of a graduated circle. On the lower part, on one side, is an eagle, with his wings extended and head lowered. Among the Egyptians the eagle was the emblem of a wise man because his wings bore him above the clouds into the purer atmosphere and nearer to the source of light, and his eyes were not dazzled with that light. Since the eagle also represented the great Egyptian Sun god Amun-ra, it is a symbol of the infinite Supreme Reason or Intelligence. On the other side is a pelican, piercing its breast to feed its seven young in a nest under it. The pelican symbolizes every philanthropist and reformer who has offered up his life for the benefit of humanity, and so teaches us an exhaustless munificence toward all men, especially the needy and defenseless. It also represents the large and bountiful beneficence of nature, from whose bosom all created things draw their sustenance. Thus, the pelican and eagle together are symbols of perfect wisdom and perfect devotedness. There is a crimson cross showing on both sides; at the intersection of its arms on the

pelican side, is a crimson rose in bloom. The cross, pointing to the four cardinal directions, and whose arms, infinitely extended would never meet, is an emblem of space or infinity. The cross has been a sacred symbol in many cultures from the earliest antiquity. The rose was anciently sacred to the sun and to Aurora, Greek Goddess of the dawn. As a symbol of the morning light, it represents resurrection and the renewal of life, and therefore immortality. Together the cross and rose symbolize immortality won by suffering and sorrow. On the summit of the compasses is an antique crown. On the segment of the circle, on the pelican side, is the word of this degree in special cipher. This jewel is of gold; the pelican and eagle upon it of silver.

Continued on page 26

## The Eighteenth Degree

### “Knight of the Rose Croix”

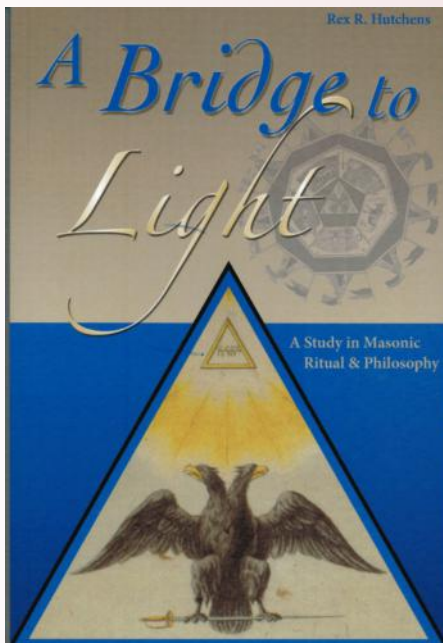
### Lessons of the Degree

**“We should have faith in God, mankind and ourselves. We should hope in the victory over evil, the advancement of humanity, and a hereafter. Charity is relieving the wants and tolerating the errors and faults of others.”**

Continued from page 27

“This degree sets forth the coming of the New Law, the Law of Love, proclaimed in unmistakable terms by Jesus of Nazareth after centuries of spiritual and intellectual darkness in the world when the Sacred Word was again lost. The supreme message brought to the world at that time was the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. This proclamation, though presented by a specific historical figure, is not to be taken as an avocation of a particular religious belief.

Tolerance is also taught as we are led through a myriad of examples from the many and diverse beliefs of the ancients which teach us that neither the cross as a symbol nor the notion of a messiah are uniquely Christian. They are manifestations of religious truths appropriate to the people who perceived them. From these examples, we may conclude that tolerance is not simply a duty, but an inescapable conclusion. The instructions on the concept of a messiah are suggestive only and are not to be taken as official doctrine or dogma of Freemasonry in general, or the Scottish Rite in particular; the religious test of Masonry is far too universal to admit of such a demand. As Pike says in the lecture of this degree, “No Mason has the right to interpret the symbols of this degree for another, or to refuse him its mysteries, ...” (p. 290).” (A Bridge To Light, pp. 143-



#### A Bridge to Light

Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, G.C.

An introduction to the Scottish Rite's Degrees and symbolism, this book is the most popular exposition available, by one of the Rite's most articulate philosophers and writers. The 4th Edition of this classic work includes the changes introduced with the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual; the official Ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. Highly recommended by the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian.

Softbound version; illustrated. 343 pages.

Available as a Kindle book from Amazon.