Virginia Light

Newsletter of the Orient of Virginia

Volume XVIV, Issue 4 Winter 2026

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Sovereign Grand Inspector General
Orient of Virginia
Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33°, GC

My Brethren,

About one hundred members, spouses, and guests attended the Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia and celebrated its 102nd anniversary at the Caesars in Virginia Resort & Casino in Danville on September 27-29.

On Sunday night, September 27 we enjoyed a welcome reception with Tobacco Road BBQ.

On Monday morning, September 28 we had three special educational presentations by Brother R. Michael McKenney, 32º, KCCH, Deputy Grand Master about the Future of Freemasonry; by Brother Joseph H. Rhodes, 32º about Building Lodges That Last: Practical Tools for Masonic Leaders; and by Brother John P. Dameron, 32º, KCCH on the 30º Degree – Knight Kadosh or Knight of the White and Black Eagle. Saturday afternoon, we conducted the business of the conference, which included reports from the nine Valleys, recognition of the Letters Temporary for Chapter Rose Croix for the Valley of Shenandoah, remarks from the Grand Master, conducting the Necrology Service, the election and installation of officers for 2026, and remarks/updates from myself. Also, the Scottish Rite Foundation of Virginia conducted their Annual Meeting.

While we were conducting business, the Ladies enjoyed a luncheon and a Foliage and Flowers presentation entitled: A Fall Forever Class where they created wreaths with dried flowers.

Later that evening, we enjoyed the closing banquet, which featured the Artistic Stylings of Trevor Percario on Piano. The guest speaker was Illustrious Jack K. Lewis, 33º, Past Grand Master and Grand Secretary.

Tuesday morning, we held a Rite Care breakfast with special remarks from Caitlin Frank, MS CCC-SLP, Director of Clinical Education and Speech, Hearing, and Learning Services at Longwood University.

The Valley of Danville is to be commended for putting together a quality agenda consisting of educational programs, entertainment, and outstanding hospitality. I extend my appreciation to the Conference President, Illustrious W. A. Wells, III, 33º and the Host Committee for a job well done. To quote Illustrious Brother Wells, “the Conference has long been a place to strengthen the bonds of our Fraternity, exchange ideas, and enjoy the warm hospitality that has become a hallmark of this annual event.”

We look forward to next year’s Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia on September 24-26, 2027, in Newport News.

"If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are an excellent leader."

Dolly Parton

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Deadline for next issue:

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

Scottish Rite Conference Summary of Events

Scottish Rite Conference

Summary,

Takeaways,

Information

SGIG's Important Information

Strong support from universities for the summer clinics. Three members are currently attending the national clinic in San Diego. Future conferences are slated for Las Vegas, Dallas, and Charlotte.

Virginia Light publication edited by Right Worshipful Frey, 32º KCCH, received highly positive feedback. Electronic versions are actively distributed to every member of the Supreme Council.

The Orient finished the year with 3,378 members. While there was a gross loss of 117 members (2.98%), adjusting for uncontrollable losses resulted in a net gain of almost 1% (0.99%).

Keynote Speaker Most Worshipful Matthew Szmasoski Highlights

The Grand Master emphasized taking lessons from Henry Ford—providing standards, detailed role training, setting goals, and quality control. Do not throw members into leadership roles without teaching them the specific expectations of the job; formally document the unwritten responsibilities for all incoming officers.

To grow Valleys, meetings must offer more value than the member's alternative (e.g., sitting at home watching TV). "Value" is the primary key to retention of our membership.

Lodges must stop doing year-to-year budgets and shift to long-term five-year, ten-year, and twenty-year strategic goals.

Leadership emphasized abandoning negative attitudes and complaints. "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

Takeaways:

- Move away from annual budgeting; Valleys and Lodges need to draft 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year financial and strategic plans.
- Valleys should implement simple tech solutions mentioned during the conference (QR codes for donations, lobby TVs to showcase Masonic bodies, AI for formatting documents).
- Audit stated meetings to ensure they are providing genuine educational, social, or philanthropic value to justify members giving up their free time.
- If a Valley has fewer than 3 petitions, partner with neighboring Valleys for joint reunions rather than burning out volunteers for a single candidate.

Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia Summary

Alexandria Valley

Illustrious Peter Terrell 33o IGH,Valley Personal Representative
Mike Bible, 33o IGH, General Secretary
Refreshing their 10-year strategic plan (last done in 2017). Using AI for predictive analytics and mapping member zip codes around Symbolic Lodges to target engagement. Presented twenty-one scholarships.
Alexandria Fall Reunion - October 17 and 24
Alexandria Spring Reunion - April 17 and 24, 2027

Lynchburg Valley

Timothy Cornman, Venerable Master
Lynchburg and Roanoke Joint Fall Reunion October 24

Norfolk Valley

Illustrious Phil Taylor, 33° IGH, Valley Personal Representative
October 15: 50-Year Member Award and Teacher of the Year Ceremony
June 3, 2027: Right Care Golf Tournament at Riverfront Golf Course (ODU)

During the Summer Reunion conferring nine degrees (potentially adding the 24th Degree).

Newport News Valley

Dave Burkus 33°, Assistant Secretary / Incoming Education Officer
The medical equipment program is booming, projecting $800K–$900K in retail value distributed to over 3,500 customers this year. Adding a QR code drastically increased monetary donations.
October (weekends): Haunted House Fundraiser (Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays for ten nights)



Valley Summary

Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia Summary

Valley Summary

Portsmouth Valley

Illustrious Frankie Edmonson, 33° IGH, Valley Personal Representative
Illustrious Jack Goodwin, 33° IGH, is stepping down as Personal Representative after serving multiple terms. Illustrious Frankie Evans, 33° IGH has been appointed as his successor.
Randy Reed, 32° KCCH, Past Conference President
Connections working through Thursday morning coffee chats, Sunday afternoon "Fireside Chats" with pizza ovens/chili, "Bring a Master Mason" nights, and adding Masonic informational TV displays in building lobbies.
Earned the VMAP award for the 9th consecutive year. Awarded twenty-nine ROTC/JROTC medals.

Richmond Valley

Illustrious Terry Francis Hilton, 33° IGH, Valley Personal Representative
Illustrious Lambros George Deligan, 33° IGH, Valley Secretary
James Eric Creeks Jr., 32° KCCH, Valley Treasurer
Dwayne Eugene Cunningham, 32° KCCH, Venerable Master
Planning relocation of the Childhood Language Center to West Broad Street by purchaseing Tuckahoe Lodge property for a new Scottish Rite Temple (est. opening late October 2027).
Richmond Valley Spring Reunion April 10, 2027

Roanoke Valley

Roanoke and Lynchburg Joint Fall Reunion October 24

Shenandoah Valley

Charles R. G. Bennett Jr., 32°, Venerable Master
Michael Steven May – 32°, Shenandoah VMAP Lead
Brother Michael 32° leading the VMAP (Valley Membership Action Plan) initiative for the Shenandoah Valley.
Membership increased by 27% (from 24 to 33) to an impressive 67% stated meeting attendance.
Transitioning accounts to high-yield savings.
Petitioning Supreme Council for a Chapter of Rose Croix.
Shenandoah Valley Spring Reunion April 15, 2027

The First Thanksgiving...

Illustrious Joel Bundy

The story feels as familiar as the old sweater I pull out each fall when the weather turns cold. When Thanksgiving comes around on the fourth Thursday in November, that sweater is always in use at my house. The story is about the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the first Thanksgiving. We all learned it as kids, maybe even acted it out in a school play or drew a cornucopia for a class project. Here's how the story usually goes: The Mayflower carried Puritans escaping persecution in England, heading for the New World. They ended up far off course, and when they landed, they decided to form their own government, drafting and signing the Mayflower Compact in 1620. After a tough winter, with new friendships forming with the Wampanoag tribe, their chief Massasoit, and the English-speaking Squanto, there was a harvest festival with fifty surviving Pilgrims and ninety Wampanoag. The celebration lasted three days and included birds, fish, and "five deer."[1] This was the first Thanksgiving—or was it?

An article in the *Washingtonian* says the first Thanksgiving actually happened in Virginia, not Massachusetts.



Figure 1. Jean Leon Gerome Ferris's 1912 illustration, The First Thanksgiving, 1621.

Continued on page 7.

The First Thanksgiving...

The story is about the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the first Thanksgiving.

Continued from page 6.

An article in the *Washingtonian* says the first Thanksgiving actually happened in Virginia, not Massachusetts.[2] More than a year before the Pilgrims reached Plymouth, other English settlers landed at Berkeley Plantation on the James River, near what is now Richmond, after a tough two-and-a-half-month journey across the Atlantic. They arrived on December 4, 1619. With only old ship rations left, they ate ham and oysters from the area and decided that this day should "be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God."

Years later, even President Kennedy said this was an earlier Thanksgiving than the one in New England, so maybe Virginia can claim the first Thanksgiving in the New World—or can it?

Some people in Texas believe the first Thanksgiving in the New World occurred under the leadership of Juan de Oñate y Salazar, a controversial conquistador.[3] Oñate, born in what is now Mexico, worked for the Spanish crown. In March 1598, he led about 500 colonists and soldiers north across the Chihuahuan Desert. They faced days of rain, then extreme dryness. For fifty days, they marched, running out of food and water, surviving only on sparse plants and roots. When they finally reached the Rio Grande River, they found relief from exhaustion and near death. After recovering, Oñate and some missionaries held Mass and gave thanks, declaring the land "drained by the Great River to be the possession of King Philip II of Spain." They celebrated with roasted meat and fish. Was this the first Thanksgiving in the New World—maybe?

When I was growing up in Jacksonville, Florida, I remember watching "Footprints in the Florida Sands" on a big black-and-white TV in elementary school, learning about Juan Ponce de Leon and other Spanish explorers. Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles arrived in Florida in 1565, claimed it for Spain, and named the area St. Augustine after spotting land on August 28, the feast day of St. Augustine. After landing, the Spanish held Mass and gave thanks, which is now believed to be the first Catholic Mass on American soil. The local Timucuan tribe joined the Spanish for the feast. What did they eat? Probably salted pork and garbanzo bean stew, along with local grains, corn, squash (the three sisters for gardeners), and some local game.[4] Was this finally the first American Thanksgiving? Not quite!

2. Matt Blitz, "The First Thanksgiving Took Place in Virginia, Not Massachusetts," Washingtonian, November 18, 2015,
3. Mike Kingston, "The First Thanksgiving?" Texas Almanac, January 1, 1857, 4. Meghan Powell, "If You Want to Be Historically Accurate This Holiday, Serve Alligator," Jacksonville History Center, November 17, 2014,
4. Meghan Powell, "If You Want to Be Historically Accurate This Holiday, Serve Alligator," Jacksonville History Center, November 17, 2014,

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The First Thanksgiving...

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If you travel forty miles north to my hometown, you'll find Fort Caroline, a wooden fort on a bluff overlooking the ocean. This is where French Huguenot Protestants, led by explorer René Goulaine de Laudonnière, landed on June 22, 1564.[5] Once again, the friendly Timucuan tribe welcomed the newcomers, and together they celebrated on June 30, offering a "psalm of Thanksgiving unto God."[6] Since the French had run out of food, most of the meal came from the natives and included deer, waterfowl, berries, oysters, and smoked alligator. And for anyone wondering, alligator really does taste like chicken.



Figure 2. Scanned from Histoire de la Marine, de la voile à l'atome, Philippe Masson Charles Lavauzelle editor.

As a little boy, I remember traveling with my family to Saint Augustine, Florida, and visiting the Castillo de San Marcos. After dinner—maybe alligator, but probably red snapper—we would watch *Cross and Sword* in the outdoor amphitheater, a play about the tragic fate of the French Huguenots at Fort Caroline.[7] Back then, I couldn't understand why people would hurt others because of their religion, beliefs, or race. I still can't. We need to work toward a sense of balance and understanding, especially within ourselves.

All these stories share a sense of discovery and remind us that life's journey often means stepping into the unknown and realizing how much we rely on others. Sometimes, we form lifelong bonds with people who are different from us. Our daughters have shown us the importance of "Friendsgiving" in their lives. It takes some of the pressure off tradition and focuses on spending time with people who have become special to us. It's about celebrating the joy and love that come from these friendships. In our home, we now celebrate both a traditional Thanksgiving and Friendsgiving in our own way.

We have so much to be thankful for in this wonderful country. While we can learn from the early settlers, I believe the real lesson comes from the Wampanoag and Timucuan tribes, who shared what they had with strangers. This reminds me of a quote from Mother Teresa about what truly matters: "At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by 'I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was naked, and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.'"

[5]. National Huguenot Society, (Perhaps) the First Thanksgiving (self-pub., n.d.),
[6]. Cathy Salustri, "The First Thanksgiving, Florida, and History We Bury," Great Florida Road Trip, November 27, 2025,
[7]. Paul Green, "Cross and Sword," Concord Theatricals, n.d.,

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I am grateful to celebrate the richness of your friendship. I am thankful for my family, who loves me even when I am not easy to love. I am thankful to be here with you, believing that together we can overcome challenges, hoping our children will inherit a better world, and trusting that our love for each other can be truly meaningful.

The First Thanksgiving...

If you travel to... Fort Caroline, a wooden fort on a bluff overlooking the ocean. This is where French Huguenot Protestants, led by explorer René Goulaine de Laudonnière, landed on June 22, 1564.

Continued from page 8.

With much love from my family to yours. I am grateful to celebrate the richness of your friendship. I am thankful for my family, who loves me even when I am not easy to love. I am thankful to be here with you, believing that together we can overcome challenges, hoping our children will inherit a better world, and trusting that our love for each other can be truly meaningful.

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Thanksgiving
Fellowship

The Triad of Builders: Why Freemasons Made Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif the First Three Most Excellent Grand Masters

Illustrious Fredrick R. Dixion 33° IGH



Let's talk about our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and, Hiram Abif. Specifically, the reasons for selecting them as such and the leadership they provide to this day.

I'll begin with a *Manual of Work* note which states they anciently represented the three pillars denominated wisdom, strength and beauty. Mankind has revered those three qualities forever: in an edifice, a man and a group. Thus, they were naturally included in Freemasonry from its founding.

Regarding the importance of the three qualities, think about ancient man, cave men. Even they possessed wisdom, strength and beauty. They had sense of enough to come in out of the rain. Ergo, they wisely decided to move into caves and other places affording protection from the elements, beasts of the field and their enemies. Having a good idea is one thing, but execution of such a plan requires strength. A cave must be made habitable, albeit unrecognizable by our standards. The fire pit area should be surrounded by stones and defensive structures at the cave's entrance are desirable. Plus, wood and other materials were required for rudimentary beds, racks and other furnishing. Last, but not least, maintaining adequate food, firewood and other consumables took a lot of muscle.



King Solomon

That leaves beauty and we find that as well in what is now called cave art. Paintings of animals, celestial bodies and more, drawn by cave men abound. They weren't necessary to make the cave drier, warmer or more sanitary. Nor were they edible. Yet they drew them just the same. Why? Maybe religious, commemorative or just plain inspirational. A picture of the Sun or the stars reminds one of the universes and perhaps his place in it, even though he might have been incapable of describing it. Seeing an animal painted on the wall may have reminded them of great past hunts or raised their hopes for future hunting. Such art probably kept our ancestors in a better frame of mind: inspirational, per se. Fostering thoughts that life was more than mere survival. Thereby separating them from animals.

Knowing that wisdom, strength and beauty had been important since time immemorial naturally made those qualities important to our founders. After all they were creating speculative Masonry, a philosophy meant for good men. How to incorporate them into this

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"So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees. . . "and a whole lot more to build the Temple; and, . . . there was peace between Solomon and Hiram and they two made a league together."

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Hiram King of Tyre

new Fraternity was probably quickly decided from the lessons taught them since boyhood; and, a major source of those lessons probably came from the King James version of the *Bible*.

The King James version of the *Bible* has been continuously in print since 1611. Therefore, the men who founded English Freemasonry in 1717 and their parents had grown up with it. They were predominately Protestant and likely considered it the supreme guide for one's conduct.

Connecting the three qualities with the *Bible* was pretty easy. Here are a few Biblical references about King Solomon: 1 King 4:29, "And God gave Solomon wisdom . . ." and 1 King 6, " . . . he began to build the house of the Lord."

Now to Hiram King of Tyre in the *Bible*: 1 Kings 5:10, "So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees. . . "and a whole lot more to build the Temple; and, 5:12, ". . . there was peace between Solomon and Hiram and they two made a league together." Hence, bonding among great men, exhibiting leadership by cooperation vice contention.



Hiram Abiff

Then there was Hiram Abif, an enigmatic figure, whom we can read about in 2 Chronicles 13, ". . . a skilled man, who has understanding, Hiram-Abi, [sic] the son of a woman . . . He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze . . . crimson fabrics . . . engraving . . . execute any design that may be assigned him, . . ." Did he really exist? You decide, but someone or a composite character like him was certainly skilled in beautiful works. Therefore, garnering the recommendation above which came from Hiram King of Tyre to King Solomon and strengthening the bond between those men. Personifying them as superb mortal examples of wisdom, strength and beauty. Hence a triad exhibiting leadership by civil collaboration was created. Not harsh nor dictatorial, but "who can best work and best agree" as our ritual states.

Knowing the three great qualities and having Biblical representatives of them was good, but now what? I think they considered the world around them. Specifically, the guilds or Lodges of operative Masons who had long built castles, abbeys and other noble structures in Europe. Among the most noble edifices they erected were majestic cathedrals. Immediately bringing King Solomon to mind. Furthermore, the fact that some of our founders already were "accepted" as speculative Masons in those Lodges made it a cinch.

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The Triad of Builders: Why Freemasons Made Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif the First Three Most Excellent Grand Masters

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Thus, they had the three venerable human qualities, historic individuals to emulate and an existing organization to make good men better. The premise being that this combination had long been successful in building temporal edifices and that it was just as important for spiritual edifices. Expressly, to guide men in the construction of that moral edifice which each makes of himself. Let's go further. Everything below this line was created by Google Artificial Intelligence in about 30 seconds.

In the rich tapestry of Masonic ritual, allegory, and symbol, no narrative carries more foundational weight than the building of King Solomon's Temple. Historically and philosophically, Speculative Freemasonry traces its moral landscape through the operative tools of ancient stonemasons, transforming physical architecture into a blueprint for character development. At the absolute apex of this allegorical framework stands a governing triad: King Solomon of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif. Within the context of Symbolic Lodge Masonry and advanced degrees, these three figures are universally recognized and revered as our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters. This designation is neither accidental nor merely historical; it serves as a foundational pillar for the craft's initiatory lessons, structural hierarchy, and philosophical worldview.

The elevation of these three specific men to the rank of Grand Masters establishes a crucial trinity of leadership that reflects the core tenets of Freemasonry. To understand why the Fraternity selected these figures, one must look past the literal history and delve deeply into the esoteric symbolism they collectively represent. Freemasonry is fundamentally a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. In this system, the physical construction of Mount Moriah's temple represents the spiritual construction of the individual human soul. A temple cannot be built by authority alone, nor by raw materials alone, nor solely by a master's design. It requires a perfect convergence of all three elements. Consequently, the first three Grand Masters represent a perfect triad of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty—divine attributes translated into human leadership.

King Solomon of Israel is traditionally celebrated as the primary catalyst and central figure of the Masonic narrative. As the ruler who received the divine mandate to build a permanent house for the Ark of the Covenant, Solomon represents the quality of Wisdom within the Lodge. In Masonic tradition, wisdom is the capacity to conceive a noble plan, to perceive divine truth, and to govern with absolute justice and equilibrium. Solomon is not merely a historical monarch in the eyes of a Mason; he is the archetypal master who sits in the East, the source of light and spiritual direction. His role as Grand Master establishes the principle that all great undertakings must begin with a clear, divinely inspired vision and an orderly governance.

Furthermore, Solomon's placement as the first Grand Master underscores the Masonic commitment to order and constitutional authority. Under his rule, the chaotic forces of a

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The third vertex of this Masonic trinity is Hiram Abif, a figure whose name is synonymous with the very heart of Master Mason ritual. Distinct from his sovereign namesake, Hiram Abif was a widow's son from the tribe of Naphtali, sent by the King of Tyre to serve as the master artisan and chief architect of the Temple.

The Triad of Builders: Why Freemasons Made Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif the First Three Most Excellent Grand Masters

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developing nation were unified toward a singular, sacred purpose. For Speculative Masons, this mirrors the internal process of subduing passions and aligning the discordant aspects of the human ego under the rule of reason and moral law. Solomon's wisdom was manifested not in isolation, but in his ability to gather resources, form alliances, and create an infrastructure where thousands of craftsmen could work in harmony without discord. By honoring Solomon as a Most Excellent Grand Master, Freemasonry emphasizes that intellectual and spiritual wisdom must guide all labor within the craft.

While Solomon possessed the divine wisdom to conceive the Temple, the physical realization of that vision required immense material strength, logistical mastery, and cross-border cooperation. This vital element was supplied by Hiram, the King of Tyre. In the Masonic hierarchy, King Hiram represents Strength, occupying a position of equal structural importance alongside Solomon. Historically, Tyre was a powerful maritime empire possessing the vast cedar forests of Lebanon and unparalleled wealth in metallurgical resources. By entering into a solemn compact with King Solomon, Hiram of Tyre provided the raw materials the financial stability, and the naval logistics necessary to sustain an architectural project of unprecedented magnitude.

In the allegorical structure of the Lodge, the Strength represented by Hiram of Tyre is not merely physical or military power; it is the moral strength of fidelity, support, and steadfast execution. He represents the unwavering stability required to see a grand design through to its completion. Without Hiram of Tyre, Solomon’s grand designs would have remained abstract ideals on a drafting board. Masons honor him as a Grand Master because he exemplifies the absolute necessity of tangible action, resource management, and external support in the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. He reminds the craft that spiritual aspirations must be anchored by practical execution and supported by enduring, unbreakable commitments.



King Solumon, Hiram Abiff, and Hiram King Tyre

The third vertex of this Masonic trinity is Hiram Abif, a figure whose name is synonymous with the very heart of Master Mason ritual. Distinct from his sovereign namesake, Hiram Abif was a widow's son from the tribe of Naphtali, sent by the King of Tyre to serve as the master artisan and chief architect of the Temple. In the symbolic language of Freemasonry, Hiram Abif represents Beauty. This is not beauty in a shallow or purely aesthetic sense, but rather the divine proportion,

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exquisite craftsmanship, and spiritual symmetry that elevates a structure from a mere pile of stones into a sacred space. He was possessed of unique skill in engraving, working precious metals, and weaving fine fabrics, making him uniquely qualified to adorn the house of God.

Hiram Abif's role as the third Most Excellent Grand Master is perhaps the most emotionally resonant for Masons, as he represents the direct link between the ruling authorities and the working craftsmen. He is the operative master who translates the king's decrees into daily tasks upon the trestleboard. Esoterically, Hiram Abif represents the soul's creative spark, the artistic and moral refinement that transforms raw human nature —the rough ashlars—into polished, perfect stones fitted for the Great Architect's temple. His ultimate sacrifice in defense of his integrity forms the central climax of the Master Mason degree, sealing his legacy as the ultimate exemplar of fidelity, duty, and spiritual beauty.

The profound reason why Freemasons made these three figures our first Three Most Excellent Grand Masters lies in their collective synergy. Separately, each man represents an admirable virtue, but together, they form an indissoluble trinity that mirrors the nature of the cosmos and the internal composition of a complete human being. In Masonic Lodges, this is visually and philosophically mirrored by the three principal officers: the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden, and the Junior Warden. Just as Solomon, Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abif ruled the craft during the construction of the Temple, these three officers rule the modern Lodge, ensuring that Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty guide every meeting and every moral lesson.

This tripartite leadership model serves as a perpetual reminder that spiritual growth is a multi-dimensional endeavor. Wisdom without strength is impotent, unable to manifest its noble designs in the physical world. Strength without wisdom is dangerous and destructive, leading to tyranny or chaotic ruin. And both wisdom and strength, if devoid of beauty, result in a cold, utilitarian existence lacking inspiration, art, and soul. By celebrating all three as equal Grand Masters, Freemasonry teaches its initiates that a balanced life requires the cultivation of all three attributes in equal measure. A Mason must learn to plan with wisdom, execute with strength, and adorn his life with the beauty of holiness and virtue.

In conclusion, the decision of early Masonic ritualists to designate

King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif as our first Three Most Excellent Grand Masters was a masterstroke of allegorical teaching. This legendary triad provides the craft with an enduring framework for understanding leadership, morality, and spiritual architecture. They stand as timeless symbols of the divine attributes that every Mason is

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By honoring these three Grand Masters, Freemasonry ensures that its members remain anchored to a profound truth: that the ultimate temple we build is not made with hands, but is an eternal monument of character, built upon foundations that time itself cannot destroy.

The Triad of Builders: Why Freemasons Made Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif the First Three Most Excellent Grand Masters

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charged to cultivate within the temple of his own heart. Through their cooperation, they proved that great achievements. require diverse talents bound together by a common, sacred purpose.

As modern Speculative Masons sit in their Lodges today, they look back to this ancient triad not merely as historical kings and craftsmen from antiquity, but as living principles that continue to govern the craft. The legacy of Solomon's wisdom, Tyre's strength, and Abif's beauty remains woven into the very fabric of every degree, every lecture, and every moral charge. By honoring these three Grand Masters, Freemasonry ensures that its members remain anchored to a profound truth: that the ultimate temple we build is not made with hands, but is an eternal monument of character, built upon foundations that time itself cannot destroy.

Well Brethren, that i about all I have to say. Are there any questions? If not, thanks again for this opportunity and please continue to venerate our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters.

The profound reason why Freemasons made these three figures our first Three Most Excellent Grand Masters lies in their collective synergy.

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Presentation Volumne
Bible King James Version
Bible Concordance, New World Schofield Edition
Freemasons Guide and Compendium, Bernard E. Jones

Artifical Intelligence assisted



EMPATHY

Barry A. Mensh, 32°

Psychology Today defines EMPATHY as the ability to recognize, understand, and share the thoughts and feelings of another person, animal, or fictional character. Developing empathy is crucial for establishing relationships and behaving compassionately. It involves experiencing another person's point of view, rather than just one's own, and enables prosocial or helping behaviors that comes from within, internal, rather than external, as we are taught in Lodge, not forced or contrived. Freemasonry is inherently empathetic, by virtue of our very teachings, which foster Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, the "Golden Rule", and the conciliation of true friendship among those who might otherwise remain at a perpetual distance, empathy helps us cooperate with others, build lifelong friendships, make moral decisions, and intervene when we see others being bullied or mistreated.

In The Voice of Freemasonry, Issue 2, 2019, MW Charbel T. Fahad, of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, speaks of empathy in his Message with several allusions of profound Masonic significance to all of us, as he says: Trees are used to symbolize empathy for multiple reasons. First, they provide shade from the oppressive summer heat. In Sonnet 12, for instance, Shakespeare speaks of how in summer "lofty trees... from heat did canopy the herd," or in other words, providing protection with shade.

There is also George Pope Morris' 1837 poem (and later popular song) "Woodman Spare That Tree," in which the poet writes of how "in youth it sheltered me... that old familiar tree." The aged oak of this latter poem furnishes a vehicle for empathy both by way of the shade it provides, as well as the comfort of familiarity, for trees also can serve as living landmarks, both personal and public.



Finally, in his *Handbook for German Freemasons*, Hermann H. Gerdes explores the meaning of the Yggdrasil tree found throughout Scandinavian lore. This sacred and holy tree's branches "rise to the highest heavens and its roots reach down to the nether-most regions of the eternal darkness of earth.

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As Masons, we must unfailingly strive daily to "walk in someone else's shoes," to "see how it feels", and to realize that WE, as members of the world's greatest Fraternal society, have within us, if we so choose - and are "Obligated to" - to promote EMPATHY in our daily transactions with mankind!

EMPATHY

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Freemasonry is inherently empathetic, by virtue of our very teachings, which foster Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, the "Golden Rule", and the conciliation of true friendship among those who might otherwise remain at a perpetual distance, empathy helps us cooperate with others, build lifelong friendships, make moral decisions, and intervene when we see others being bullied or mistreated.



Its branches grow from generation to generation, bestowing blessings, life, and beauty to Humanity." Gerdes suggests that, like the Yggdrasil, empathy and moral conviction come from knowing Freemasonry has been passed down through the ages, rooted in the stability and continuity of eternal truths revealed by the Grand Architect of the Universe… from "time immemorial."

Recent local and global events have devastated our sense of normalcy, of how good and decent people "should" act in the face of tragedy, hate, and indifference. Of course, it is easy to simply allocate to our consciousness to a term known as psychic numbing, a concept created by University of Oregon psychologist Paul Slovic… it describes how tragedies turn into abstractions in our minds, and how abstractions are easily attenuated and even ignored. We all begin to sense a feeling of helplessness; we feel more and more powerless to help, so we consequently shut down those feelings of EMPATHY that we know darned well we should inculcate!

As Masons, we must unfailingly strive daily to "walk in someone elses shoes," to "see how it feels", and to realize that WE, as members of the world's greatest Fraternal society, have within us, if we so choose - and are "Obligated to" - to promote EMPATHY in our daily transactions with mankind!

"A Date Which Will Live in Infamy..."

Illustrious Joel Bundy, M. D.

I remember a good Brother and friend breaking bread and sharing old Navy stories, mine as a Navy Physician, his from traveling the world. He was in Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and remembers it well. It was 1980, and it was time to re-enlist or go home. Brother Gus was stationed at NAS Barbers Point in Honolulu, and he and his division officer headed to Pearl Harbor on a beautiful, sunny summer day. He and other strangers boarded a Navy boat, then stood at the USS Arizona Memorial. Oil still bubbled to the surface from her broken hull, just as it had for the four decades prior. As the breeze moved across the water and caressed his skin, he raised his right hand and repeated these words, "…I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States…," and with that, headed off to Keflavik, Iceland, on his twenty-eight year journey in the U.S. Navy.



Figure 1. The burning wreckage of the U.S. Navy battleship USS Arizona (BB-39) at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. December 7, 1941. National Archives Catalog. Public Domain.

Thirty-nine years earlier, on a typical Sunday morning at 0755 on December 7, 1941, the men of the USS Arizona (BB-39) first heard the air alarms. Type 91 Model 5 bombs fell within five minutes.[1] The Arizona survived the first wave. With the second wave, a No. 80 bomb was released from a height of 10,480 ft., passing through four decks before hitting a powder magazine. The men had seven seconds left: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. 1,747 lbs of bomb exploded, destroying most of the internal structure of the Arizona and breaking the battleship in half. 1,177 men died as the ship sank to the floor of the harbor.[2]

Appearing before Congress the following morning, President Roosevelt spoke to a nation declaring, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy…"[3]

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Patients began to pour in by 0900, and within three hours the hospital had 546 casualties and 313 dead. By the end of the day, this 250-bed hospital had received 960 casualties.

"A Date Which Will Live in Infamy..."

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147th General Hospical Pearl Harbor.

Many of us remember hearing of that day and the devastation of the Pacific Fleet. What isn't often told is of the brave nurses and doctors who were there. Like the hospital where I worked, there was another 250-bed hospital: Naval Hospital Pearl Harbor. It was also one of the best of the twenty-one Navy hospitals in operation at the time.[4] After the first bombs fell, leadership transitioned all ambulatory patients into empty buildings, or one of five tents set up outside. Patients began to pour in by 0900, and within three hours the hospital had 546 casualties and 313 dead. By the end of the day, this 250-bed hospital had received 960 casualties.[5]

Lieutenant Ruth Erickson, Nurse Corps, USN, remembers. The nursing staff had recently increased to thirty. It was her day off, but the chief nurse called her in and told the nurses having breakfast to put on their uniforms at once. This was real! She remembers the first patient "with a large opening in his abdomen and bleeding profusely," who died within the hour. They worked nonstop until late into the night, slept for a few hours, then again all day, day following day for a week. Compound fractures and penetrating abdominal wounds were common, but it was the burns that were truly legion. Many of the men jumped into the water to survive the fires on deck, but the water was thick with oil and its own fires. Nurse Erickson described the tropical dress as T-shirts and shorts, and that the burns began where the shorts ended. [6]

U.S. Army nurse Myrtle Watson also remembers. "I very distinctly remember one young sergeant from Wheeler Air Base (good looking youngster), and I could see from his eyes he was trying to get my attention," she said. "And he was bleeding so profusely I didn't know how to check the wounds, he was so bandaged up from the operating room, across his abdomen and chest. And the mattresses were very thin and I put a basin under there; it was dripping through the mattress. And I asked him what I could do for him. And he beckoned across the ward, he wanted me to go see his buddy. Even with life-threatening injuries they were more concerned about their buddies than themselves. Well, while I was checking his dressings and seeing what I could do to check the bleeding, he looked down at my hands. Well, on the night of December 6, I had given myself a manicure and put some light nail polish on. And he could only speak in little more than a whisper and I held my ear to his mouth. And he said, 'Who ever heard of a lieutenant wearing nail polish in the middle of a war?' And I did what I could for him and went across to see his buddy. And when I went back to him, he had stopped breathing. And I cried, it just seemed so unfair."[7]

The men had seven seconds left: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. 1,747 lbs of bomb exploded, destroying most of the internal structure of the Arizona and breaking the battleship in half. 1,177 men died as the ship sank to the floor of the harbor.

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"A Date Which Will Live in Infamy..."

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Yes, the doctors and nurses were busy, as was the priest. It was truly all hands-on deck. They were heroes, quietly doing the work they were trained for, saving lives, easing suffering, and giving us vivid examples to emulate as we strive to do the same today. May we remember those who have fallen with great solemnity. With this in mind, let us also treasure those here with us today and nurture the friendships we have. We should remember that our lives are a brief, brief candle. Memento mori.



USN Solace Hospital Ship at Pearl Harbor.

Endnotes

1. "Pearl Harbor: The Bombs of the Second Wave," Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, March 14, 2024, https://www.pearlharboraviationmuseum.org/news/blog-archives/the-bombs-of-the-second-wave/, sec. The Second Wave.

2. John F. De Virgilio, "Seven Seconds to Infamy," U.S. Naval Institute, December 1997, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1997/december/seven-seconds-infamy.

3. "Speech by Franklin D. Roosevelt, New York (Transcript)," The Library of Congress, Library of Congress, n.d., https://www.loc.gov/resource/afc1986022.afc1986022_ms2201/?st=text, para. 2.

4. "Pearl Harbor Navy Medical Activities," Naval History and Heritage Command, n.d., https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/p/pearl-harbor-navy-medical-activities.html, sec. Navy Medical Department Preparedness, 1941.

5. "Medical First Responders Remember Pearl Harbor," DVIDS, December 7, 2011, https://www.dvidshub.net/news/81007/medical-first-responders-remember-pearl-harbor.

6. Ruth Erickson, "Pearl Harbor: Oral Histories 1," History Navy, n.d., https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/education/educational-resources/the-date-that-lives-in-infamy--pearl-harbor--high-school-/this-is-not-a-drill/oral-histories/oral-histories-1.html.

7. "Pearl Harbor Nurses: The Women Who Cared for the Wounded," Pearl Harbor Warbirds, November 8, 2023, https://pearlharborwarbirds.com/pearl-harbor-nurses/, sec. Myrtle Watson.

May we remember those who have fallen with great solemnity. With this in mind, let us also treasure those here with us today and nurture the friendships we have.

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"A Date Which Will Live in Infamy..."

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USS Arizona explosion.

"…I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States…,"

Reason, Intuition, and Freemasonry

Brian Walaszczky, 32°

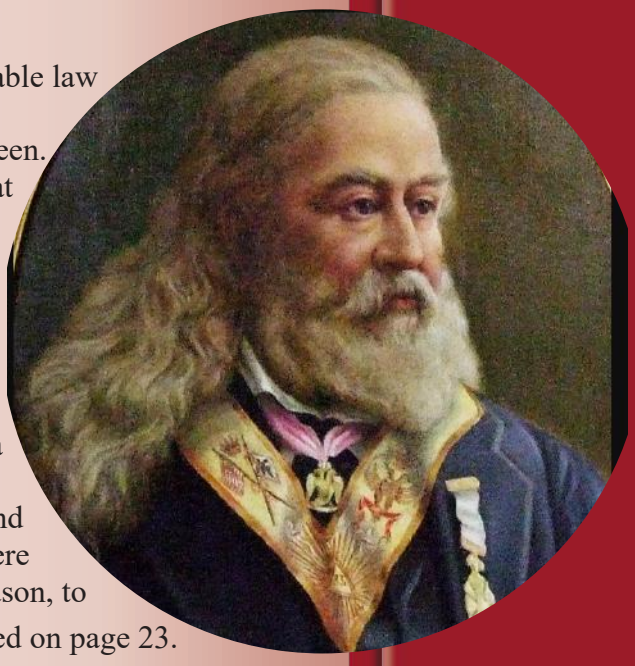
There have been many philosophical discussions about the interaction between reason and intuition and the relative value of each.



Immanual Kant

The German Philosopher Immanuel Kant said that "all human knowledge thus begins with intuitions, proceeds thence to concepts, and ends with ideas." *In Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike writes that, "Socrates believed, like Heraclitus, in a universal reason pervading all things and all minds, and consequently revealing itself in ideas… He believed true wisdom to be an attainable idea, and the moral convictions of the mind, those eternal instincts of temperance, conscientiousness, and justice, implanted in it by the gods, could not deceive, if rightly interpreted."

Our intuitive thoughts provide instinctive wisdom towards this universal reason, the truth pervading all things. Intuition can provide an innate feeling of right and wrong, love and hate, and universal morality. All of these are moral principles displayed through the Craft's archetypal symbolism and allegories, which transcend time, religion, and culture. Masonry's teachings may be studied and understood as part of a universal reason and divine will. The light obtained from the lessons of the Craft form the edifice of the mind's temple that every Freemason is urged to develop using his own intuition and reasoning.

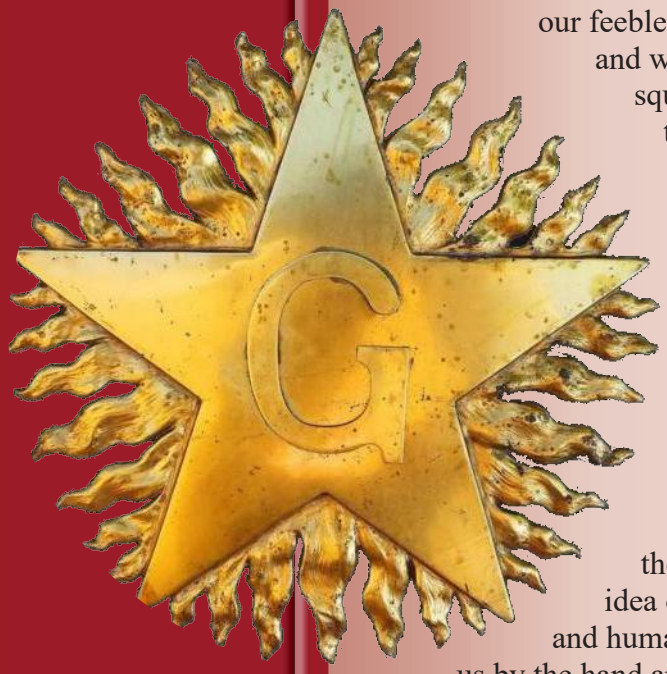


Pike notes, "the absolute is the very necessity of being, the immutable law of reason and of truth… God himself is not without a reason of existence. He does not exist accidentally. He could not, not have been. He can exist only in virtue of a supreme and inevitable reason. That reason, then, is the absolute; for it is in it we must believe, if we would that our faith should have a reasonable and solid basis… Saint Thomas Aquinas said, a thing is not just because God wills it, but God wills it because it is just. If he had deduced all the consequences of this fine thought, he would have discovered the true Philosopher's Stone; the magical elixir, to convert all the trials of the world into golden mercies… therefore, according to the idea of Saint Thomas, the moral laws are the enactments of the divine will, only because they are the decisions of the absolute wisdom and reason, and the revelations of the divine nature… Faith begins where reason sinks exhausted. Beyond the human reason is the divine reason, to

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Reason, Intuition, and Freemasonry

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our feebleness the great absurdity, the infinite absurd, which confounds us and which we believe. For the Master, the compass of faith is above the square of reason; but both rest upon the Holy Scriptures and combine to form the blazing star of truth."

Pike explains that the blazing star of truth is the union of faith and reason. Faith is said to be conviction of truth without tangible proof. One could interpret this as knowing without knowing why, a blind trust, which could translate to divine intuition.

You may not have proof, but you know deep within you that it is right. This intuition harmonized with reason forms the blazing star providing light to the Lodge. Reason may lead to logical proof, but intuition sparks the intrinsic understanding of the absolute with faith. Intuition may be the "Eureka!" moment of an idea or answer that seemingly appears out of nowhere. When reason and human understanding is exhausted, intuition gives way for faith to take us by the hand and guide us through the darkness when we are blind. Thus, one should trust their instincts and fear no danger when intuition is their guide.

You may not have proof, but you know deep within you that it is right. This intuition harmonized with reason forms the blazing star providing light to the Lodge.

Intuition has always guided humans in the face of danger and darkness. It has been called the sixth sense or the third eye. Intuition serves as a divine, internal instinct that gives us fear, faith, and hope among other things. It warns us of danger and guides the way in the darkness with our innate feelings. Gavin De Becker wrote a book titled the *Gift of Fear*. In his book, De Becker elaborates on how intuition and the gift of fear allows us to avoid dangerous situations. De Becker provides examples of when victims innately knew danger was afoot. He discusses scenarios and situations where intuition prevented or would have prevented one from danger. An example of this where a woman gets into an elevator with a man she intuitively felt was dangerous. Although she had a gut feeling she should not enter, she did so anyways because she did not want to seem rude having the elevator door close and not entering. These types of situations can lead to assaults, rapes, and other dangerous events that should have been avoided by following our intuition. He writes "you have the gift of a brilliant internal guardian that stands ready to warn you of hazards and guide you through risky situations."

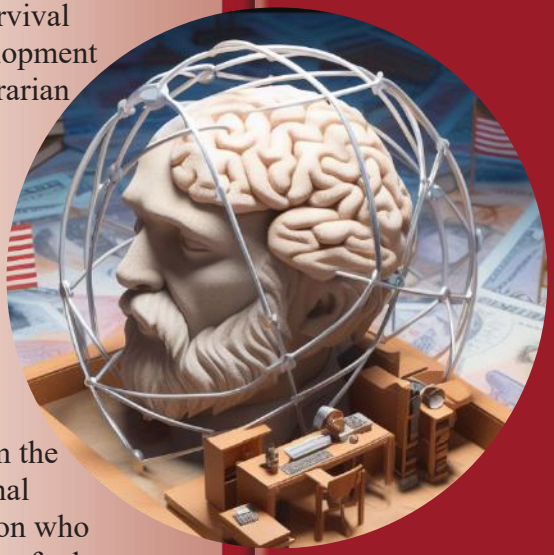
While intuition has always been vital to keeping us safe in survival situations, cultural bias, the phenomenon of interpreting and judging phenomena by standards inherent to one's own culture can also lead us astray. For instance, think of the role intuition plays in your daily life. Every time you meet someone your intuition makes an instant judgment on the person's character. You intuitively make judgements about whether or not the person is

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Reason, Intuition, and Freemasonry

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trustworthy, intelligent, honorable or dangerous, and these initial intuitive impressions are long lasting. The problem is that these insights are as often wrong as they are right, particularly when we judge people on superficial characteristics rather than on their intellect or moral worth.



As humans evolved from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, the primitive goal of survival lessoned, and reason played an increasingly more important role in the development and understanding of ourselves and society. Then, as we evolved from an agrarian to an industrial society, empiricism, experimentation, observation, and the scientific method led to technological advances that transformed the way we live. Despite these transformative inventions, cultural, religious, and other societal biases – based on fanatical reasoning – have persisted, and these judgments have skewed our inherent intuition and moral compasses.

Freemasons benefit from the use of both intuition and reason in their pursuit to become better men, so how can we better integrate the two? Freemasons are freethinkers and believe that knowledge should be grounded in facts, scientific inquiry, and logic. The application of reason involves freedom from the intellectually limiting effects of confirmation bias, cognitive bias, conventional wisdom, popular culture, prejudice, and sectarianism. A freethinker is a person who forms his own ideas and opinions rather than unquestionably accepting those of other people. Reason is the power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by a process of logic. It is how we try to understand and explain the cause of an event. The use of reason allows us to make informed decisions and avoid hasty reactions.

However, it also is true that sometimes reason leads to overthinking and inhibition of action. In some cases, reacting to a gut feeling, or intuition, may provide a better outcome than by the analytical process of reason, especially in situations requiring an instantaneous reaction. Intuition can pave the way through obstacles when one cannot find a clear way forward. Intuition is the power or faculty of attaining direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference. Basically, it is knowing without knowing why you know. Intuition manifests as instantaneous feelings, reactions, and insights. Thus, as we learn from the Royal Secret, the use of reason and intuition should be balanced. A Mason must develop the valuable skill of finding equilibrium and harmony in our application of both modes of thinking, using the strength of both intuition and reason, but neither to intemperance nor excess.

In summation, a Mason understands that an intuitive idea can be developed by reason and logic into the search for more light. An intuitive spark may lead an initiate on a pilgrim's journey where he utilizes reason to continuously discover knowledge and wisdom. Properly joining the two forces keeps Masons from jumping to conclusions based on

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It is the lack of an equilibrium between intuition and reason that leads to fanaticism, despotism, intolerance, suppression of thought, and superstition, which in turn has led to the degradation of cultures, the destruction of books and temples, and many other atrocities.

Reason, Intuition, and Freemasonry

Continued from page 24.

biases or societal norms, and explains why men of all cultures and faiths can meet on the level and be called Brother, and how Masons who hold different viewpoints can have civil discussions on difficult subjects. It is the lack of an equilibrium between intuition and reason that leads to fanaticism, despotism, intolerance, suppression of thought, and superstition, which in turn has led to the degradation of cultures, the destruction of books and temples, and many other atrocities.

In summation, a Mason understands that an intuitive idea can be developed by reason and logic into the search for more light. An intuitive spark may lead an initiate on a pilgrim's journey where he utilizes reason to continuously discover knowledge and wisdom.

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Word Puzzle
Historic Women

F N R P W T Y M V C X W Q Z O P R W J N P C
S Y B I L L U D I N G T O N F G I L O E W A
A U W R U W Q T Y B B M E X X P W E A G H T
N I Q E C L A U D E T T E C O L V I N E M H
D G U M I R T I I J O C H E B E D T O E V E
R H C A L E H E D Y L A M A R E T Y F R W R
A L L A L C A C L E S T H E R W I W A V C I
D K E L E X L V W F S K R A P A S O R E H N
A B O H B N I V E K D Q M R W M Z X C S I E
Y M P I A N H A T S H E P S U T W E F A M T
O S A L L Y R I D E A Q V A N D E B O R A H
C U T M L Q S M L K L Y U R E Q C T D A G E
O S R E H C T A H T T E R A G R A M M H D G
N A A E D A Z F G P Y T E H K L O P O B A R
N N I G O L D A M E I R W V S Q F T T R L E
E B O E L Q U E E N E L I Z A B E T H E E A
R A P W L E H C A R M B N C C X Q R E E N T
E N C U Y R A M E R E B E K A H E T R D E H
D T O H P P A S T R E B E S G V D Y T L Q I
W H V S A C A G A W E A W A A N M I E O M O
Q O N Y R Y N M B A T H S H E B A O R V G P
Z N M U T J Y E N K C N I P A Z I L E E H L
X Y T S O J O U R N E R T R U T H A S P L N
V A L E N T I N A T E R E S H K O V A X E D

Word Puzzle - Words

Answers are to be found on page 28.

ATHALIAH
BATHSHEBA
CATHERINE THE GREAT
CLAUDETTE COLVIN
CLEOPATRA
DEBORAH
DOLLY PARTON
ELIZA PINCKNEY
ESTHER
EVE
GOLDAMEIR
HATSHEPSUT
HEDY LAMAR
JOAN OF ARC
JOCHEBED
LUCILLE BALL
MARY
MARGARET THATCHER
MAGDALENE
MOTHER TERESA
QUEEN ELIZABETH
RACHEL
REBEKAH
ROSA PARKS
SACAGAWEA
SALLY RIDE
SANDRA DAY OCONNER
SAPPHO
SARAH
SARAH BREEDLOVE
SOJOURNER TRUTH
SUSAN B ANTHONY
SYBIL LUDINGTON
VALENTINA TERESHKOVA





ANSWERS

F	N	R	P	W	T	Y	M	V	C	X	W	Q	Z	O	P	R	W	J	N	P	C
S	Y	B	I	L	L	U	D	I	N	G	T	O	N	F	G	I	L	O	E	W	A
A	U	W	R	U	W	Q	T	Y	B	B	M	E	X	X	P	W	E	A	G	H	T
N	I	Q	E	C	L	A	U	D	E	T	T	E	C	O	L	V	I	N	E	M	H
D	G	U	M	I	R	T	I	I	J	O	C	H	E	B	E	D	T	O	E	V	E
R	H	C	A	L	E	H	E	D	Y	L	A	M	A	R	E	T	Y	F	R	W	R
A	L	L	A	L	C	A	C	L	E	S	T	H	E	R	W	I	W	A	V	C	I
D	K	E	L	E	X	L	V	W	F	S	K	R	A	P	A	S	O	R	E	H	N
A	B	O	H	B	N	I	V	E	K	D	Q	M	R	W	M	Z	X	C	S	I	E
Y	M	P	I	A	N	H	A	T	S	H	E	P	S	U	T	W	E	F	A	M	T
O	S	A	L	L	Y	R	I	D	E	A	Q	V	A	N	D	E	B	O	R	A	H
C	U	T	M	L	Q	S	M	L	K	L	Y	U	R	E	Q	C	T	D	A	G	E
O	S	R	E	H	C	T	A	H	T	T	E	R	A	G	R	A	M	M	H	D	G
N	A	A	E	D	A	Z	F	G	P	Y	T	E	H	K	L	O	P	O	B	A	R
N	N	I	G	O	L	D	A	M	E	I	R	W	V	S	Q	F	T	T	R	L	E
E	B	O	E	L	Q	U	E	E	N	E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	E	E	A
R	A	P	W	L	E	H	C	A	R	M	B	N	C	C	X	Q	R	E	E	N	T
E	N	C	U	Y	R	A	M	E	R	E	B	E	K	A	H	E	T	R	D	E	H
D	T	O	H	P	P	A	S	T	R	E	B	E	S	G	V	D	Y	T	L	Q	I
W	H	V	S	A	C	A	G	A	W	E	A	W	A	A	N	M	I	E	O	M	O
Q	O	N	Y	R	Y	N	M	B	A	T	H	S	H	E	B	A	O	R	V	G	P
Z	N	M	U	T	J	Y	E	N	K	C	N	I	P	A	Z	I	L	E	E	H	L
X	Y	T	S	O	J	O	U	R	N	E	R	T	R	U	T	H	A	S	P	L	N
V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	A	T	E	R	E	S	H	K	O	V	A	X	E	D

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 Plumbline®
- 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 Plumbline, 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 Thirty-second Degree
"Master of the Royal Secret"

Summary

This degree teaches many lessons, but the mystery concealed is that man is a creature of free will and capable of recreating himself. If he accomplishes this goal, he will attain a genuine power that can shake the limits of science, surpass the problems of this earth, decipher the secrets of space, surpass the limits of ceremony and catechism, and attain genuine enlightenment; a gnosis which is the foundation of all religions. He will also surpass the narrow views of interest in the area of morals, and will comprehend a genuine virtue that transcends his own interest. Thus, it will become his nature to help his fellow men, and, in so doing, he will discover the divine light within which brings true freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and freedom of culture.

DUTIES:

- A Soldier of the Light seeks truth and knowledge.
- A Soldier of Freedom demands for the people free vote and voice and attains freedom of voice, vote and opinion for himself.
- A Soldier of the True Religion combats spiritual tyranny with reason and truth.
- A Soldier of the People encourages men to be self-reliant and independent.
- A Soldier of Scottish Rite Masonry is zealous and ardent in the performance of his duties to God, his country, his family, his Brethren and himself.

FOR REFLECTION:

Do you endeavor to achieve the Royal Secret in your life and within yourself?

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

The Camp, Lesser Tetractys, five-pointed star, Greater Tetractys, seven-pointed star, triple interlaced triangles, Trimurti (3-faced bust).



The cordon is worn from the right shoulder to the left hip and is four inches wide, doubled, black edged with white on the principal side and crimson on the other. At the point of the principal side is embroidered a red Teutonic Cross with a silver double-headed eagle superimposed. On the crimson side, at the height of the heart, is embroidered a Teutonic Cross in black.



The jewel of the order is a Teutonic Cross of gold with arms frosted. In the center are the letters 'XXXII°', surrounded by a green wreath.

Continued on page 31.

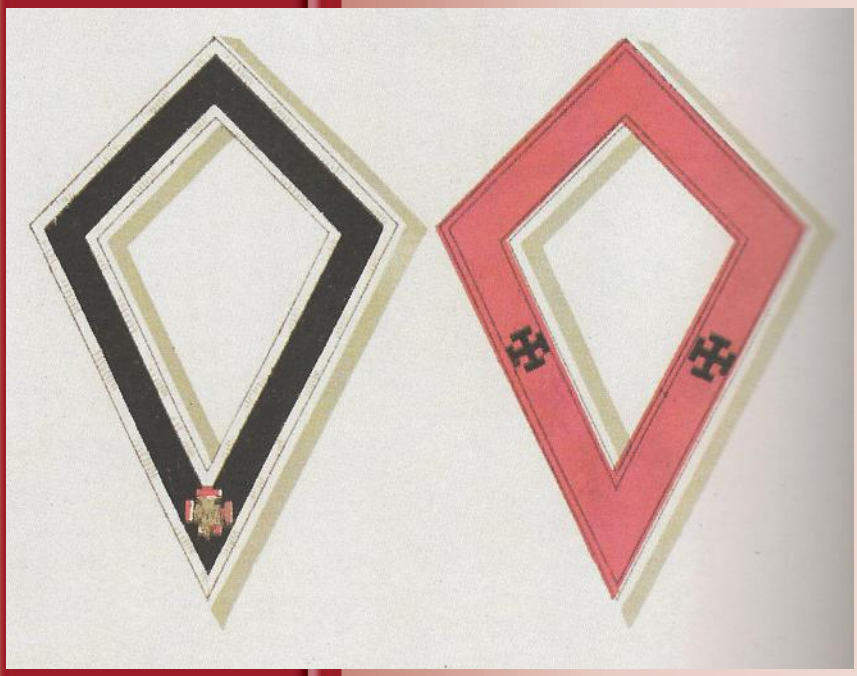
The Thirty-second Degree
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The apron is of white silk or velvet, twelve inches square, edged with two stripes of gold lace, each half an inch wide, and an inch apart, and fringed with gold. Between the stripes of lace is a stripe of black velvet. On the flap are embroidered six flags, three on each side, the lower one blue, the middle one red, and the upper one gold. On these, in the center, is a Teutonic Cross of gold, and over that an eye of gold, surrounded by rays. On the cross, a black double-headed eagle, with beak and claws of gold, holding a sword of gold, one claw on the hilt.. On the body of the apron is the Tracing -Board of the degree in all the colors. The reverse side of the apron is of crimson silk or velvet. It is tied by a heavy cord of crimson silk.





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The Thirty-second Degree
"Master of the Royal Secret"

Lessons of the Degree

"The human is ever interlaced with the divine.
Only doctrines, faith or knowledge which bear fruit in action are of value.
To work is to worship."

Continued from page 31.

Of that Equilibrium between Authority and Individual Action which constitutes Free Government, by settling on immutable foundations Liberty with Obedience to Law, Equality with Subjection to Authority, and Fraternity with Subordination to the Wisest and the Best: and of that Equilibrium between the Active People, and the Passive Stability and Permanence of the Will of the Past, expressed in constitutions of government, written or unwritten, and in the laws and customs, gray with age and sanctified by time, as precedents and authority; which is represented by the arch resting on the two columns, Jachin and Boaz, that stand at the portals of the Temple budded by Wisdom, on one of which Masonry sets the celestial Globe, symbol of the spiritual part of our composite nature and on the other the terrestrial Globe, symbol of the material part.

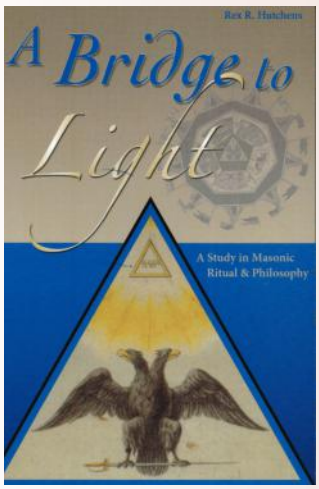
And, finally, of that Equilibrium, possible in ourselves, and which Masonry incessantly labors to accomplish in its Initiates, and demands of its Adepts and Princes (else unworthy of their titles), between the Spiritual and Divine and the Material and Human in man; between the Intellect, Reason, and Moral Sense on one side, and the Appetites and Passions on the other, from which result the Harmony and Beauty of a well-regulated life.

Which possible Equilibrium proves to us that our Appetites and Senses also are Forces given unto us by God, for purposes of good, and not the fruits of the malignancy of a Devil, to be detested, mortified, and, if possible, rendered inert and dead: that they are given us to be the means by which we shall be strengthened and incited to great and good deeds, and are to be wisely used, and not abused; to be controlled and kept within due bounds by the Reason and the Moral Sense; to be made useful instruments and servants, and not permitted to become the managers and masters, using our intellect and reason as base instruments for their gratification.

And this Equilibrium teaches us, above all, to reverence ourselves as immortal souls, and to have respect and charity for others, who are even such as we are, partakers with us of the Divine Nature, lighted by a ray of the Divine Intelligence, struggling, like us, toward the light; capable, like us, of progress upward toward perfection, and deserving to be loved and pitied, but never to be hated nor despised; to be aided and encouraged in this life-struggle, and not to be abandoned nor left to wander in the darkness alone, still less to be trampled upon in our own efforts to ascend.

Such, my Brother, is the TRUE WORD of a Master Mason; such the true ROYAL SECRET, which makes possible, and shall at length make real, the HOLY EMPIRE of true Masonic Brotherhood.

GLORIA DEI EST CELARE VERBUM. AMEN (pp. 859-861).



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.

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