

THE

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ACADEMY FOR THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & EXAMINATION  
**OF SCOTTISH RITE MASONS**

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**UNITED SUPREME COUNCIL, 33°**

ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE | PRINCE HALL AFFILIATION | SOUTHERN JURISDICTION | USA | INC.

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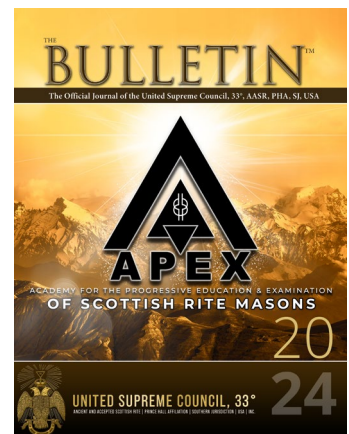
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# INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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Preferred Mailing Address	332 Main Street Monticello, FL 32344
Phone:	555-441-6932
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1. Use Garamond or Times New Roman typeset.
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7. Number tables and figures in the order in which they are cited in the text.
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## References

1. Include literature citations that substantiate important concepts or statements.
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# MESSAGE FROM

ILLUSTRIOUS DR. COREY D. HAWKINS, SR.  
SOVEREIGN GRAND COMMANDER

At the heart of our beloved organization lies a profound dedication to service and progress. Since our 2023 annual session, we witnessed remarkable growth and achievement within the United Supreme Council. With a steadfast commitment from our membership, we have been able to drive positive change and make a difference in our communities.

## **CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

### *HBCUs*

First and foremost, our charitable foundation continues to flourish. Through generous donations and thoughtful initiatives, we supported several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), some of which include Alabama State University, Rust College, Tugaloo College, and Miles College. Acknowledging that HBCUs provide a supportive community and offer a culturally tailored education, we are proud to donate to such institutions, as they continue to effectively prepare students for leadership roles in diverse fields.

### *Hawaii*

In response to the devastating wildfires in Lahaina Maui, our charitable foundation generously donated \$10,000 to support affected communities. This contribution pro-

vided essential aid to those impacted by the fires. Moreover, we stand in solidarity with the people of Hawaii and eagerly anticipate reconstruction initiatives in the coming times.

## MEMBERSHIP

Efforts to strengthen our membership have been met with resounding success. Through outreach programs and community engagement, we welcomed new faces into our fraternity and expanded our collective impact. Additionally, each new member brings with him unique perspectives and talents, further fueling our mission to be unified in service and dedication.

## APEX PROGRAM

Launching in July 2024, the Academy for the Progressive Education and Examination (APEX) of Scottish Rite Masons aspires to deepen the understanding of Scottish Rite degrees and rituals. With a focus on supportive learning, the APEX program offers a comprehensive exploration of historical, ethical, philosophical, and moral perspectives through reading, group discussions, and assessments. I am excited about the trajectory of education in our jurisdiction and look forward to admitting our initial class of 50 fraters.

## RECENT VISITS

Visiting several orients and jurisdictions over the past few months was a phenomenal experience for me. In March, I was blessed to attend the 195th-Year Anniversary of the Supreme Council of Brazil and the Assembly of the Ibero-American Confederation of Supreme Councils in Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, I was honored to visit the California, South Carolina, and Virgin Islands Councils of Deliberation. I am extremely appreciative to Sovereign Grand Commander Lins, Grand Masters Major and San Juan, and Deputies Harrington, Haynes, and Sutherland for their respective invitations and hospitality. Attending each of these events left a lasting impression, and I am extremely thankful to all for your generosity.

I am also appreciative to those who represented me during the Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina Councils of Deliberation. Thank you also to Deputies James, Scruggs, and Upchurch for your hospitality during their visits.

## PERFECT MASTERS (IN MEMORIAM)

In solemn remembrance, we honor the lives of two esteemed members of the United Supreme Council, whose unwavering commitment enriched our fraternity beyond measure. Let us pay tribute to their enduring legacy and the indelible mark they made in our lives and the lives of others.

### *SGIG Arvin W. Glass*

SGIG Arvin Wesley Glass (TN), Grand Chancellor Emeritus, transitioned from labor to refreshment on December 17, 2023. Glass worked at International Harvester for 25 years, and as a manager at Federal Express for an additional 25 years before retirement. His passing leaves a profound void in our fraternity and his wisdom, leadership, and dedication will be deeply missed.

### *SGIG Dr. Donald Ware*

SGIG Dr. Donald Ware (CA) passed away on February 21, 2024, at the age of 75. A dedicated cardiologist at Brotman Medical Center in Los Angeles, Dr. Ware was renowned for his unwavering commitment to providing exceptional care and compassion to his patients. As Grand Minister of Health, his knowledge and devotion to the wellbeing of our membership will also be missed.

*Alas, my brothers...*

Finally, please know that I am humbled to be a member of an organization with such a rich history. While we have accomplished much, the journey ahead holds even greater promise. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence and evolution. With your help, I am confident that our best days are ahead! Let us continue to rebuild the Rite, Stone by Stone!

Fraternally,

Corey D. Hawkins, Sr. 

Illustrious Corey D. Hawkins, Sr., 33°  
Sovereign Grand Commander

# NEW HORIZONS

PUBLICATIONS IN THE UNITED SUPREME COUNCIL

*By Illustrious Dr. L. Ken Collins, 33°*

**As we continue to rebuild the Rite, Stone by Stone, we will also focus efforts on updating and reissuing previously published works to improve the membership experience.**

## **Foundational Importance**

The distinctiveness of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR), compared to other degrees in Freemasonry, lies in its comprehensive structure and the promotion of expansive freedom of thought. As such, the published works of the AASR encourages members to immerse themselves within each degree, affording time and space for reflection on the lessons from various perspectives. These texts, both current and historical, provide a wide array of lessons designed to empower members in their Symbolic Lodges. Moreover, as the College of Freemasonry, our goal is to uphold this mission by continually expanding our collection of published works.

## **Opening and Closing Manuals**

The committee on Ritual and Ritualistic Matters recently revised the opening and closing manuals for Lodge of Perfection, Chapter of Rose Croix, Council of Kadosh and the Consistory. Refining the manuals will ensure congruency in all houses and consistency in the administrative language. The new manuals include proper jewels and regalia to standardize instruction. The new opening and closing manuals are now called the “Arcanum”, which means – The Secret Knowledge.

## **Publication of Old Manuscripts**

While enhancing our published works, we decided to revive historic documents and manuscripts to enrich our members’ knowledge and the AASR experience. We desire to encourage members to utilize these resources and contribute their own works through papers and lectures.

## **Conclusion**

The Grand Secretary General’s office remains steadfast in its commitment to the “Revitalization” of the Rite, consistently providing our members with the necessary tools to enhance their Scottish Rite experience. We aim to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our traditions, while encouraging innovation and growth within our community.



Illustrious L. Ken Collins, II, 33°  
Grand Secretary-General H.E.







Photo Credit: Shutterstock - Columns and statues of the Luxor temple main entrance, first pylon, Egypt. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/columns-statues-luxor-temple-main-entrance-2164088641>

# ECHOES OF WISDOM

## REMEMBERING THE IMPORTANCE OF TEMPERANCE AND PRUDENCE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

By Illustrious Marlon S. Honeywell, Staff Writer

### INTRODUCTION

In the multifaceted nature of human affairs, the threads of truth are often entwined with strands of misunderstanding. As such, actively listening with temperance (self-discipline) to both sides of a story and employing prudence (good judgement) before rendering a decision is an important concept. Since the dawn of time, such actions or the lack thereof have shaped the outcomes of nations and, ultimately, the fate of countless individuals. This manuscript seeks to provide a few instances which demarcate the significance of temperance and prudence in the decision-making process and how employing these cardinal virtues may increase the propensity of a beneficial outcome.<sup>1</sup>

### INTIMATE SECRETARY

In the sixth degree of Scottish Rite Masonry, the narrative unfolds around Zabud, a trusted friend of King Solomon. Zabud, inadvertently overhearing a private conversation between King Solomon and King Hiram of Tyre, found himself in a precarious situation: To protect his friend, he entered King Solomon's audience chamber without permission—a crime punishable by death.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the potential consequence of his transgression, Zabud's actions stemmed from being uneasy. Zabud was convinced that King Hiram harbored ill intentions due to his dissatisfaction with 20 cities promised to him by Solomon. Governance of these cities was stimulated by a prior agreement between the two kings, acknowledging

Hiram's generous provision of Lebanese cedar for the construction of Solomon's Temple. However, after visiting the cities, Hiram was quite displeased and described them as dilapidated.<sup>2</sup>

Once tensions inherently escalated, Zabud's fear for Solomon's safety led him to secretly follow Hiram into the audience chamber, where the kings were conferring about Hiram's displeasure. Amid the discussion, Zabud was discovered by the King of Tyre and subsequently faced demands for execution according to law. However, Solomon's renowned wisdom prompted him to listen first to Zabud's explanation (temperance) before rendering a fair decision (prudence). Moreover, recognizing Zabud's noble intentions, Solomon spared his life and appointed him as the Intimate Secretary for a new agreement with King Hiram—one to which only he was privy.<sup>1,2</sup>

### THE SCALES OF MA'AT

When studying Egyptian cosmology, the notion of truth and justice stood as the cornerstone of earthly existence and the afterlife. At the core of this elaborate belief



Visionary decision-making happens at the intersection of intuition and logic.

Paul O'Brien



FIGURE 1: Ma'at: Scales of Justice<sup>18</sup>

system was Ma'at, the goddess who embodied truth, balance, order, and justice. An image of Ma'at may be found in **FIGURE 1**. Ma'at's influence permeated every aspect of Egyptian life, from the pharaoh's rule to the common people's daily activities.<sup>3</sup>

Central to the journey of the soul in the afterlife was the Hall of Two Truths, where the deceased's heart was weighed against the feather of Ma'at.<sup>4</sup> This act symbolized

<sup>1</sup> Markbartels. Decision Making using the Cardinal Virtues. <https://markbartels.org/2018/07/03/decision-making-using-the-cardinal-virtues/>. Accessed March 25, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> DeHoyos A. Confidential Secretary. Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor & Guide. 3rd Edition. The Supreme Council, S.J. 2016; P 220-226

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p 805-809

<sup>4</sup> Ma'at. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maat>. Accessed March 25, 2024.



FIGURE 2: Richard the Lionheart<sup>19</sup>

the ultimate judgment, whereby a life was invariably assessed according to her 42 principles.<sup>5</sup> The ceremony also highlighted the importance of hearing both sides (temperance) and arbitrating fairly (prudence), which reflects the Egyptians' deep commitment to fairness and equity.<sup>6</sup> Only those whose hearts were as light as the feather were granted passage to eternal life. This process also illustrated that justice is a universal principle which governs the living and the dead.

### RANSOM OF RICHARD THE LIONHEART

The ransom of Richard the Lionheart serves as a vivid demonstration of the power of diplomacy over prolonged conflict. After being captured near Vienna in December 1192 by Leopold V of Austria, Richard I of England found himself in the middle of a complicated diplomatic chess game.<sup>7</sup> The capture was the culmination of Richard's participation in the Third Crusade and his consequent journey back to England. Leopold, angry because of Richard's actions during the crusade, handed him over to the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI, who demanded a colossal ransom for Richard's release. An image of Richard the Lionheart may be found in **FIGURE 2**.

The negotiation for Richard's release is a prime example of medieval diplomacy, where the discernment of both sides' positions was crucial. England, under the regency of Richard's mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and his ministers, had to navigate a delicate situation.<sup>8</sup> They were tasked

were not just about the money; they were also about establishing a balance of power in Europe. The emperor had to consider the potential backlash from other Christian monarchs and the papacy itself.

The resolution came with the payment of 150,000 marks (~\$17.4 million<sup>9</sup>), which was raised through a tax on all England's holdings and possessions.<sup>10</sup> This act of evaluating both sides of the argument—England's need to recover its king without irreparable harm to its economy and citizenry, against the Holy Roman Empire's desire for wealth and political leverage—contributed significantly to the final settlement. In the end, temperance and prudence mitigated the probability of a prolonged conflict that could have weakened both realms, potentially altering the course of European history.

### TREATY OF ALCÁÇOVAS

Signed in 1479, the Treaty of Alcáçovas marked a significant moment in the history of European exploration and colonial expansion.<sup>11</sup> This agreement between Spain (then the Crowns of Castile and Aragon) and Portugal was a result of the War of the Castilian Succession. It effectively ended hostilities between the two leading seafaring nations of the time and laid the groundwork for the division of the world's newly discovered territories. An image of the Treaty of Alcáçovas may be found in **FIGURE 3**.

Careful listening and negotiation (temperance) were crucial to averting further war

and led to the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which further refined the terms agreed upon in Alcáçovas.<sup>12</sup> The Treaty of Tordesillas, negotiated by envoys from Portugal and Spain with the mediation of the papacy, drew a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands. Lands discovered to the west of this line were to be Spanish territories, while those to the east would belong to Portugal (prudence).

On the other side, Henry VI needed to balance his desire for wealth with the political implications of holding a crusader king captive. The ransom negotiations

and led to the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which further refined the terms agreed upon in Alcáçovas.<sup>12</sup> The Treaty of Tordesillas, negotiated by envoys from Portugal and Spain with the mediation of the papacy, drew a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands. Lands discovered to the west of this line were to be Spanish territories, while those to the east would belong to Portugal (prudence).

This division was pivotal in shaping the modern world map by determining the spheres of influence of the two colonial powers. Portugal retained its hold on African and Eastern routes and possessions, including parts of India, the East Indies, and Brazil—the only country in South America where Portuguese is the official language.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, Spain gained dominion over most of the Americas, where its explorers like Christopher Columbus had already begun to stake claims. The lines of delineation for the Treaty of Tordesillas may be seen in **FIGURE 4**.

Compromises that led to the Treaty of Tordesillas exemplify the power of diplomacy in international relations.<sup>14</sup> By prioritizing dialogue over conflict, Spain and Portugal not only averted war, but also

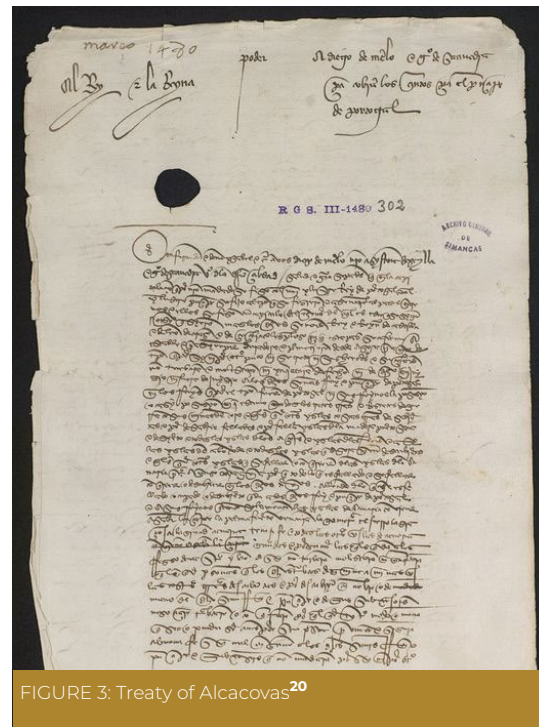


FIGURE 3: Treaty of Alcáçovas<sup>20</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ahmed R. The 42 Ideals of Ma'at. The Kemet Experience. <https://www.kemetexperience.com/the-42-ideals-of-maat/>. Accessed March 26, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Carelli F. The Book of Death: Weighing Your Heart. London J Prim Care (Abingdon). 2011 Jul; 4(1): 86-87.

<sup>7</sup> King Richard the Lionheart: The King who Sold Scotland to Go on Crusade. <https://www.essentially-england.com/richard-the-lionheart.html>. Accessed March 30, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> King Richard the Lionheart: The King who Sold Scotland to Go on Crusade. <https://www.essentially-england.com/richard-the-lionheart.html>. Accessed March 30, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Gainesville Coins. A "King's Ransom?" 5 Outrageous Ransoms Paid in Gold and Silver. <https://www.gainesvillecoins.com/blog/a-kings-ransom-5-outrageous-ransoms-paid-in-gold-and-silver>. Accessed March 31, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Carter C. 4 February 1194: Richard the Lionheart is Ransomed. Money Week. <https://moneyweek.com/4251424-february-1194-richard-the-lionheart-is-ransomed>. Accessed March 31, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Yale Law School. Treaty Between Spain and Portugal, Concluded at Alcáçovas, September 4, 1479. [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th\\_century/sppo01.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/sppo01.asp). Accessed April 2, 2024.

# Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494

(The World split between Spain and Portugal)

established legal frameworks that would guide their imperial ambitions and reshape the geopolitical landscape of the world for generations.

## TRIAL OF SOCRATES

Familiar to those in the Scottish Rite, the trial of Socrates serves as a philosophical counterpoint to temperance and prudence and demonstrates the ramification of inaction. Additionally, this trial embellishes the stark consequences of a legal process lacking fairness and equity.<sup>15</sup> An image of the trial of Socrates may be seen in **FIGURE 5**.

In 399 BCE, Socrates faced charges of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens. These accusations stemmed more from political animosity and societal unrest than from genuine misconduct. Unlike the sagacious inquiry attributed to Solomon, Socrates' trial lacked a fair hearing, which was necessary to legitimately adjudicate his case.<sup>16</sup>

The Athenian democracy, for all its virtues, faltered in providing a platform for Socrates to be heard impartially. His method of incessant questioning, though aimed at improving learning, irked the power-

ful and resulted in a quest that was more an execution of character than a search for truth. The jury, swayed by the rhetoric of the prosecution and the prevailing political climate, condemned Socrates to death by *hemlock*.<sup>17</sup> Further, Socrates' execution accentuates the peril of a legal system that bends to the whims of public opinion and political pressures, rather than adhering to the principles of temperance and prudence. It also exemplifies how even the greatest minds can fall victim to discrimination when the scales of justice are imbalanced.

## CONCLUSION

Upon examining the allegorical and historical excerpts above, the impact of restraint and sound judgment becomes clear. These cardinal virtues are essential in cultivating harmony, mutual understanding, and

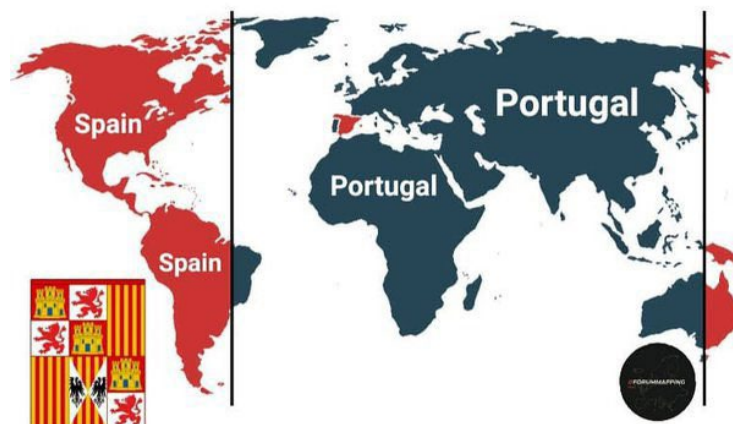


FIGURE 4: Treaty of Tordesillas Line<sup>21</sup>

collaboration in varying situations. With this awareness, we must continually enact these values, knowing fully that the legacy we craft today will afford lasting advantages in the future. Hence, let us embrace our responsibility to shape a future guided by prayer, insightful contemplation, internal reflection, good judgement, and positive change, as such actions will reverberate emphatically throughout the annals of time. *Lest we forget...*



FIGURE 5: The Trial of Socrates<sup>22</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Wikipedia. Treaty of Tordesillas. [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Tordesillas](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Tordesillas). Accessed April 3, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Chaffin S. Brazilians Speak Portuguese, Not Spanish. Here's Why. <https://www.connectbrazil.com/brazilians-speak-portuguese-why-not-spanish/>. Accessed 4, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Downey K. Treaty of Tordesillas. Study.com. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/treaty-of-tordesillas-definition-and-lesson.html#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20of%20Tordesillas%20was,the%20Portuguese%20received%20lands%20eastward>. Accessed April 4, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Levi D. Keynote Speaker: Fair and Impartial Judiciary Symposium at the Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement in Philadelphia. What Does fair and Impartial Judiciary Mean and Why is it Important? October 2019. <https://judicialstudies.duke.edu/2019/11/what-does-fair-and-impartial-judiciary-mean-and-why-is-it-important/>. Accessed March 26, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Linder D. The Trial of Socrates. <https://www.famous-trials.com/socrates/833-home>. Accessed March 27, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Dayan A. Death of Socrates: A Likely Case of Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) poisoning. *Clin Toxicol (Phila)*. 2024 Jan; 62(1): 56-60.

<sup>18</sup> Image of Ma'at from Artpictures.club and Google images. <https://artpictures.club/autumn-2023.html>. Accessed April 4, 2024

<sup>19</sup> Oliver C. Richard I: An English King or Crusader King? The Collector. <https://www.thecollector.com/king-richard-i-the-lionheart>. Accessed April 4, 2024

<sup>20</sup> Places of Peace/ Peace Treat of Alcáçovas (Portugal) was signed 541 years ago. <https://placesofpeace.eu/2020/09/04/peace-treaty-of-alcavovas-portugal-was-signed-541-years-ago/>. Accessed April 4, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Treaty of Tordesillas. Map Porn. Reddit.com. [https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/14tbfo/treaty\\_of\\_tordesillas?rdt=59738](https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/14tbfo/treaty_of_tordesillas?rdt=59738). Accessed April 4, 2024

<sup>22</sup> Histories History. The Trial of Socrates. <http://www.historyshories.com/the-trial-of-socrates.html>. Accessed April 4, 2024.

# UNLOCKING THE POWER OF CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

## A PATH TO POSITIVE IMPACT

By *Illustrious Gregory L. Clark, President, USC Charitable Foundation*

Charitable foundations play a pivotal role in transforming societies by channeling resources towards meaningful causes and driving positive change. These entities, fueled by philanthropic values and a commitment to social responsibility, offer a range of benefits that extend far beyond financial contributions. In this article, we explore the significant advantages of charitable foundations and how they serve as catalysts for a better world.

- 1. Focused Impact:** One of the primary benefits of a charitable foundation is its ability to concentrate resources and efforts on specific areas of need. By defining clear mission statements and strategic goals, foundations can direct their funding towards initiatives that align with their values and priorities. Whether it's supporting education, healthcare, environmental conservation, or social justice, foundations have the flexibility to target their efforts where they can make the most significant impact.
- 2. Long-Term Sustainability:** Unlike short-term charitable giving, foundations are designed for sustained impact over time. By establishing endowments and investment strategies, foundations can generate ongoing revenue streams to support their philanthropic activities. This long-term approach ensures continuity in funding for essential programs and allows foundations to weather economic fluctuations and external challenges effectively.
- 3. Strategic Partnerships:** Charitable foundations often collaborate with other organizations, including nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses, to maximize their impact. These strategic partnerships enable foundations to leverage expertise, resources, and networks to tackle complex social issues more effectively. By fostering synergies and sharing best practices, foundations can achieve greater outcomes and drive systemic change.
- 4. Innovative Solutions:** Foundations serve as laboratories for innovation, experimenting with new ideas, technologies, and approaches to address pressing societal challenges. Through research, pilot projects, and grants for innovation, foundations support the development and scaling of innovative solutions that can lead to transformative change. This innovative spirit is essential for finding sustainable solutions to global issues, such as climate change, poverty, and healthcare disparities.
- 5. Community Engagement:** Charitable foundations engage communities by soliciting input, collaborating with local stakeholders, and empowering grassroots initiatives. By involving community members in decision-making processes and listening to their needs and priorities, foundations ensure that their efforts are responsive, inclusive, and culturally sensitive. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and partnership, leading to more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.
- 6. Advocacy and Awareness:** Beyond financial support, foundations play a crucial role in advocating for policy changes, raising awareness about social issues, and promoting public discourse. Through strategic communication campaigns, partnerships with media outlets, and advocacy efforts, foundations amplify voices, mobilize public support, and drive action on key issues. This advocacy work complements direct interventions and contributes to creating an enabling environment for social change.
- 7. Legacy Building:** Many philanthropists establish charitable foundations as a way to leave a lasting legacy and make a meaningful impact beyond their lifetimes. By setting up foundations with clear governance structures, succession plans, and strategic frameworks, donors can ensure that their philanthropic vision endures and continues to benefit future generations. This legacy-building aspect adds a profound sense of purpose and continuity to philanthropic endeavors.

In conclusion, charitable foundations play a vital role in driving positive change by focusing on targeted impact, fostering sustainability, building partnerships, promoting innovation, engaging communities, advocating for change, and leaving enduring legacies. As stewards of philanthropy, foundations have the unique opportunity to leverage resources, expertise, and passion to address some of the world's most pressing challenges and create a brighter future for all.

# WHAT IS FIDUCIARY DUTY?

## DOES IT MATTER TO ME AS A SGIG OR GIG?

By Attorney Michael Burnett Joiner<sup>1</sup>

Yes, fiduciary duty should mean something to a SGIG (Sovereign Grand Inspector General) or GIG (Grand Inspector General). In everyday terms, fiduciary duty means that a person has a responsibility for or to something. Most attorneys, if not all, often get the dreaded calls from family, friends, and even the guy playing pick-up basketball, asking, "Can you answer this quick legal question?" Likewise, I received a memorable "legal question" call. A close friend's sister said that her husband was being sued, along with other members of his church by another church member, because they hired a construction crew that had (allegedly) improperly built a multipurpose hall for its sanctuary. The husband did not build the multipurpose hall for the sanctuary. He was a deacon, who voted on hiring this particular construction team, and they sued him! Surprisingly, another close friend was also sued. The church member filed a lawsuit against all deacons, who were at the church during the time they voted to hire a construction crew to build this structure, because he alleged that the deacons violated their fiduciary duty to the church.

As a new lawyer at the time, I was unfamiliar with the concept of fiduciary duty. Basically, officers of an organization, such as directors, board members, or, in this instance, a deacon at a church, can be held responsible for decisions that they make, which are deemed unreasonable while in those leadership positions because they have a fiduciary duty to that organization. Therefore, it is important to consider other possibilities in which a fiduciary duty can come into play as a SGIG or GIG.

Since one could be sued for allegedly not upholding their fiduciary duty to the church, said person could be subject to a lawsuit for not upholding his fiduciary duty while serving in the role as a Worshipful Master of a lodge, a Commander-in-Chief of a local consistory, or as an elected member of Council of Deliberation. A fiduciary is defined as a duty obligating (as an agent or trustee) to act with loyalty and honesty and in a manner consistent with the best interests of the beneficiary of the fiduciary relationship. In layman's terms, a fiduciary relationship<sup>2</sup> is similar to the responsibility of a parent, which is to act in the child's best interest when making decisions on behalf of that child. As an officer or



Image Credit: Shutterstock - <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/determined-african-american-lawyer-attorney-ceo-1188225214>

<sup>1</sup> Grand Attorney General SGIG Michael Burnett Joiner is a Chief Ethics Officer/Senior Attorney for Shelby County Attorney's Office (Memphis, Tennessee) and is licensed to practice law in Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky and Washington, D.C.

one serving in a leadership capacity, a person has an obligation to serve and perform those duties, considering the best interest of the entity when making decisions.

Under a case of first impression, the Tennessee Attorney General filed suit to dissolve two nonprofit public benefit corporations devoted to children and families because the nonprofit corporations abandoned their charitable purposes and devoted themselves to private purposes.<sup>3</sup> Allegedly, the two nonprofit corporations repeatedly violated the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, and the Tennessee Attorney General questioned numerous transactions approved by the leadership of these nonprofits, such as: 1) rental of property owned by the executive director to the corporations; 2) hiring of the executive director's husband as accountant for the corporations; 3) investment of monies in a local start up bank; and 4) several transactions and purchases by the corporation for the benefit of the executive director, her family, and friends.<sup>4</sup> Nonprofit corporations generally are recognized to be public or charitable in nature.<sup>5</sup> A basic distinction between profit and nonprofit entities is the possibility of private enrichment.<sup>6</sup> Masonic organizations, such as a Grand Lodge, its subordinate bodies, and York or Scottish Rites, can be and are likely nonprofit organizations organized under its particular state laws. The United Supreme Council is a Nonprofit Organization organized pursuant to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. The officers of nonprofit organizations have a fiduciary duty to operate within the stated purpose and for the benefit of the organization. In Tennessee, nonprofit corporations are required to

operate for public purposes and not for private gain.<sup>7</sup> Adherence to the fundamental character of a nonprofit corporation is intended to be insured by the fiduciary duties imposed on officers and directors of such corporations.<sup>8</sup> Directors and officers of corporations are bound to exercise the utmost good faith, loyalty, and honesty toward the corporation.<sup>9</sup> The directors of a corporation have to ensure that the corporation has the benefit of their best judgment, acting always with reasonable care and in good faith to promote its welfare.<sup>10</sup> This does not mean that the decisions have to be perfect or even good. In fact, an officer or director can make bad decisions, but those decisions generally must be reasonable based on the circumstances.

Directors and officers of nonprofit corporations also owe a fiduciary duty to the corporation.<sup>11</sup> The central purpose of fiduciary duties of officers and directors of nonprofit corporations is to ensure that a corporation's resources are used to achieve the corporation's purposes and not to enrich the directors.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the duty of loyalty requires that a director or officer faithfully pursue the interest of the organization, and its nonprofit purposes, rather than his or her own financial or other interests, or those of another person or organization.<sup>13</sup> This means that the officers of the organization, like any masonic organization, are focused on its purposes and goals and take actions to achieve those goals.

It is important to understand that officers and directors (those in leadership roles) in any organization have a fiduciary responsibility to that entity. When a person accepts the role of a Grand Inspector General, said person also accepts that he becomes a leader in the local Masonic community. Some may have already considered the awesome responsibility that one embarks on when serving as an officer. Others may not have. Next time one is asked to take a leadership position, that person should consider whether he is ready to protect that organization because a leader has a fiduciary duty when he accepts that role. It is unlikely that the deacons envisioned at the time that they were elected or appointed in their church that they would have become defendants in a lawsuit years later. This discussion of fiduciary duty, however, should help one consider the awesome responsibility that he has when accepting the role of officer. Yes, the concept of fiduciary duty should matter to a SGIG or GIG.



Quality is everyone's responsibility

W. Edwards Deming

<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster, Duty Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/duty#legalDictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/duty#legalDictionary).

<sup>3</sup> Summers v. Cherokee Children & Family Services, 112 S.W. 3d 486, 493 (Tenn. Ct. App. 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Id. at 494.

<sup>5</sup> Id. at 500.

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> Id. at 503.

<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> Id.

<sup>10</sup> Id.

<sup>11</sup> Id.

<sup>12</sup> Id.

<sup>13</sup> Id.



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# SECRET MASTER

THE INITIAL LESSON OF THE HAUTE DEGREES

By *Illustrious P. Cardell Worlds*, Staff Writer

“

The lips of wisdom are closed, except to the ears of understanding.

The Kybalion

## INTRODUCTION

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is a revered and honored Masonic order that unfolds profound lessons that transcend ritualistic experiences, delving into the areas of philosophy, morality, and spirituality across its degrees. The fundamental teachings of the Scottish Rite degrees include the pursuit of knowledge, harmony, balance, and equilibrium. This article explores the transformative teachings within the Secret Master degree and reveals the importance of its lessons and the benefits they bestow upon those who earnestly embrace them. Albert Pike, author of the book *Morals and Dogma*, states,

“Freemasonry is a succession of allegories, the mere vehicles of great lessons in morality and philosophy.”<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish Rite curricula requires of its members patience and an aptitude commensurate with the ability to learn and synthesize and operationalize lessons. For this reason, the Rite must be rigid and strict in its consideration of the qualifications to become a candidate: Not all who seek initiation into the mysteries are prepared to receive the haute degrees. However, through allegorical teachings and symbolic rituals, candidates are encouraged to seek truth and understanding in both the material and spiritual realms. This emphasis

<sup>1</sup> Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma*. Supreme Council (SJ). 1871.

serves as a reminder of the importance of continuous learning and self-improvement in the journey through life. Additionally, the fourth degree provides a foundation from which the voyage begins.

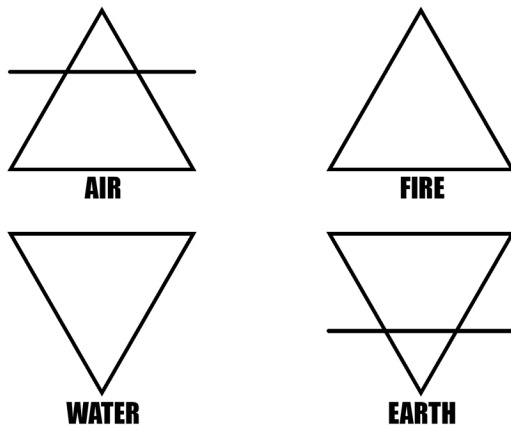
## FOURTH DEGREE

### Foundation Lesson

Structured within the framework of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, degrees are designed to impart timeless wisdom and foster personal growth. Its foundational lessons, embedded within the heart of each degree, emphasize moral virtues, ethical conduct, and the importance of integrity. The fourth degree highlights specifically the lessons of Secrecy, Silence, and Fidelity.<sup>2</sup> These principles hold great significance to individuals navigating the complexities of life.

In the fourth degree, King Solomon sought trustworthy men to protect the Sacred Furniture following the untimely demise of Hiram, the builder. In the Secret Master degree, a key symbol, among others, is the equilateral triangle.

### The Equilateral Triangle



In addition to the Three Great Lights of the Symbolic Lodge, the triangle is acknowledged as the fourth great light, and this symbol is not a component of Ancient Craft Masonry.<sup>3</sup> Its three sides symbolize the Grand Architect of the Universe, to whom we render our devotions and whose will it is ours to obey.<sup>4</sup>

Its three angles refer to our Creator, Preserver and Benefactor; and to His three attributes—Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. It is also one of the primitive instruments used by the Grand Architect to produce order out of chaos.<sup>5</sup> Alchemically, this symbol represents fire, through which purification occurs (Figure 1). Fire is a representation of transformation, purification, and rebirth. Just as fire can purify and refine metals, symbolically, it can also purify and transform our lives. Alchemy is defined as, “a medieval chemical science and speculative philosophy aiming to achieve



Contrary to human desire, we should always welcome life's fueled fire because the burn they leave on our skin tell nothing of the man they've created within.

Unknown

the transmutation of the base metals into gold, the discovery of a universal cure for disease, and the discovery of a means of indefinitely prolonging life; a power or process that changes or transforms something in a mysterious or impressive way.”<sup>6</sup>

The process of calcination involves heating (inorganic materials) to a high temperature, but without fusing to remove volatile matter or to effect changes (i.e., oxidation or pulverization), which is essential and harmonious.<sup>7</sup> This stage symbolizes the trials and struggles we face in our daily lives. During moments of chaos and turmoil, the lessons learned represent heat, and from them we may purify ourselves of that which no longer benefits us. From the cornerstone of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (4° - Secret Master) to its capstone (32° - Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret), lessons provide integrated structural support, and when employed, personally advances and elevates the lives of each frater. Further, the Triangle represent collateral symbolism of the 4th degree, while its primary lessons, as previously mentioned, are secrecy, silence, and fidelity.

## SECRECY

Secrecy teaches the importance of discernment and discretion. Discernment is defined as, the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure, or simply put, the ability to judge well.<sup>8</sup> In a world where information is readily accessible and often over-shared (i.e., social media), the ability to keep certain matters private is a valuable skill. Learning when to speak and when to remain silent, when to share and when to withhold, empowers us to maintain trust and safeguard sensitive information. It also cultivates a sense of responsibility and respect for the boundaries of others, fostering deeper connections built on mutual respect and understanding.



It's not me who can't keep a secret. It's the people I tell that can't.

Abraham Lincoln

<sup>2</sup> Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma*. Supreme Council (SJ). 1871.

<sup>3</sup> United Supreme Council. *Book of the Scottish Rite 4 - 32 Prince Hall Affiliation*. 1946. Pg. 8.

<sup>4</sup> United Supreme Council. *The Book of the Scottish Rite 4° - 32° Prince Hall Affiliation*. 1946.

<sup>5</sup> United Supreme Council. *The Book of the Scottish Rite 4° - 32° Prince Hall Affiliation*. 1946. Pg. 17.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alchemy>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/calcline#medicalDictionary>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discernment>. Accessed March 16, 2024.



**Do not tell secrets to those whose faith and silence you have not already tested.**

Elizabeth I

### Esotericism

Another form of secrecy involves deriving certain meanings from allegories and objects, which is only discernable to those who study and comprehend symbolism. Esotericism is defined as that which is, “designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone; requiring or exhibiting knowledge that is restricted to a small group.”<sup>9</sup> The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite holds an arcane well of esoteric wisdom and offers a journey into the profound mysteries of existence. At its core is a repository of esoteric teachings involving symbolism, rituals, and philosophical insights.

While secrecy may seem contrary to the idea of sharing wisdom, within the context of esotericism, it serves as a protective veil: it guards the sanctity of the teachings and preserves their transformative power. Secrecy isn’t about exclusivity; it assists with creating a sacred space for seekers to explore and understand the hidden truths within themselves and the universe. Each degree within the Rite is a stepping stone, unveiling deeper layers of meaning. After exposure to these truths, fraters should embody the virtues of wisdom, compassion, and integrity by using esoteric knowledge to uplift and inspire others.

### Comparison

When comparing secrecy and esotericism, it’s essential to recognize that while secrecy may serve as a means of safeguarding esoteric knowledge, it’s not the essence of esotericism itself. Esotericism transcends mere secrecy; it is about the pursuit of hidden truths and the transforming power gained through spiritual study. Secrecy, when used judiciously, can help preserve the integrity of esoteric teachings. It is ultimately the inner journey of the seeker that unlocks the true depth and meaning of lessons within the Scottish Rite.

### SILENCE

Euripides, a Greek author of more than ninety (90) plays, states, “silence is true wisdom’s best reply.”<sup>10</sup> Silence is defined as, forbearance from speech or noise; the absence of sound.<sup>11</sup> In a society where communication and noise are amplified, silence holds its own lesson in the art of listening and reflection. While listening and hearing are sometimes used synonymously, they are quite different. Hearing is simply the automatic response to sound.



FIGURE 2

In moments of silence, we create space for contemplation. By muting the external chatter (i.e., cars, planes, etc.), we invite the whisper of our inner thoughts to be clearly heard.

Silence teaches us patience, restraint, and the power of tranquility in a world filled with noises, sounds, and voices. Most of these sounds cannot be avoided. Instead, people choose to listen to important sounds, while ignoring insignificant ones.<sup>12</sup> In comparison, listening requires motivation and effort to understand this concept. Hearing requires concentration on the sounds with the intention of understanding what the speaker is saying. The listener employs an attentive ear to interpret and make sense of what’s being conveyed. The Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, Lao Tzu, stated, “silence is a source of great strength.”<sup>13</sup>

### FIDELITY

Fidelity defined is, the quality or state of being faithful, the steadfast commitment to promises, principles, and relationships.<sup>14</sup> Faithfulness is the beginning of trust and integrity, binding individuals together in bonds of loyalty and mutual respect. It teaches the value of honoring one’s word, standing by personal convictions, and remaining true to ourselves and others, even in the face of adversity. It requires courage and fosters resilience and the fortitude needed to weather life’s storms.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/esoteric>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.worldhistory.org/Euripides/#google\\_vignette](https://www.worldhistory.org/Euripides/#google_vignette)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/silence>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> <https://study.com/academy/lesson/hearing-vs-listening-importance-of-listening-skills-for-speakers.html#:~:text=Hearing%20is%20the%20ability%20to,brain%20to%20interpret%20the%20message>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/5993-silence-is-a-source-of-great-strength>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/fidelity-2017-06-30>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

The Bible's Book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, verse one (11:1) describes faith as, "...the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."<sup>15</sup> From this passage, we see that the central feature of faith is confidence or trust. Faith goes beyond religious beliefs to encompass trust in a higher power, the teachings/lessons, and the ties that bind brothers together. In the Scottish Rite, faith serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration, guiding members on their journey of self-exploration.



**A fool is known by his speech, and a wise man by silence.**

Pythagoras

Within the construct of Freemasonry, fidelity and faith form the bedrock upon which the organization stands. Through fidelity and faith, Freemasonry cultivates a sense of belonging and purpose, and empowers members to strive for excellence in their personal and Masonic endeavors.

#### **LOCAL ACCOUNT**

Each year, John G. Riley Consistory #207, encamped in the Valley of Tallahassee, Orient of Florida, presents among others, the Secret Master award during its annual banquet. It is presented to the frater who most exemplified the tenets of the fourth degree. Generally, this award is characterized as a "behind the scenes brother," who displays loyalty and fidelity – without expectations. The Commander-in-Chief, along with both the First and Second Lieutenant Commanders, decide whether the award will be given and to whom. A photo of the award can be seen in **Figure 2**.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The benefits of the lessons learned in the Scottish Rite degrees are numerous. They provide a structure for personal/spiritual development and facilitate a path toward service to humanity. By encouraging reflection and introspection, these lessons help members cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Embracing these teachings can encourage meaningful relationships, uncover new opportunities and contribute to the pursuit of harmony. Additionally, the result can create a ripple effect, positively impacting individual members and their families and communities. Moreover, the principles of the Secret Master degree highlight the legacy of those who came before and paved the way for posterity, thereby, inspiring the next generation to continue the Great Work of this Grand Ole' Order.



<sup>15</sup> King James Version, The Bible. Hebrews 11:1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2011%3A1&version=KJV>. Accessed March 16, 2024.

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