



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

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## Lessons From the 6<sup>th</sup> Degree: The Faults of All Men and Masons



By **ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°**  
Editor-in-Chief

The 6° is often overlooked as one of the shorter degrees with little substance. The ceremony starts off with King Solomon and King Hiram of Tyre. King Hiram brought King Solomon cedar and fir trees, along with gold. In return, King Solomon gave King Hiram twenty cities. However, King Hiram was outraged to find out that the cities are but small, insignificant villages among ruined cities.

While Hiram was confronting Solomon about this, Hiram notices someone listening in on their conversation. He seizes this person, who turns out to be Zabud, a loyal servant of Solomon, and hands him over to the guards. Hiram wants Zabud punished while Solomon says that he deserves a fair trial. Zabud explains that he was afraid that Hiram meant King Solomon harm, so he was standing by in case he had to quickly act to defend his king.

Zabud is rewarded and Solomon informs Hiram that he meant to rebuild the cities, but that he was delayed because the Master died. As a kind of apology, Hiram returns the cities to Solomon and donates a large sum of gold to the construction of the temple.

The story is simple and straightforward. Hiram jumped to conclusions and was quick to judgement, while Zabud was a loyal servant who just wanted to protect his king. In *Morals and Dogma*, Illustrious Brother Pike deeply expands on these seemingly minor interactions between characters. His writings for this degree are notably uncomplicated and focus on flaws that most Masons would probably notice among the brethren in their lodge and themselves.

Pike explains that what we do in life, and in Masonry, is not a zero-sum game. Men should not be envious of others when they succeed and should not plot for others to fail in the future because they were successful. He touches on how we can nitpick at even the most respected brothers among us; how we may try to belittle their accomplishments or good deeds by remembering small mistakes or misgivings that they made in the past. At the same time, though, every man has a wealth of knowledge on the poor choices that he himself made in life. If, out of envy, a man tries to tear down the best of men among us by savoring over the small mistakes that they

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*The Judgement of Solomon* (1842) by Frederic Henri Schopin.

## The Awesome Responsibility of Judgement

By **ADAM B. OLIVIER 32°**  
Editor-in-Chief

King Solomon's judgement in 1 Kings is an ancient example of wisdom and impartiality. Essentially, two women are living together in a home, and each woman has a baby. One of the children is smothered to death and both women claim that the living baby as their own. They cannot settle their disagreement, so the women bring their dispute to King Solomon.

Solomon calls for a sword to be brought to him and declares that he will have the baby cut in half and that each mother will get a piece. The first mother is satisfied with this and essentially says that if she cannot have the baby, then neither of the women can. The second woman begs King Solomon not to go through with his decision, and she says that the other woman can have the baby if it means that the child can live. King Solomon determines that the second woman is the mother.

The 7°, "Provost and Judge" contemplates the consequences of one's own actions and the difficulties that surround being a judge. In *Morals and Dogma*, Illustrious Brother Pike mulls over how crucial it is for judges to be impartial and that it is an incredibly difficult job with exceptional responsibility. He weighs how even jurors in democratic countries are called to take their duties seriously and presume the innocence of their fellow citizens.

While it is difficult, men must strive to be as impartial as King Solomon and hope that they can one day be as wise as him. He did

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made in the past, then he may just be a hypocrite who is afraid to see another man succeed.

We also should not forget the anger that King Hiram had for King Solomon before he knew all of the facts. In fact, as we know from this degree, King Hiram ends up realizing that he was too quick to judge both King Solomon and Solomon's servant Zabud. This again is a good lesson for all people and more especially Masons who are in a fraternity of men. Instead of a man making an instant judgement on how he was wronged and getting enraged about it, he should carefully evaluate the situation and get all the facts before he jumps to conclusions. How much more harmonious would lodges be if Masons always took this approach to conflicts?

While that is all well and good, it is not realistic that men can always hold their tempers when they are mistaken (or even when they have been wronged). One of the key lessons of this degree, though, is that men should remain calm and peaceful like King Solomon – they should be peacemakers even when it is tempting to fight fire with fire. If a brother is angry at another, the second brother should remain calm and try to explain the situation to him so that he has all of the facts. Another perspective is that if someone observes two men fighting, he should act a mediator and try to facilitate peace instead of egging them on.

Finally, Pike also touches on a broader topic. The Earth, nature and the products of it, and all the resources of the world exist for man. Man does not exist only for himself but also for the benefit of others. We have a duty to hold up and recognize others for their worthy accomplishments instead of trying to degrade them with mistakes of the past – a man's success will not hurt his compatriot. We also should be generous and helpful to our fellow men. When a man is giving a favor, he should not be keeping an exact record of what he did so he can demand repayment later. Finally, Masons should strive to be peacemakers. Preserving harmony in Masonry, and in life, is crucial to success and to living in a functioning society.

## Announcements

### Houston Valley Dark in August

The Houston Valley of the Scottish Rite will not have a stated meeting during the month of August and will be dark.

### Upcoming Reunion

The next Houston Valley reunion will be three sequential Saturdays: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>.

### 2022-2023 Capital Campaign

Join us in building the Next Chapter of the Houston Scottish Rite's Library Story by contributing to the expansion of the main library shelves. Donations of all sizes welcome!

With a minimum donation of **\$500**: You will have a bookshelf dedicated to you or someone you admire. A nameplate will be engraved and placed on a bookshelf in the Main Library.

Minimum donation of **\$100**: You will receive an Architect's Circle kit (limited supply!) including: Architect's Circle Commemorative Book Bag, Architect's Circle pen, Architect's Circle Certificate, and a book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$50**: You will receive an Architect's Circle pen, and a Book from the Premium book list.

Minimum donation of **\$25**: You will receive a book from the Premium book list.

For more info visit [www.HoustonScottishRite.org](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org) and click "Education Foundation" under the "Philanthropy" tab.

### Per Capita Program

The endowed, life members, and dues exempt members are encouraged to donate \$30 or more per year to offset their per capita membership assessment. Donations can be made through the Valley's website at: [www.HoustonScottishRite.org](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org).

Click "Dues Donations and Meal Fees" under the "Membership" tab.

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not make jump to conclusions or make any hasty judgements about the women. Instead, he recognized the conflict between them and came up with a reasonable test for not just who is the real mother, but who should be the real mother.

When a person must act as a judge, Pike wrote, "Those who are invested with the power of judgement should judge the causes of all persons uprightly and impartially, without any personal consideration of the power of the mighty, or bribe of the rich, or the needs of the poor. That is the cardinal rule, which no one will dispute; though many fail to observe it. But they must do more. They must divest themselves of prejudice and preconception. They must hear patiently, remember accurately, and weigh carefully the facts and the arguments offered before them. The must not leap hastily to conclusions, nor form opinions before they have heard all..."

Whether it is in common life or in Masonry, Masons can consider that it is practically important to know how to judge. Every man owes it to his fellow citizens to be impartial and fair when he serves on a jury because that would be the very least he would expect if he was defending himself in court. In Masonry, a worshipful master is given significant power over the proceedings of the lodge as its presiding officer. He has to use his better judgement to moderate discussions and to make judgement calls to ensure that things run smoothly. At the same time, the junior warden must always be prepared to preside over a Masonic Trial if called to do so by his lodge.

Simply put we have to consider how we would want to be treated in a court of law, in the lodge, or amongst friends when considering what it is to be fair and impartial with judgement. If all else fails, one call always recall this passage: "Judge not, lest ye yourselves be judged: for whatsoever judgement ye measure unto others, the same shall in turn be measured unto you."

## Photo From June Meeting



Photo by Jason Rees 32° KCCH. Photo of XXXX 32° KCCH, Right Worshipful Brian R. Dodson 33° IGH and Personal Representative of the S.G.I.G., and Cody Webb 32°.

## Contributing to *The Houston Valley Herald*

If you are interested, contact Brother Adam B. Olivier 32° at [HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com](mailto:HoustonValleyHerald@gmail.com) if you wish to contribute articles or pictures for future issues of *The Houston Valley Herald*.