

Thomas Lodge "THE STARBOARD" Newsletter

In Freemasonry, the sun and the moon together represent wisdom, power and goodness while the blazing star is an emblem of divinity and resurrection (not surprising since one of the main thrusts of the Craft is to guide and propel the members along the path that leads to true light).

The sun is one of the Lesser Lights of Freemasonry, and as a source of light it is a reminder to all Masons to strive for intellectual enlightenment. This is also one of the reasons why all our ceremonies are performed facing East in the Lodge. Ritual proclaims that "as the sun rises in the East to open and adorn the day, so rises the Worshipful Master in the east ..." Together with the moon, which governs and rules the night, the sun represents the active forces of nature, which must be in balance for the latter to exist.

According to some contemporary authors, Freemasons today claim to meet symbolically at noon on the basis of the "universality" of the Craft and therefore the sun is always at its meridian with respect to Freemasonry (to observe the sun at its meridian height which is the glory and beauty of the day). We Masons make reference to God as "the most high", a clear reference and description of Re, the sun god of the Egyptians in his ultimate position: at the zenith of the heavens at noontime.

Along with the mosaic pavement and indented tessel, the blazing star is one of the ornaments of the Lodge and features prominently during the Entered Apprentice lecture; it symbolizes the sun and at the same time the Great Architect of the Universe, (faithful reliance on Divine Providence) reminding us of the "omnipresence of the Almighty" and that the fact that "wherever we may be assembled, God is in the midst of us, seeing our actions and observing the secret intents and desires of our hearts".

The star is also identified with the Star of Bethlehem that alerted the shepherds to the birth of Jesus and guided the Three Wise Men, who on the back of camels rode across the desert to bring offerings to the newborn King.

Connections to astronomy are undeniable, its presence felt throughout Masonic teachings and writings, ceremonies and ritual, paintings and drawings; keeping always in mind that "discoveries" in this field were hot topics during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and were closely monitored by the Church.

The second of the Lesser Lights in Freemasonry, The moon, can be found in the Book of Genesis in which it is related how on the fourth day of creation, God "made two great lights, one to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night". It also has undeniable links to alchemy in medieval times, it was they who first gave the moon a symbolic and ritualistic significance in those turbulent times (for them, it stood for silver and was used to depict

that metal in their secret writings). The alchemists were a group of mystics dating from around the 12th. Century and the forerunners of modern chemists (one of their key beliefs was that base metals such as lead, could be turned into precious ones, like gold). But they were also great philosophers who used symbols and drawings extensively in their teachings. Much of the graphic symbolism in Masonry such as images of the Plumb, Square, Level, Rough and Perfect Ashlars owe their existence to earlier alchemical texts and writings.

In a more general symbolic context, the moon is also associated with our Senior Warden, who is positioned to the West of the Master during ritual; according to some, just as the moon's light is a reflection of that of the sun, the Senior Warden reflects the light of the Lodge's Master. In this context, it is also significant that the Junior Deacon, who acts as the messenger of the Senior Warden within the Lodge, wears the square and compasses enclosing the moon as his Masonic jewel.

JANUARY NOTABLES:

1702 Born. Bro. Benjamin Franklin, oldest signer of the Declaration of Independence and also The Constitution. Scientist, Diplomat, Author, Printer, Publisher and Philanthropist.

1735 Born. Bro. Paul Revere, American patriot and leader of the Boston Tea Party, silversmith and founder of our Lodge.

1798 Bro. Edward Jenner introduces the small-pox vaccine while Master of his Lodge.

1880 Born. Bro. General Douglas Mac Arthur, WWII hero.

1880 Born. Bro. W.C. Fields, entertainer.

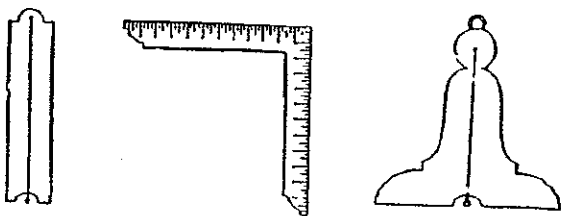
1895 Born. Bro. J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director.

1919 Died. Bro. Theodore Roosevelt, US President.

1936 Died. Bro. Rudyard Kipling, famed author.

QUOTABLE QUOTE:

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble" Helen Keller



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