

A MASONIC MINUTE

From Darkness to Light Sons of Light The Hoodwink

It is that season of the year as we approach the Winter Solstice when the hours of daylight recede in our part of the globe. From ancient times, people have compensated for this time of increasing darkness by burning fires, lighting candles, and using the various sources of light at their disposal. In our own time we festoon our houses and buildings with strings of bright coloured lights. It is no coincidence that the festivals of light – Christmas and Hanukkah – are celebrated at this time.



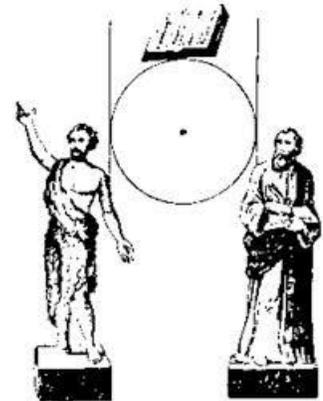
In early civilizations, ancient people observing the apparent movement of the sun, rising daily from the east and setting in the west and moving annually from south to north and then returning from north to south, were filled with awe and wonder. It controlled their lives with the seasons of seedtime and harvest upon which they depended for survival. The radiant Sun, the source of light and life, was worshipped as their God.

Fiat Lux

According to the Creation Myth in the Book of Genesis, Light is the first thing God created. “*Let there be light, and there was Light.*” In the Koran, “*God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth.*” Light is a fundamental feature of nearly all founding myths. In Greek mythology, Hyperion the Titan god of light, is the son of Ourans (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth).

Ex oriente lux

In Freemasonry, the Sun “*that glorious luminary of nature*” is a significant symbol in our ritual. In times past lodges held the annual installation ceremonies in celebration on one of the two Saints John days – St. John the Baptist 24 June and St. John the Evangelist 27 December. A few lodges in our Jurisdiction still hold to that tradition.¹ It will be noted that these dates closely coincide with the Summer Solstice and Winter Solstice respectively. In the 17th century English Freemasons were known as ‘St. John’s Men.’ This is curious as neither of the Saints John is associated with the stonemason’s trade or architecture. However, it is not surprising that our operative predecessors, having a close relationship with the Church as their employer, would adopt Patron Saints from the Ecclesiastical calendar.



¹ e.g. Niagara No. 2, Niagara-on-the-Lake, the oldest Lodge on the Grand Register.

The Saints John are known in Freemasonry as ‘The Two Great Parallels.’ As with all symbols there are a number of interpretations: the point within the circle, the centre, the circumference. All have profound significance in our rituals.

The first Grand Lodge was established on St. John’s Day, 24 June 1717 in London when four old lodges met at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern under the shadow of St. Paul’s Cathedral and elected a Grand Master. Twelve lodges in our jurisdiction are denominated St. John.

In former times Freemasons were known as ‘**Sons of Light.**’ We equate Light with knowledge and Darkness with ignorance. Hence the Freemason seeks Light. We express this desire when we declare that the purpose of Freemasonry is to “*cultivate and enlighten the mind.*” This is the intellectual challenge which Freemasonry presents. Masonry is a knowledge based institute of learning, the oldest and largest in the world..

“In all time, truth has been hidden under symbols, and often under a succession of allegories where veil after veil had to be penetrated before the true Light was reached, and the essential truth stood revealed.”²

When we enter the Lodge we enter the Temple of the Mind – a different world apart. In this sense Initiation provides a changed perspective. Henceforth, the Freemason sees things in a new light. It enables him to be at home in the world at a deeper level. This we term ‘*enlightenment.*’

The quest for the golden light which is beyond price

The Hoodwink (blindfold) is used at Initiation as a symbol of the darkness of ignorance. When it is removed, the first thing the Candidate sees are the Three Great Lights, and the first elements that are explained to him are these and the Three Lesser Lights. However, ‘*enlightenment*’ is not immediate. As a genuine seeker for knowledge, anxious for education, anxious for instruction, it requires commitment, diligence and devotion, serious study and quiet reflection. Like the Sun that moves almost unperceived across the heavens, it dawns gradually upon the serious candidate with the daily acquisition of Masonic knowledge.



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² Pike, Albert. **Morals and Dogma**, p. 246