

STELLAR THEOLOGY
AND
MASONIC ASTRONOMY;

OR,

*THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF ANCIENT AND MODERN
MYSTERIES EXPLAINED.*

BY

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1882.

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PART FIRST.

- I. INTRODUCTION.—A FEW WORDS TO THE MASONIC FRATERNITY.
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- III. A CHAPTER OF ASTRONOMICAL FACTS.
- IV. WHAT THE ANCIENTS KNEW ABOUT ASTRONOMY.

I.

A FEW WORDS TO THE MASONIC FRATERNITY.

THE writer of this work was for a long time in considerable doubt as to the propriety of its publication—not because he had any lack of faith in the truth of the theory it advocates, but from a fear that the revelations it contains might be thought unlawful according to a strict construction of the masonic obligation. But, after consulting with many conscientious as well as eminent members of the fraternity, the author was confirmed in his belief that nothing is said in the book which discloses any of the *essential secrets* of the order.

The “essential secrets” of freemasonry are defined by Dr. Oliver, in his “Dictionary of Symbolical Masonry,” as consisting of nothing more “than the signs, grips, pass-words, and tokens essential to the preservation of the society from the inroads of impostors, together with certain symbolical emblems, the technical terms appertaining to which serve as a sort of universal language by which the members of the fraternity can distinguish each other in all places and countries where lodges are instituted.” Now, although in the following pages the masonic tradition as to the history of an important masonic personage is freely alluded to, nowhere is there anything said, or even implied,

by which any of the essential secrets of the craft are placed in peril ; nor is there a particle of information given which can be of use to unprincipled persons, however acute, who might desire to impose themselves upon the fraternity as having a right to its benefits and honors. The masonic reader should also bear in mind that many things in the following pages, which are to him full of masonic significance, will appear to the uninitiated but an expression of some of the simplest facts in the science of astronomy, long established and known to all.

Says Gadicke, a masonic writer of repute : “With the increase of enlightenment and rational reflection, it is admitted that a brother may both speak and write much upon the order without becoming a traitor to its secrets. . . . Inquiries into the history of the order, and *the true meaning of its hieroglyphics and ceremonies* by learned brethren, can not be considered treason, for the order itself recommends the study of its history, and that every brother should instruct his fellows as much as possible. It is the same with the printed explanation of the moral principles and *symbols* of the order. We are recommended to study them incessantly, until we have made ourselves masters of the valuable information they contain ; and, when our learned and cautious brethren publish the result of their inquiries, they ought to be most welcome to the craft.” These remarks of

Gadicke are quoted with approbation by Dr. Oliver, who himself says, in the introduction to his "Landmarks":

"No hypothesis can be more untenable than that which forebodes evil to the masonic institution from the publication of scientific treatises illustrative of its philosophy and moral tendency. The lodge lectures, in their most ample and extended form, however pleasing and instructive soever they may be, are unsatisfactory and inconclusive. They are merely elementary, and do not amply and completely illustrate any one peculiar doctrine. As they are usually delivered in nine tenths of our lodges, they are monotonous, and not perfectly adapted to the end for which they are framed, or for the effect they are intended to produce. For this reason it is that literary and scientific men, who have been tempted to join our ranks in the hope of opening a new source of intellectual enjoyment, and of receiving an accession of novel ideas for their reflection and delight, so frequently retire, if not with disgust, at least with mixed feelings of sorrow and regret, at the unprofitable sacrifice of so much valuable time which might have been applied to a better purpose." He adds that, "if the authorized lectures of masonry were amplified and illustrated, such instances would not only rarely occur, but our lodges would become the resort of all the talent and intelligence in the country."

Dr. Mackey, who in America holds the highest rank as a masonic writer, says: "The European masons are far more liberal in their views of the obligation of secrecy than the English or Americans. There are few things, indeed, which a French or German masonic writer will refuse to discuss with the utmost frankness. It is now beginning to be very generally admitted—and English and American writers are acting on the admission—that the only real *aporrheta* (essential secrets) of freemasonry are the modes of recognition and the peculiar and distinctive ceremonies of the order, and to these last it is claimed that reference may be *publically made* for the purpose of *scientific investigation*, provided that the reference be made so as to be obscure to the profane and intelligible only to the initiated." (Symbolism—Synoptical Index, *Aporrheta*.)

Many masons who do not make themselves familiar with the standard and authorized masonic authors, like Dr. Oliver in England, and Pike, Mackey, and Morris in America, are not aware how freely many parts of our ritual are spoken of by brothers occupying the most distinguished positions in the fraternity.

In this work "I have been scrupulously careful about the admission of a single sentence from the peculiar lectures of masonry which has not already appeared in a printed form in one or other of our legitimate publications."

In speaking of the masonic traditions and legends, I have used no greater freedom than other masonic writers whose works are authorized by the highest masonic bodies in England, Germany, France, and America; and, in view of all these considerations, have come to the conclusion that it was not wise to permit an unnecessary and unrequired degree of caution to longer delay the publication of truths which are, as I am persuaded, of great importance and interest to the craft.

II.

THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES DESCRIBED.

IF we closely examine the elder forms of religious worship, we will find in most of them that God is worshiped under the symbol of the sun. This is not only true of those nations called pagan, but we also find in the Bible itself the sun alluded to as the most perfect and appropriate symbol of the creator. The sun is the most splendid and glorious object in nature. The regularity of its course knows no change. It is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." It is the physical and magnetic source of all life and motion. Its light is a type of eternal truth; its warmth of universal benevolence. It is therefore not strange that man in all ages has selected the sun as the highest and most perfect emblem of God. There is a natural tendency, however, in the human mind, to confound all symbols with the person or thing which they were at first only intended to illustrate. In the course of time we therefore find that most

nations forgot the worship of the true God, and began to adore the sun itself, which they thus deified and personified. The sun thus personified was made the theme of allegorical history, emblematic of his yearly passage through the twelve constellations.

The zodiac is the apparent path of the sun among the stars. It was divided by the ancients into twelve equal parts, composed of clusters of stars, named after "living creatures," typical of the twelve months. This glittering belt of stars was therefore called the *zodiac*, that word meaning "living creatures," being derived from the Greek word *zodiakos*, which comes from *zo-on*, an animal. This latter word is compounded directly from the primitive Egyptian radicals, *zo*, life, and *on*, a being.

The sun, as he pursued his way among these "living creatures" of the zodiac, was said, in allegorical language, either to assume the nature of or to triumph over the sign he entered. The sun thus became a Bull in *Taurus*, and was worshiped as such by the Egyptians under the name of Apis, and by the Assyrians as Bel, Baal, or Bul. In *Leo* the sun became a Lion-slayer, Hercules, and an Archer in *Sagittarius*. In *Pisces*, the Fishes—he was a fish—Dagon, or Vishnu, the fish-god of the Philistines and Hindoos. When the sun enters *Capricornus* he reaches his lowest southern declination; afterward as he emerges from that sign the days become longer, and the Sun grows rapidly in light and heat; hence we are told in mythology that the Sun, or Jupiter, was suckled by a goat. The story of the twelve labors of Hercules is but an allegory of the passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac, and past the constellations in proximity thereto.

The beautiful virgin of the zodiac, *Virgo*, together with the Moon, under a score of different names, furnishes the female element in these mythological stories, the wonderful adventures of the gods. These fables are most of them absurd enough if understood as real histories, but, the allegorical key being given, many of them are found to contain profound and sublime astronomical truths. This key was religiously kept secret by the priests and philosophers, and was

only imparted to those who were initiated into the MYSTERIES. The profane and vulgar crowd were kept in darkness, and believed in and worshiped a real Hercules or Jupiter, whom they thought actually lived and performed all the exploits and underwent all the transformations of the mythology.

By these means the priests of Egypt ruled the people with a despotic power. The fables of the mythology disclosed to them grand scientific truths, and to them only. The very stories themselves served to perpetuate those truths for the benefit of the initiated, and also formed an easy vehicle for their transmission. Books were not only rare and difficult of multiplication, but it is also probable that, in order that scientific knowledge might be concealed, it was considered unlawful to commit it to writing. If in special cases it became an absolute necessity to do so, the sacred hieroglyphs were employed. These were known only to the initiated; there was another sort of written characters used by the common people. (Rawlinson's "Herodotus," Appendix to Book II, Chapter V.)

Science was thus for the most part orally transmitted from one hierophant to another. While an abstruse and difficult lecture is not easy, either to remember or to repeat, on the contrary, a mythological tale can with ease be retained in the memory and communicated to another, together with the key for its interpretation. These fables, therefore, served a threefold purpose: 1. They kept the secrets of science from all but those who understood the key to them; 2. Being themselves easy to remember, they served, on the principle of the art of *mneumonics*, or artificial memory, to keep alive the recollection of scientific facts which otherwise might be lost; 3. Being the means of keeping the people in ignorance, by their use the priests were enabled to rule them through their superior knowledge of the secrets of nature, which gave them the power of working apparent miracles.

The science in which the Egyptian priesthood were most proficient, and which they most jealously guarded, was that of astronomy. The people worshiped the sun, moon, and stars as gods, and a knowledge of their true nature would have

at once put an end to the influence of the priests, who were believed by the ignorant and superstitious crowd to be able to withhold or dispense, by prayers, invocations, and sacrifices, the divine favor. The priest of a pretended god, when once his god is exposed, stands before the world a convicted impostor. To deny the divinity of the sun, moon, and stars, or, what was the same thing, to permit science to disclose their true nature to the masses of the people, was consequently held by the priesthood of Egypt as the highest of crimes. By a knowledge of astronomy the priests were able to calculate and to predict eclipses of the sun and moon, events beheld with superstitious awe and fear by the multitude. Seeing how certainly these predictions, when thus made, were fulfilled, the priests were credited with the power to foretell other events, and to look into the future generally. So they cast horoscopes and assumed to be prophets.

Of course, a knowledge of astronomy diffused among the people would have been fatal to these pretensions. The facts of astronomy were therefore, for these reasons, most carefully hidden from the common people, and the priesthood only communicated them to each other, veiled in allegorical fables, the key to which was disclosed to him only who had taken the highest degrees of the Mysteries, and given the most convincing proofs of his fidelity and zeal.

The names under which the sun was personified were many, but the one great feature, most prolific of fables, was his great decline in light and heat during winter, and his renewal in glory and power at the vernal equinox and summer solstice, which gave rise to all that class of legends which represent the sun-god (under various names) as dying and being restored to life again.

Thus we are told, in the Egyptian sacred legend, that *Osiris*, or the Sun, was slain by *Typhon*, a gigantic monster, typical of darkness and the evil powers of nature. The body was placed in a chest, thrown into the Nile, and swept out to sea. Isis, or the Moon personified as a goddess, ransacks the whole earth in search of the body, which she finds horribly mutilated. She joins the dismembered parts, and raises him to life again.

In the Greek mythology we are told that

Adonis (the Lord, or sun-god) is slain, but returns to life again for six months each year—thus dying in the fall and winter months and returning to life again during the spring and summer.

The ritual of the Mysteries in Egypt, India, and Greece, was founded upon this legend, in some form, of the death and resurrection of the personified sun-god.

The Egyptian Mysteries of Osiris and Isis were in the form of a mystic drama, representing the death by violence of Osiris (the sun-god), the search for his body by Isis, the Moon, and its finding and being raised to life and power again. In the celebration of these Mysteries the *neophyte* was made to perform all the mysterious wanderings of the goddess amid the most frightful scenes. He was guided by one of the initiated, who wore a mask representing a dog's head, in allusion to the bright star *Sothis* (Sirius, or the dog-star), so called because the rising of that star each year above the horizon just before day gave warning of the approaching inundation of the Nile. The word *Sothis* means the "barker," or "monitor."

The candidate was by this guide conducted through a dark and mysterious labyrinth. With much pain he struggled through involved paths, over horrid chasms, in darkness and terror. At length he arrived at a stream of water, which he was directed to pass. Suddenly, however, he was assaulted and arrested by three men, disguised in grotesque forms, who, taking a cup of water from the stream, forced the terrified candidate to first drink of it. This was the water of forgetfulness, by drinking which all his former crimes were to be forgotten, and his mind prepared to receive new instructions of virtue and truth.

The attack of *Typhon*, or the spirit of darkness, typical of the evil powers of nature, upon *Osiris*, who is slain, was also enacted as the initiation progressed, and amid the most terrible scenes, during which the "judgment of the dead" was also represented, and the punishments of the wicked exhibited as realities to the candidate. The search for the body of Osiris, which was concealed in the mysterious chest or "ark," followed. The mutilated remains were at last found, and deposited amid loud cries of sorrow and despair. The initiation closed with the return of

Osiris to life and power. The candidate now beheld, amid effulgent beams of light, the joyful mansions of the blessed, and the resplendent plains of paradise.

"I saw the sun at midnight" (says Apuleius, speaking of his own initiation into the Mysteries of Isis) "shining with its brilliant light, and I approached the presence of the gods beneath, and the gods of heaven, and stood near and worshiped them." (See "Metamorphoses.")

At this stage of the initiation, all was life, light, and joy. The candidate was himself figuratively considered to have risen to a new and more perfect life. The past was dead, with all its crimes and unhappiness. Henceforth the candidate was under the especial protection of Isis, to whose service he dedicated his new life. (See Apuleius.)

The sublime mysteries of religion and the profoundest teachings of science were now revealed to him, and satisfied his thirst for knowledge, while the possession of power as one of the hierarchy gratified his ambition.

The Mysteries of all the other nations of antiquity were quite similar to those of Egypt, and were no doubt derived from them.

In India the chief deity was triune, and consisted of *Brahma*, the Creator, *Vishnu*, the Preserver, and *Siva*, the Destroyer. Brahma was the representative of the rising sun, and the others respectively of the meridian and the setting sun. The aspirant having been sprinkled with water and divested of his shoes, was caused to circumambulate the altar three times.

At the east, west, and south points of the mystic circle were stationed triangularly the three representatives of the sun-god, denoting the rising, setting, and meridian sun. Each time the aspirant arrived in the south he was made to exclaim, "I copy the example of the sun, and follow his benevolent course."

After further ceremonies, consisting in the main of solemn admonitions by the chief Brahman to lead a life of purity and holiness, the aspirant was again placed in charge of his conductor, and enjoined to maintain strict silence under the severest penalty; told to summon up all his fortitude and betray no symptoms of cowardice.

Amid the gloom then began bewailings for the loss of the sun-god *Sita*, followed by ceremonies of fearful import, and scenic representations of a terrible nature. The candidate was made to personify *Vishnu*, and engaged in a contest with the powers of darkness, which, as the representative of the god, he subdued. This was followed by a dazzling display of light, and a view of Brahma exalted, glorified, and triumphant.

In Persia the candidate was prepared by numerous lustrations performed with water, fire, and honey. A prolonged fast for fifty days in a gloomy cavern followed, where in solitude he endured cold, hunger, and stripes. After this the candidate was introduced for initiation into another cavern, where he was received on the point of a sword presented to, and slightly wounding, his naked left breast. He was next crowned with olive, anointed with the sacred oil, and clad in enchanted armor. He was then taken through the seven stages of his initiation. As he traversed the circuitous mazes of the gloomy cavern his fortitude was tried by fire and water, and by apparent combats with wild beasts and hideous forms, typical of the evil powers of nature, in the midst of darkness, relieved only by flashes of lightning and the pealing of thunder. He was next made to behold the torments of the wicked in Hades. This was followed by a view of Elysium, and the initiation concluded by a display of divine light and the final triumph of *Ormuzd*, the sun-god, over all the powers of darkness.

In Greece the Mysteries were denominated the lesser and greater Mysteries. A chosen few only were admitted to the latter, and they were bound to secrecy by the most frightful oaths.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were performed by the Athenians at Eleusis every fifth year, and were subsequently introduced at Rome by Adrian. These Mysteries were the same as those of Orpheus. A magnificent temple of vast extent having been erected for their celebration at Eleusis, they subsequently became known as the Eleusinian Mysteries. The principal officers who conducted the ceremonies were the Hierophant, the Torch-Bearer, the Priest, the Archon, or King, and the Mystagogue.

The hierophant appeared seated upon a magnificent throne, adorned with gold. He was dressed in a royal robe ; over his head a rainbow was arched, and there also the moon and seven stars were seen. Around his neck was suspended a golden globe. These expressive symbols all point out the fact that the hierophant represented the sun. Before him were twenty-four attendants, clad in white robes and wearing golden crowns. These represented the twenty-four ancient constellations of the upper hemisphere. Around him burned with dazzling radiance seven lights, denoting the seven planets. The torch-bearer, whose duty it was to lead the procession when the wanderings of Rhea commenced in search of the body of the lost god, may have been intended to represent the feeble light of the moon, since Rhea and Ceres were both identical, according to Herodotus, with the Egyptian Isis. The duty of the mystagogue was to impose silence on the assembly, and command the profane to withdraw. The priest officiated at the altar, and bore the symbol of the moon, being, like the Egyptian priests of Isis, devoted to her service.

The archon, or king, preserved order, offered also prayers and sacrifices, compelled all unworthy and uninitiated persons to retire at the order of the mystagogue, and punished all who presumed to disturb the sacred rites. The aspirant was required to pass through a period of probation, during which he prepared himself by chastity, fasting, prayer, and penitence. He was then dressed in sacred garments, crowned with myrtle, and blindfolded. After being thus "duly and truly prepared" he was delivered over to the Mystagogue, who began the initiation by the prescribed proclamation :

"*Exas, exas, este Bebeloi!*"—"Depart hence, all ye profane!")

"The aspirant was then conducted on a long and painful pilgrimage through many dark and circuitous passages: sometimes it seemed to him as if he were ascending steep hills, walking over flinty ground, which tore his feet at every step, and again down deep valleys and through dense and difficult forests. Meanwhile as he advanced, sounds of terror surrounded him, and he heard

the fierce roar of wild beasts and the hissing of serpents. At length, the bandage being removed from his eyes, he found himself in what seemed a wild and uncultivated country. The light of day never penetrated this gloomy region, and a pale and spectral glare just served to light up the horrors of the scene. Lions, tigers, hyenas, and venomous serpents menaced him at every point, while thunder, lightning, fire and water, tempest and earthquake, threatened the destruction of the entire world. He hardly recovers from his surprise and terror, his eyes no sooner become accustomed to the twilight of the place, than he discovers before him a huge iron door, on which is this inscription: 'He who would attain to the highest and most perfect state, and rise to the sphere of absolute bliss, must be purified by *fire, air, and water.*' He had scarcely read these words when the door turned on its hinges, and he was thrust into a vast apartment also shrouded in gloom" (Arnold).

Then began the wanderings of Rhea in search of the remains of Bacchus, her body begirt with a serpent, and a flaming torch in her hand, uttering as she goes wild and frantic shrieks and lamentations for her loss. Those already initiated join in, and mix their howlings with hers, blended with mournful music. By means of certain mechanical contrivances (see Salverti's "Philosophy of Magic," vol. i, Chapter X; also, Brewster's "Natural Magic") the plains of Tartarus were presented as realities before his eyes. He beheld the flames amid which the wicked suffered the purification by *fire*. Behind him yawned a dismal and dark abyss, from which issued a burning wind and voices of woe and suffering. Approaching the brink he looks down, and sees some suspended on the sharp points of the rocks, and others impaled on a mighty wheel, which turned without ceasing, thus working their way toward heaven through the purgatorial *air*. The purification by *water* was represented by the horrors of a gloomy lake, into which souls less guilty were plunged. Apuleius also alludes to this purification by fire, air, and water. He says, "I approached the confines of death, and, having trod on the threshold of Proserpine, I returned therefrom, being borne through all the elements."

As the aspirant thus wanders among these startling scenes, surrounded by the wild cries and lamentations of the goddess and her train, at a



OSIRIS.

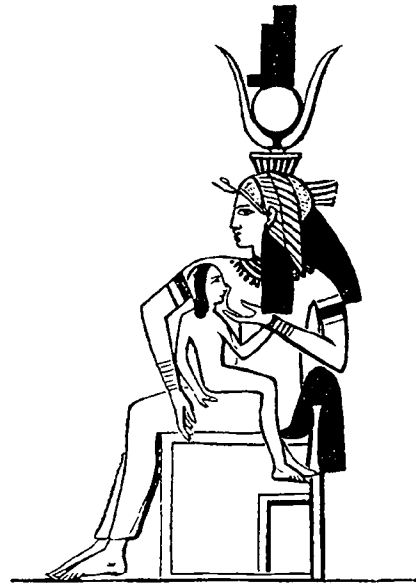
The god is represented emblematically as a man with a bull's head, hieroglyphically denoting the sun in Taurus. In one hand he holds the symbol of eternal life, in the other the emblem of power, above which appears the name of the god in hieroglyphics, which, by a singular coincidence, is composed almost entirely of masonic emblems.

signal from the hierophant a sudden turn is given to their feelings. The gloom begins to disappear, and their cries of grief are changed to joyful and triumphant shouts of "*Eurekamen, eurekamen!*" ("We have found it!") The *euresis*, or discovery of the body, is then celebrated, and the mangled form of the murdered sun-god restored from death and darkness to life and light and power.

Another iron gate, heretofore concealed, is now thrown open. The Orphic hymn is chanted, and a splendid spectacle of the Elysian fields and the bliss of the purified presented. The four-and-twenty attendants of the hierophant prostrate themselves before him, and, amid strains of solemn music, the neophyte receives the benediction and instructions of the hierophant. (See Rev. A. C. Arnold's "History of Secret Societies"; Bishop Warburton on the "Mysteries"; Oliver's "History of Initiation"; Apuleius's

"Metamorphoses"; and Salvetti's "History of Magic.")

The Mysteries of the *Cabiria*, or *Kabiri*, of Samothrace, were to the same effect, and were derived from the same Egyptian source—the Mysteries of Osiris and Isis—which they perhaps followed more closely. The candidate, after a term of probation, was purified by water and blood, made to sacrifice a bull and a ram, and to drink of two fountains, the one called *Lethe* (oblivion)



ISIS AND HORUS.



GNOSTIC GEM OF ISIS.

"Isis was wife of Osiris and mother of Horus. She was originally the goddess of the earth, and afterward of the moon. The Greeks identify her both with Demeter, or Ceres, and with Io."—Smith's "Classical Dictionary."

and the other *Mnemosyne* (memory), by which means he lost the recollection of all of his former crimes, and preserved the memory of his new instructions and vows. This is exactly similar to

the Egyptian Mysteries. The candidate was next conducted to a dark cavern, and thence through | by an invisible choir, and all the scenes of terror multiplied.



DIONYSUS, OR BACCHUS.

horrible scenes similar to those before described. The walls were clothed in black, and he was surrounded by all the emblems of decay and death. Terrible phantoms passed and repassed before

These fearful visions were brought to a close by a flood of dazzling light. All the emblems of death vanished. The dead body of the sun-god on the bier was raised and returned to life amid demonstrations of joy and triumph. The candidate was then instructed, sprinkled with water, and a new name given him. This new name, together with a mystic token and sign, was engraved upon a small white stone and presented to him.

The Mysteries of Dionysus were the same as the Eleusinian and those of Bacchus, Dionysus being but one of the names of Bacchus.

The Dionysiac Mysteries and those of the Kabiri prevailed in Asia Minor, and spread through all the cities of Syria. *Hiram, King of Tyre*, was undoubtedly the high-priest of these



CERES, DEMETER, ISIS, ETC.

him. A bier rose up at his feet, and on it was a coffin and a dead body, representing the slain sun-god. A funeral dirge was chanted



VIRGO.

Virgo is the sign the sun enters in August, and was depicted in the zodiac holding in her hands the emblems of the harvest. The identity of Ceres, the goddess of the harvest, with the constellation Virgo, is quite plain. This figure of the fruitful virgin was placed in the zodiac as emblematic of the harvest season, because the sun is in those stars at that time. The word "Virgo" originally implied not only a virgin, but any virtuous matron. By an astronomical allegory this virgin of August became a goddess, who descended to the earth, presided over the harvest, taught mankind agriculture, and was worshiped under various names.