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From the square to the compasses

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, K.Y.C.H.

The Compasses and square are some of our most ancient fraternity's most recognized symbols throughout the world. What do the Compasses and square symbolize and represent and do these great movable lights have the same meanings today as it was intended when past generations of Masons first beheld them in the light? These great implements, the Compasses and square are just two of three of our most important symbols within the Symbolic lodge. Mason's seek light and truth and do not want disingenuous explanations that some random person came up with. The true mason searches for light/knowledge to elevate himself above his most animalistic nature.

Brother Albert Pike searched long and hard for the true meanings behind the Compasses and square. We find in the book Esoterika written by Albert Pike in 1888; "I inquired, some years since, of an eminent English Masonic scholar and antiquarian, Bro William James Hughan, weather the compasses and square were used on the alter in the same positions, in England, as among us, and since what time had they been so used; desiring to be sure that their use was not a novelty, introduced in this country." Brother William James Hughan replied, "I cannot say how long it has been the custom as to the points of the square and compasses in the 1st, 2nd and 3d Degrees. I am inclined to consider it an old one, as it is general."

The compasses and square are not just instruments used in construction their meanings run far deeper. In the ancient world people of the time believed the earth was level with exceptions of the terrain such as mountains and canyons, the square symbolizing the earth or nature. The compasses are employed to lay out circles and transfer measurements and trace exact forms transferring them from one object to another. Esoterika; "The compasses are used to describe circles, and in spherical trigonometry in which the square cannot be used. They are therefore a fit symbol of the sky, the heavens, which form as it were, the roof of a half-sphere, in crossing which the heavenly bodies appear to describe arcs of circles." The square the symbol of the earth and your animal nature and the compasses of the heavens and spiritual and divine.

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The Sun, Moon and Worshipful Master

By Trevon Encalade 32°

Brethren, the Lodge is arranged not merely for ceremony but for instruction. In the EA degree we receive a ritual explanation of the Lesser Lights — the Sun, Moon, and Worshipful Master — and, unknowingly, an introduction to their Qabalistic and Hermetic symbolism. Yet they never appear again in the Blue Lodge degrees; a Mason next meets them in the Scottish Rite's 6th degree, whose jewel depicts the Master under the symbol of Mercury — a choice that lets us see the symbolic East in a new light.

The Sun has in all ages represented generative Light, the Divine source of illumination, shining by its own radiance: the emblem of spiritual vitality, clarity, and truth. The Moon generates no Light; it reflects it, governing rhythm, balance, and order, teaching that Wisdom is the fruit of temperance and discipline. In that jewel, the Master stands as Mercury between them: the Third Principle, not always seen, but always implied.

In alchemical philosophy, Mercury is the transformative agent and reconciler of opposites, moving between realms, carrying messages from above to below. The Master, in his mercurial capacity, is NOT the Sun. He does not create Light, improve upon it, or compete with it. He receives Light, refines himself by it, and disperses it as "good and wholesome instruction." This is divinely-guided self-mastery — a responsibility that, left unchecked, can be corrupted. Here another symbol enters: the hat.

At first glance, the Master's hat resembles a crown, elevating him above his brethren — but symbolically it does the opposite. A crown exposes the head and proclaims personal sovereignty; the Master's hat COVERS it. The crown of the head is the seat of illumination and gateway of Divine inspiration. Covering it declares that Wisdom does not originate with the Master. His authority is derivative, flowing from alignment with the Divine Principle. Where a crown declares the right to rule, the hat declares submission to the Power by which he governs.

Here is the inner alchemy taught at every meeting: the Sun is disciplined aspiration, the Moon is balanced reflection, and the Master, as Mercury, MUST stand as a purified mode of communication. *Cont'd on next page*

Cont'd from front, "the compasses to the square"

When a man exists in the profane world he does not see how his animal/worldly nature consumes him and hangs above him and suppresses his potential to be raised to his heavenly and spiritual potential. Once the brother is exposed by light to this symbol of that very representation of those movable objects, the brother now sees how he must be raised from that animal nature to that divine nature that can only flow from the creator in heaven, rising ever closer to heaven one position at a time. As that brother progresses on that journey towards further lights he is given more instruction in which to build upon and raise his Masonic temple.

The points of the compasses are a representation of man's reason and moral sense; first a man must recognize that this battle exists within him. As your masonic journey progresses you are learning to surpass those bad habits and uncontrolled passions that dominate the world by taking those mystical steps towards the light. A Fellowcraft mason has been taught and shown these essentials to living a better life through his labors of study and zeal based on his duty to make himself and his world a better place.

Once you have mastered those foul appetites that have ruined man and the world since Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, you have now beheld those movable instruments are raised along with your reason and moral sense to all the light of the creator in heaven. We must work hard to reinforce our masonic temples by constantly transcending those earthly natures and promoting in ourselves and others the love of God, the love one another always persistent mastery of our lessons and symbols passed down to us.

When a brother asks are you a Master Mason?

Your response "I am; I have passed from the square to the compasses"

"There is no such uncertainty as a sure thing."
Robert Burns

"Journey Passport" Program
The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

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Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast, we interview *Past Grand Master* of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas, Rite Worshipful Tommy Frederick Griffin. Find out what it is like once elected to the office of Grand Junior Warden and behind the scenes and the challenges of being Grand Master and difficult decisions. So much is covered in this interview with one of the most beloved Past Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

Scan the QR code above for the Houston Valley Podcast

Cont'd from front, "the sun moon and Worshipful"

Without humility, ambition becomes cunning. Without submission to Divine Law, communication becomes manipulation. Without self-mastery, authority becomes ego amplified. When the Master sits in the East — head covered, ego restrained, consciously dependent on the Volume of Sacred Law — he becomes symbolically transparent: Light descends from the Supreme Architect, good and wholesome instruction flows, and harmony prevails.

Not every Mason will sit in the East, but every Mason is called to be a Worshipful Master somewhere in his life — in his home, his profession, his private moral struggles and unseen decisions. The question is not whether he will preside over a Lodge, but:

- Do we govern ourselves well?
- Do we temper our passions and ambitions?
- Do we reflect honestly on our flaws?
- Is our communication free of ulterior motive and ego?
- Do we cover the crown of our ego and submit our will to Divine Law before we speak, judge, advise, or act?

A man who can rule others but not himself is NOT a Master. A man who channels Light into his family, his community, and his conduct — though he may never wear the hat — is more of a Worshipful Master than any who merely held the office. Let us aspire not to office, but to alignment: humble, disciplined, divinely guided conductors of Light, so that wherever we stand, the Light we disperse is not our own, but His who is the origin of all things.

So mote it be

The Tyler's Toast

'Are your glasses all charged in the West and the South?'
The Worshipful Master cries.
'All charged in the West!' '
All charged in the South,'
Came the Wardens' prompt replies.
Then to our final Toast tonight, our glasses freely drain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.
The Mason's social Brotherhood around the festive board,
Reveals a Truth more precious far, than the miser's hoard.
We freely share the bounteous gifts, that generous hearts contain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.
We meet as Masons free and true, and when our work is done,
The merry song and social glass is not unduly won.
And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure mixed with pain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.
Amidst our mirth we drink to all poor Masons o'er the Earth,
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled.
We prize each Brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.
We Masons prize that noble truth, the Scottish peasant told,
that rank is but a guinea stamp: The man himself the gold.
We meet the rich and poor alike, the equal rights maintain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.
Dear Brethren of the Mystic tie, the night is waning fast,
Our work is done, our feast is o'er, this toast must be the last.
Good night to all, once more good night, again that farewell strain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Editor in Chief Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, K.Y.C.H.