

THE HEDGE MASON

A BLOG OF INTERESTING NEWS & COMMENTARY
ON LIBERAL & ESOTERIC FREEMASONRY
& OTHER STUFF



Posts

Comments

Sunday, June 23, 2013

RENÉ GUÉNON ON THE TWO SAINTS JOHN



While summer is generally regarded as a joyful time and the winter season as sad, due to the fact that the former represents in a way the triumph of light and the second that of darkness, the two corresponding solstices are in actuality a character exactly opposite to that indicated. This might appear a strange paradox, and yet is very easy to see it that way given our knowledge of traditional understandings of the annual cycle. In effect, what has peaked already can not but decrease, and what has come to its lowest can not go further, but on the contrary, must begin to grow immediately. So the summer solstice marks the beginning of the downward half

year, and the winter solstice, conversely, the ascending half, and this explains, from the point of view of cosmic significance, these words of John the Baptist, whose birth coincides with the summer solstice, "He (Christ, born in the winter solstice) should grow, and I to fall." It is known that, in the Hindu tradition, the upswing is put in relation to the deva-yana, and the downswing with pitr-yana, therefore, in the zodiac, the sign of Cancer, for the summer solstice, is the "door men", which gives access to pitr-yana, and the sign of Capricorn, for the winter solstice, is the "gate of the gods", which gives access to the deva-yana. Actually, the term "cheerful", ie beneficial and favorable, is the upstream half of the annual cycle, and the "sad" period, ie malefic or unfavorable, appears in the descending part of the year, and the same character belongs naturally, at the door which opens at each solstice of the two periods in which the year is divided by the solar action.

It is known, moreover, that in Christianity the festivals of the two San Juan are directly linked with the two solstices, and, this is very remarkable, although we have never seen it mentioned anywhere, just remember what is expressed in some way by the double meaning of the very name of "John". Indeed, the Hebrew word hanan has both the sense of 'benevolence' and 'mercy' and the 'praise' (it's at least curious that, in our own language, words like "grace" have exactly this double meaning), therefore the name Yahanán [or, rather, Yehohanan] can mean 'mercy of God' and 'praise to God'. And it is easy to see that the first of these two senses seem to agree very specifically to St. John the Baptist, and the second at St. John the Evangelist, but otherwise, it can be said that mercy is obviously "down" and praise, "up", it brings us back to their respective relationships with the two halves of the annual cycle.

Regarding the two Saint Johns and their solstice symbolism, it is interesting to also consider a symbol that seems peculiar to Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry, or at least has not been preserved elsewhere: a circle with a dot in the center, between two parallel tangents, and these tangents are said to represent the two Saints John. Indeed, the circle here is the figure of the annual cycle, and the solar significance, on the other hand, is more manifested in the presence of the dot in the center, as the same figure is both the astrological sign of the sun, and the two parallel lines are tangents to the circle in the two solstice points, marking their characteristic "breakpoints", as these points are, in effect, the limits which the sun can never overcome in the course of its motion, and because these lines correspond to the two solstices and may also be

Welcome to the Hedge Mason Blog, affiliated with the UMURM

A word or two by way of explanation may be worth offering concerning the title of this blog. *Hedge Mason*, like similar terms *Hedge Master*, *Hedge Lodge*, and the more widely recognized *Hedge School*, are terms from Hiberno-English. The latter of these terms, as many Irish will know refers to illicit schools dedicated to the maintenance of Irish culture and language, alongside the class of European Philosophy, including Greek and Latin. These institutions were founded throughout rural Ireland during the Penal era when Irish Gaelic culture was under attack by the English occupier. During this time also, the *Hedge* was added to masonic terms to refer to any individual or institution not approved of by the Anglophone world. These often were lodges and working to advance the cause of Irish independence. It seems a very appropriate term then, for me to use to name this blog.

For quite a while I have observed various blogs and sites relating to Freemasonry, finding both much worth and a few things worth avoiding among them. Fairly quickly it became apparent to me that there was little being published in North America (or elsewhere) that dealt fairly and offering a positive perspective on Freemasonry or the world beyond the confines of Preston-Webb Rites or the AASR Northern or Southern Jurisdictions and especially with the Modern Rite we are associated. Such sites exist beyond the Anglosphere, but *The Hedge Mason* will endeavor to bring that information within the grasp of an English-speaking audience.

It seems to me that it is time for a change, and this will hopefully serve as a small corrective step in that direction.

The goal of this blog will be to provide interesting information from time to time on subjects relating to Liberal Freemasonry and on responsible alternatives to what is exemplified by the mainstream Grand Lodge system in North America. While this site will not avoid covering contemporary events, it will try to avoid heavy handed critiques of any specific tradition within Freemasonry. It is my belief that such things as clandestine or irregular freemasonry labels belittle the rich tapestry of our traditions both contemporary and historical. Further, such attitudes directly contradict the premise of brotherhood among which is the foundation of Freemasonry.

In short, this site is about education and expanding the horizons of Freemasons of all stripes and those who are just interested in the subject. It is not a place for debate or dispute, although if it engenders something to be a good thing.

said to represent the same thing - both Saints John. There is however, an anomaly in this configuration, the annual solstice diameter should be considered, as we have explained before, as relatively vertical to the equatorial diameter, and only in this way, moreover, the two halves of the cycle, going from one solstice to another, may appear as real and ascending and descending respectively, for then the solstice points are the highest point and the lowest point of the circle, in such conditions, the tangents at the ends solstice diameter, being perpendicular to it, will necessarily be horizontal. But now consider that the symbol, the two tangents, on the contrary, are figurative and vertical, therefore, in this special case, some modification is made to the general symbolism of the annual cycle, which otherwise is easily explained, it is evident that it has not been produced by an assimilation established between these two parallel and two Masonic columns; these, which naturally can not be vertical but have otherwise under their respective situation north and at noon, and at least from a certain point of view, are in an effective relationship with the solstice symbolism.



This aspect of the two columns clearly seen especially in the case of the symbol of the "Pillars of Hercules", the character of Solar hero Hercules and his twelve zodiacal correspondences are familiar enough to not require additional comment, and it is clear that the solar character justifies precisely the significance of the two columns linked to his name. Thus, the motto "non plus ultra", referring to those columns, appears to contain a double meaning: not only expressed, according to the usual interpretation, an otherwise valid terrestrial perspective, indicating the limits of the known world, ie, in fact, what the limits are, for reasons of research might be of interest, was not allowed to be passed beyond the travelers, but indicates at the same time - and certainly should said first and foremost - that, from the celestial point of view are the limits that the

sun can not cross and between which, as between the two tangent lines that tried before, it holds inside its annual course. These latter considerations may seem far removed from our starting point, but, in fact, are not, as they contribute to the explanation of a symbol expressly referencing the two Saints John, and, moreover, it can be said that in the Christian tradition, all that pertains to solstice symbolism is also, for that matter, related to both saints.

Posted by [E C Ballard](#) at [9:06 PM](#)

Labels: [Saint John the Baptist](#), [Saint John the Evangelist](#), [Saint John's Eve](#).

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Anonymous said...

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October 25, 2013 at 1:35 PM

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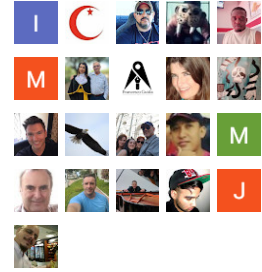
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Just in case some object to certain posts being off please note the subtitle of this blog includes the pl "and other stuff." That of course is because it's my occasionally I want to ramble.

We look forward to sharing with you!

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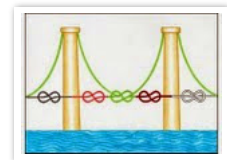
E C Ballard

E C Ballard is a Folklorist, and Ethnographer specializing in

Afro-Caribbean traditions of Central African origin, Fraternalism, Celtic Studies and Ethnomusicology, having received his Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. Eoghan has been variously musical instrument maker, bookseller, college professor, academic dean, and independent researcher. Eoghan is Tata Nganga, a Vodousaint, and is a Master Mason, Orator for Lodge Intrepid, and GM of GLMRNAC, affiliated with UMURM.

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