



Why Ancient Egypt?

The uneducated with no interest in mystical traditions and the esoteric may regard Ancient Egypt as little more than a place of pagan worship, strange hieroglyphics, and monuments erected by thousands of Hebrew slaves.

But those more learned, especially those having undertaken the initiative rituals of Freemasonry, will see a link between the Egyptian metaphysical tradition and modern mystery schools, of which Freemasonry is one.

It is Freemasonry's aim to educate an initiate on the god concealed in the unfathomable depths of his own essence, represented by the letter G in the middle of the square and compasses, symbolizing the divine spark within, the god essence of oneself.

the similarities to the teaching methods of Freemasonry which is performed by way of symbolism and allegory and never revealed to the uninitiated (known as cowans) is taken from the ancient Egyptians in no small measure..



Initiation Rituals

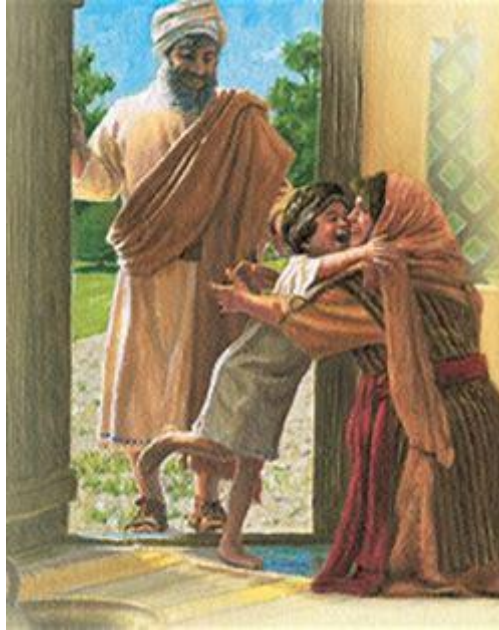
Masonic teaching centres on its initiation rituals.

Each of Freemasonry's three degrees takes the candidate through a journey steeped in history, symbolism, and allegory to teach him lessons of how to raise his divine spark, realize his relationship to a higher power (God, Grand Architect, Supreme Being, etc) and live a life of moral rectitude.

As it happens the same goal of initiation was practiced in Ancient Egypt:

There has been a relationship between modern Freemasonry and Ancient Egypt going back beyond the so called dark Ages.

The ancient Egyptians used two systems, each illustrated by the division—into steps, classes, or degrees—to which both were subjected, viz., lustration (purification, or preparation), initiation, and perfection.”



The Widow's Son

Another link between modern Freemasonry and Egypt is the Isis – Osiris story that formed the crux of the Ancient Egyptian belief system.

In the Egyptian rites, Horus is the saviour-avenger, son of Isis, magically conceived through ritual after the brutal murder of her husband/brother Osiris.



We can apply this myth to modern Freemasonry's allegory of the murder of Hiram Abiff, the chief architect of Solomon's Temple.

Isis, **made a widow by Osiris' murder** (Freemason's are called Widow's Sons), gives birth through initiation ritual to Horus, the redeemer, raised solely that we may avenge the destruction of wisdom (by Set aka Chaos) and restore peace, harmony and the just god, in whom there is no death (the Divine Spark within).

The Similarity in Symbols and Teaching

Other similarities between Freemasonry and the Egyptian Mystery Schools are seen in certain Masonic symbols and initiation procedures.

When he first enters a lodge room for initiation, the candidate for Freemasonry is blindfolded and has a rope tied around his neck by which he is led in a circuit of the room.

This rope is called a **cable tow**.



The Cable Tow

The cable-tow is purely Masonic in meaning and use, but as with many Masonic symbols, it is rooted in antiquity.

In the mystery schools of Ancient Egypt, a chain was placed around a candidate's neck as part of his preparation for initiation.

BLINDFOLDED OR HOODWINKED

As in Freemasonry, the Egyptian candidate was also blindfolded to represent a state of darkness before emerging into the light of knowledge when the blindfold was removed.



The image, above is of a man in a Masonic hoodwink which dates from the early 1800's to the early 1900s and were sold by DeMoulin, a Masonic lodge supplies manufacturer, as well as other purveyors (sellers) of lodge supplies.

Freemasonry is not the originator of the hoodwink.

Religious rites and initiations of civilizations and tribes dating back centuries before the believed or known origins of Freemasonry used blindfolds to represent going from darkness (ignorance) to light (knowledge).

Hood: The word, "hood," in old German and Anglo Saxon refers to a head covering, as in a hat, or helmet.

A hood might also be of cloth.

To "hood" is to cover. Hooded garments have been worn throughout history.

Wink:

The word, "wink," in old German and Anglo Saxon refers to a closing of the eyes. The word, "wince," is similarly derived from the word "wink". The word "wink" pertains to the eye.

Therefore, a **hood** (to cover) **wink** (eyes) was a head covering designed to cover the eyes.

Misconception:

While Freemasonry has many secrets, the term "hoodwink" is not one of them.

The word is often misconstrued by non-Freemasons as having negative overtones due to our more modern-day definition of the word which defines it as meaning to be deceived or tricked rather than its actual meaning which is to cover the eyes.

A Masonic hoodwink is not used as a method of deception.

It is simply a symbolic and visual method of covering the eyes which is used in the initiation of the candidate into acquiring new knowledge, hence the term, "from darkness to light".

The Masonic symbolism of the hoodwink is not about placing the candidate into the darkness, which is symbolic of ignorance, but about the removal of the darkness to let in the light, which is symbolic of knowledge.



The White Apron

When a candidate becomes a Freemason, he is presented with a white apron consisting of a square overlaid with a triangle.



The Triangle of Divine Spark supports our VSL

The Ancient Egyptian ceremony of initiation led the candidate to a door shaped exactly as a Masonic apron: a triangle over a square, symbolizing his progression from an earthly, material existence (square) into a heavenly, spiritual existence of higher learning (triangle).



The Point Within a Circle

The Masonic symbol of the Point Within a Circle inside two parallel, perpendicular lines is steeped in antiquity.

Early Egyptian monuments have been discovered inscribed with the symbol of the great Architect of the Universe.— represented by the Alpha and Omega — in the centre of a circle bordered by two perpendiculars.

In all right and proper Lodges the two Grand parallels represent the two Saints John, ...the Evangelist and the Baptist. Later, unthinking persons attribute the two Grand parallels to Moses and King Solomon, but they are in error.

Sadly in most Lodge rooms the VSL does not rest on the top of the circle, as it should, but rather it rests at some distance above the circle.



The Honeycomb - BEE HIVE

We do not use this ancient symbol anymore and for that we should be ashamed, not congratulated.

One of the emblems of the third degree of Freemasonry is the honeycomb. Many ancient civilizations revered bees and honey.

The Ancient Egyptians developed methods of advanced apiculture as far back as 3000 BCE. Menes, the first King of Egypt, who ruled somewhere between 5000 BCE to 4000 BCE, was called 'The Beekeeper', a title bestowed on all subsequent Pharaohs.

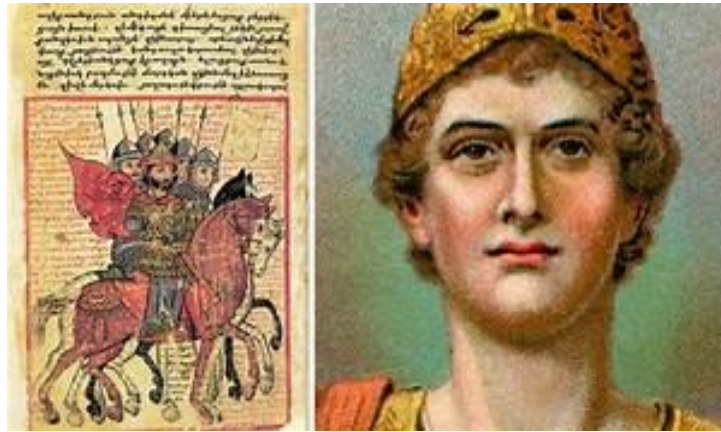
Depictions of bees and honey are prevalent on many Egyptian carvings including the Flamic and Pamphilic obelisks, the obelisk of Luxor, the pillars of the Temple of Karnak and on statues of Rameses II.



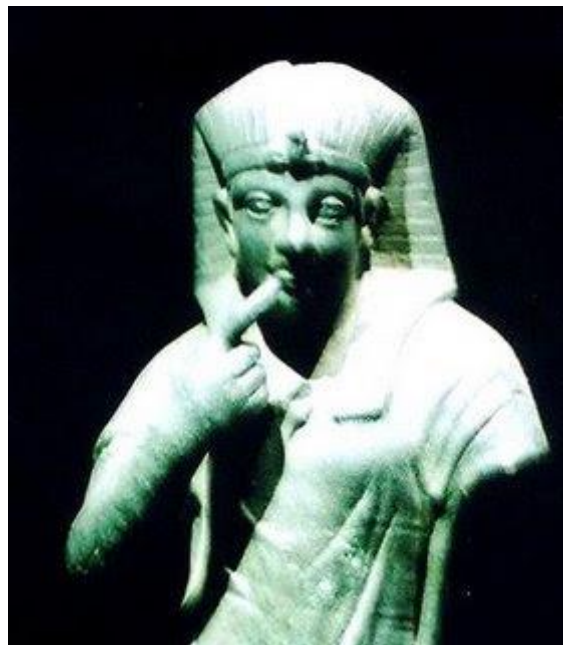
Even the Rosetta Stone, which dates to 196 BCE, was etched with pictures of bees.

Royal tombs in Egypt also show the importance of beekeeping and honey, including the enormous sarcophagus of Rameses II which includes numerous pictures of honeybees.

Foodstuffs created by bees, such as pots of honey, honeycombs, and honey cakes, were placed by the sarcophagi as food for the gods.



Even Alexander the Great requested that his body be wrapped in honey upon his death.



Keeping Hush, Hush

Secrecy and silence play a big part in Masonic teaching but are not exclusive to the organization.

Wellins Calcott, author, wrote of the ancient veneration of secrecy and silence:

"the old Egyptians had so great a regard for silence and secrecy in the mysteries of their religion, that they set up the god Harpocrates, to whom they paid peculiar honour and

veneration, who was represented with the right hand placed near the heart, and the left hand down by his side, covered with a skin before, full of eyes and ears, to signify, that of many things to be seen and heard, few are to be published.”

Apuleius, who was an initiate in the Mysteries of Isis, said:

“By no peril will I ever be compelled to disclose to the uninitiated the things that I have had entrusted to me on condition of silence.”



The best-known champion of silence and secrecy was Pythagoras, (well known to all Freemasons) who ventured to Egypt to study the Mysteries, which he later brought back to Greece.

To become a member of the Pythagorean School, an initiate took an oath of silence for two to five years.

Novices were called ‘Listeners’ and were not permitted to partake in class discussions, but only to listen so the teaching could be absorbed before entering into an intellectual debate on what they learned.

The connections between Ancient Egypt and modern Freemasonry are many, and only a few are presented in this article.

To say that Freemasonry was born from the Egyptian Mystery Schools and their initiation rituals is true.

"...to be sure that we have changed things in part, not because it needed to be changed but because it suited someone...God knows who...."

And I think it is important that we know that nobody can claim to know the full history of Freemasonry and the origin of each of its symbols.

The Egyptian Mystery Schools played a part in its development, as did those of the Greeks, Romans, Druids, Essenes, Cathars, Rosicrucians, Alchemists, and the guilds of the Medieval Stone Masons.

But , when in certain lodges...we hear those words....

the usages and customs of Freemasonry have ever borne a near affinity to those of the Antient Egyptians....

we will know those words to be true and we will know something of **why they say it....**

We know why, but do they know why they say it?

Maybe not.

