

THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

At the four quarters and half quarters of the circle on the Masonic keystone of the Royal Arch Chapter are the letters H. T. W. S. S. T. K. S. Have they any relation of the zodiac, and what do their positions around the circle indicate?

The letters H. T. W. S. S. T. K. S. are read from left to right, but they must also turn from right to left. As we know the zodiac, the first letter H. is at the place of aries, the first T. at aquarius, W. at capricorn, the first S. at scorpio, the second S. at libra, the second T. at leo, K. at cancer, and the third S. at taurus. The letters may be found in Masonic books, but neither the words for which these letters stand, nor their meanings, are given in any book. It must, therefore, be inferred that their significance is secret and important and not intended for the instruction and illumination of those who have not taken the degree of the Royal Arch Chapter. The writer is not a member of the Masonic fraternity, has received no instruction from any of that fraternity concerning Masonry, and does not pretend to any knowledge of the secrets of the Masonic Craft. But symbolism is a universal language. Whoever understands it truly should read the meaning of the keystone by the light of Masonry, which is included in the zodiac, and made clear by the light which the zodiac gives, and according to the degree to which the one who receives it is raised. The four signs of the zodiac, gemini, virgo, sagittary and pisces, are omitted as not being necessary to the work, or else they are included in the signs, taurus, leo, scorpio and aquarius. Taurus, leo scorpio and aquarius are marked by the letters S. T., S. T., which are placed midway between the signs aries, cancer, libra and capricorn. If the signs or letters opposite each other are connected by lines, two crosses will be formed. The cross formed by the vertical line H. S. and the horizontal line K. W. is the stationary cross of the zodiac, aries-libra and cancer-capricorn. The cross formed by the lines S. S. and T. T. is a movable cross of the zodiac, formed by the signs of taurus-scorpio and leo-aquarius. These movable signs and cross are characterized by the four sacred animals: the bull or ox, taurus, indicated by the letter S.; the lion, leo, for which is the letter T.; the eagle or scorpio, in

place of which is the letter S.; the man (sometimes angel) or aquarius, in place of which is the letter T. A glance at the relationship and positions of letters and signs of these two crosses: The letter H. and its opposite S., represent the head of the keystone and its base, and correspond to aries and libra. The letters K. and W. represent the two sides of the keystone, which correspond to the signs cancer-capricorn. This is the stationary cross of the zodiac. The upper letter S. and the lower letter S. represent the upper corner and its opposite lower corner of the keystone and correspond to the signs taurus-scorpio of the zodiac. The upper letter T. and the lower letter T. correspond to the other upper corner and its opposite lower corner of the keystone, and to the signs aquarius-leo of the zodiac, which form a movable cross of the zodiac. These letters of the keystone, or the signs of the zodiac, may be used in pairs in many ways. It will be noticed the letters of the head and base and sides of the keystone are different and the opposite letters (S. S. and T. T.) of the corners which correspond to a movable cross of the zodiac, characterized by the four animals mentioned above, are the same. If the letters of the keystone and their positions, and the signs of the zodiac were merely to puzzle the mind and mystify inquisitive people, they would be of little use and should be cast aside. But they have, in fact, a deep significance, a physical and a spiritual value. Too little thought is given them by men who should make such subjects of practical value, and have them as realities in their lives.

The zodiac represents man in the universe and the universe in man; the keystone is representative of man. An explanation of the positions in which man is placed in the world and the cultivation of the virtues by which he overcomes the vices that torture him, before he rises to the crown and glory of his lives, is too lengthy to attempt. Only the briefest outline can be here given. As physical man is placed in the physical world in his zodiac, so man as a spirit is placed in physical man, his physical body. As man who is born of woman should arise from his low state of physical matter, work through his animal nature, and arise to the glory of intellectual manhood in the world, so man as a spirit must subdue and ascend from his base animal nature and rise and complete the man of intellect as his spiritual crown and glory. Like Ixion in the mythology of the Greeks was bound and turned on a cross, to atone for his misdeeds, so is man placed in the world to work out his destiny; and, so is man as a spirit placed in his physical body to undergo the tests of his physical

nature, to be tormented by, until he shall overcome it, the animal nature, thereafter to pass through and be purified by all manner of tests and trials, so that he will be fitted and prove himself worthy to fill his proper place in the universe. The signs of the zodiac show the stages and the law according to which the physical and psychic and mental and spiritual men work in their respective zodiacs, within the all-inclusive zodiac. The letters on the keystone should show the way and the means by which man as a spirit works within the physical body in his zodiac in which he is placed, in order that he may become the true keystone which completes the royal arch. The work of the Royal Arch Chapter may give the symbolism of the letters and the keystone; but it can only be the symbolism. Man as a spirit may build his arch, but he does not complete it—does not really fill it in one life. He is overcome; he is slain by his adversaries. As often as he dies he is raised and comes again, and will continue his work until he rises and does fill his place and complete his arch in the temple. The circle of his lives, the arch, will be complete. He will then go out no more.

The physical keystone of every Mason who has taken the Royal Arch Chapter is symbolical of himself when he shall be worthy and ready to complete and fill the arch of his lives—in that temple not built with hands. Man as a Mason, the keystone of the temple, now lies at the lowest part of the structure. He, it, is at the place of sex, libra, of his zodiac. He must arise, must raise himself. After taking the positions indicated by the letters on the keystone, or by the signs of the zodiac, and doing the work required by each letter or sign, he must rise by his own worth and work to the head—which is the crown and glory of man. When the stone is raised from the place of sex to the head, he, man, the keystone, will become immortal. He will then be all that is said of the White Stone on which is a new name, his new name, which he himself makes as his mark on that stone, the stone of immortality.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



THE
WORD FOUNDATION, INC.

A Non-Profit Organization Established in 1950
P. O. Box 17510 • Rochester, NY 14617 • USA

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