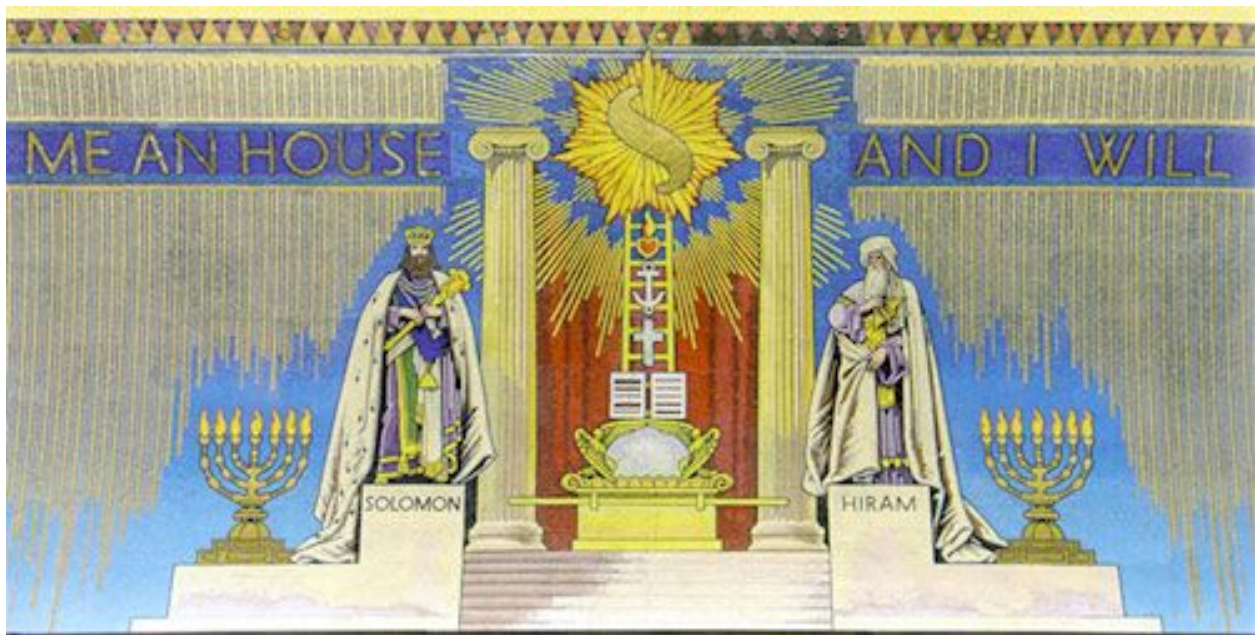


The Cardinal Directions

Freemasonry teaches that every Lodge is a representation of the Temple of Solomon. Like many ancient centers of worship, the Temple in Jerusalem was oriented toward the sunrise. Within the a Lodge, the four cardinal directions have powerful symbolic implications, derived from traditional wisdom. This page provides visuals and texts selected for the consideration of brethren who are contemplating the meaning of the four directions in Masonic ritual.

The Symbolic East



Omnia anima bona est anima nova veniens ab oriente.
"Every good soul is a new soul coming from the East."

Pico della Mirandola
Conclusiones 28.41

"And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."

Ezekiel 43:2

The Symbolic South



"When the sun is at his meridian height, his invigorating rays are darted from the south. When he rises in the east, we are called to labor ; when he sets in the west, our daily toil is over ; but when he reaches the south, the hour is high twelve, and we are summoned to refreshment. In Masonry, the south is represented by the Junior Warden and by the Corinthian column, because it is said to be the place of beauty."

Mackey's Encyclopaedia

"[T]he very radiant brightness of the midday sun... This is that midday light, which, perpendicular, inflames the Seraphim, and at the same time illuminates the Cherubim."

Pico della Mirandola
On the Dignity of Man, 1486

"The Holy One created three hundred and sixty-five windows for the world to use: one hundred and eighty-two in the east, one hundred and eighty-two in the west, and one in the firmament's middle, out of which the sun issued at the beginning of the work of creation."

Talmud Yerushalmi
Tractate Rosh Hashannah 2:5

The Symbolic West



"I will bring thy seed from the East, and gather thee from the West."

Isaiah 43:5

The Symbolic North



A Stately Dome o'erlooks Our East,
Like Orient Phoebus in the Morn:
And Two Tall Pillars in the West
At once support Us, and adorn.
Upholden thus, the Structure stands,
Untouched by sacrilegious Hands.

John Bancks
Masonry, An Ode
1734