

HEPHAESTUS-VULCAN IN MYTHOLOGY

By Virginia Reyer, ASA member

The god of the forge, of fire and craftsmanship, was named Hephaestus by the Greeks and Vulcan by the Romans. He is commonly believed to be the son of Zeus and Hera, although in some versions of his story he had no father, with Hera bearing him alone in retaliation for Zeus having brought forth Athena. Hephaestus' mother, seeing that he was ugly and deformed, hated him on first sight and cast him from Olympus. He fell for an entire day and night, landing on Lemnos, where he broke his legs and became lame. The sea-goddess Thetis found the crippled infant on the beach and took him to her underwater grotto and raised him with the help of Eurynome, mother of the Graces. Hephaestus' limitations became his challenge.

To regain his rightful place on Olympus among the gods, Hephaestus built a golden throne and sent it to Hera as a gift. When she sat on it, its golden arms promptly clamped together, imprisoning her. To reclaim her freedom Hera had to extract a promise from all the gods on Olympus that Hephaestus would be accepted into the Pantheon. Hephaestus became the smith and manufacturer of art, arms and armor for gods and heroes, using a volcano as his forge. He married Aglaia, one of the Graces; others claim that he married Aphrodite.

Astronomically, Vulcan is known as the "Ghost Planet," the celestial body closest to the Sun, circling inside the orbit of Mercury. Vulcan's period of revolution is 19,5804 days. Its A.U. is 0.177. In our solar system, one A.U. equals the distance from the Earth to the Sun.

The hammer is symbolic of Vulcan's power to pound base metals into items of beauty, or to free the chains of the slave.

Vulcan symbolizes force over power. Some keywords are:

Alchemist	Hidden emotions	Refines
Abuse	Handicap	Rehabilitates
Abnormal	High spirited	Resourceful
Affliction overcome	Heat	Rejected
Artistic	Isolated	Scarred
Battery	Industrious	Seclusion
Behind the scenes	Inventive	Silent suffering
Burns away dross	Lame	Stunning blow
Clarifies	Loveless	Struggle
Creative energy	Limitation	Strong willed
Disciplines	Metallurgist	Tone deafness
Discriminates	Muscular	Ugly
Exiles	Originator	Unappreciated
Expert craftsman	Overshadowed	Worker

Fundamental
Fearless
Heartbroken
Homely

Perception
Persistent
Propman
Resistance

Wounded
Withering
Weakness eliminated
Yearning