

MORE LIGHT

When the candidate is admitted to the Lodge for the first time, he is questioned about what he most wants and he says that it is light. Perhaps if we were more clear about what "light" is more Freemasons would actually seek light. This paper is going to discuss the concept of "light" from a scriptural point of view and from a Masonic point of view. It will discuss how we "receive" light and how it affects our lives.

Genesis 1: 1-5 says: In the beginning, the g-ds created the heavens and the land, and the land was without form and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep and the Ruach of the G-ds was moving gently on the face of the waters. Then said the g-ds, 'Let there be Light and Light was.' And the gods saw the Light that it was Good and the gods separated the light from the darkness. And the gods called the Light Day and the darkness they called Night and the evening and the morning day one.

In our Masonic ritual we emphasis the fact that we are lacking Light by blindfolding the candidate and then removing his blindfold clapping at the moment that Light appears. This confuses the candidate into believing that Light is the ability to see photons. However, this cannot be the meaning of the scriptural passage because Genesis 1:14-18 tells us that it was on the fourth day that the source of photonic light was created; thus the sun, the luminary, is not the source of the Light described in Genesis 1:1-5.

What is the Light that is described in Genesis 1:1-5? The answer lies in the careful understanding of the word "Ruach". Now ruach means wind. When the gods blew into Adam's nostrils, they blew nephesh, soul. But ruach is both wind and the source of wisdom. The passage says that Ruach of the Gods was moving gently upon the face of the waters. So this being has form and character. And that form and character we often call spirit, but it is better called the sentience. When an animal or plant received nephesh it gets life, but not sentience. It is only when ruach is added to nephesh that an animal or plant is sentient. Philosophers have said that sentience is the ability to know that you know that you know. So one of the first attributes of true sentience is knowledge. The G-ds characterized this knowledge as day, yom, but in reality day is a dawning of awareness. Animals without sentience are living in darkness, oblivious to the beauty that surrounds them. Only with Ruach can an animal ascertain knowledge.

With that understanding, the candidate really seeks knowledge not light. He seeks to be enlightened, that is filled with knowledge. How does that occur. The Zohar teaches us more about the Chaim Etz, the Tree of Life. It tells us that the great G-d El pours forth the divine knowledge from His very being through the Keter, the Crown. The Crown of this Multiverse is YHVH. He is the Source of all knowledge. Knowledge allows for Wisdom and we say that the Light descends from Keter to Chochma, Holy Wisdom. Now Wisdom is different than being intelligent. One can be very intelligent and not be wise and likewise the simplist of people can be wise without being intelligent. The Light flows from Chochma, the source of Wisdom to Binah, the source of Intelligence and when mixed with Intelligence we say that the Light is Knowledge, or Da'at. True Light then is composed of the Very Knowledge of G-d, the Wisdom of the Descending Spirit that we call the Spirit of G-d and the natural intelligence that G-d has given to us.

YHVH Elohim decided to express this concept more clearly in the building of the Temple. In front of the Temple, in front of the Porch of the Temple, there were two free standing pillars -- Jachin and Boaz. They represented Faith and Reason. True Knowledge is always a combination of Faith and Reason. You cannot have one without the other. Thus, we understand that what comes from Divine Knowledge

is the filtered knowledge that has flowed through Faith, called Divine Wisdom, and Reason, called Divine Intelligence. It is only after we receive this divine gift of Divine Knowledge, that we are capable of completing the Tree of Life.

The candidate then is really asking for Divine Knowledge and asking for that Divine Knowledge seems a bit absurd when the people from who he requests the knowledge do not yet have it. So on what basis does the Master say that the Candidate will receive it. The answer comes from a better understanding of the Tree of Life.

The Tree continues with Light descending to fill the Vessel of Mercy called Chesed. Thus relief, which is a physical reflection of mercy, can only take place if one has Divine Knowledge. Without Divine Knowledge the acts of so-called mercy neither relieve nor improve the recipient. It is for that reason that our rituals require the candidate to ask for help before it is given, because that allows us to inquire as to whether the request was made with due diligence. The Light then flows to Gevurah, Strength, or Din, Judgment, which allows us to weigh the request and see if the gift requested is warranted, not wanting to give a person a snake when they ask for a fish. The Light then is perfected by descent into Tipheret, the abode of Beauty. Knowledge, the True Light, is now perfected with mercy and justice.

The Light continues to come down from the Tree through Netzach, Victory, which allows the Light to truly suppress the Darkness allowing Day to dawn and forcing Night into defeat. We now have the basis of Brotherhood. We see what is the real knowledge and we grasp it. The True Knowledge always leads toward Love and Love is expressed by caring for our Brothers. Knowledge has defeated ignorance and Brotherhood has dawned as the ultimate result of enlightenment. The Light then flows confidently to Hod, Glory, when we demonstrate that We Love each Other even as Our supreme Grand Master, Yeshua, has loved us. This Light then becomes the Foundation, the Yesod, of all that follows.

The Light having come this distance now descends into the World, Malchut, the Kingdom. And we say that it enlightens the Holy Book on our Altar and makes it the source of Truth, which is every Mason's final goal. That truth, that Light then shines forth to the Daimon, the Adept of the chair, who divinely judges the truth of all things in the Lodge. Seldom do we have a Master who is an Adept of the Spiritual Life, but that is our goal. However, just as the Holy Spirit speaks through the Prophets, so also does the Holy Light enlighten the Master when called to Respond to situations within the Brotherhood.

The Light that descends into our Holy Book first flows to the Master and concurrently flows out from the Master to the Senior Warden and then it flows to the Junior Warden setting up a triangle of pure Knowledge that will guide the Lodge. The Master's light, being the brightest of the Luminaries in the Lodge, as we meet in candlelight, causes his glow to fill the Senior Deacon, the Treasurer, the Chaplain, and the Secretary. Because the Secretary and Treasurer often remain for many seasons, they have residual light that comes from the working of the Spirit in the Lives of several occupants of the Oriental Chair. Just as the Moon reflects the Light that it receives so the Secretary and Treasurer continue to reflect the Light of many Masters. The Light of the Senior Warden gives light to the Junior Deacon and the Tyler so that the Divine Knowledge will allow them to properly protect the Lodge from the intrusion of Darkness. The Light of the Junior Warden gives light to the Junior and Senior Stewards who are the only persons within the Lodge that have offensive weapons to use against anyone who intrudes on the sanctity of an open Lodge.

Having described how the Light descends into the Lodge, now I want to reflect on what is really happening during an initiation, that is, how does the candidate get the light.

The candidate's journey begins with the recognition that contrary to the lies of the world he cannot hope to find light outside of the Lodge. He comes here a poor blind candidate. If he thinks he knows what we have, he is not fit to be here. Only when he recognizes his poverty is he a fit candidate. Then he reaches out and knocks three times asking for the Master to let him in. The Master should have already consulted with the Lodge and by vote decided he is qualified to become a disciple or mathetes in the Lodge. By letting the Candidate in, the Master has agreed to teach the young one the truth that the Lodge holds. The Candidate is found worthy and begins his trip by turning to the Elohim who protects the lodge and asking for guidance. Then he is taken around the Lodge and taught in the first circuit how to approach the Master, as Adept, how to wear his apron, what his working tools are, and finally how he will become a brother. The goal of the trip is to first discover Brotherhood.

In the Second Degree, the Brother now committed to loving his fellow brothers, begins the job of learning how to give, that is, how to give relief. He learns how to use Divine Knowledge, how to separate darkness from Light, how to choose the Light over the Darkness. His obligations become more onerous. The Second Degree allows the brother to enter into a place of Reason. The Middle Chamber emphasizes science, art, music, and the earthly abilities. It teaches us to subject those things of reason to Spirit. And thus we learn how to be spiritual people.

In the Third Degree, the brother now aware of love and relief, must learn truth. Truth relies on enlightening Reason with Divine Knowledge. We learn that all is not as we have been taught. Not everyone will rejoice at our success. Not everyone will cry at our failures. In fact, Reason will teach us that not everyone is a Brother. But we will learn to love even those who are false. And the lessons we learn will allow us to be able to resurrect our faith even in the face of disappointment. We learn in the Third Degree that the ultimate response of Brotherhood and Relief is a resurrection from our disappointment in the lack of Brotherhood found in others. It is the source that lets us continue when it all seems pointless. Ultimately, in the Third Degree, we will learn that we are not present in the Lodge for earthly approbation; we are present in the Lodge to learn how to Love. That is the source of all Truth and All Truth flows from that Love. The immediate harvest of this love is Forgiveness. We learn to forgive and in forgiving we find that we can learn to love ourselves. The ultimate truth of our Lodge, of our Order, is Forgiveness is the Source of Love.

Once we have discovered that Forgiveness is the Source of Love, then the Spirit no longer will gently flow over the waters for us. It will take up residence within us and give us Divine Knowledge. We will look at everything with the wonder that flows from a forgiving heart. Remember that we have learned Faith and Reason and our forgiveness is not simplistic nor foolish. We know about the person we forgive and we forgive any way. We have received the Light.

Light then makes sense to us. And we see the wisdom in asking for it. At that point we are adepts and ready to help our brothers becomes Masters in the truest sense.

Trusting that all of you are Adepts, most of you having sat in the Oriental Chair, I can now suggest that it time for us to show forth our forgiveness and love more completely. Some of us have gone away. One has left us for the Grand Lodge above. Another retreats into the worlds of the past. A third retreats in preparation for the world to come. Now is the time when our love really counts. We meet tonight to celebrate another year of this lodge and to enjoy each other. Let us do it with brotherly love. Amen.