

The Quest for More Light

By Brian Kremer

When I became a Mason, I did not immediately tell anyone at work. Over the next couple of years I discovered that a couple of my coworkers were also Masons. As other coworkers learned of my Masonic involvement, the topic of Masonry would enter casual conversation from time to time. I was surprised and upset to learn of some of the ideas that people have about Masonry.

One coworker told me he had heard that Masons worship Lucifer. I assured him that was not true, and he responded that of course I would not know about that because you only find out about that when you make it into the upper ranks of Masonry. However ridiculous that sounds, there was no way for me to disprove it. I had only my experience. In the Lodge meetings I'd attended we hadn't worshipped anything, and certainly not Lucifer.

So where did he get such a crazy idea? From his pastor at church and a YouTube video. If you search YouTube for Freemasonry you will be overwhelmed with the dark secret truth about how the world is controlled by Masons; Masonic geographers and city planners; hidden camera footage, exposés, interpretations of symbols, and page after page of search results, most of which range from misleading to completely false.

On the internet, almost anyone can put their thoughts out there for the whole world to see. While Masons can sign up for Masonic forums, which can lead to various outstanding resources of Masonic information, the materials available to the average person on Google and YouTube seem to contain a lot of misinformation. Kernels of truth about Masonry are often distorted by the misunderstanding or vitriol of disillusioned ex-masons.

Some men leave the organization under pressure from priests, pastors, and other presumably well-meaning folks who don't approve of Masonry for theological reasons. One frequently-given reason is that it's inappropriate to require members to take oaths on the Bible. Another is intolerance of other religions. While there is plenty of information that is based completely on fear and ignorance, there is some information that is based on a kernel of truth.

My concern, based on the seriousness of the allegation, is that there could be some legitimate basis for the claim we worship Lucifer. Even at that time I was aware that Lucifer was referred to as the light bearer or bringer of light, and of course Masons seek light. Thinking that was the only reason for the allegation, I was confident the whole thing was a ruthless attempt to tarnish the fraternity's reputation.

But then my coworker emailed me a link to the YouTube video he had mentioned. It is called *The Age of Deceit, part 2*. This video includes a clip of a man named Bill Cooper, who claims that Masons believe that Lucifer freed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and gave them the gift of knowledge. His claim is that Masons goal is to become gods through the application of knowledge and technology.

"Through the use of intellect, man will conquer the earth, and conquer nature, and will himself become God. It's taught in every Masonic temple in this land, every secret brotherhood, every secret society,

every mystical temple, every occult organization teaches the Luciferian philosophy.” (Bill Cooper in Age of deceit video)

To that end, some Masonic conspiracy theorists see Transhumanism as the destination where knowledge is leading. Implanted computer chips help the blind see and the deaf hear. The paralyzed can control limbs thanks to the interface of man and machine. The rise of synthetic biology makes Transhumanism more real every day. If transhumanism is a Masonic goal, we sure don't advertise it. If you look at Masonic websites, it appears that we are more focused toward cancer research, children's hospitals, and scholarships.

Is it possible that some Masons at the top of the organization are pushing the Transhuman agenda? Hanly P. Hall, a 33rd degree Mason, in his book *The Secret destiny of America*, states that “the supreme human purpose is the perfection of man. This must come first, and when this end has been achieved, all good things will inevitably follow.” (Hall, 51) Yet transhumanism is not the perfection Brother Hall is describing. Transhumanism is not the light that Masons seek.

So what is the light Masons seek? If you look at the definitions for the word light you have a noun which is a photon in the visible spectrum. You also have an adjective that means not heavy. But the light that masons seek is not photonic light and although a lot of us would like to lose some weight we are not seeking the adjective form either.

The word light, in the Masonic context, is a metaphor. To many Masons, light is a metaphor for knowledge. According to Duncan Moore in *A guide to Masonic symbolism*, “...the idea of restoring light to the candidate is not so much bringing him into the light of the room in which he now finds himself among his newly acquired brethren, as bringing him into the light of Freemasonry and therefore into the light of knowledge.” (Moore, 94) H. L. Haywood states in *The great teachings of Masonry*, “...all Masons understand that light is nothing other than the symbol of truth and knowledge...” (Haywood, 141)

In the Age of deceit YouTube video, the defamatory claim is stated again a bit differently, “The ancient mystery school teaching is an esoteric spiritual wisdom and philosophy passed down by the initiated elite for centuries. It is in fact one in the same as the Luciferian doctrine, that one day man will become God through the use of his own intellect. This is the religion of the new world order which is operating in various degrees under various secret societies, cults, and even high ranking religious circles. The origin and understanding of the mystery schools and its history can be found in theosophical writings.” (Age of Deceit Video)

Helena Blavatsky was the cofounder of the Theosophical Society, and author of *The secret doctrine*, which says a fair amount about Lucifer, and supports the allegations of the YouTube video. Blavatsky explains how Lucifer was unfairly cast as synonymous with Satan. She points out that he was actually revered by many in the early Catholic Church, and that the Church marginalized Lucifer as they sought to eliminate all possible spiritual competition with Jesus. “because he is higher and older than Jehovah, and had to be sacrificed to the new dogma.” (Blavatsky, i. 138)

Lucifer is a more modern name for Heilel, who was a lesser god of Canaanite mythology, alluded to in the 14th chapter of Isaiah, verse 12. Heilel wanted to dethrone the Canaanite high god, El. When Heilel failed, he descended to the underworld. This story depicted the motion of the planet Venus, rising before the sun in the morning, but being outshone by the sun before reaching its peak. Thus, Heilel became synonymous with the planet Venus, and was translated as such in the late 4th century Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate. But planet names are different in Latin. In Latin, the name for the planet Venus is Lucifer.

In the Orthodox Jewish Bible, Isaiah 14:12 references not the planet, but the Canaanite god, “How art thou fallen from Shomayim, O Heilel Ben Shachar! How art thou cast down to the earth, thou, which hast laid low the Goyim!” Most other English translations of the Bible refer to the god, Heilel, by his planetary association. For example, the translation in The American Standard Version is, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!” In the New International Version, the translation is, “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!”

The King James Version also references Heilel as the planet Venus, but it retains the Latin name for Venus, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12) Although this is the only scriptural basis for using the name Lucifer to mean Satan, the introduction of the King James Version in the early 17th century resulted in the popular acceptance of this character in modern western Judeo-Christian cultures.

So, although the story is convoluted, it is clear that the name Lucifer refers to Heilel, and Blavatsky repeatedly shows support for Lucifer in *The secret doctrine*. “LUCIFER-the Spirit of Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought-is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sand-banks of Life, for Lucifer is the Logos in his highest, and the “Adversary” in his lowest aspect-both of which are reflected in our Ego.” (Blavatsky, iii, 169-170) Here she is stating that Lucifer is not strictly bad, but also has good aspects and really does help people.

It seems excessively inflammatory to fly in the face of Western Religions and defend the personification of evil. Why do it? What secret doctrine lies beneath the story of Lucifer?

According to *The secret doctrine*, the light that Lucifer bears separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom, and it is because of this light that we are self-conscious and intelligent. Not only that, but that Lucifer represents the portal within us that lets the light through, “‘Lucifer’, or ‘Light-Bearer,’ is in us; it is our Mind.” (Blavatsky, iv, 81). We can use our mind for good or for evil.

This is just a peek into the worldview portrayed in *The secret doctrines*. The gods were neither all good nor all bad. They each had their good points and they each had their failings. This is in contrast to the more dualistic views encouraged by the Church, where Lucifer is all bad all the time. Blavatsky states that the Angels of the Church are the same as the gods of the ancient religions, but in polarizing Lucifer as strictly evil, the Church has thrown the baby out with the bathwater.

In *The lost keys of Freemasonry*, Manly P. Hall also advocates this worldview, stating that when a Mason learn the mystery of his craft, "The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands and before he may step onward and upward, he must prove his ability to properly apply energy." (The lost keys of Freemasonry)

While the mechanisms through which it is possible to harness the energies of the mind in this context have, so far eluded me, I do believe that this lesson is worthwhile. But using Lucifer, which has become a western personification of evil, to explain the concept is provocative, to say the least. That it caused emotionally charged responses from the general public is not surprising. But why were the accusations aimed at speculative Masonry? What influence did Blavatsky have on modern Masonry?

The secret doctrines, and Theosophy in general, may appeal to Masons because Masonry explicitly encourages the exploration of many of the world's spiritual systems. In the book, *The bridge builders guide*, author Kyle G. Ferlemann encourages Masons to "...search for truth in the hermetic traditions, the study of religions, myth, alchemy, and the Kabbalah." (Ferlemann, 10) That being the case, Masons are undoubtedly drawn to Blavatsky's works because she claims that "The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of all ages..." (Blavatsky, i, 157)

Masonry teaches that we should learn as much wisdom as we can. There is truth in all religion. There are plenty of other examples of ancient mystery schools that used light as a symbol. In *A guide to Masonic symbolism*, Duncan Moore tells of ancient organizations where light played some role. There were three degrees in the rite at Hermopolis, Mortals, Intelligences and Beings (or Sons of light). They "...had a ritual with charges and other features that would be to some extent recognizable to us." (Moore, 19)

Also, the Eleusinian Mysteries, practiced in Ancient Greece where the Hierophant (or revealer of light) bears comparison to the Worshipful Master. (Moore, 23)

The most apropos example I have run across, however, is of Thoth. According to C. W. Leadbeater in *Freemasonry and its ancient mystic rites*, Thoth "taught [the priests of the temples] of 'the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world' ... He taught them that the Light was universal, and that the Light, which was God, dwelt in the heart of every man: 'I am that Light,' He bade them repeat, 'That Light am I':. 'That Light' He said, 'is the true man, although men may not recognize it, although they neglect it.'" (Leadbeater, 17)

This seems to be a good description of the light Masons seek, and it would probably be more agreeable to the layperson than Blavatsky's explanation of Lucifer as the seat of self-awareness, self-consciousness, intelligence, ego, and the like. In the spirit of presenting the search for light in a more agreeable context, is there a way to seek an increased presence of the divine light that shines from within? I will briefly present two mechanisms worthy of study: the qabbalistic tree of life, and the enneagram.

Rav P. S. Berg, in *The essential Zohar* explains that "The Creator knows that we cannot receive the full intensity of His Light. Therefore we are separated from God by a sequence of ten energy fields known as the *sefirot*. Each *Sefirah* has distinctive properties, qualities, and, kabbalistically, lessons to be absorbed

and mastered. Together, arranged in right, left, and central columns, the ten make up what kabbalists call 'the Tree of Life'. As we increase our spiritual competency by ascending each *Sefirah*, we simultaneously increase our spiritual capacity, giving us the ability to connect with and contain more and more Light." (Berg, 15)

Timothy Hogan, in *The 32 secret paths of Solomon, A new examination of the Qabbalah in Freemasonry* describes the tree of life as "...a symbolic diagram that represents the expression of consciousness in creation..." (Hogan, 13) He states that the tree of life is a "...mandala that we can meditate on in order to make correlations in the book of nature and within ourselves. Each sphere or path represents an aspect of the manifestation of the consciousness of Deity in creation." (Hogan, 15)

Hogan goes on to explain that "Some teachers of Qabbalah have likewise associated the three [vertical] levels [of the Tree of Life: Yetzirah, Briah, and Atziluth] with grades of the soul, known as [1]'nephesh' – or vital principle which inhabits and governs all of the organic or material body and lower psyche, [2]'ruah' – or spirit and seat of the will (generally constituting individual human personality), and [3]'neshamah' or soul proper (the seat of the spiritual element in each human and the ability to reason). Spiritual development involves degrees of Mastery within each of these three principle stages." (Hogan, 29)

I know very little, at this point, about the tree of life, but if these authors are correct, then the tree of life does appear to be a system that describes how we can increase the emanation of Deity from within.

Riso and Hudson also describe the Enneagram as an emanation, saying that "...everyone is made of light- that we are like forms of light-but that a crust has formed over it. The crust is black and rubbery like tar and has obscured the inner light that is everyone's real, inner self. Some blotches of tar are very thick; other areas are thinner and more transparent. Those who have worked on themselves for longer have less tar and they radiate more of their inner light." (Riso & Hudson, 4)

They describe the Enneagram as "...a geometric figure that maps out the nine fundamental personality types of human nature and their complex interrelationships.... The heart of the Enneagram is the universal insight that human beings are spiritual presences incarnated in the material world and yet mysteriously embodying the same life and Spirit as the Creator. Beneath surface differences and appearances, behind the veils of illusion, the light of Divinity shines in every individual." (Riso & Hudson, 9)

"George Ivanovich Gurdjieff compared the Enneagram to the legendary 'philosopher's stone' and stressed that in occult literature it was 'nowhere to be found...So great an importance was assigned it by the enlightened that they considered it necessary to keep knowledge of it a secret." (Rohr & Evert, 8)

Richard Rohr and Adreas Ebert theorize that the Enneagram originated among the Sufi brotherhoods, who called it "the 'face of God,' because in the nine points of energy that the Enneagram describes they saw nine refractions of the one divine love. The word 'Enneagram' itself is a later invention, compounded from the Greek word *ennea* (nine) and *gramma* (letter, point.)" (Rohr & Evert, 7)

So the Enneagram and the Tree of life are systems that describe divinity flowing forth through humanity as ego, self-consciousness, and personality. These would be much more palatable vehicles for conversation about the Masonic search for light. It would be a long and difficult task to explain how Lucifer is bad and good, and the good represents freedom of thought and spiritual enlightenment. That is offensive to many who see only black and white, who are unable to separate the good from the bad.

So how does Masonry answer the accusation that we worship Lucifer? On the internet it appears that we answer with silence. Why? Probably because the internet is an open forum, and we are obligated not to discuss the secrets of masonry with non-masons. The simple answer, however, is that we do not worship Lucifer. Definitions of worship always include the concept of reverence, homage, or adoration, none of which applies.

While this may provide a bare level of defense against the accusation, it misses the mark. Many non-Masons who are passionate enough to enter into a conversation about this subject with a Mason would be excellent candidates for the fraternity. If only there was a better way to turn the defense into an offense, those who are hostile to the craft might see what a valuable addition Masonry can be to the many religions that offer little or nothing in this area. Additionally, helping existing members to seek light as described in this paper, and through the methods described herein, could make Masonry that much more potent.

In this time of dwindling membership and lackluster attendance, hasn't this paper described ways that Masonry could capitalize on our greatest asset, the quest for more light?

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