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Freemasonry and Jewish Kabbalah: An Unusual Association

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According to a 19th century definition, Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled with allegories and illustrated by symbols (Graeter, 2011). The word 'Kabbalah' comes from the Hebrew 'KBL' and means 'receiving' or 'that which has been received' (Matt, 1983, p. 1). It refers to a very ancient tradition, to an ancient wisdom nurtured and developed in the past, kept for centuries exclusive to a small circle of followers and disciples. Freemasonry developed in the Western cultural system, namely within the Anglophone culture. England has a culture marked by an explicit Christian dimension, and its own ethical and moral values. Christianity favours intimacy, proper ritualism, and is characterized by respect and sobriety.

Some authors insist on associating Freemasonry to Egyptian mysteries (Jacq, 1990; Leadbeater, 1926). Leadbeater remarks that Freemasonry is found to be a direct descendant of the Mysteries of the Egypt, and its purpose is to serve as a gateway to the true mysteries of the White Craft (p. 9). However, this sounds fantastical and excessively imaginatively, and most authors and historians believe that the allegories used by the Craft are inspired by the myths and fables of the Torah, which is commonly known as the Old Testament.

The symbols used by Freemasonry, within guiding and demonstration material, are those of building tools used by the stonemasons of the medieval period: the trowel, the mould, and the square. Those operative masons were the craftsmen who built cathedrals, churches, fortifications, and houses for the British aristocracy when wood was replaced by stone as a building material. In the following lines, we intend to examine the possible connections between the Craft and Kabbalah, a subject usually included in the literature of the fantastic, but not often researched and debated in the Academy.

Kabbalah's Possible Influence in England

Kabbalah study was developed in Jewish communities who emigrated to Northern Europe and Spain in a certain time. Scholars and rabbis read and interpreted the Torah, searching for the hidden meanings and messages it may have concealed. Scholem remarks (Scholem, 1956) that this Jewish mysticism represents an attempt to interpret, in terms of mystical conceptions, the meaning of rabbinical Judaism that was crystallized in the time of the Second Temple and later. Only then, when the Catholic authorities of Spain persecuted the Jews (the ejection of March 1492), and forced their exodus to Israel, did the study of Kabbalah grow beyond a small circle of scholars and disciples, soon becoming a subject of intellectual curiosity between European intellectuals.

In this regard, it is relevant to call attention to authors such as Pico della Mirandole and Johan Reuchlin. Della Mirandole lived between 1463 and 1494, and both studied and popularized subjects including Kabbalah, Hermeticism and Neoplatonism. He tried to organize a large debate in Rome on his nine hundred theses, involving philosophical, theological, magical, and cabbalistic themes (Terraciano, 2018). His theses faced inquisitorial action, with thirteen judged unacceptable and subsequently removed. The linguist Johannes Reuchlin lived between 1455 and 1522 and was author of two important Kabbalistic works: *De Verbo Mirifico* (1494) and *De Arte Cabbalistica* (1517), the latter being the first full treatise on Kabbalah written by a Christian (Bogdan, 2007, p. 57). Both authors became relevant figures of the so-called Christian Kabbalah and helped to further the mystic tradition of Kabbalah within European circles. Philosophers and intellectuals, such as Gottfried Leibniz, Gotthold Lessing, and William Blake were clearly influenced by Kabbalistic ideas (Matt, 1983, p. 16).

At a certain point in the history of the guilds, and of the livery companies in England, the operative associations, organized in Lodges, opened to non-operative members. How and why this evolution took place is the subject of lively debate between historians and Freemasonry researchers (Gonçalves, 2012; Storey, 1991). This debate is caused by the scarcity of internal documentation within Lodges. Those rituals that survive do not provide enough clues as to why this development took place. We acknowledge, through the consultation of some of these documents (Manuscripts Harleian No. 2054, Sloan No. 3848, and Sloan No. 3323), that Lodges had a simple structure, and that members were organised into two classes: apprentices and companions (Hughan, 1905). The works were directed by a knowledgeable and experienced Master of Works, whose role was to guard the main secrets of the art and precede the workings in the construction site with a prayer to the Creator. As most of the buildings had a religious destiny, they were supposed to increment the individual introspection and connection to God. Those buildings emphasized the idea of spiritual elevation and religious redemption of the faithful.

When the Craft became Speculative, with the federalization of four London lodges in the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, the openness of Freemasonry to English aristocracy become a reality (Lomas et al., 2006, p. 47; Ridley, 1999, p. 33). It is no accident that the members of these four lodges carefully chose a nobleman, Thomas Sayer, as the Grand Lodge first Grand Master (Anderson, 1721; MacKay, 1917, p. 249). Sayer was followed by George Payne (1718, June) and by Jean Theophilus Desaguliers, scientist and, later, a cleric ordained into the Church of England (Ridley, 1999, p. 37). These appointments likely took place for prestige or to capture the attention of aristocracy. In the particular case of Desaguliers, he may have believed that by joining Freemasonry, and by convincing many of his aristocratic friends to join, he may have realized his mission of furthering tolerant deism in religion (Ridley, 1999, p. 36). In 1721, the second Duke de Montagu was elected Grand Master under the proposal of George Payne. Montagu was one of the great individualities of that time. He acted as High Constable at the Coronation of George I, and was colonel of a regiment of the Horse Guards. He was also a member of the Royal College of Physicians, Knight of the Garter Order, and a member of the Royal Society (Ridley, 1999, p. 35).

The Royal Society, the oldest scientific institution in the world, was the gathering point of the most advanced spirits of the time, some of them recently identified as Freemasons (Lomas, 2006, p. 277; MacKay, 1917, p. 137), including Robert Moray, Isaac Newton, John Pearson, and Elias Ashmole. These were people who believed in religious toleration, in friendship between men of different religions, and in the simple faith in God and morality without theological constraints (Ridley, pp. 20-22). Since then, all the Grand Masters in England, Scotland and Wales have been either a noble or a member of the Royal Family.

Oddly, in 1721, a Presbyterian pastor, Reverend James Anderson, was instructed by Grand Master Desaguliers to revise and condense the Old Masonic Manuscripts observed by the English Lodges. This would lead to the 1721 Anderson's Constitution (Anderson, 1723; Ridley, 1919, p. 20). Anderson was from Aberdeen, became a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and when he moved to London, he became minister of a Nonconformist chapel in the city. Anderson was one of the fourteen members of the Grand Lodge officials who worked on the redrafting of the statutes of the Craft under the guidance of Desaguliers. As Ridley remarks, it is unlikely that Anderson was personally responsible for writing the principles of Freemasonry laid down in the Constitution (Ridley, 1999, p. 37). In a group of legislators with different backgrounds, and in the deist context of the Grand Lodge, we can assume that some members were familiar to subjects such as astrology, alchemy, and Kabbalah. Those ideas were, therefore, poured into the lettering of the Constitution (Gould, 1890, p. 140).

The Constitution is presented divided into three parts: the history of the Freemasonry, the Duties and Charges, and the General Regulations, the latter were compiled by George Payne, the second Grand Master in the history of English Grand Lodge. Anderson was responsible for rewriting the historical part that narrates relevant historical and theological events, such as the role Adam has had in the Creation, the myth of Noah and the Great Dilluvius, the magistrery of Abraham, Moses as prophet and leader of Israel, and particularly the role of King Solomon as the builder of the first Temple of Jerusalem. As no preparatory works survived, we do not know why Anderson made such effort to describe those historical events which are included in the Torah. The historical part is preceded by an injunction, 'To be read at the admission of a new Brother, when the Master or Warden shall begin or order some other Brother to read'.

We may therefore conclude that an implicit purpose was present to give some historical legitimacy to the Craft, to glorify it, and provide the Grand Lodge with a past that may emphasize its importance (Bogdan, 2007, p. 68). It should be added, that far from a pretentious originality of that section, the text followed the systematic of the Old Charges, the old manuscripts of the Operative Lodges, the earliest being the Regius MS dating from 1390 CE. The Old Charges are important because they form an historical link between the operative masons and the speculative masons, improving our understanding of the masonic rituals of initiation (Masonic Lodge of Education, n.d.).

The predominance of theological Jewish imagery in the Masonic rituals may insinuate that probably, indirectly, Jewish mysticism embodied into the Kabbalah philosophy may have influenced the spiritual and esoteric dimensions of modern Speculative Freemasonry. If the 18th century Lodges were formed originally by Christians, Conformists and Nonconformists, the demographic explosion that took place in late 19th century England allows us to deduce that Jews were being admitted as full members to English Masonic Lodges. The spiritual spirit was theism, and no political or religious confrontation was permitted, as is clearly evidenced by the first chapter of Anderson's Constitution entitled 'I. *Concerning GOD and RELIGION*' (Wood, Charles E 8/4/20 10:21):

«A Mason is oblig'd by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves ; that is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd ; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must else have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.»

The enlarged scope in the expression is evident through, "...only to oblige them [the members] to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves...". A second quote, "...that [religion] is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty and obeying to the commands of the Denominations and Persuasions they were members". (Wood, Charles E 8/4/20 10:21). Anglicans, Presbyterians, Nonconformists, Catholics, and even Jews may be allowed to become members.

Newman registers (2015) in the year 1717 there were 1,000 Jews in England, and by the end of the 18th century there were approximately 25,000. Records of the Grand Lodge of London reveal the names of some Freemasons, including Benjamin Deluze, Simon Andell, Solomon Mendez, Meyer Schomberg, Benjamin da Costa, and Isaac Barrett. Some of them were even Grand Officials of the Grand Lodge, not just members of Lodges. This distinction would not be possible if the spirit of the time was not so convergent and tolerant to religious entities outside of the Christian denominations. Ridley (1999, p. 131) observes that Jews may have been admitted to Freemasonry as early as 1724, but certainly by 1732. That is to say, fifteen years after the foundation of the Great Lodge of London and Westminster, the Craft cease to operate as an exclusive Christian-based Fraternity. A little time later, the Duke of Sussex used his position as Grand Master to encourage Roman Catholics and Jews to become Freemasons.

Kabbalah and Freemasonry

On the other hand, other points of interaction between Speculatives and Kabbalists exist. Eliphas Levi said that Kabbalah can be called the mathematics of human thought, the algebra of faith (Freedman, 2019). All in the Hebrew language is related to numbers, since each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, made up only of twenty-two letters, has a numerical value. The Kabbalists name this translation of letters into numbers 'gematria', which made possible for different words with the same numerical value to have some kind of relationship. The numbering is based on the first ten numbers of the alphabet. Hence, the ten sephitots of the Tree of Life (Lancaster, 2006, p. 77). This is the nucleus of the Kabbalistic hermeneutics, of man's relationship with God, nature, and with himself. The ten sephirot, Gershom Scholem (1991) says, are the ten primitive categories that form the world of divine unity and its development. God is beyond human comprehension, of his perception. From God, ten sephirot emanate that are, at the same time, created by God and part of God.

God is beyond the definition of the ten sephirot, beyond the first emanation Keter because He is Ein Sof, without end, without limit. Ein Sof designates the unknowable transcendence essence of God (Lancaster, 2009, p. 229).

In Freemasonry everything is related to numbers (and geometry). Three, five, and seven are the age of the Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master, respectively. By three steps we climb to the Orient where the Master of the Lodge sits. Behind him the Delta with the all-Seeing Eye or the 'Iod' letter (י) inscribed in the centre of a Triangle. The letter 'Iod' represents the value ten, and is the end of the sequence of the first ten numbers, which means that with it the division of one returns to unity (One). Three governs the Lodge, the Worshipful Master, and the First and Second Wardens. Seven Masters makes a Lodge 'Just and Perfect'. Three represents the Three Great Lights of Freemasonry: the Square, the Compass, and the Book of the Law. Three also represents the columns of the Lodge: Wisdom, Beauty and Strength (Burktel, n.d.). The first two Great Lights are of operative origin inspired by the guilds of the stonemasons, the third represents God's will and Commandments transcribed to the scriptures. The third letter of the Hebrew alphabet is 'Gimel' (ג). Three candles, three knocks on the door, three stages of life. The universal symbol for the Great Architect of the Universe is an equilateral triangle. Three represents father, mother, and child in many cultures.

Five are the fingers on a hand, five are the senses, five are the parts of the human body: the head, chest, pelvis, thigh, and leg. In many cosmologies five is the number of the universe with the five elements (fire, air, earth, water, and ether). The Hebrew consonant representing five is 'Heh' (ה). It is the last letter of the ineffable name of God (YHWH). It is the first sound of the human communication 'ahh'. 'Heh' is also the Hebrew word for light and is mentioned five times in the narrative of the first day of Creation.

Seven is the symbolic age of the Master in Freemasonry. Seven is equal to the sum of the triangle and the square. Seven are the cows and the maize cobs in the Pharaoh dream (Genesis 41:26), seven are the days of inauguration of the sons of Aaron (Exodus, 29:35), seven are the days of Creation. Seven are the planets, the metals, the musical notes, the colours, the weekdays, the chakras, and the virtues. Seven also represents a six-pointed star with a point in the centre and symbolizes the equilibrium that leads to our inner self. The Hebrew consonant representing seven is 'Zayin' (ז). Seven is the seventh day of the week and is the day God rested from His workings in the other days.

Because Freemasonry emerges from the need to make oneself a better and more knowledgeable person, as it is taught by Catholicism or Protestantism, the concept of the Holy Trinity is very dear to the Craft. If the Trinity is not explicitly mentioned in the rituals it hovers in the imagination of the faithful and of the worshippers. Under no other degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, other than the 18th, is the exaltation of the Holy Trinity doctrine so solemnly present. The degree is named Knight of the Rose Croix and is dedicated to exalt the practice of virtue and labour, the elimination of vice and purification of humanity (Hutchens, 2010, p. 135). The philosophy of rite teaches to be tolerant to the faith and creed of others. As this author remarks, tolerance is also taught to lead us to several examples from the beliefs of the Ancients that praise that neither the cross, as a symbol, nor the notion of messiah, are uniquely Christian.

They are, Hutchens adds (2007, p. 135), "manifestations of the religious truths appropriate to people who perceived them. The symbol of the degree is a rose which has gained the meaning of immortality. It represents, in Christian symbolism, the blood of Christ, which is merged with the cross, and within Freemasonry is a statement of infinity" (Hutchens, 2007, p. 140). Therefore, the idea of the universality of tolerance and faith, and the rejection of any sort of dogmatism (religious, political or any other) act as benchmarks of masonic philosophy and practice.

The origin of the relevance of numbers in Freemasonry is a subject of controversy. MacKay says in his Encyclopedia (MacKay, 1917) that numerology is a form of occultism in which magical properties are attributed to numbers, a knowledge that has been experienced in Europe since the 13th century. However, he rejects any link between Masonry and numerology, and he mentions William Preston as the author of the texts from which the ritual of the second degree of Fellowcraft was drafted, qualifying Preston as an 'Orthodox Christian' for whom any form of occultism would be 'aberrant' (MacKay, 1917, p.163).

Since Speculative Masonry is a derivation of Operative Masonry, coming from a Christian context the relevance of Jewish theology is, according to MacKay, secondary. The argument is not convincing. Most of the members of the Royal Society, who were also Masons, were familiarized with Rose Croix, Kabbalistic and occult texts. These themes were of great appreciation to English erudites. If the origins of the rituals are definitively Christian (the operative Freemasons and their Lodges), then their writers would not assume a clear Jewish or Talmudic relation. One should recall that the Jews were expelled from England in 1290 by edict of King Edward I (Roth, 1964, p. 136). From that time until the republic of Cromwell (1649-1659), Jews were forbidden to practice their religion publicly; however, it cannot be ruled out that they did not continue to worship privately, as was the case for the Portuguese 'cristão-novos' (born-again Christians). It is inferred that a small community of Sephardic Jews, identified in 1656, was allowed to stay in England (Roth, 1964). According to historians, Cromwell was a former Jew who assisted in dismembering the Church in England, acting as architect in the separation of Britain from the Roman Church, and by asserting the sovereignty of the British monarch as the supreme leader of the Church of England (Hirschman & Yates, 2014, p. 160).

Ragon has a more realistic position, as he recognizes not existing in the ancient doctrines strict frontiers between the doctrine of Christianity and other foreign theological teachings. He comments in *De la Maçonnerie Occulte* (Ragon, 2007, p. 59) "the mysterious laws governing the invisible world, even from ancient times led to a science that was later named Kabbalah or sacred tradition. This science is independent of religious times and forms. Eastern, Indian, Arabic or Hebrew peoples, European, Catholics, Greeks or Protestants equally accept the same principles and combinations". "The Kabbalist doctrine, Ragon says, was for a long time the religion of the wise and the erudite, because, like Freemasonry, it tends incessantly to spiritual perfection and to the merger of beliefs and nationalities between men. In the eyes of the Kabbalist (as in Freemasonry), all men are brothers, and his relative ignorance is, for the Kabbalist, an excuse to educate them" (Ragon, 2007, p. 59).

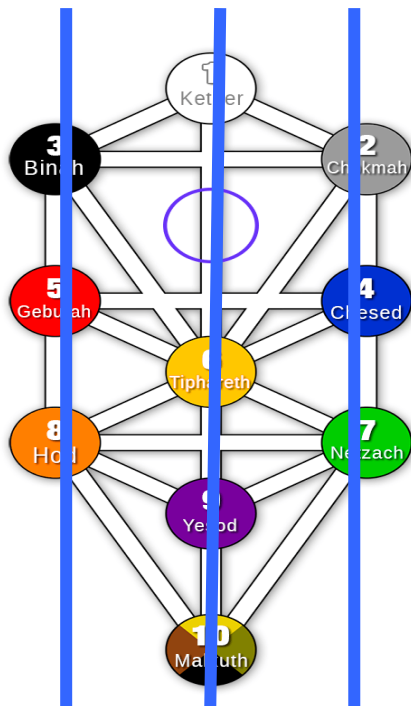
Albert Pike in *Morals and Dogma* (2013, p. 707) sums-up the importance of Kabbalah as a key to a Masonic esotericism by stating, "One is filled with admiration, on penetrating into de Sanctuary of the Kabbalah, as sees in it a doctrine so logical, so simple, and at the same time so absolute. The necessary union of ideas and signs, the consecration of the most fundamental realities by the primitive characters; the Trinity of Words, Letters and Numbers; a philosophy simple as the alphabet, profound and infinite as the word; theorems more complex and luminous than those of Pythagoras; a theology summed up by counting on one's firmness; an Infinite which can be held in the low of an infant's hand; ten ciphers and twenty-two letters, a triangle, a square and a circle, - these are all the elements of the Kabbalah. These are the elementary principles of the written Word, reflection of that Spoken Word that created the world".

Leadbeater agrees with this (1926, p. 74), "there is much in Kabbalah which brings light upon our sermons and symbols and a study of Kabbalistic theosophy may be both profit and interest to a Mason". He concludes (1926, p. 76), "the skeleton of this body of doctrine (Kabbalah) has reached us in the symbolism of Freemasonry, and in kabbalah we may find a clue to much that is obscure in our modern rituals".

As the Masonic Temple is a reconfiguration of the Solomon Temple, the three columns that stand on the mosaic floor, in a given disposition, can be associated with an ancient Kabbalistic concept and with a singular diagram found in the Zohar. A diagram that illustrates the emanations (sephirot) from God into the formation and preservation of the universe. The diagram also reflects certain states of spiritual realization in man. This diagram, called the Tree of Life or the Sephirot, often consists of spheres connected to each other by pathways and ordered to reflect the sequence of the Divine Creation (Lancaster, 2006, pp. 48-53).

According to Kabbalists, the Keter (the Crown), the Ein Sof (Nothingness) shines as the head of the sephirot and comes from the top, down like an array of light across the ten sephirot, ending in the material universe in the last sephira called Malkhut, that is Kingdom, Divine Presence, Apple Orchard. The three columns that lay down in the centre of a Symbolic Lodge can be interrelated with the three columns of the Tree of Life. Let us imagine them (Figure 1) as if they are the materialization of the tree. The right column starts in Chochma, passes by Chesed and Netzach, to end up in Yesod. The left column starts in Binah, passes by Geburah and Hod, and ends in Yesod. The central column starts in Keter, passes by Daat, Tif'eret, Yesod, and ends in Malkhut.

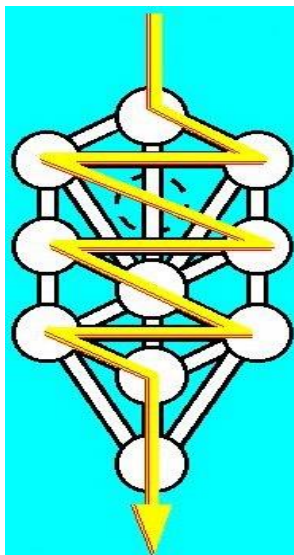
Figure 1



According to Figure 1, on the right side of the Tree, Chokmah is wisdom, beginning, father; Chesed is love, grace; Netzach is victory, emotions, God’s will, and intuition; Yesod is the foundation, the covenant, the male phallus. On the left-hand side, Binah is understanding, the palace, the womb; Geburah is power, judgment, structure; Hod is splendour, the prophecy, the analytical mind; Yesod is foundation, the covenant, the male phallus. Thirdly, the central column represents equilibrium. Keter, the Crown, is The Will of God, Ayin, nothingness; Da’at is knowledge; Tipheret is beauty, compassion, heaven, the sun, harmony, the King; Yesod is life, Providence, the foundation, the convention; Malkuth, the Divine Presence, the Communion of Israel, the Earth, the Queen, the Moon.

The ten sephirot system works in dual equilibrium whilst producing a new synthesis, in a new emanation. According to Figure 2, the emanations are interconnected, forming a zig-zag pattern starting at 1 and continuing consecutively (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.) until 10 is reached.

Figure 2



Freemasonry identifies these columns as symbolic and instructive. They represent the virtues of Wisdom and Justice, and Beauty and Strength. These three columns are associated with the cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. We can relate them to Figure 2 by matching them with the pillars of the Tree of Life. On the left we have a pillar bringing together Understanding, Judgement and Splendour. On the right we have a second pillar uniting Wisdom, Loving Kindness (Mercy) and Victory (Eternity). Finally, at the centre we have a balancing pillar matching the Crown, Knowledge, Beauty, Foundation, and the Kingdom.

This means that our individual efforts to control our negativity, impulses, anger, envy, and hatred are achieved by practicing Loving Kindness, doing good deeds and treating others as we would like the others to treat us. In an allegorical way, the right pillar is the pillar of love, the left pillar is the pillar of fear, and the central pillar is the pillar of holiness.

Looking at the sequence of the Genesis, the first book of the Torah, God created the universe and material world in a series of sequential actions (from the first to the tenth), through channels that He identified and that interconnect with each one of the spheres, or sephirot, with the preceding or succeeding sphere. On the first day, God created the heavens and earth and God said, 'let there be light and there was light' (Gen. 1:1-4). On the second day, God made the firmament and separated the waters that were beneath the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament. He called the firmament heaven (Gen. 1:6-8). On the third day, God caused the waters to move to one side and dry land to appear. He called the dry land 'Earth' and the gathering of the waters 'sea' (Gen. 9:10). On the fourth day, He created the luminaries, 'one to dominate the day and another to dominate the night and the stars', and set them in the firmament, 'to dominate by day and by night and to separate between the light and the darkness' (Gen. 1:14-18). On the sixth day, He created the living creatures, the animals, and the beasts (Gen. 1:24-25). On the same sixth day He made Man in, 'His image, after His likeness', to rule over fish of the sea, birds in the sky and over animals. God created male and female (Gen. 1:26-27). God ordered them to be fruitful and multiply, fill the Earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish, the bird and every living thing that moves on the Earth (Gen. 1:28). On the seventh day, God completed the work and abstained from the work He had done. God rested, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, as He abstained from doing the work that He had done (Gen. 2:1-3).

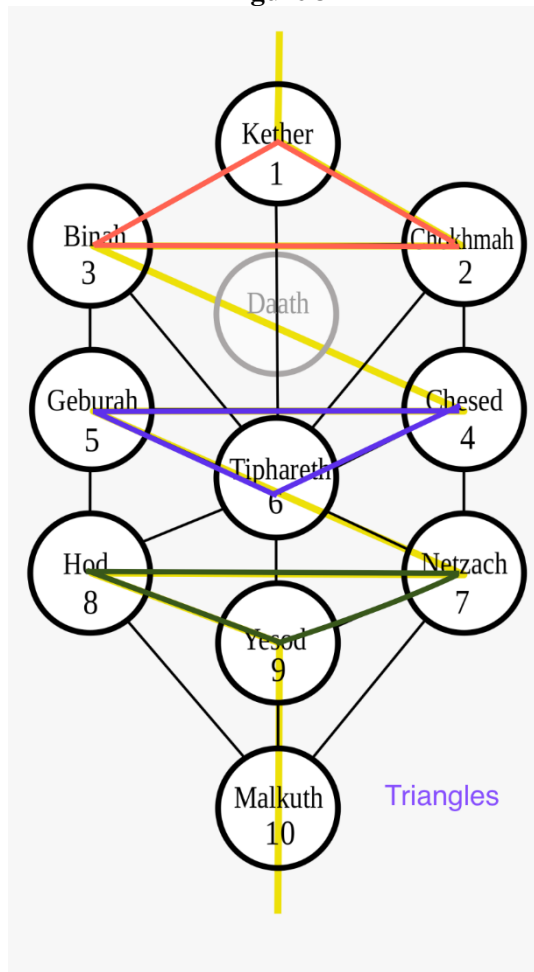
With the creation of Man on the sixth day, the work of the Creation was completed, and Man was invested of a mission: to direct other animals, to cultivate the Garden of Eden, and to guard it. We know of the myth of the original sin, that the directive given by God to Man to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge was disrespected by him and Man was conducted to his mortal condition. The reasoning here is that Man was not prepared to accede the enlightenment of the Tree of Knowledge, as he needed to prove himself worthy of being made in God's image.

This myth of the imperfectness of Man, stained by the original sin, was absorbed by the philosophy of Freemasonry as an Initiatic doctrine that makes possible, through a process of auto-transformation, the rebirth of Man for the mission which God entrusted him. That process is only fruitful through the struggle against personal vices and doing good deeds. This is clear in the description of the rough stone performed in the ceremony of initiation. The writer elucidates what the rough and the perfect ashlar are (Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, 1860):

«By the rough ashlar we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the perfect ashlar of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God; and by the trestle-board we are also reminded that, as the operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Master on his trestle-board, so should we, both operative and speculative, endeavor to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe, in the great book of Revelation, which is our spiritual, moral, and Masonic trestle-board.»

This idea of human self-improvement towards the Divine Light, done by Divine Providence, is also present in the system of triangles that are formed by the sephirot that constitute the Tree of Life. A Tree that is the true Tree, consisting of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil (Fielding, 1989, p. 15). The ten sephirot become organized into three triangles (Figure 3).

Figure 3



The superior triangle is formed by Keter, Chokhmah, and Binah, constituting the world of Briah, the World of the Creation, the supernal triangle. These three sephirot represent stages of the phase of development in the universe and in humankind (Fielding, 1989, p. 29). The second triangle reunites Chesed, Geburah, and Tiphareth, configuring the ethical triangle as it furthers law and morality in the plane of nature and humankind. It is rooted in that triangle the sense of right and wrong, lawful and unlawful. In masonic terms, that is the dimension of the rituals, the regulations of the Order, the command of the superiors of the Craft.

The lower triangle groups together Netzach, Hod, and Yesod. Netzach is pure energy, emotions, and personality; Hod is splendour, the analytical mind and truthfulness; Yesod is the womb from which Netzach and Hod are born into the material world, that is Malkhut, the kingdom. Malkhut is like the profane who leaves the Chamber of Reflection and struggles with his limitations, in the ceremony of Initiation, to be able to bear a new human being, more enlightened, under the illumination of the Great Architect of the Universe.

The initiate is an apprentice who cuts figuratively the rough stone with the help of the chisel. To be successful he needs the guidance of the Creator to orientate him while he strikes the chisel with the hammer. He works through emotions, energy, and truthfulness to rebuild himself. He works on the lower triangle, in the physical world. When this stage is completed, he is ready to become a Fellowcraft. In that degree, he is confronted with the challenges created by Chesed, Geburah, and Tiphareth, that is, the World of Yetzirah, the World of Formation, the working out.

It is the ethical triangle, of moral learning, of the discovery, of the science of the world, of the universe, and of the liberal arts. Now a Fellowcraft, he is blessed by Beauty, Compassion, and the Blessed Holy One. He learns to use Grace and Power, and both the right and left arms. From there he moves to the definitive test of death and personalizes Hiram, the Architect, who was betrayed by three companions wanting to steal the password that leads to the Sanctus Sanctorum.

As a man he died, to be born again close to his paradigm, the Primordial Man, Adam Kadmon. There he touches slightly the splendorous work of Creation. He becomes a collaborator of God's perennial, incessant, and profound work of recreation of the world.

As Cooper (2006, p. 298) puts it, quoting the *Sefer Yetsirah*, if the root of the soul is Adam ha-Rishon (the human primordial conscience), resurrection represents the work of rectification, of the sacred sparks that have fallen into the world, and step by step are returning to their divine source, through the good deeds of humans. In the description of the *Zohar*, the body is a garment or a bark for the soul that is seen as a spark, a spark of broken-up light. In the after world the body will no longer be a prison for the soul, the body will absorb the flame of the spark, intensifying it instead of limiting it. This is the work of the Master, in the polishing of the cut stone, in drawing of the new plans for new constructions, in the assistance given to others. He will not reach the condition of perfect ashlar if others are divergent from it.

To conclude this section, through the analysis of the masonic ritual and philosophy it becomes clear that Freemasonry as a system of beliefs and values, directed to the teaching of moral values and ethical conducts, greatly resembles the philosophy and teachings of Kabbalah. The system of columns shown in the figure (1) above, has roots in Christian teachings and is clearly associated with the construction of Solomon's Temple, to which Freemasonry gives enormous relevance. This relevance is inspired by chapters six (Edification of the Temple) and seven (Solomon builds his Palace) of the Book of Kings I. The ritual of the first degree, for instance, says that the seven masons required for a Lodge of Initiation to take place 'assemble in a room well-guarded from all cowans and eavesdroppers, in the second or third story (as the case may be) of some building suitably prepared and furnished for Lodge purposes, which is, by Masons, termed the Ground Floor of King Solomon's Temple.' (Duncan's *Ritual and Monitor of Freemasonry*).

The Book of I Kings is the book where the names of two individualities very dear to Freemasonry (Hiram Abif, the Architect, and Hiram, the King of Tyre) are named (Kings 5:21 and 7:13). The names of the two pillars of the porch of Solomon's Temple, Boaz and Jachin, which are specially praised in Freemasonry, are quoted in Kings I (7:21). The Torah says that the left pillar meant 'strength is in it' and the right pillar meant 'establish'. Solomon gave these names to the pillars to symbolize that the Temple firmly established would be blessed with the strength of God forever.

Why these names were given, even in early versions of the masonic rituals, is the subject of enormous interrogation between masonic scholars. In his *Encyclopedia*, MacKay remarks that this symbolism, found at a very early period in the eighteenth century, was incorporated into the lecture of the second Degree, where it remains (MacKay, 1917). He adds, '...that meaning is not for the Apprentice. The adept may find it in the Kabbalah. The Justice and Mercy of God are in equilibrium, and the result is Harmony, because a Single and Perfect Wisdom presides over both'. In the same sense, Leadbeater (1926, p. 77) affirms that the Jewish mysteries were the source of masonic traditions for the three Craft degrees, and they are the basis of the whole system in masonic initiation. Sibley adds (1913, p. 57) that the three degrees ceremonies seem to have come to masonry around 1735, and were later revised by Preston and adopted by the Grand Lodge of London.

The Contribution of Albert Pike

Albert Pike, the author and reorganizer of the High Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, was a renowned cultivator of Kabbalah and Hermeticism (Shapiro, 2013). In his famous 'Moral and Dogma', he recognizes the influence of the Kabbalistic doctrine in the manufacture of the ritual of 32nd degree, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. Pike (1871, p. 458) says, "...the Sages proudly wore the name of Kabbalists. The Kabbalah embodied a noble philosophy, pure, not mysterious, but symbolic. It taught the doctrine of the Unity of God, the art of knowing and explaining the essence and operations of the Supreme Being, of spiritual powers and natural forces, and of determining their action by symbolic figures; by the arrangement of the alphabet, the combinations of numbers, the inversion of letters in writing and the concealed meanings which they claimed to discover therein. The Kabbalah is the key of the occult sciences; and the Gnostics were born of the Kabbalists". The author adds (Pike, 1871, p. 849), 'the main tradition of single revelation was preserved under the name 'Kabbalah' by the Israeli Priests. The cabalistic doctrine, which was also the dogma of the Magos and Hermes, is contained in the *Sepher Yetsirah*, *Zohar* and *Talmud*.

According to this doctrine, the Absolute is the Being, in which The Word is, the Word that is the declaration of being and expression of life'. Pike adds, "...the word is the first and the only father's; and the astonishment with which the Highest Mysteries were faced imposed silence in relation to the nature of the Holy Spirit. The Word is the Light and Life of Humanity."

In accordance with the ritual of this degree (Supreme Council, 1981) 'Man has the royal secret - the eternal gift of God - Love. It cannot be imparted to him by others. It was incarnate when the Father breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Cherish this love as a divine attribute, a precious birth right, a witness that man is indeed a son of God'. The search for the secret becomes a major goal in the mason raised to the 32d degree of Scottish Freemasonry, a search for the relationship with God, family, vocation, and brethren. It is not a vague ephemeral quest, but a realizable goal that can, and should, be made the activity of our lives, Hutchens comments (2010, p. 316) referring to the teachings of the degree. The Kabbalist inspiration for this degree, which concludes the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite system of Freemasonry, is self-evident and inescapable.

Conclusion

The relationship between Freemasonry and Kabbalah has caused controversy between masonic authors and historians. While much of the symbolism associated with the Masonic doctrine gets its inspiration from the Torah and its founding myths, most authors shined the basis of that philosophy and history in the limits of Christian inheritance. A good reason for this is the fact that Speculative Freemasonry, as we currently understand it, is an 18th century British invention as the first Grand Lodge resulted from a federalization of four operative London Lodges. It seems clear that this step served the political purposes of the Crown, to pacify a complex social and political situation by allowing men of different religions, creeds, and political allegiances to be together and share the same ethics and principles of philosophy. It is disparaging to circumscribe his values and symbolism to Christian doctrine and ethics. A good reason for this is the influence of members of the Royal Society like Robert Moray, Frances Bacon, Isaac Newton, Elias Ashmole, Thomas Wharton, and John Hewitt, who were, at the same time, members of the top ranks of the Order. They who are enthusiastic readers of Kabbalistic texts. The influence of Kabbalah is visible in the wording of Anderson's Constitution, and the primary role given in it, and in the rituals of the first three degrees of the Craft to the allegory of the construction of Solomon's Temple. It is also relevant the fact that two important passwords of the Craft Freemasonry (Boaz and Jachin) were retaken from the Torah.

But it is in the high degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite that this influence is definitively confirmed by the central role that Albert Pike, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of that masonic system of Freemasonry, had on writing the rituals and main teachings. Pike was a frenetic reader of ancient philosophies, including Jewish mysticism, and it is clear by his comments to the rituals and degrees that he restructured them from the bottom to the top, that he considered Kabbalah one of the relevant theologies to inspire the teachings of the Craft. As Pike wrote, Kabbalah is the source of all occult sciences, and all sages recognize one First Cause (material or spiritual) of the existence of the Universe. Thence, Unity became the symbol of the Supreme Deity. It was made to express, to represent God, but without attributing to the number One any divine or supernatural virtue.

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