The Word.

The Etymology of Language has always been something of a fascination to me. When I was in college, I discovered through one of my minors in Psychology that not only the way the word was constructed, but its use within the phrase played such a vital role in how we as individuals interacted with it. Interact, we make decisions about how we respond to a Word, or a phrase traditionally based on a set of previously learned responses.

We received praise as a child for a job well done, we automatically associate those words with a pleasant or pleasurable experience. When we were scolded or given a talking to by our professors or someone of authority outside of our home, we carried that association with us as well. Much of our response to words and phrases, is set into us at an early age because of just such an upbringing.

As we learn about from our study of Kabbalah, there are 3 levels to each story. The first is the obvious truth we are being told during the recitation of the tale or story.

Think about Jesus and his tale of the Adulterous Woman from the Gospel of John. "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." That's pretty straight forward and easy to get. The second, typically requires a bit more digging to fully grasp or understand. In Catholic Mythology we were often informed by the Priest that this woman was wrongly accused by these men who tried to find their way into her favors and were rebuffed. She chose to remain pure and with virtue. And therefore, had to defend her honor. Remember the company you keep; was the lesson we were told. The third requires a key to unlock. And in this instance, the key was provided to us by Bart Ehrmenn in one of his books, "And God said What?" That the oldest, most original forms of the Gospel of John were written in ancient Greek, the language of the day. This story does not appear in any of those original manuscripts. But in the books found in the Byzantine monasteries, this story was found, and at a later date. It was added after the fact to drive home a point that the author of this tale, felt the need to relate.

So, it is with the "Word".

What Word?

Are we discussing the Substitute Word of the Master Mason?

Are we discussing the Real Word of the Master Mason?

Let's add some context to this conversation. In the culture of today, words are just a jumble of letters that we move about to create a sound.

Some words have a very short life span, can you imagine your father looking at you and telling you that you have Rizz? My children did that to me and caused me to laugh. They thought they were paying me a compliment and were therefore, notably, confused by my response.

Words, and the letters used in them have not always been so casually thrown about. Take one of the oldest languages still in use around the world. Hebrew

In the Zohar, Book 1, Page 19 of the Prologue, we are introduced to a fascinating story of The Letters.

"Individual energy forces, which express themselves as Hebrew Letters, come before the Creator requesting that they be the instruments by which the world is created. The Creator eventually agrees to utilize the letter Bet, as this particular letter beings the Hebrew word Brachah (Blessing). The Zohar then depicts the unique attributes of each of the twenty-two letters and the spiritual energy they emit. All these forces and their power of blessing are transferred to us when we visually scan the Aramaic text and learn the lessons it holds."

"…And he explains that when the Holy one, blessed be He, was about to create the world, all of the letters were still hidden. For two thousand years before the creation of the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, watched the letters and amused Himself with them."

Watched the Letters and amused Himself? Who knew that letters could sing and dance and carry on. But, to the authors of the early Hebraic texts, they believed so. Words, were not just useless letters all jumbled together to create a recognizable noise, each and every Letter had a purpose and place and was used carefully. They are the essence of Creation itself.

When Masonry, the great collector, compiler, and aggregator of older esoteric symbols and meanings set about to create their degrees, they reached right out to a language that has a history of meaning within the words themselves for help.

In guttural Hebrew, we are told "I, the Builder" is the Replacement Word of the Master.

The fascinating use of this phrase still grips me. This phrase, was not used previously in Hebrew and even Albert Pike remarked on its re-translation and use. His best work to fit it into Hebrew was MVABAVN.

But when we are told the "Word" when we are Raised, it's a three-syllable sounding word. M H B. I think, in this regard, Pike may have been too eager to find its place amongst the actual Hebrew letters and was stretching a bit. More on this to come.

When we pass through the Royal Arch, and are given the Real Word of a Master Mason, we are told the translation is I Am. Now every student of Kabbalah, Hebrew Studies and almost any

Esoteric Practice has already seen the Tetragrammaton enough to know the Ineffable Name of God is unpronounceable in its truest form.

So, let's do some dissecting for a moment before we return to the reason for the use of the Words.

M H B

In Hebrew, the letters those are most closely associated with are.

ם For Mem, or the M Sound we are told to pronounce.

ה for He, or the H Sound we are told to pronounce.

ב for Bet, or the B sound we are told to pronounce.

For me now, this is one of the better parts of the story. We again reach back to the Zohar, Prologue, to see how each of these letters was entertained by Himself.

"The letter Mem entered and said to Him, Master of the universe, may it please You to create the world by me, because with me you are called Melech (King). He told it yes, it is indeed so, but I shall not create the world with you, because the world needs a king! Go back to your place, you and the letters Lamed and Caf, as it is not proper for the world be without a king."

"The letter Vav entered, and pleaded before Him, Master of the universe, may it please You to create the world with me because I am in myself one of the letters of Your Name, Yud Hei Vav Hei He replied: Vav, you and the letter Hei should both be satisfied with being written in My Name. Because you appear in My Name and are engraved in It, I shall therefore not create the world with you."

"The letter Bet entered and said unto Him, Master of the universe, may it please You to create the world with me, because of me You are blessed in the upper and lower worlds. This is because the letter Bet is the first letter of the word Blessing. The Holy One, blessed be He, replied; But, of course, I shall certainly create the world with you. And you shall appear in the beginning of the Creation of the world."

Now together, we have a letter that stands for King, one that is silent in its creation story, and one that means Blessing and was the Creator of the world. So the substitute word of a Master Mason means The King of Blessings and a Creator in our loose translation from the Zohar.

Not a bad substitute if you ask me.

The “Real” “Lost” Word of a Master Mason.

HVHY, the Tetragrammaton itself.

What student of mystics and esoteric hasn’t seen this and been forced to spend countless hours studying, reflecting and meditating on this. It’s on necklaces, bumper stickers, rings, posters and banners; in short, no small amount of places.

As we have already covered two of the three letters in the ineffable name, we shall now look at the final letter and see what the Zohar has to say about this one.

“The letter Yud entered, stood before Him, and said, Master of the universe, may it please You to create the world with me, because I am the first letter of the Holy Name. Thus it should be proper for You to create the world with me. He Replied: It should suffice you to be engraved upon My Name and appear in Me. You embrace all My Desires. Rise up, it would not be proper for you to be removed from My Name!”

How we bridge the gap from two of the three letters of the ineffable name not having a meaning in the Zohar to being translated into I am, that I am seems strange to me. The fascinating clue we are given from the letter Yud is encapsulated in the simple phrase, “You embrace all of My Desires.”

So, we have now moved from “I, the builder” to the King of Blessing and a Creator, all the way to I am, that I am, Embracer of My Desires. Fascinating how the Word has evolved in this matter.

Then it hit me, as we Master Masons are given the word and we see it written out, it is spelled M H B. Wait, we are reading this from Left to Right as most Western cultures will be want to do.

But in Hebrew, it would be read from Right to Left. Well now that makes for a considerably more interesting translation of this Forgotten Word. Would the “Word” now not mean, Creator of Kings? Same translation but read from Right to Left. Creator of Kings! Creator. What a fascinating use of that word. Did the Masons that created this entire portion of the ritual have something to tell us that they wanted us to find the second level of understanding on?

Genesis Ch1, verses26-28

And He said, Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth.

And God created man to his own image: to the image of God, he created them: Male and female he created them.

And God blessed them, saying: increase and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and all living creatures that move upon the earth.

We were created in the image and likeness of a Creator. And we were given dominion over just about everything from the way this reads. So kind of like being a King.

Is the "Word" here to remind you of a basic Biblical truth? And since you didn't hear it and take it to heart the first time, we are repeating it in the Royal Arch degree for those that weren't paying attention the first time? You are a Creator. You are the King of what you have created. You were made by the Divine to Create. You were made in His image and likeness. Is Masonry reminding you that it's your job to create?

Create what?

Well to start, how about your own world? You, decided to take a wife. You chose your wife. You decided this was a woman that you could work with to co-create, right? You, created children. You raised and nurtured your creation. They are a direct result of your work. You, create your work! You have decided that this was the job, or place where you could or would create. All of these, we are being reminded is our decision that we have made each and every day. We have created the world we live in. And we, as creators of it, have dominion over it. Don't like the way your creation worked today? Fix it, you have dominion over it. Don't like the way it's working out? Fix it, it's still a work in progress. Want to be smarter? Create it, be the King of learning. Want to be stronger? Be the creator of your own healthy life story. Remember, God didn't find satisfaction in His work and was pleased with it until the 6th day. And on the 7th, He rested. What day of your creation are you in?

Is Masonry trying to remind us of the simple, ultimate fact of life, we are the creators of our own reality and destiny?

We have all heard the first and simplest lesson of the "Word" within Masonry. This, was my attempt at bringing a second and hopefully deeper meaning to this Word. And a slight tip of the hat to the third meaning of this for all Masons and Men. This is, of course, another part of my personal travels through the Great Work and my hope to share this with my Brothers so it can help you shorten the road we are all walking together.

Credits:

Zohar Book 1, Prologue

MasonCode.com

Albert Pike

Wikipedia Hebrew Letters

Holy Bible Douay Rhemes Edition