

In the last talk on light, Companion Reverend Elliot made the point that all light originates with the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Building on that point, I want to discuss the means of dissemination of that light, try to classify the light as good, bad, or otherwise, point out briefly how light is perceived, and then develop the rationale that in Masonry, light is leadership.

Now the light which originates with the Supreme Architect of the Universe arrives to us through conduits. These conduits may be animate or inanimate. A hot stove is inanimate, but the first time you burn your finger, the message is received. We tend to recognize the animate, fellow human beings who influence our lives, more than the inanimate. We also tend to recognize hearing as the primary perceiver of light, but this is not necessarily true. All of our senses are at work in the learning or teaching process. We observe and react to body language; we also react to feel when we shake hands with a Brother or conduct a candidate and the list could go on.

One might liken the light coming down from above as going through a prism. The input is pure white light, but the output, or that which we perceive may be colored or even non-existent. To simplify discussion and provide a basis for me to play teacher, let us say that light can be either white, gray or black. We define white light as good, constructive suggestions, positive actions much in line with the five points of fellowship in the Master Masons Degree. Black light then is that which is evil, unlawful, degrading or negative. As in law or propaganda, there is a gray area, extralegal matters at law or propaganda with no reference as to source.

Now let us attempt to define leadership. I have heard many people talk or write about the science of leadership, but my receptors are turned off as soon as I hear the word science. Leadership is an art. Specifically it is the art of influencing human behavior. No two people exercise leadership the same way. Compare George S. Patton with Mohandas Ghandi. Both were excellent leaders; one flamboyant, the other very quiet and reserved, but both quite effective. Then compare Churchill and Hitler, one representing good, the other evil, but both very effective leaders. It is my personal opinion that leadership cannot be taught, but it can be learned. And, that Masonry provides an excellent learning ground for exercise of leadership by providing the light for learning if you are willing to receive it. Now let's have some fun and go into examples. The examples are taken from my own experience for both accuracy and so as not to embarrass others.

General MacArthur, in his farewell address to congress said (and I am not sure my quote is exact), "so here I stand, an old soldier who did his duty as G-d gave him the light to see that duty." I do not know if MacArthur was a Mason, but he sure put the concept of light into context.

Let's get more personal and develop the lemma that leadership can and probably does include the art of spreading the light. My roommates in college during my senior year were Ed and Bob . Ours was truly an ecumenical room. Ed was catholic, Bob was Protestant and I was Jewish. We used to get visits from Francis Cardinal Spellman. It seems Ed's Father was a big muckey-muck in the Boston Catholic hierarchy and the two Cardinals (Cushman and Spellman) exchanged information.. I usually excused myself so as not to cause embarrassment to my roommates, but after Bob converted to Catholicism, Cardinal Spellman invited me to stay on. He asked me one day why I didn't convert to the

true religion. I replied, why convert, I am quite comfortable with my religion. He then asked if I wanted to go to Heaven. I countered with are you saying I can't go to heaven because I am not Catholic? He smiled; and I knew I had been had. His answer was, " By no means, I am only offering you a shortcut." Talk of leadership!

OK-Quiz time. How many of you think Cardinal Spellman's approach was white light?...Gray Light...Black Light. Point is it often depends on the identity of each. Going on...

My personal reaction was a warm, fuzzy feeling that such an outstanding individual would take an interest in me. In the same sense, if you are a knowledgeable Mason, you should take the time to talk with the newer members of the Craft and make them feel the warmth of your interest.

Now let me give an example of improper application or imparting of light. During my Senior year, as Cadets, we had to take a course called MP&L, Military Psychology and Leadership. The instructor was a civilian psychiatrist who rubbed us all the wrong way. Again as Cadets, we never commented on our instructors, but this guy was a three dollar bill, a complete phony. Our Regular Army instructors were not dumb, but they fixed us. After graduation those of us who opted for Signal Corps went to Fort Monmouth for Officers Basic, seven of us in a class of 45. Guess who we ran into. The Academy got rid of him, but we again had Dr. Motivate in class. One day he presented the following situation in class. The troops had been in a field exercise. Everyone was hot, tired and thirsty. The mess trucks came out to serve lunch and you were the officer observing the mess line. You saw one young soldier put his dirty hands into his mess kit and brush the food back into the pot saying, "I don't want no goddamn peas." What are your actions?" He pointed to a Forestry Major from Maine who was very well liked in our class. In his quiet drawl and twang, Ed said, "Well, I'd take that man to the hospital." The instructor beamed and said, "Oh, you're going to take him to see the psychiatrist." "No", said Ed, "I'm going to take him to the operating room and get my foot cutout of his ass." The instructor lost control of the class.

OK, Quiz time. Was the instructor giving white black or gray light in his initial query?  
- The instructor was an example of how being overbearing or emoting can destroy an attempt to help or teach. This is an example of a self-serving type of "good counsel".

The reason I included this episode was as much for amusement as demonstration of some things to avoid. Incidentally Ed retired from the Army as a Major General. Dr. Motivate was killed in action in Korea.

So, in this paper I have attempted to cover the nature of light, touch on the Masonic leadership that can be imparted by the proper use of light, and entertain you with two incidents in which I was involved. An equally important aspect that I did not cover, is setting the example. That is unnecessary for this Chapter, and I respect you for this.