

The Glory of Light

Transcribed by Adam McLean from Ms. Ashmole 1415. f61-70.

The Glory of Light

or

a short treatise showing Urim and Thummim
to be made by Art, and are the same
with the Universal Spirit corporate and fixed.

Noble Sir:

Although things merely intellectual are most excellent; yet to know rare things out of use, is held little better than to know nothing, and it is now held a miracle. Also because weak things require the stronger support, I present this invention to you whose long experience hath enabled [you] to discern betwixt good and evil, when you come into an artificer's shop and find many instruments appear, of you know not the use, yet you think not the worse of them that cut your fingers, knowing the artist useth them to perfect[ion], and their speculations are compared to Rachel and Leah for beauty and perfection. Heretofore many worthy men manifested the possibility of squaring the circle, which is not yet done, because in ardua virtuis, and I do desire to hold good correspondence with the Lawers, because they hold Reason to be the soul of the Law, and thereby essences are made manifest by themselves. The victory and regal power of pure sulphur which turns four into one brings perfect peace and shows the quadrate perfection, toward that which it is, is meant to do you service.

The truth seems buried because it brings forth little fruit but it is great and prevaieth to make all things manifest, so far as is possible to all men, for in common sense and reason all agree, in mysteries never; so that we may not speak of Science without knowledge, which breaks the Gates of Brass and cuts asunder the Bars of Iron, before the Eyes of understanding, that the Treasure of Darkness may be opened and the bright and fiery sword discovered, which turns every way to keep transgressors out of Paradise. For if we consider wherein the celestial and terrestrial bodies agree, we shall find something objective in the inferior bodies, whereby they communicate their Celestial virtue and influence, which excellent Art doth imitate to produce a glorious substance of commixed forms, and of clearness, virtue and beauty beyond expression. The Mathematicians say the Celestial influences do hold and govern every natural body, and by many virtues collect a quantity, subsisting without shadow, for the real virtues affect to be specificate, and as living fire gives light to other things, so this central substance of Celestial virtue or form of metals is the subject of this short discourse.

That Urim and Thummim were given on the Mount cannot be proved, yet they are potential from the Creation may appear, for they were substances whose name and essence did predicate each other being convertible terms: the name and essence one, the words signify Light and perfection, knowledge and holiness, also manifestation and truth; even as science and essence make one perfection. It is likely they were before the Law given, for the Almighty commanded Noah to make a clear light in the Ark, which some take for a window, others for the arching and bowing of the upper deck a cubit (Gen 8,22), but sith [since] the text saith Day and Night shall no more cease, it seems it did then cease, and whether there were one or many windows is uncertain. But when the windows of Heaven were opened, and the air darkened by pouring out rain, the Sun not giving his Light, but prohibited the generative spirit of the creatures in the Ark, what exterior clearness could be expected, therefore some of the Rabbins say the Hebrew word Zohar, which the Chaldee translates Neher, is not found in the scripture but in this place, so that like the word it seemeth to be a rare Light, and that which is generally doubted to be, the Creator commanded Noah to make by Art. Other Hebrew Doctors say it was a precious stone hung in the midst of the Ark, which gave light to all living creatures therein, this the greatest carbuncle could not do, nor any precious stone that is only natural, but the Universal spirit fixed in a transparent body shines like the Sun in glory, and gives sufficient light for all the room to unveil by. Therefore it is most probable this was the light that God commanded Noah to make, to give light to all living creatures, for it is of perpetual durance.

And whereas Tubal Cain is said to be a perfect Master of every artificer in brass and iron, which some hold doth contain the whole and perfect decoction of the Metallic virtue, wherein the central virtue is most abundant, and makes the happy more admired, who walks in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezech: 28,16), for where there are two things of our nature the chief is to be understood, therefore in the mention [mansion?] of fire, pure fire is preferred. The scarlet veil in the Temple seemed ever moving and signified pure fire generative and moving, which [when] fixed in clear bodies is Urim and Thummim, although essences are not without great difficulty made manifest by themselves, yet the clear vision thereof makes the possibility unquestionable, as at Elisha's prayer his servant saw the horses and chariots of fire about his master, which before he saw not, so are these apparent when the Invisible is made Visible.

Some think that Urim and Thummim were not artificial because they are said in the text (Exod 28, 30) to be put into the Breastplate, but not to be made, but this point may be cleared by observing the several kinds of making, as betwixt those things made with hands, and those things that are only made visible by effect, for when Nature and habitual virtue meet together the perfection is more absolute by a kind of new generation, as the pure l of metals by an inward power doth purge itself by ebullition, not by the first and remote causes but by the second and nearer, whereof the Philosophers saith the secret of all secrets is such a disposition which cannot be perfected with hands, for it is a transmutation of natural things from one thing to another. Also it is said the Artist taketh impure spirits and by sublimation, Nature and Art, cleanseth them into bodies pure and fixed, so that the bodily nature doth eternally predominate, and being more than perfect doth give perfection to other things. Now that these perfections have their beginnings from two Lights, both the text and the ancient philosophers make plain, but ignorance and the matter of the elements are the Iron Gates which must be cut in pieces before the invisible be made visible, for the natural Urim and Thummim the philosophers affirm what they have seen and done, and that they did nothing save that they knew before, so that a perfect knowledge is especially requisite to make a perfect Art. Therefore we are now to consider the means to attain this end.

The Lord gave Bazalael wisdom, understanding and knowledge (Exod 31, 34), there are the means, for Gold is dissolved by wisdom in contrition, assation and fire; the end is directed to invent works in Gold, Silver and Brass; which is not to be understood according to the sound of words but according to the intent of all distillation to extract the inward [perfection] and manifest the central virtue, for where the perfection of the matter is glorious, the perfection of the form must be more glorious.

The Sun and Moon are as the Parents of all inferior bodies and those things which come nearest in virtue and temperature are more excellent, The Sun's motion and virtue doth vivify all inferior bodies, and the pure form of the Terrestrial Sun is said to be all fire, and therewith doth the Celestial Sun communicate most virtue. Therefore the uncorrupted quality of pure l being digested in external heat hath also regal power over all inferior bodies, for the Sun doth infuse his influence into all things, but especially into Gold, and these natural bodies do now show forth their virtues, until they be made spiritual.

One of the Rabbins saith they made in the Second Temple Urim and Thummim, to the end they might make up all the 8 ornaments, although they did not enquire by them, because the Holy Ghost was not there, and any Priest that spake not by the Holy Ghost, and on whom the Divine Majesty rested not, they inquire not by him. So it is with sacramental bread, which hath no signification before consecration, but these man have the Spirit of Bezalael, and made the natural and spiritual bodies, which sovereign natural tincture some say so purifieth and causeth the radical humour so to abound, that the children in the fourth generation (yea some say in the tenth) shall perceive the effect of such present health of their ancestors. The two stones which uphold man's life is natural heat and radical moisture which requireth all care to observe equal proportion and mixture like a lamp, where neither the flame nor the oil must surpass, lest the oil is exhausted or the flame suffocated, for there is a possibility and aptness in nature to attain eternity, seeing natural desires are never altogether frustrated, and this aptness extending itself to immortality as it was before the Fall and shall be after the Resurrection, but there is one term of Nature appointed after the Fall and another by corruption of Parents, for these are perfect terminative and privative ends, the Hart and Eagle renew their young, so that it is possible for Man to attain that which is not denied to unreasonable creature, others say that if you had once finished this work and should live but 1000 years, you might give what you will and when you will without danger of diminution, as a man that hath fire may give to his neighbour without hurt to himself. Marcus Varro said there was much more in the Flamens Ceremonies than they understood; Vesta signified pure Earth and internal fire, of whom it is said Earth undergoeth the name and so doth Fire. Vesta is both. Thus is shown forth in a work by fire.

Philosophy is nothing but the study of wisdom considered in a created nature, as well subject to sense as invisible; and consequently material, and wisdom's central body is the shadow of wisdom's central essence, and the moral interpretation can never excuse the real effect from ocular demonstration, but where reason hath experience, Faith hath no merit, and without faith there is no knowledge of any excellent thing, for the end of Faith is understanding.

The Rabbins hold every natural beginning to be either matter or the cause of matter viz., the four elements. Others are of the opinion the Creator made one pure matter of which he made the 4 Elements, but here beginnings must be well understood, for there are beginnings of preparation, and beginnings of composition, and beginnings of operation, for the Artist was commanded to devise works in Gold, that is from the object to the possibility, for if the matter be glorious the form must be more glorious, and though the spiritual nature be more operative, yet the bodily nature must predominate eternally, so that to make the corporeal spiritual, and the spiritual corporeal is the whole scope of this intention, yet the spirit is not first but the natural, for corruption must put on incorruption, and mortality immortality, for that which is of greatest duration and most abundant in virtue doth most excell in glory and beauty, and so is fittest to make Urim and Thummim, for power and honour in his Sanctuary.

But because greatest things are not done by strength or habit of fingering, as also because the intellect doth so far excel the sense, this is a work of a second intention, and the beginning upon the virtue of the Elements, that is a pure bright and clear water of putrefaction for the perfection of every Art (properly so-called) requires a new birth, as that which is sown is not quickened except it die: but here death is taken for mutation, not for rotting under the clods, now therefore we must take the key of Art, and consider the secret of every thing is the life, therefore life is a vapour, and in vapour is placed the wonders of Art, whatsoever hath heat agitating and moving in itself, by the internal transmutation is said to live: This life the Artist seeks to destroy and restore an eternal life, with glory and beauty. This vapour is called the vegetable spirit because it is of the degree of heat with the hottest vegetable, and being decocted until it shines like the brightest steel ye shall see great and marvellous secrets, not by separation of elements by themselves but by predomination and victory of that pure fire, which like the celestial Sun enters not materially, but by help of Elemental fire, sends forth his influence and impression of form. Here we must observe differences of perfections, for although you have the fountain of complete white, yet you are not near your chief delight, which is the Fountain of Life and Centre of the Heart, the Universal Spirit, which lives in the radical humidity, and doth naturally vivificate, and is the masculine seed of the celestial Sol.

Here is that rule made good. Except you sow gold in gold you do nothing. Therefore we must take heed what we understand by gold. Whereof there are 3 sorts - vulgar, Chymicall and Divine; which is therefore so called because it is a special gift of God. The Theosophists are persuaded by exact diet, and by certain forms of prayers, at certain times to obtain the Angel of the Sun, to be their guide and director.

The Philosophers advise to take the like matter above earth that nature hath under the earth. Others to search the most precious treasure from a vile thing, all which is easily agreed if rightly understood, for in the lines following the same author saith the vile thing is from the sperm of the Gold cast into the Matrix of Mercury by a prime conjunction. Others affirm Azoth and ignis to be sufficient for this high perfection. The which Azoth amongst the Germans is Silver, with the Macedonians Iron, with the Greeks Mercury, with the Hebrews Tin, with the Tartars brass, with the Arabians Saturn, and with the Indians it is taken for Gold. All which being ends in Nature are potential in one Composition, and by the duel of Spirits, the Celestial Gold obtaineth victory over all the rest, and it is made though not without hands a body shining like the Sun in glory which is called *Ens omnis privationis* exps or Thummim.

This is the king that made the pure (Thummim) clear bright fountain, and of it was made himself, the fair Woman so loving the red man, she became one with him, and yielded him all glory, who by his regal power and sovereign quality reigneth over the fourfold nature eternally, but if any shall understand either common or chemical gold to be the subject of this sacred body, he is much mistaken for a glorious spirit will not appear save in a body of his own kind.

Although fine maurchett be made of the purest meal, yet wheat is not excluded, and so bread is not properly said to be of the second and nearer causes rather than of the remote, notwithstanding that which is made by effect in a successive course, is as clean as that which is made with hands.

After we fell from unity we groan under the burden of division, but 3 makes up the union, first temporary, and after eternally fixed, he that knows a thing fully must know that it was, is, and shall be, so to know the several parts of a successive course is not a small thing, neither the how and little.

In the right use of the creature, Air turned into Water by his proper mixture, becomes wood, and the same wood by water is turned into a stone. A Spring in Italy called Clytumnus, makes oxen white that drink of it, and a water in Bretia makes sheep black that drink of it, and the River in Hungary turns iron into copper. What excellent things may be obtained by habitual virtue, or what power when nature and art make one perfection, who is able to express. That Reverend Martyr Johannes Rupercissa affirmeth the exalted quintessence upon the breaking of the glass sendeth forth such fragrant scents that it doth not only delight these that enter into the house, but even the birds that fly by will sit on the threshold so ravished with delight, that they may take them with their hands and if you desire by art to have thing of admirable sweetness and odour you will take a subject of like quality to exalt unto such excellency, the proper quality of fire and air is sweetness, it is but appropriate in Earth and Water, what bodies shall

we find where these are most abundant to be wrought upon.

As the celestial bodies work qualities in other things yet have none in themselves, so the metallic bodies give no tincture, yet are most abundant in tincture. Air is cause of Life, Mercury is a [coacted] Air, aetherial and truly homogeneal which doth after a sort congeal and fix. It is called a crude gold, and gold a fixed and mature Mercury, and although the crude quality be cold and dry yet the internal and aetherial spirit is held hot and dry, and [soever] held for the excellency of his temperature that it is all fire or like to it, whereby it is dissolved, howsoever it is at large perceived these bodies are most abundant in pure fire and air, whose proper quality is sweetness. Therefore these are the fittest subjects to make the most precious perfume in the world, and considering clearness and brightness is the Centre of each thing and these bodies have both centre and superficies clear and bright, when they are purified by art, and the bodies made spiritual, and those spirits incorporate again, they must necessarily be bodies of greatest or clearest light and perfection, as one compareth a glorified body to a clear lantern with a taper in it saying "the more a man excelleth in virtue, the greater or lesser was the taper".

But the work cannot be manifest without the destruction of the exterior form, and the restitution of a better, which is the glorious substances of Urim and Thummim, which in their being and physical use, preserves the temple of Man's body incorruptible.

Some observe not a like difference between liquefaction and solution, but all corrosives or violent operations Nature hates, because there can be no true generation but of like natures. Neither can you have the precious sperms without father and mother, and although one vessel is sufficient to perfect the Infant in the Womb, ye Nature hath provided several breasts to nourish it, and different means to exalt it to the strength of a man, how gold should be burnt which the fire could not consume, is questionable; but every exaltation of this sovereign spirit adds tenfold power and virtue.

Then take one parte of this spirit, which is become as insensible dust, and cast upon molten gold it turns all into powder which being drunk in white wine, openeth the understanding, increaseth wisdom, and strengtheneth the memory, for here is the vein of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.

The truth of every thing is said to be his incorrupted nature, for nothing shall rest eternally visible at the last fire, but that which is of pure virtue and essential purity. Truth and science is not led by chance or fortune, but the spirit of God guides by the hand of Reason, and it seems the prophets approve of these stones of fire, some mentioning the stone of darkness, and as it were fire turned up, other the stone of tyne, and Ezekiel the stone of fire attained by wisdom, which he differeth from the natural precious stones, as pure fire from common fire.

Therefore let modesty allow that possible whereof he understands not terminations and degrees, neither refuse the waters of Shiloh because they go slowly, for they that wade in deepest waters cannot go fast.

To obtain the treasures of Nature, ye must only follow Nature who gives not like time to every generation. But as the mare hath ten months, the Elephant hath three or as some say nine years and 50 before Conjunction, be patient therefore in a work of nature, for thereunto only is promised victory and the chief errors in art are hastiness and dullness.