

Chapter 12

King Hiram of Tyre

What Was Tyre?

According to biblical and Masonic tradition, King Hiram ruled a small but wealthy nation of sea traders to the north of Israel. The cedar beams used in the Temple were cut by woodsmen provided by King Hiram, in the Lebanese forests controlled by Hiram. The King of Tyre also provided trained stone masons who cut and shaped the stone used in the Temple, and the smiths who made the implements, vessels, altar, etc. King Solomon provided unskilled Judean labor, a building site, and wages for the workers.

In fact, Tyre was a real nation, a Phoenician colony contemporary with biblical Israel.

All of this makes King Hiram's crucial supportive role quite odd from the Judeo/Christian viewpoint, as there is no indication that he or any of his people worshipped YHWH. Quite the contrary, like all Phoenician cities, Tyre had its own "Ba'alat" (female goddess) who had a male consort or "Ba'al." Thus, King Hiram of Tyre, his woodsmen, and his masons were part of the local religious traditions that YHWH's prophets fought against in the Old Testament.

The fact that the Legend has "pagans" construct the Temple is another source of criticism from those who do not understand the allegory. The proper response is to look for the symbolic meaning. In this case, the search can begin as a question, "Why would members of *this* tradition be chosen to build the Temple?"

A common, rational response to this question is to suggest that the Hebrews did not have either the materials (wood or metal) or the skills (woodsmen, masons, or smiths) to build the Temple themselves, so they had to import foreign materials and workers. However, this ignores the central fact that the Legend is an allegory and that all of the characters and actions are symbolic of the path of spiritual growth.

Once we recognize this, and turn our attention to the symbolism, we find a hint to its meaning in the fact that the Ba'al (male god) had a significant Ba'alat (female god), as a consort.

As already mentioned, the Temple represents the Substance or Mother Aspect of the Spiritual Soul. The material for the Temple, the Stone and Wood, is depicted as coming from, and being shaped by the builders of, Tyre. Thus, when the builders of Tyre transport stone and wood to Judea, they are symbolically transporting the Substantial Aspect, the concept of the Divine Mother or Queen of Heaven, from Tyre to Jerusalem.

The fact that YHWH had a consort, Asherah, was hidden behind patriarchal shrouds for thousands of years. That consort is and must be the polar equal of YHWH. Like all poles, the two cannot exist without each other.

This simple fact is abhorrent to patriarchal monotheists, who typically use a number of strategies to undermine and supplant female deities, including:

- The male gods “rape” the goddess (symbolically stealing the power of the goddess and establishing the preeminence of the god).
- Turn the goddess into a lesser being, such as a queen, princess, or heroine.

- Distort the goddess into an evil, demonic being.
- Turn the goddess from the dominant divinity into a subsidiary divinity, dependent on the god.
- Transfer characteristics and power from goddess to god.

These are often done in combination, as when Zeus raped various heroines. The patriarchal Judean priests and prophets were striving against a goddess (Asherah) whose rites included sexual passion. Their response included:

- Demonizing the goddess.
- Removing all hint of sex from their official rites.
- Turning the joyful act of sexual passion into a solemn duty, commanded by YHWH.
- Transferring the creative process, including the builders who perform the work (the “hosts of heaven”) from the goddess to YHWH.

This process covered hundreds of years, and began with the advancement of YHWH to primacy.

The Bible indicates that the local name of the Ba’alat was “*Ashe’rah*.” When Asherah first appears in the Bible, she is already being transformed from a significant female Ba’alat (the polar equal of El/YHWH), into a subsidiary female deity. However, the priests did not agree on the identity of the male God.

There appears to have been a power struggle between the Israeli priests of El and the Judean priests of YHWH, with Asherah as part of the prize.

Asherah was a very popular goddess in both Israel and Judah, with altars in

many high places. In Israel, she was worshipped alongside the El, but in Judah (including the Temple of Solomon), she was worshiped alongside YHWH.

This began to change with the advent of extreme patriarchy, and the rejection of all gods but YHWH.¹ The prophets demonized Asherah, threw her out of the Temple, and instituted the exclusive worship of YHWH.

Unfortunately, the followers of YHWH failed to understand the nature of polarity. Yes, there is only One God, but that Divine Being is so far above us that “naught may be said” about that Being.

We know that YHWH is not that One Divine Being about whom naught may be said because:

- A great deal is said about Him
- He is always portrayed as masculine, and
- He is part of a Trinity

The first expression of that One Divine Being is a trinity, the Three Aspects that are One. The Polarity between those Aspects, and the magnetic field of relationship between them, produces everything that is.

Thus, everything that exists, in order to exist, must have a positive pole (spark of Spirit), negative pole (Substance), and the magnetic field between them (consciousness).

These two divine poles are always in balance. As in an electromagnet, the strength of one pole must be equal to the other. Thus, by cutting themselves off from the negative pole, patriarchists limit their access to the positive. By rejecting

¹ 2 Kings 21, 2, 2 Kings 23, 1 – 3, & 1 Kings 18, 19-40

Asherah, they distanced themselves from YHWH.

Some attempts have been made over the centuries to bring back the goddess and restore some balance between the poles. However, none have been successful. The Christian trinity, for instance, is improperly portrayed as masculine, forcing the raising of Mary, the mother of Jesus, into the role of the Queen of Heaven. This is actually the title and role of the Great Goddess, the polar opposite of and equal to the Father.²

As for King Hiram and his workers, they also brought to the Temple a more balanced relationship between the two poles of deity. They were much more in tune with substance, and thus represent the intelligent lives or beings of substance. The woodsmen represented the lesser builders of impermanent forms, while the masons and smiths represent the greater builders of permanent forms.

But what, then, does King Hiram represent? We can find further clues in his symbolic actions.

King Hiram's Actions

In the Temple Legend we find:

“After they left, King Solomon turned to King Hiram of Tyre and said, ‘My worthy brother of Tyre, as the Master’s word is now lost, *the first sign given* at the grave, and *the first word spoken* after the body is raised, shall be adopted for the regulation of all Masters’ Lodges until future generations shall find out the right.’”

This is significant because the tradition plainly states that both King Solomon

² The function of the Great Goddess is covered at length in one of my other works, “Raising the Queen of Heaven.”

and Hiram Abiff were Grand Master's, and thus must have known the word. Thus, the Word was not lost in the sense that no one knew it. It was lost in the sense that it could not be sounded unless all three Masters (King Solomon, Hiram Abiff, and King Hiram) were present. This suggests that King Hiram was equal to King Solomon and Hiram Abiff.

If King Solomon is the Spirit and Hiram Abiff is the Soul, then King Hiram is the Third Aspect or Substance. This suggests that the Word can only be conveyed when all three Aspects are integrated and functioning in right relationship. As we shall see below, this is indeed the case.

As already discussed, King Hiram provided both the greater builders (the workers in stone or permanent materials) and the lesser builders (the foresters who cut and carpenters who shaped the timber, or workers in impermanent materials). King Solomon provided Purpose and wages, Hiram Abiff related the purpose to the workers as a Plan and reported on the progress to King Solomon, and King Hiram provided the intelligent activity or Substance, out of which the Temple was built.

Through this process, King Solomon's Purpose is made manifest, Hiram Abiff is raised, and King Hiram's substance is transformed. This is the process of spiritual growth and development.

Thus, it becomes clear that King Hiram represents the Third or Substance Aspect of divinity, the Great Goddess represented in the Bible as Asherah.

Contemporary Equivalent

If King Hiram is the Great Goddess given a patriarchal mask, then the next step

is to look for confirming evidence, a goddess who performs the same role in the spiritual process. We find this confirming evidence in a number of the myths of the region, including those of: Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, and Asherah.

Isis

Isis was the Egyptian goddess of corn (grain), the moon, and the sea. Following the treacherous murder of her brother/husband Osiris, she set out in search of him, sailing down the Nile. Finding the chest in which his body lay (inside a column carved from a tree), she attempted to raise him, and failed. Her sister Nephthys tried, and also failed. Their brother Thoth tried using a special grip, and succeeded.

In the Freemasonic Legend of the Temple, King Hiram makes the second attempt to raise Hiram Abiff, using the grip of a fellow craft.

Inanna/Ishtar

Following the death of her lover Dumuzi/Tammuz (which she caused), Ishtar descended to the underworld. On the way, she passed through seven gates, and is stripped of an item of raiment (engagement gifts from Tammuz) at each. In the underworld, she used the water of life to raise Tammuz, and returned to the upper world.

Inanna/Ishtar was also known as “Sharrat Shame” (Queen of Heaven). Her symbol was the moon, and she rode a chariot drawn by seven lions.

Asherah

Asherah was symbolized by trees or poles, and was portrayed riding a lion and holding lilies and serpents. Her full name was “Lady Asherah of the Sea” and some

of her statuettes in household shrines were made out of bread or “corn.” Thus, we find that Asherah had a great deal in common with other local goddesses.

We have already seen that the three ruffians are three attributes of the Goddess, and that Hiram Abiff is the Soul trapped in the cycle of Substance. In the ancient world, this cycle was often symbolized in the rituals of the Divine King who rules for a solar year, dies, and is resurrected by the Goddess. This ancient myth cycle represents the relationship between Spirit, Soul and Substance during the process of spiritual evolution, when the Soul descends into Substance and is caught up in it.

In order to understand this process, we must examine the nature and function of the Third Aspect or Substance.

The Function of Substance

The true Master Mason is a co-participant in the creative process. He works with Spirit (King Solomon) to formulate Divine Intent into a Plan, and then transmits that formulated intent to substance using the creative word.

Creating the form that manifests that purpose is the job of the Substance Aspect, or that portion of the Mother that is receptive to that formulated intent. This Body Receptive consists of those creative intelligences (greater and lesser builders) whose position and function in the body of the Mother makes them receptive to that portion of The Divine Plan.

Each of the sub-planes plays a different part in the creative process. The astral is the vehicle of force that puts substance into motion. The mental is the vehicle of creative mind that gives direction and focus to the moving substance. The physical-

etheric and physical-dense are the form of appearance for the created substance, and the field of experience for the creating consciousness.

The work of the Lodge trains the Freemason for this creative work, a work that is symbolically portrayed in the Legend and completed at the discovery and sounding of the lost Word.

The Descent into the Intellect

Our previous exercise began the descent, the process whereby one's Divine Purpose is moved into appearance. In this technique, we exit the Holy of Holies and embody our purpose, place, and function in the intellect.

- ◆ Opening alignment:
 - Sit in a comfortable chair and place *The Temple and The Word* in your lap.
 - Close your eyes and relax your physical body, finishing with your consciousness focused in your head.
- ◆ Review the ascent, from the gate, laver, and altar, through the porch, and middle chamber, into to the Holy of Holies. Imagine yourself standing before, and bowing to, the Ark of the Covenant.
 - Realign with your overshadowing purpose, place and function, and exit the Holy of Holies, taking one step through the torn veil into the middle chamber.
 - As you enter the middle chamber, you notice that all seven candles in the candleholder are alight, and the chamber is now much brighter than it was.
 - Turn right, and walk over to the blank tracing board.
 - Pick up the chalk, and focus the idea of your Divine Purpose on the tracing board, the unformed energy of the mind.
- ◆ When that idea reaches it height of clarity, audibly state the seed-thought:

“As the Soul, a Child of God, I appropriate the energy of mind and form it into the thought of my purpose within the One Life.”

Hold this thought, without thinking about it, for at least three minutes.

- Maintaining your awareness of your self as the Soul, stand receptive to a symbol of your purpose, place, and function within the One Life.

This symbol may be an abstract shape, a familiar form, or anything else that represents your Divine Purpose. You will not necessarily receive or formulate that symbol on your first attempt (it may take a number of repetitions of this exercise). If not, then simply continue using whatever comes to mind.

- Using the chalk, draw whatever symbol comes to mind (simple and abstract) on the tracing board.
- When the drawing is complete, step back and turn toward the altar in the heart of the middle chamber.
- Take a deep breath, drop the image, and open your eyes.

Continue to the next chapter.

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