

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT
THROUGH THE CROSS

A SHORT ESSAY ON
JACOB BOEHME

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It has been the opinion of many that Jacob Boehme, the 17th century German mystic was one of the most influential men in all of history. But just who were these people and what did they do? Most students of Boehme are either philosophers , scholars ,poets, theologians , etc. People like G.W.F. Hegel, Isaac Newton ,William Blake, Soren Kierkegaard and William Law, all great thinkers in their own right ,but not like most of the rest of us.

Was it J.B.'s intent that his great vision into the Being of God and consequently the being of man something that the common man be found wanting of ? I think not ,since he was himself not an educated man but a simple cobbler who just had an earnest and sincere desire to understand God.

But just what is it that makes this simple shoemaker so difficult for the average man ? Seeing that he was an un-educated man he was forced to use symbolic language much like John did with his book of Revelation. Things like the planets, alchemy, as well certain elements were used by him to describe certain processes called principals that he found in God ,man and nature. These corresponded with what he called The Seven Spirits of God. To put it into today's perspective we could say that Einstein sought to put his theory of relativity into symbols that his

contemporaries could relate to ie: $E=MC^2$. Do you see the correlation?

Many there have been that did not understand this and tried to make sense of what he said on face value of his words alone. Perhaps this was meant to be as he said himself that to seek this knowledge for knowledge's sake alone would be futile. But to the true seeker of wisdom the husk begin to fall away and the truth that lay therein will find its way to their heart.

Just what did J. B. have to say that was so Important and why does it bear repeating today?

I will not try to get too laborious with his symbolism ,but simply try to restate and put what he said into perspective,maybe extracting the practical from the mystical, by using the one thing that he sought guidance from ,the Holy Scriptures.

We shall use James chapter 4 for our text.

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fighting's among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

I will also go ahead and introduce a brief description of the Seven principles of Jacob Boehme so the reader may follow along and perhaps see the process that J.B. so clearly understood.

1. Attraction
2. Resistance
3. Rotation

4. Fire
5. Light
6. Sound
7. Manifestation

All of being is to be understood in DESIRE. Just what it is and how it operates in both God and man and nature is what Boehme so clearly understood and how its use and misuse could be seen in all things.

The great Isaac Newton who was also a student of J. B. said that an object would remain at rest forever unless it was acted upon by some other force. While he applied this maxim to physics, it is safe for us to apply it to the development of consciousness for the same process takes place within each one of us upon this earth.

We humans are full of potential desires or to use the language of the scripture the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life (for we know that the Greek word for lust is properly translated desire). Yet until some outside stimulus comes to our attention these desires lay as it were; hidden from our sense and reasoning.

The philosopher Descartes coined a phrase that I think might stand up to some literary license and that was ".I think, therefore I am". I would make better use of it by saying...I desire, therefore I am... ,for it is through our desire that self consciousness is obtained and we find out that our intellect then comes to our service to establish our being.

This was signified by Adam and Eve in the Garden when tempted to eat the fruit .God first warned them of the consequences of a desire turned in a wrong direction but also knew that this was the only way for them to become fully functional human beings, to be confronted with a desire and to discover how they were to properly handle it; hence finding out that not only were they desiring creatures but that they were also willing creatures, for will and desire are but opposite sides of the same coin. Satan

tempted them not with an evil thing but with a good thing and knew that if he could get them to turn their desire unto themselves for its fulfillment that he would have them for they would be like as unto him, someone in whom he would always be able to control as he knew that their will would always follow their wants as this is the way of all self for self living.

J.B., with his tremendous insight into the Being of God and man, knew full well what mans plight was and sought through the use of symbol and metaphor to show man both what the problem was and that a solution was to be had through his Lord Jesus Christ as well.

James was the psychologist of the Bible, he knew what made man tick. He was able to look beyond appearances and see into the situation and pinpoint the underlying cause back of all things, but even he is considered by some to difficult to understand. Let us now begin to try and relate what this man of God saw with what Boehme saw and perhaps come to a deeper understanding of our selves and of God.

James begins his argument with some what of a rhetorical question and that is "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?"

We find here a simple explanation of cause and effect. But is it that simple? Outer actions come as a result of inner choices but what is it

that motivates us in what we choose? To understand this lets look at J.B. s First principle. He relates this as Attraction ,an attempt at seizing something ,or quite simply put, DESIRE. James begins in quite the same spot when he says "ye desire to have". Let us pay close attention to the direction of this desire for it shall have great importance in our discussion later on.

As we said earlier all of life begins at this point, but something crucial happens at this point. Boehme's Second principle, Resistance, comes to action here. As we begin to desire

something we become painfully aware that we do not have ,it somehow opposes us. James says "yet ye obtain not". I use the word painful here because it is this inner agony that brings us to self consciousness as human beings. And this is good as God created us to be responding creatures not simply automata.

Sir Isaac Newton , whom we said earlier was a student of J.B. can perhaps shed some light on this point with another of his famous maxims ,and that is "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction". Simply put, what we desire ,resists us and the more we desire it the more it resist us. This is the beginning of motion, a function critical to all life.

So ,where does this now bring us? Boehme's Third principle, Rotation, also called anguish or wrath. For this is the natural outcome of the first two principles. It is a whirling motion something like a hurricane with its spinning, and its force driven by its strong warm winds opposed by the cool wind that it faces. James answer, as we earlier stated is clearly understood in light of this revelation ,for he has put his finger squarely on the problem to all of our outer conflicts and stresses of daily life by pointing to its true inner original cause.

We can begin to see by this threefold action , of our desiring to have and becoming conscious of the fact that we do not have the thing desired with its accompanying anguish or wrath that we have struck the heart of the matter of our very existence. This process brings us to place of action .This all important action is what separates us and causes us to stand apart from all of the rest of Gods creation . This action is called CHOICE. Its appearance is as spontaneous from the first three principles that I have said that it is almost like two sides of the same coin. Boehme called this Fourth principle Fire .It is our will that is so closely linked to our to our desires because we find that our wills control the final out come of the inner process that we have just described. Why is our will so crucial to this process? It is simply this, that a desire that is not acted upon would lead to eternal misery. It would be a very cruel God who would create us with

such strong capacities yet give us no way to satisfy them, wouldn't it ?

Will and desire go hand in hand. They are the formers and shapers of our destiny. Just what we desire, why we desire it and how we act upon it is some thing that both James and Boehme had evidently spent long hours before the Lord in prayer to get this matter into complete focus. Let us not fool ourselves here for if we are truly seeking light on this subject we must become brutally honest with ourselves and let the light of God shine into our hearts. It is precisely here that we need a larger understanding on just what it means to discern soul and spirit.

We should know that the fundamental issue of our existence is what type of a person will we be . By that I mean will we be like our creator ,a Person whose entire being is fixed eternally in being wholly for others .Someone in whom every desire is fixed solely on what is best for His creation, us created persons in HIS own image. Or will we be some one who uses these God given abilities of will and desire to achieve his own ends at the expense of others. The fact is that TWO possibilities exist and we must face this issue head on and become eternally fixed in what type of person we shall be.

We know that this is precisely what was done by one of God's highest created beings ,Lucifer ,as the Scripture records this fact in Isaiah. Instead of willing only that which God willed, he turned his desire inward upon himself and willed that he should have all of the greatness that he imagined it be in himself ,not knowing that the greatness that he imagined to be his belonged to another. With an act of his will he spoke the word that would fix him eternally and give to him the consequence of his choice. He got all of the greatness that he imagined in himself , NOTHING, for all was but illusion seeing that the true greatness belonged solely to the Creator and not the creature.

We also know that Adam was tempted in like manner. The two trees in the Garden signifying that he was to become aware of his

ability to choose and that his choice would have immediate consequences.

We know that his choice brought with it some dire effects and also

that God meant for him to have them. It is the very fact that we are meant to get precisely what we choose that God allowed man, or should we say purposed the event so that man could learn exactly what it meant to be a person who could both desire and choose.

It might appear that we have digressed from the subject at hand but it shall become clear as to why the above has been brought up.

Boehmes Fifth principle is Light. Light comes from fire . Without one the other could not exist .But Boehme was not so much speaking of fire and light in purely objective terms as much as he was pointing to the subjective terminology much like a revelation. I guess the best way to describe this would be to call to your remembrance what happened to the Apostle Paul on the Damascus Road. Not only did he see an out ward great and blinding light but he saw inwardly what his heart had long been desiring . He came to inward revelation of the truth and for the first time knew who the Light really was.

Depending on our choice which Boehme characterized as to a Dark fire or a Light fire ,the fifth principal would become manifest. We shall for the moment discuss only this Dark side. This Dark fire signifies a choice that has been made from this Self for Self attitude discussed earlier with respects to Lucifer and Adam. A Dark fire produces a dark light. Does this sound like a contradiction in terms? Lets explore for a moment. Jesus Himself can shed light on this subject Mat 6:23 (KJV) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Just how we see a thing is determined from the choices we make. If we have chosen to be a self for self then the light we have is darkness, our inner seeing will be from this perspective

as Jesus said "how great is that darkness". If our viewpoint is solely from the natural then all we can say about what we are desiring is false.

There is no need to continue on at this point with the Dark side of the issue since the whole tragic outcome of Adam's choice is evidenced in all of creation including mankind. What we will do is take a look back at what Boehme found to be the ultimate resolution to the dialectic and paradoxes of life.

Return with me for a moment to J.B.'s Fourth principle . We have already seen what a choice made from a self for self perspective yields. But if we are to continue with the rules from which logic dictates we find ourselves with two other alternatives ,the first of which is to totally deny our desires, giving us a supposed safety; but this perspective is precisely what Buddhism purports to do. It would have us believe that all of our desires were evil and the only thing we could do to not practice evil would be to practice this belief. Such self effort would supposedly make us happy, but we would soon find our selves failing miserably necessitating further dogma such as karma and reincarnation.

So what is the other alternative? The revelation which came to Boehme was found to be within the Godhead itself and was to be the most supreme of all mysteries and that was the CROSS. Long before the cross was revealed on Calvary its eternal principle was practiced within the Godhead itself. In the eternal abysmal depths of God when (and we must speak as men regarding such things)confronted with his own selfhood a choice was made as to the type of self He would be . Would He take His desiring fire self and be a self for self God or would He forever "die " to this possibility and beget that glorious light Son and the Spirit proceed from both? The scriptures record that choice in a most peculiar way in Titus where it says of God "that He cannot lie". To do so would mean he was being a self for self deity.

With all of creation based on this principle it becomes the most profound concept, no ,the most profound reality that mankind

shall ever know. Let he who would know anything know this ,and he would know all.

When we take our desires to the cross we are not denying them rather we placing them into Gods eternal purposes, the alchemists fiery furnace where they are transformed into the thing which our heavenly Father purposed for them from the beginning of time.

Nature itself shows us some what of this mystery if we consider something as simple as an apple on a tree. Take a green apple for example. It is very sour ,bitter ,astringent and sometimes even poisonous as it first begins to form. But some thing happens when these properties are acted upon from another source, the sun. They are transformed by some "horticultural photo-synthesis" into the ripe, red ,sweet and pleasant tasting fruit that we all enjoy.

You might say that all works fine in nature but show me where this works out in mankind. This is precisely the point that Boehme grasped as working the same when he saw how these principles found in God,also were to be found in nature and man.

Let us consider the Temptations of Jesus as he was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness(the Garden grown wild, if we would have eyes to see it) to face the devil. These are not mere trivial episodes showing simply the desires of the flesh but their importance is perhaps best understood if we consider one of the most prolific pieces of literature ever written and that is from "the legend of the Grand Inquisitor" taken from the Brothers Karamazov by Dostoevsky. He begins his story with Jesus appearing in the crowd of people watching and listening as the Grand Inquisitor meets out the cruel and unjust punishments to the people of that time .He represents the false church and its ideology so prevalent in its day. When his eyes fix upon the stranger in the crowd ,he recognizes Him, Jesus, and begins to angrily verbally attack Him, saying to Him, why have you returned? IF you had done it right the first time we wouldn't have to be doing this now. He goes onto say that the church feeds the

masses thereby gaining control over their flesh ,and he says that they perform the miraculous ,gaining control over their minds and last but not least they would tell them whether or not they would go to heaven, taking control of their wills ,thus totally controlling man for their own selfish purposes. He says to Jesus ,Why didn't you do this to begin with..... And this is precisely the point. All of the temptations Jesus was faced with centered around the fact that He knew who He was and what His mission was on this earth. He was The ultimate super human man. Would he take His human desires for recognition as the Son God and misuse them by being a self for self? Or would he employ the grand mystery, the Cross and die to fulfilling the desires as the flesh and Satan would have Him to do? We know the choice that He made but let us look at its outcome.

By refusing to act upon those desires as He first became aware of them He wasn't denying their existence but He took them to the cross and "died" to them as they first appeared. But what happened next is the wonderful message that this story brings to light. All of the desires were fulfilled but in away that is so wonderful we almost miss it.The Father through the Spirit took every desire and transformed them into what only Love could do. Jesus fed the multitudes because He loved them ,not so He could gain control over them. He also healed them, performing the miraculous because he loved them and most important of all when it came to matter of their salvation He died for them because He loved them. And because He took the Cross the Father was glorified in the Son and the Son glorified by the Father.

Our blueprint for living, tried and proven by no less than our Savior Himself Jesus Christ. Can we do any thing less? Does the verse "never the less not my will but thy will be done" begin to show you somewhat of that which has been said? We shall continue...

Let us look once again at Boehmes Fifth principle. The principle of Light shall have greater meaning for us when we see that it is the introduction of the supernatural deity into our wills that

begins the flash which turns into light. Not only light but also love for our delight is to be found in doing the Fathers will. We find that it is His love perfected in us that brings such great joy. But light also takes on a deeper significance here as we shall see. When Jesus said "that which I see my Father do, that I do" He was not talking of some long range vision, rather an inner revelation as to His fathers perfect plan in whatever situation he found Himself to be in. His own desires transformed by His Fathers love and expressed to a world that was in such desperate need.

He showed us a new way to look at life, not the old way of judging by appearances but the new, by judging a righteous judgment. This new way was not from a false light which has a selfish motive always at heart, but from the true light which is from above. One might say that we see clearly now. And with this confidence we are now in a position to function as true sons of God and acting on his behalf and authority with only love as our motive. This is what the Father has purposed for His sons through out all of eternity.

Having seen things from this deeper level we are now prepared to move onto Boehmes Sixth principle which is Sound or understanding. To simply see a thing is not what God would have for us. His purpose is directed towards a goal which we shall soon see. This sound according to J.B. is inherent in all things. He likens it to that which a piece of metal makes when struck a certain way. He calls it a signature, the same way with a piece of fruit when eaten has a certain taste peculiar to it alone.

One thing to note here is the direction of this sound. It is outgoing, its purpose is to go away from itself. This is of supreme importance when we consider this in relationship to desire which from the natural has an attracting motion as previously mentioned. When we begin to see things from Gods perspective it is given on our behalf the authority to act as a son of God.

Just what does the Son of God do? By His very name the Word we are given a glimpse as to our role in life. He spoke that which He saw in the Father into existence. And the Holy Spirit brought

it into manifestation. We are to do exactly the same. We have come to operate under a new set of laws, that which we all know as the kingdom principle of "Give, and it shall be given unto you". This is a direct contradiction to the order of things given earlier when we begin to look at the motive which lay behind the individual described earlier by James as he says we have not because ... "we seek to consume it upon our own lusts". With our desires now transformed even our motives are purified and take on a God like quality. We do what we do Because we love the other one.

In looking at the Seventh and final principle of Boehme called Manifestation we find that we have a completion of things. The kingdom principle says we now "Get" after having given. That which we now desired is brought into manifestation by the Holy Spirit. It is completely opposite from the first order of things. Desires are purified and motives sanctified by the love of God so that we can finally begin to take our rightful place as sons of the living God.

We speak our words of faith with authority knowing that is the Fathers will that they come into manifestation, not in fear but with the utmost certainty of faith which the Holy Spirit cannot but help to bring forth because the Father and son are now Glorified IN US.

What Boehme has shown us is that the negative pulls and situations of this life are the necessary pre requisites in this life for God to be recognized as the God who is All and in All. What seems to be confusion and disorder, wrath and conflict is to the eye of faith the natural ingredients to a Supernatural manifestation of the Living God.

It was William Blake who said "without contraries nothing exists..."

If we understand this then we most certainly have found the key to life ,which Paul said was a stumbling block to the Jews ,an offence; but us ward that believe it was the POWER OF GOD.

Do you see how the first three principles are transformed into the last three, their order and action reversed, "tinctured" to use Boehmes terminology, these three by the power of the fourth?

Listen once again to words of the Master and this time listen with the ear of faith and perhaps , and it is my prayer, that you understand what God is speaking to you today...

John 9:1-5 (KJV) And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

GO ,AND DO THOU LIKEWISE