

Without Light there is no Intelligence

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Intelligence has been defined in many different ways such as in terms of one's capacity for logic, abstract thought, understanding, self-awareness, communication, learning, emotional knowledge, memory, planning, and problem solving.¹

"Without light there is no intelligence" is only meant literally in parts. Light is a mighty symbol and is used in different applications. To clarify my point of view, I suggest thinking of an allegorical library which contains the collected knowledge of humankind – all discoveries in mathematics, physics, psychology, philosophy, medicine, chemistry and all other fields of science. How much use would that library have in absolute darkness, without windows or artificial lightning, without the possibility to grasp all that knowledge? Light is essential to see, appreciate and comprehend that knowledge.

The priest of King Noah around 159 B.C. were in a similar situation.² They had obtained their position by the corrupt king and were overwhelmed with the task to spiritually guide the people. They had the records of the Old Testament prophets up until 600 B.C., but they did not know how to apply them. They were in the dark. The prophet of God – Abinadi – exposes their inability³ as they ask him for the meaning of a scripture in Isaiah.⁴ Isaiah is certainly not the easiest prophet to understand in the Old Testament, but it should not be an impossible task for priests appointed by God. Abinadi even points out to them what their critical failure was, "Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding."⁵ In other words, they did not really try to bring light into that darkness.

Joseph Smith received in a revelation in December 1832 the following insight:

"This is the light of Christ. [...] And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space."⁶

To quicken and enlighten their understanding, they had to go to the source of that light – which is God.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence>

² Mosiah 11,12

³ Mosiah 12:25,26

⁴ Mosiah 12:25,26

⁵ Mosiah 12:27

⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 88:7,11,12

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”⁷

What is the connection between light and God? “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”⁸ This declaration says a lot about the relationship between God and light, but there more.

“For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit. And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.”⁹

It shows another significant meaning in which light is essential to intelligence. It is in close association with truth and pursues a specific goal.

As for truth: In our world of information overload is a library with the collected knowledge of mankind and sufficient brightness to read not enough. We need the ability to distinguish and to single out what is relevant, accurate and useful for us. Every single one of us received the “Light of Christ” for that very purpose.

The prophet Mormon left for us some information on that topic:

“But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged. Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.”¹⁰

The Light of Christ is the capability to know good from evil. For those having trouble to tell the difference – it invites and entices to do good; to love God and to serve him.¹¹

Now we get to its goal: Nothing is worth to be called intelligent if it has not a purpose and meaning. Light shows us the way back to God and helps us to know him which in turn is the purpose of life: to gain Eternal Life.¹²

⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 50:24

⁸ Genesis 1:3

⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 84:45-47

¹⁰ Moroni 7:13,15,16,18,19

¹¹ Mosiah 2:17

I would like to add a second definition to the one mentioned in the beginning:

“The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”¹³

God’s glory is synonymous with his intelligence.

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”¹⁴

He devotes all his intelligence to facilitate our Eternal Lives. He is capable to do that because he is “more intelligent than they all.”¹⁵ All the other intelligences – which means the entire creation, even the whole universe – acknowledge him as God. Satan wanted this honor – the power of God – for himself. He offered to bring back all of Father’s children at the cost their free agency. The Beloved Son recognized the will of the Father and gave him all honor (glory).¹⁶

Intelligence equals light and truth.

In a different verse in that revelation of 1833 truth is defined in a short in precise way:

“Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.”¹⁷

God alone has that perfect knowledge at his command. Whosoever aspires to complete intelligence should look to that source. Another few interesting insights:

“He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things. Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light.”¹⁸

1. **Obedience** to the commandments of God is another access to intelligence. The commandments are God’s way to help and to reward us for our efforts. This goes along with Mormon’s admonition to “lay hold upon every good thing”¹⁹ and the statement to “continue in God” as mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.

¹² John 17:3

¹³ Doctrine and Covenants 93:36

¹⁴ Moses 1:39

¹⁵ Abraham 3:19

¹⁶ Moses 4:1,2,4

¹⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 93:24

¹⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 93:28-31

¹⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 130:20,21

2. **"Intelligence was not created."** We – our intelligence, our cognitive self or that which many understand as our soul – are eternal. Intelligences existed before the beginning of time and without time²⁰ there is no end and no beginning, therefore intelligences are eternal.
3. **We are independent.** „Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.“²¹
In order to have that independence it is necessary that there is more than one possibility to choose. We need to be free and not under any coercion. Christ said that the truth shall make us free²², but only if we continue in his word thus choosing the right.
4. To reject the **light** means to surrender our independence – our **agency**. Lucifer wanted to destroy that independence²³ – and in this way part of our divine intelligence.

“And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.”²⁴

The consequences are restrictions that cause us to be no longer free “to act for ourselves.” Every addiction – in most cases the outcome of the transgression of God’s commandments – deprives us of our freedom to do as we please, because that addiction is now in control of us. To ignore the commandments of God implies also that we can no longer choose of which blessings we like to partake. Ultimately, the absence of those blessings means “captivity and death.”

“And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.”²⁵

It’s getting darker and darker in our library and the flood of information less and less comprehensible. The absence of light is the result of banalities and things without value. In essence everything that does not edify, but is shallow, mindless, trivial, trite, vulgar, bland and empty.

“And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.”²⁶

²⁰ Alma 40:8 "...all is as one day with God, and **time** only is measured unto men."

²¹ 2. Nephi 2:16

²² John 8:32

²³ Moses 4:3

²⁴ 2. Nephi 2:26,27

²⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 93:39

²⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 50:23

Light is an essential part of intelligence. It enlightens our understanding and lets us discern important from irrelevant, good from evil. Light is of God and invites us to do good. We can know God and return to him through light. It stands for our freedom to choose and act for ourselves. Light and knowledge should be our aspiration if we want to share in God's intelligence and claim his work and glory for us.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."²⁷

Christ is like the light for the photosynthesis. He is life and energy. He invites us to follow him and encourages us to do good just like light puts chlorophyll in an excited state. This means enough energy to bring to pass eternal life from mortal lives, like the phosphorylation of ADP to ATP. Our vital unit of energy is the Light of Christ and the Holy Spirit. If we receive light and continue in God, we will receive more light and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day. That day when we accept our inheritance as "joint-heirs with Christ" and we will be "glorified together."²⁸

Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior. Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out. His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand. From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail. For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory. And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom. Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations. And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught. **For by my Spirit will I enlighten them,** and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man."²⁹

Concomitant with that promise goes a charge to us:

"For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have."³⁰

²⁷ John 8:12

²⁸ Romans 8:16,17

²⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 76:1-10

³⁰ 2. Nephi 28:30

More light is given to them that receive, but those that assume enough has been said, written and learned, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. Those who think that they know everything and achieved all that is to be achieved will realize that their private little library is getting darker and darker.

This is a continuous process which Abinadi explained to the priests of King Noah with the counsel to apply their hearts to understanding. In the following chapter we learn that he himself took that advice very serious which Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount to the Jews: "**Ye are the light of the world.**"³¹

"Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words that the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord."³²

Abinadi had received the image of God in his countenance because he had been born of God and experienced this mighty change in his heart. On this day in front of the priests he could look up to God with a pure heart and clean hands.³³

It becomes our duty to seek the light, to continue within and to let our fellow men partake of it. We do so by applying our knowledge and by following the example of Christ on that way³⁴ he has prepared for us.

³¹ Matthew 5:14

³² Mosiah 13:5

³³ Alma 5:14,19

³⁴ John 14:6