

## THE HISTORY OF BATH QOL

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There is an obscure reference in the Historical Lecture of the Royal Master Degree that should be explained.

“Here the Shekinah, or Divine Presence, rested, and was visible in the appearance of a cloud over it. From hence the Bathkol issued, and gave answers when God was consulted. And hence it is that God is said in the Scriptures to dwell between the Cherubim; that is, between the Cherubim on the mercy seat, because there was the Seat or Throne of the visible appearance of His Glory among them.”

Consulting several Masonic encyclopedias, there is no explanation of the term “*Bathkol*.” Other sources do go into rather long explanations. One of the problems is that the term may be incorrectly transliterated into English.

The “kol” part might be more properly spelled, “qol.” The Hebrew word, transliterated as Kol, as in “Kol Nidre,” means “all.” Kol Nidre means “All Vows.” The difference being that the accepted transliteration by most Bible scholars is that the first letter of Qol is *Qoph* and the first letter of Kol is *Kaph* which are two different letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Perhaps it would be a little less confusing if we transliterated the term as “Bath Qol.”

The word as it relates to our work is made up of two Hebrew words; “*Bath*,” meaning *daughter* and *Qol*, meaning *voice*. Collectively, the meaning of *Bath Qol* is — Daughter of Voice — the voice of God from between the Cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant.

The *Shekinah* being the presence of God. The visible appearance was a cloud, the representation of the aural presence was the *Bath Qol*, or voice of God.

From the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church we have this entry:

### BATH QOL

The term in Rabbinic theology for a voice from Heaven such as was believed to be a regular means of God’s communication with men. Such a voice is referred to in the New Testament at Christ’s Baptism. Mark Chapter 1, verse 11. “And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

In the Royal Arch Degree there is reference to God speaking to Moses at the Burning Bush. “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto them in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.” As from Exodus, Chapter 3, verse 2.

There is a wonderful connection here in that many differing creeds rely on the “voice of God” to explain many of their points of belief. By recognizing that God does speak to us, as is related to us in the Historical Lecture of the Royal Master degree, we as Masons realize our reliance on God’s guidance.

In our ritual we are admonished that we as individual Masons should be aware of His influence in our own lives. Perhaps it is this same voice that we refer to in the Charge of the Degree of Entered Apprentice. “Care little for the jibes of men, but heed the sting of conscience.”

How many times do we say, “Well, a little voice told me that was not the right thing to do.” Could it be my companions, that the voice of conscience that we know is always there to gently nag us to do the right thing, could very well be that voice of God, the *BATH QOL*.