



The Mark of Intelligence

Reaching the Island of Intelligence one might see a bustling land of many people doing many things in what appears to be the advancement of many ideas. But what one sees is not the Engraved Mark of which the island holds.

Earlier I had mentioned a story I had heard from Stephen Covey about being in the wrong jungle. I have no intent to diminish Covey's wisdom and I would encourage anyone to read Covey's works. I had written a similar short story many years ago in which more recently I have admittedly blended some of Covey into my story ...

A young man, not long from facing the rights of passage, wakes one morning feeling overly tired. It was not so much a physical fatigue, but rather more mental—more emotional. He had been following the people of his tribe for many years. They were all looking for their place in the world—a place where they fit. Every day the tribe would mass together and commence to hacking through trees and bushes and weeds to trudge through the forest of an immense mountain. Every day they made great progress. New tools had been created. New ideas had been developed. New ways to make the work of clearing away trees *easier*. However, every day became many days, and many days became many years, and the tribe just kept trudging.

On this day, the young man needed a lift of spirit. He needed to see where they were going and possibly see a destination to inspire his efforts.

The young man climbed a nearby tree. There were far too many trees to see much of any promise, but the young man did see a mountain top. He thought to himself; *From there I could see everything.*

Thus the young man took off on his own to climb the mountain. Many chastised him for leaving and not doing his part. Some even condemned and threatened if he returned. But the young man needed to know.

The climb was not easy, and the time was very lonely. Finally, the young man reached the top of the mountain. It was true, he could see everything! When he looked down on the place of his tribe he noticed an oddity in the trees before them. They were shorter than the trees to the side. The oddity looked like the swath of a wide path. The young man began to follow the odd path with his eyes. The path led around the mountain and the farther around the mountain, the shorter the trees.

The young man continued to follow the trees until alas, the path of the trees was no more. A canyon of bare land now spanned between the outer trees. This was very odd for the young man to ponder, as the path appeared to hold a pattern. Thus the young man continued to follow the path with his eyes. Farther and farther around the mountain he traced until he noticed the bare land now lingered stumps. Not far beyond the stumps, the young man's eyes came upon the vision of what he had already expected. There was his tribe—making great progress.

Realizing what was happening, the young man rushes down the mountain until he arrives at his tribe.

“You have been going around in a circle!” The young man pleads with what he knows. “I have seen it. You have been going around in a circle for years.”

The people of the tribe look at each other with confounded gnashing of mumbled speak. Then with supportive reassurance they thunderously laugh. One of the tribe leaders takes a step forward and dominates the laughter with commanding word. “We will not listen to what you say. We do not care for what you know. You left, and we continue to make great progress. Leave us and go back to where you came!”

From the sounds of mockery and disdain the young man leaves and returns to the top of the mountain. Every morning he steps into the dawn and sees everything. Every evening he rests his head, and feels alone. Many times over the years, the young man looks down on the path of his tribe.

They are making great progress! However, their path remains the same. Perhaps he should not have left. Perhaps it is better to not know. Perhaps, at least, he would not be alone.

Then one day as he is looking upon his tribe the young man—now older—sees the face of a woman break through the trees of old. The woman approaches the man on the top of the mountain,

“Is this where I fit? Is this where I belong?”

In 1776, the United States of America scripted as its Engraved Mark that “All men are created equal.” Over two hundred years later, we appear to be making great progress, but we still cannot get beyond the arrogance of skin color or gender or cultural divides of our languages. It is one of the most disheartening realizations that, although humans have advanced technologically to the point where we can share the knowledge of every individual on the planet, we still cannot work together as a human team. We are far from collaborating a Tower of Babel!

Obstinate—an ORC—denies reasoning ...

Intelligence means to choose between. Intelligence is not the items chosen, but rather the choosing—the reasoning—between the items. Choosing is an action! Thus, Intelligence is the action of what one does with the reasoning between what is known. It is not what you know. It is what you do with what you know. That is the meaning within the definition of intelligence.

Passion guides you to something new. Open-Minded allows you to see what was and what is. Knowledge retains what was, and what is. Creativity transforms what was, and what is, into something new—something more. And Mastery means you are good at it! Together these Engraved Marks will get you to the top of the mountain. Together these Characters will guide you to what you were—and are—meant to do. If you know that you will progress with what you know, and you must know this, then you have found the definition of intelligence—the Virtue of Intelligence.

Can you write upon your soul the Engraved Mark of Intelligence?