

THE BRAZEN PILLARS, THE MOSAIC PAVEMENT AND THE BLAZING STAR

By Jaime Paul Lamb

The two Brazen Pillars of the Blue Lodge – one surmounted with the terrestrial globe, the other with the celestial – are said to be representations of those on the porch of King Solomon’s Temple [*The Holy Bible* KJV, 1 Kings 7:13–22, 41–42]. They have an immediate precedent in the obelisks of Dynastic Egypt in that they flank the portal and do not support the roof. The presence of pillars or obelisks, as a part of the architectural scheme of temples and other sacred structures, may be a symbolic allusion to the method by which many ancient temple structures were conjectured to have been aligned and subsequently *squared*. There are methods by which the shadows of precisely two standing poles (raised perpendicularly by means of a plumb line to stand at a right angle to a level plane) may be used to determine the cardinal directions based both on diurnal sunlight and, more accurately, by the biannual occurrence of the solstices [Brown, *Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy*, Merchant Books, 2008, pp. 79-82]. Here we are again reminded of the Saints John, personifications of the solstices.

As two parallel columns, they denote the zodiacal signs of Cancer and Capricorn, which were formerly placed in the chamber of initiation to represent birth and death – the extremes of physical life. They accordingly signify the summer and winter solstices, now known to Freemasons under the comparatively modern appellation of the two “Saint Johns” [sic].

Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Dover, 2010 p. 262

It has been suggested that mosaic patterns and tilework on the floor of ancient temples, from which the Checkered Pavement found in many Masonic Lodge rooms is descended, functioned not solely as aesthetic choices but also served as elaborate sundials [Brown, *Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy*, Merchant Books, 2008, p. 82]. Ancient architects utilized the effects of sunlight in their designs not only to position the edifice in space but also to accentuate its symbolic import. The trajectory of sunlight was directed through the portals of a building at specified angles depending on the time of year, based on various astronomical cycles, thus illuminating a certain area within the temple and thereby marking temporally significant events such as the equinoxes and solstices. This could be an elaboration on the same premise by which a temple is *squared* – by the utilization of two pillars marking the solstices, as discussed above. A properly oriented temple would thereby serve as a sort of annual, or seasonal, chronometer. This architecturally deliberate phenomenon can be observed in many structures around the globe [Hiebert, *Celestial and Mathematical Precision in Ancient Architecture*, University of Manitoba, World-Mysteries.com, retrieved online].

The Blazing Star, a five-pointed star usually within a circle, is often depicted in the center of the Checkered Pavement. This symbol is alternately said to represent the Sun, Sirius and Venus [Brown, *Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy*, Merchant Books, 2008, p. 59]. The Solar interpretation is obvious, in terms of the Sun's Masonic significance as being the "glory and beauty of the day", et cetera, but the theory of the Blazing Star as a representation of either Venus or Sirius provides us with much more substance for our contemplation.

The Blazing Star's relationship to Venus (also anciently known as the Morning and/or Evening Star) may best be illustrated by the fact that it is represented in the form of a pentagram. This significance comes primarily from the fact that Venus traces a five-petalled rosette at the completion of its synodic period, which is 583.9211 days – the amount of time it takes for the planet to return its originally observed position, relative to that of the Sun, as seen from the perspective of Earth – thus itself alluding to the pentagram. The pentagram, perhaps due to its association with either Pythagoreanism or as an elemental symbol in alchemy, is relatively common as a Masonic symbol and appears in the appendant body, the Order of the Eastern Star, as well as the Blazing Star.

The Star which guided them is that same Blazing Star, the image whereof we find in all initiations. To the Alchemists it is the sign of the Quintessence; to the Magists, the Grand Arcanum; to the Kabalists, the Sacred Pentagram. The study of this Pentagram could not but lead the Magi to the knowledge of the New Name which was about to raise itself above all names and cause all creatures capable of adoration to bend the knee.

Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, L. H. Jenkins Inc., 1947, p. 842

The 'New Name' to which Pike refers is almost certainly that of Jesus (*Yahoshuah, Yeshua, Iesous, IESV*). This was Athanasius Kircher's *Pentagrammaton*, which is formed by adding the Hebrew letter *Shin* to the *Tetragrammaton* (YHVH + Sh = YHShVH). From this perspective, the Blazing Star may be associated with Jesus. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus states, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and the bright and morning star.*" From the Earth's vantage point, Venus may appear as much as 47 degrees away from the Sun. At these times, the planet may be seen just before sunrise as the *Morning Star* – Jesus – and just after sunset as the *Evening Star*. The pentagram which lead the magi and to which Pike refers in this passage is almost certainly Venus.