

Contemporary Mystic Christianity Bible Self-Study Supplement

Temple Decorations and Furniture

The Two Columns

I Kings 7:15-22

For he cast two pillars of brass, Of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

And he made two chapiters of molten brass to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits and the height of the other chapter was five cubits: (Five is the symbol of white magic)

And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. (Seven is the number of the mystic's Path of attainment.)

And he made the pillars, and two rows about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

And the chapiters upon the two pillars had

Pomegranates also above, over against the belly which

was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows round about upon the other chapter. And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right Pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left Pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

In writing of these pillars, Albert Pike informs us that "these columns were imitations by Khurum, the Tyrian artist, of the great columns consecrated to the Winds and Fire at the entrance of the famous Temple of Melkarth, in the city of Tyre," The word jachin (Hebrew, Ya-Kayan) means "firm", "upright", (masculine); Boaz (Hebrew, Baaz) Signifies "Source of strength" , (feminine).

According to some writers, one of these two columns was white like a lily, the other red as a pomegranate. The lily symbolizes chastity, regeneration, and the pomegranate, fecundity, generation. The light of the mystic as seen in the soul world is white; of the occultist, ruby red.

The lily or lotus was one of the important decorative features of these columns. The lotus has been sacred in all Temple worship, due to the fact that instead of casting forth its seeds after germination the lotus retains and nourishes therein in its heart until they are perfect replicas of the

original mother flower. It is then that they are free to float away and take root in some propitious soil.

Aphrodite, the love goddess of Greece, was called "the lotus-born" because she ascended full grown from the sea within the heart of this flower. "The Lotus-born" in esoteric parlance is the Initiate, the chaste or the "new born," lifted above the illusions of sense. Isis, the Initiate-Queen of Egypt, was Lotus-crowned and this same flower was held in profound veneration by the Egyptians, and was the principal flower motif in all their architectural decorations.

The two mighty columns that guard the entrance into every Temple pertaining to the Mysteries, the Osiris and Isis of Egypt, the Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's Sanctuary, are capable of many interpretations. Osiris typifies the White Brotherhood which has through all ages endeavored to lead man into the state and conditions which will establish the Golden Age, a return of the Edenic state, upon the Earth. Typhon typifies the Brotherhood of the Shadows, which through isolation, separation and egoistic tendencies has produced the chaotic, confused, self-seeking humanity we know today. The Lost Word is Love, the soul attribute of Isis and the only power which will lift her fallen column and emancipate man from the shackles which bind him to Earth in its present material state.

The Pyramid and Sphinx are immemorial witnesses to the same lessons in soul wisdom that much later were given in the holy edifice constructed for that purpose under the supervision of the wisest of all kings.

Jacob Boehme, the illumined medieval seer, has said: "He who dies not before he dies, is the most unhappy of all mortals." And Christ Jesus, the Master-Initiator, taught Nicodemus that he must be born again before entering the kingdom of heaven. In Isis, the feminine column, is concealed the meanings of the first and the second deaths. When the neophyte has died to the personal life through Initiation, he becomes "the new born" upon whom the second, or natural death has no power.

These Illustrious Ones are termed "those who have been forgotten by death." Biblically this attainment is phrased as "a priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek." This title is descriptive of the messenger who brought the Ancient Wisdom from the Atlantean continent into Egypt and who later led Abraham, the Father of the Aryan peoples, into this state of soul immortality.

Thus we note that both the Church and the Masonic Craft have a similar origin and that the purpose of their respective ritualisms is identical. The Church depicts the way of Illumination as outlined in the life of the Master,

Christ Jesus, which includes death at the hands of three traitors, and resurrection after the third day.

Masonry depicts the way of Light as outlined in the life of the Master, Hiram Abiff, which includes death at the hands of three ruffians, and resurrection after the third day.

In each instance, both Masters assume the role of cosmic Way Showers for the emulation of their followers. The disciple and candidate in turn must assume the same role and pass through identical experiences in order that he may change mortality for immortality, the terrestrial for the celestial as the Church expresses it, or in Masonic language, "learn to receive the wages of the Master and to travel in foreign countries." In both instances the glory of the first death (by Initiation), over which the second or natural death has no power, is the consummation to be attained.

There is one important distinction in the two ceremonialisms. In the Masonic allegory, the Master is discovered by three officiants, all male. In the Church ceremonial the Master is discovered by three officiants, but one is a woman.

In comparison with the initiatory formula of the life of Christ Jesus, the three murderers of Hiram Abiff correspond with Pilate, Caiphas and Judas; his three wounds with the scourging, the blow on the ear, and the crown of thorns.

The twelve fellowcraft who are sent to search for him correspond to the twelve disciples. The three masters who raise him are Peter, John and Mary Magdalene. All true "operative" occult work unites the forces of man and woman.

Embellishments and Furniture

II Chronicles 4:19-22

And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shewbread was set;

Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner, before the oracle of pure gold; And the flowers, and the lamps, and thongs, made he of gold, and that perfect gold;

And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, of pure gold and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and the doors of the house of the temple were of gold.

The furnishings and decorations of the Temple have been admirably described by a writer in the following words: "The inner walls, beams, posts, doors, floors and ceilings were made of cedar and olive wood and planks of fir which were entirely covered with plates of gold, with various beautiful engravings, and adorned with precious jewels of many splendid colors. The nails which fastened these plates

were also of gold with beads of curious workmanship. The roof was of olive wood covered with gold; when the sun shone thereon the reflection from it was of such a refulgent splendor that it dazzled the eyes of all who beheld it.

"The dome of the inner Temple was the most splendid and magnificent of the entire stately structure. It was so brilliant that when the sun at its rising shone upon it, travellers at a distance could not bear to look upon it, as it appeared like a vast gleaming mound of snow below the gold of the roof.

"The ceiling of the sactum sanctorum is said to have been ornately spangled in the form of a circle within a square overlaid with gold. The sides were similarly ornamented down to the height of ten cubits, from whence to the floor the wall was of solid gold, unchased and annealed, forming the greatest exhibition of human ingenuity ever recorded in history."

The table of gold mentioned in I Kings 7:48 as being made by Solomon and given to the Temple at Jerusalem is said to be still in existence. According to legend, after the destruction of Jerusalem it was taken into Spain and remained there until that country was conquered by the Moors, who sent it to Damascus, whence it was finally removed to Mecca.

The Bible account tells us that the king "garnished the house with precious stones for beauty" (representative of the jewel radiance of the soul), and that he carved all the walls round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. Palm trees are symbols of eternal life, and open flowers signify awakened spiritual centers within the body. "And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold." The gold work shadows forth the luminosity of the golden wedding garment, the body celestial which all mankind is learning to make through loving words and selfless deeds. The occultist labors at this task consciously, while others labor unconsciously. In everyone the work is proceeding steadily and surely.

The Molten Sea

I Kings 7:23-26,39

And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three

looking toward the south, and three their hinder parts were inward.

And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.

To cast the Molten Sea constitutes the great work of the Master Mason. It was embellished with "flowers of lilies" — the lily or lotus of occult symbology. The Molten Sea stands for a high degree of Initiation in the Temple rites, mystically termed the blending of Fire and Water. It refers to the spirit's control of the emotions (the principal outlet of the mystic), and the subjugation of desires (the principal outlet of the occultist). When a physical attribute is overcome and transmuted, a certain spiritual essence is added to the power and brilliancy of the soul body which eventually becomes a veritable Molten Sea of beauty and glory. The completion of this work and the blending of the spiritualized essence of emotion and desire marks the end of the nine degrees of the Lesser Mysteries and the formula of its attainment is the Lost Word of the Craft. Enoch, as we know, embedded this Word in the Arch of the ninth layer of his initiatory structure, where it was later found by Solomon. This statement gives an estimate of the degree of Initiateship which had been earned by Solomon and his worthiness in being chosen as the great Temple Builder.

This glorified Temple of Spirit has down through the ages borne many names. It is epitomized in the White Stone, the New Stone, the White Rose or Lotus. It is the Foundation Stone of all enduring works and the Capstone of Immortal Life,

Many are the mystic legends connected with the Molten Sea. This sea bore the shape of a flower and was supported by twelve oxen. As the widow's son learns to become the Master Builder by the alchemy of transmutation within the body, this same Molten Sea becomes as a crystal in which the entire world is reflected.

King Solomon and the Master Builder Hiram Abiff embodied the Mysteries of their Quest in the building and "furniture" of the great Sanctuary. Had their followers remained true to this Quest, destruction could never have overtaken the Temple and its people, Instead of dissolution, decay and death, peace, prosperity and eternal youth would have been their portion, and today the Earth would know a Master Craft of such enlightened powers that many of the present world evils would never have come to pass.

The twelve oxen represent rays from the twelve zodiacal Hierarchies — and which remain all unperceived by the majority, but to which the aspirant who is learning to build within himself this mystic "cup with flowers of lilies" becomes increasingly sensitive. This is the cup which

Melchizedek brought to Abraham, and the same that the disciples partook of at the Last Supper. It became the Grail Cup of later Christian Mystery Schools.

Max Heindel writes: "Hiram was consumed by an overpowering urge to add something to the Temple that would eclipse the rest of the structure in beauty and importance. Out of the travail of his spirit was born the conception of the Molten Sea, and this great ideal he proceeded to carry into execution, though Heaven and Earth held their breath in awe at the audacity of his purpose."

In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike gives an extended description of the Molten Sea and the method of its making. All composite substances are formed of three primary substances which in turn are composed of the four elements. The first three of the four are salt, sulphur and mercury (body, soul and spirit). The three golden basins allude to these three substances. In the first basin was engraved the letter M, which is the Hebrew letter for salt; in the second basin, the letter G, the Hebrew for sulphur, but in the third basin no letter was inscribed because the Hebrew had no letter for spirit. This basin must be filled by the neophyte himself. Every neophyte is given a new letter or name when he is found worthy to join the ranks of the illumined.

To continue the citation from *Morals and Dogma*: "In the Brazen Sea must always be rain water from which is extracted a first substance or salt which must undergo a sevenfold purification and manipulation before it is properly prepared. The second substance or sulphur must be extracted from the purest gold, and then added to the purified or celestial salt. They are to be mixed as the Art directs and placed in a vessel in the form of a Ship."

"From the mixture of the four elements and of their four qualities result the three Principles-Mercury, Sulphur and Salt. These are the philosophical, not the vulgar. The philosophical Mercury is a Water and Spirit The philosophical Sulphur, a Fire and Soul The philosophical Salt, an Earth and a Body The whole is done in the bosom of Air."

From these three principles result the four elements duplicated, or the Grand Elements, Mercury, Sulphur, Salt and Glass. The glass thus becomes the Molten Sea for those who understand it. This is the chief work and supreme ideal of every mystic builder who aspires to become a master.

The twelve oxen symbolize the twelve signs of the Zodiac and comprise the four triplicities of Fire, Air, Water and Earth

The Hebrew word Khi means "living;" ram, "lifted up." The symbology of the name refers to the resurrection of Hiram, the Master Workman, the high Mystic Mason. Khurani means "high", "noble", "white!"; Abi, "master". This is a title of honor or reverence and not a person's name. Hiram, or properly written, Khuram-Abi, means "a master Initiate." He was the Master Mason (an Initiate-Teacher) who was sent from the city of Tyre.

I Kings 7:45,48,46

And the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of bright brass.

And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was,

In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

Hiram, the Master Builder, worked with brass. Solomon, the wise king, worked with gold, the most perfect of all metals. This symbolizes the fact that Solomon worked from patterns which he investigated in the archetypal regions wherein is to be found the creative archetype of everything that exists on earth. Succoth means "hard" and "difficult"; Zarthan, "shining." "Narrow is the path and straight the

gate, and few there be that find it," but glorious is its recompense.

Astrological Symbolism

The temple of Solomon, astrologically interpreted, is our solar universe, which forms the school of life for our evolving humanity. The cosmic outline of man's development, past, present and future, is written in the stars.

Albert Pike, again in *Morals and Dogma*, states that "in all histories of gods and heroes lie couched and hidden astronomical details and the history of the operations of visible nature, and those, in their turn, were also symbols of higher and profounder truths."

In the ancient sacred book of the Hindus, the Mahabharata, we find the following: "That splendor issuing from the Sun that enlighteneth the whole world, that which is in the Moon and in Fire, that splendor known as from Me." This song from ancient India is like in spirit and comprehension to the familiar hymn of exaltation expressed by David: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the heavens showeth His handiwork."

Temples of Initiation have ever been "songs in stone" fashioned to immortalize these starry truths.

All Mystery teaching has been connected with astronomy and its mother science, astrology. The Tabernacle of Moses, which contains the sacred teachings brought into the new continents from Atlantis, and Solomon's Temple, in which these inner truths were perpetuated, were previously represented by Zoroaster in caves and subterranean temples dedicated to the Sun as Mithras. The four elements, the path of the Zodiac and the seven planets were all outlined in the Path of Initiation as taught in Persia and accepted by Cyrus and Darius, the sponsors of the Second Temple, Zerubbabel's, which eventually succeeded the edifice of Solomon. (Compare this Persian Mystery with the Syrian and Greek described in the previous chapter.)

Josephus says: "The three parts of the Temple represent the heaven, the sea and the earth. The twelve loaves, the twelve months. Seven candlesticks, the seven planets. The veil of four colors, the four elements. The loaves of bread in two groups, the six zodiacal signs above and below the equator." Clement of Alexandria accepted this interpretation.

Albert Pike says that the Royal Arch Degree of America has four veils of different colors. There is a banner for each of these; their colors are white, blue, crimson and purple and each carries the symbol of one of the four fixed zodiacal signs; namely, Taurus, Scorpio, Aquarius and Leo.

Clement of Alexandria states that the arrangement of the Temple, its ornamentation and coloring, all had symbolic reference to the order and harmony of the world. The decorations of the Temple included many emblems of the Sun, Moon, planets, constellations, seasons, the Zodiac and the elements.

The entire Temple, according to Albert Pike, was the abridged image of the Sun. Imitating the famous Temple of Tyre, where the two great columns of bronze were consecrated to the Wind and Fire, the Tyrian artist placed two columns of bronze at the entrance porch of the Temple. The Brazen Sea was supported by the four groups of bulls of three each which looked to the four cardinal points. The Temple at Tyre, which was built by Hiram, was consecrated to Astarte and Melkarth.

In mystic Masonry is also to be found a symbolic representation of this heavenly movement, the precession of the Equinoxes and Solstices. The life, work and death of the master, Hiram Abiff, is an analogue of the Sun's passage through the twelve zodiacal signs. The three "starry" ruffians who perpetrate the crime are the last three signs of the year through which the Sun passes after the "fall" at the Autumnal Equinox; also, the three important stars posited in the constellation Libra form a triangle: Zuben-es-chamedi in the West, Zuben-Hal-Rau in the East,

Zuben-El-Gubi (to use their Arabic names) in the south. From these starry appellations, Mackey in his Masonic Encyclopedia, states that the mystic cipher, Jubolo-a-um, is a corruption, and he adds further that the first ruffian strikes him with the twenty-four inch rule in significance of the time it takes for one Earth revolution upon its axis (twenty-four hours). The second uses the iron square, representative of the four seasons; the third strikes with the mallet, which being round in shape, signifies the fact that the Sun has now completed the twelve months cycle and that anew cycle must be born as the Sun enters Capricorn at the beginning of an astronomical new year.

The body was carried by night on a westerly course and buried beneath rubbish, or the dead vegetation of summer. The one green sprig of acacia remaining represented the immortality of life and the spirit's return in ever-refining bodies.

This truth is symbolically portrayed also by the resurrection of Hiram and the work of the three Masters who discover the "newly made grave". These three Masters are the three signs of the resurrection or Easter Season, through which the Sun passes after it enters Aries at the time of the Vernal Equinox. The two Equinoxes were termed by ancient star lore as the two gates of heaven.

The twelve Fellowcraft who go in search of Hiram are the twelve signs and he is finally raised by the strong grip of the Lion's Paw, or the glory of the Summer Solstice (Leo). The mystic Mason is well aware of the glorious work of transmutation which occurs both in "heaven and earth" as the Sun goes through the midsummer signs of Cancer and Leo.

The teachings of the Mysteries have always, in all lands, outlined the same spiritual truths, namely the divinity of man's origin, the Way of his emancipation and the eventual culmination of his destiny in grandeur and immortality. They have each taught in their several ways that by living a life of unselfish service in purity and love, it is entirely possible for the spirit to free itself from the enthrallments of flesh and to ascend the path of Liberation through the Lesser Mysteries (depicted in the heavens as the Milky Way), there to pass through the seven planetary spheres and by way of the Gates of Capricorn (the home of each New Year's Sun) into conscious freedom.

This path of humility and self-effacing service, so necessary for true spiritual accomplishment, was demonstrated by King Solomon when he chose the ability to serve, rather than an accumulation of worldly goods and royal position and power. In the modern parlance of the Masonic Craft it is described thus:

The king from his palace must leave
his diadem outside the mason's door.
And the poorman find his true respect
upon the checkered floor.

In the Greater Mysteries, or the higher degrees, is depicted this same mystic ladder of attainment. This time, however, it extends far beyond the seven planetary spheres and leads toward the seven stars of the Pleiades, the home of our planetary Logos, where forever triumphant over mortality and all things finite the redeemed may chant with the poet Virgil of that bright, new day which inaugurates a transcendent life cycle, "when the bright Bull with her gilded horns opens the year."

Masonry had its origin when the Sun was in Taurus (the Word) at the Spring Equinox, in Leo (power) at the Summer Solstice; in Scorpio (secrecy) at the Autumn Equinox, and in Aquarius (fellowship) at the Winter Solstice. These four signs constitute the cross of fixed signs, so it may be said that, astrologically speaking, Masonry, too, has a jeweled cross, a cross set with the four Royal Stars corresponding to these four fixed signs of the Zodiac: Aldebaran, Regulus, Antares and Fomalhaut.

In the Aquarian Age now brightening an the world's horizon, these four Royal Stars will once more occupy the equinoctial and solstitial months, but in a different order

than above given, namely, Aquarius (spring), Taurus (summer), Leo (autumn) and Scorpio (winter). We may therefore look forward hopefully to a world-wide renaissance of mystic Masonry, under the light of the Four Jewels of the New Age.

— ***Corinne Heline***