



# Shamash

the radiant essence

Dr. Petr Simeon Gajdos



## Star of Shamash

*"We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the dread Universal Essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old... Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator."*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, Ch.VII



# SHAMASH

THE RADIANT ESSENCE

*“It is our essence that has the ability to set us free from the uncertainties of a world cloaked in darkness, and from bondage to ignorance into an ever-brighter shining light of radiant self-cognisant awareness.”*

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**THE SHAMASH DISCOURSES**

- the kindling of a nine-branched menorah

In antiquity, a nearby planet metamorphosed into a brilliant, awe-inspiring object that earthlings chose to call 'star.' The stars play the ubiquitous and essential role in the indigenous system of beliefs, often associated with power, healing, growth and light.

Ancient cultures in the Mesopotamian region used an arrangement of lines as a symbol for both stars and gods. This is why 'star' icons look nothing like the pinpoint of light in the night sky that we call stars. Our ancestors have considered the sun as the centre of humankind's existence. Shamash, god of the sun, was the conqueror of night, death and disease who swept across the heavens.

The so-called Star of Shamash of four points in each of the cardinal directions and four wavy, diagonal lines emanating from between each point enclosed within a circle, was the symbol for the sun. The word is derived from the Akkadian word for the sun, šamšu, which is in turn derived from the Proto-Semitic śamš and is cognate to Syriac ܫܡܫܐ šemša or šimšu Hebrew שֶׁמֶשׁ šemeš and Arabic شمس šams.

Because sunlight dispels and banishes all darkness, Shamash was the "one from whom no secrets are hidden", with the ability to see all things. Shamash was not only the god of the sun but also governor of the whole universe. At night, Shamash became the judge of the underworld. The attribute most commonly associated with Shamash is justice. Just as the sun disperses darkness, so Shamash brings wrong and injustice to light.

The sun, the source of life-giving light and warmth, was used as the symbol for our nourishing radiant essence – our inner sun. The expanding radiant 'inner sun' is felt like warm, rising, fertile power and the blazing flame of fire - it incinerates inertia, freeing us from isolated containment and thus restoring us back to the fluent, graceful motion of the Whole. Through the process of gradual transmutation and fusion, our whole being dissolves and changes into the "Philosophers' Stone."

The Philosophers' Stone is the symbol of insight into humanity's true nature, reflecting upon the life-giving properties of the sun that transforms and transmutes the constraints of earthly existence. At the first glance, humanity's true nature may seem very complicated to our closed eyes, but its simplicity shines forth once we choose to open them.

Blindness – the inability to see Truth – is thought to epitomize ignorance and unawareness, leaving one hapless and exposed, vulnerable to being consumed by all that is dark and unknown. Similarly to the sun, our intrinsic radiant luminosity – our essence – has the ability to set us free from the uncertainties of a world cloaked in darkness, and from bondage to ignorance into an ever-brighter shining light of radiant self-cognisant awareness.

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A 9th century BC cuneiform tablet records the re-foundation of the temple of the sun by the Babylonian ruler King Nabu-apla-iddina (circa 887-851 BC), who sits in reverence beside the rayed disk symbolic of the sun's presence.

Gray schist (29.5 cm x 17.8 cm); Sippar (Northern Babylonia) circa 855 BC. Found in the Ebabbar Temple (shrine of Shamash) at Abu Habba (Sippar) in 1881 by H. Rassam (British Museum, London, BM 91000)

