



Nugget

Two Pillars

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The story of two pillars set within Solomon's Temple.

Summary

The story of two pillars and their creator, set within the story of Solomon's Temple.

Keywords

Third-Degree, Pillars, Solomon, Temple, Hiram

Two Pillars

Let's begin our story of the two Pillars, by setting the scene, first through the building of Solomon's Temple, which was patterned after the Tabernacle carried across the wilderness by Moses. It was built on top of Mount Moriah,¹ and building began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign and finished about seven years later. Its creation centred upon the interplay between three key characters, Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff.

When Solomon became King, he turned away from war and began a process of détente by fostered economic and political ties with his neighbours, one of whom was his father's old associate, Hiram King of Tyre. Solomon wrote to him in connection with his intention to build a Temple and a Palace, *'I am about to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God and to dedicate it to him. Send me cedar, juniper and algum logs from Lebanon. I will give your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber, twenty thousand cors of ground wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine and twenty thousand baths of olive oil.'* (II Chronicles 2:4 & I Kings 5:5)

As part of their joint trade and growing friendship and respect, Solomon asked Hiram for a skilled artificer to add lustre to the building, to which Hiram replied, *'I am sending you Hiram-Abi, ... A master craftsman, the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him.'* (II Chronicles 2:14)

He was truly, a prince of architects, able to superintend all the work of the Temple, though exactly what part he played in that great work we will never know. What we do know is that he cast two bronze pillars, erected at the portico of the temple, and made a 'Casted or Copper Sea', a circular bowl measuring about five yards across, which held about 12,000 gallons of water; together with numerous smaller items. (I Kings 7:21 and II Chronicles 3:17)

Estimates of the size of the pillars, vary along with their differing accounts, and the differing estimates of the size of a cubit, the standard measurement of the times²; added to which it is believed they were recast, creating more confusion. However, in broad terms, they were about forty feet high, if you include the capitals on top, and about three feet in diameter. [I Kings 7:15 & II Chronicles 3:15-17] The capitals were in the form of cast bronze lilies, adorned with a network of interwoven chains and pomegranates, and topped with a hollow round bowl.³ (Jeremiah 52:21) The pillar in the north was called Boaz, named after the great grandfather of King David,⁴ symbolising 'in strength'; and the one to the south, Jachin, named after the Assistant High Priest of Israel,⁵ symbolising stability⁶. Conjointly suggesting a 'personal relationship' between the Temple and the Royal Family, and the presence of Almighty, who 'dwelt' within the Ark of the Covenant, in the 'sanctum sanctorum (the 'Holiest of Holies'). Thus Solomon's Temple, was and is, symbolic of a physical manifestation of a spiritual link to God, the Great Architect of the Universe, and in similar vein, for Freemasons, to Hiram, the role model for all Master Masons.

Endnotes:

¹ Mount Moriah, sometimes called Temple Mount, or Mount Zion, was 2,428 feet above sea level on a natural plateau, which had a natural spring providing abundant water. The site chosen was the threshing floor of one 'Ornan the Jubusite', the place where Abraham had been about to sacrifice his son Isaac to the Lord but substituted a more agreeable victim; a goat. David having seen the Lord there in a vision and purchased the site – (II Chronicles 3:1).

² 'Two Pillars' - Short Talk Bulletin (Sep. 1935) in Masonic Service Association of North America
(www.masonicdictionary.com/pillarsp.html)

³ Bragdon William B. 'The Pillars of the Porch', Article, in the Builder, (1922). www.masonicdictionary.com/pillarsp.html

⁴ We read about Boaz in the book of Ruth, a widow from Moab, who after her husband's death supported his mother, Naomi, and travelled back with her 'home-village,' Bethlehem. There, she met and married a rich landowner, BOAZ, and gave him a son, Obed, whose son Jesse was the father of David. (Ruth 2:1)

⁵ Neville Barker-Cryer explains why Jachin, the Assistant High Priest, is not found in the Volume of the Sacred Law; it is recorded in other books of ancient usage (that are called the Pseudepigrapha). Revd. Barker Cryer Neville, (2008) 'What Do You Know about Ritual?' p. 29, Lewis Masonic.

⁶ The *Jachin* pillar (meaning *Yah establishes*) is King Solomon, and the *Boaz* pillar (meaning *strength*) is King David. Israel's two most illustrious kings and also the ones mostly responsible for planning and/or building the Jewish Temple. Both kings are messianic figures. Jachin and Boaz', Badillo Tony (2007) 'The Secrets of Solomon's Temple' in Temple Secrets - Pillars

##END##

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