



Internet Lodge 9659
United Grand Lodge of England
Province of East Lancashire
<http://internet.lodge.org.uk>

Short Papers Competition 2009

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Paper 30/2009

Title **At the Gate of Initiation – The Two Pillars**
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We accord the two Pillars – otherwise known as **Jachin** and **Boaz**, very great prominence within our Temples. Their imagery can also be found on our banners, tracing boards and regalia. In fact, you could say they are **synonymous** with Freemasonry.

But what do they **actually mean** or put another way – **what do they signify?**

This is not an easy question to answer; for despite the heavy emphasis laid upon the Pillars in our artwork and lodge ornaments, we learn surprisingly little of their **hidden** meaning from our ritual. More to the point; their **mystical dimension** is largely overlooked and as a consequence, each of us is alone – free to contemplate for ourselves the **true design purpose**. But that being said, for those of us who have been **stimulated** enough to find out more; **where should we begin our study?**

In order to shed some further light on our subject, we must first broaden our frame of reference **beyond** the Craft. It is important to remember that the **source** of our Masonic Legend is derived from the **Legend of Israel**. Historians and scholars have long since known that ‘certain’ other manuscripts exist; namely those written by **Jewish Mystics** under the generic name of the **Kabbalah**. Certain of these writings are of particular relevance to Freemasonry - because they lay special stress on the **mystical import** of the two Pillars. The Kabbalah therefore provides an invaluable insight as to their deeper symbolism although within the confines of this paper, we are forced to restrict our research to that which may simply be **observed** during any ritual.

You will have noticed that the Pillars are adorned with two globes; one depicting **material earth** and the other **celestial heaven**. They are replicated on the Warden’s columns and when the lodge opens, the earth column is laid flat and the celestial column raised upright thereby symbolising the **heavenly** or **spiritual** nature of our work. We can also describe them as a **pair of opposites**; this is less obvious perhaps but nonetheless symbolic of the **dual nature of existence** - positive and negative, active and passive, light and dark, good and evil.

During our ritual, the Candidate will stand between them and will thus form the **middle pillar**; he himself is placed in a position of **balance**. In other words, we can interpret that the **personality** of the Candidate will be **harmonised** *if* he follows the path of **equilibrium or balance**.

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Finally, perhaps we should consider that the answer to our question is more fundamental; maybe the **primary function** of the Pillars, like all of our other symbols, is to simply **stimulate the imagination** – their true purpose being to act as a kind of **doorway** into the **inner Temple**. The answer can thus only to be grasped through our **own searching or contemplation** – after all, if one is told the answer in advance, the value of the lesson is lost!

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