

JACHIN

and

BOAZ

by

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(1921)

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Jachin and Boaz

"AND he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz." (II Chron. 17.)

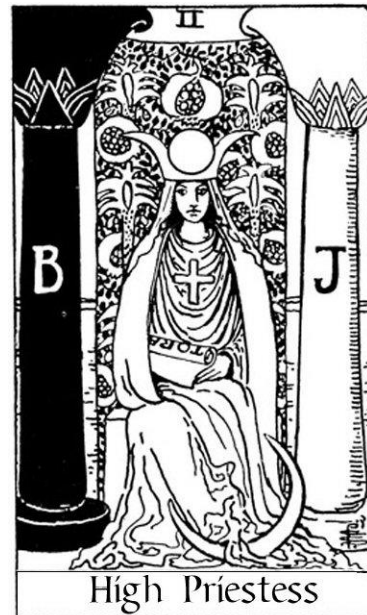
[Author's Note: The pillars of Jachin and Boaz are often depicted in esoteric symbolism; such as in the pictures to the right and below. In some representations the pillars are depicted with the letters 'J' and 'B' inscribed on the respective pillars.]

Very likely some of us have wondered what was the meaning of these two mysterious pillars set up by Solomon in front of his temple, and why they were called by these strange names; and then we have dropped the subject as one of those inexplicable things handed down in the Bible from old time which, we suppose, can have no practical interest for us at the present day. Nevertheless, these strange names are not without a purpose. They contain the key to the entire Bible and to the whole order of Nature, and as emblems of the two great principles that are the pillars of the universe, they fitly stood at the threshold of that temple which was designed to symbolise all the mysteries of Being.

In all the languages of the Semitic stock the letters J and Y are interchangeable, as we see in the modern Arabic "Yakub" for "Jacob" and the old Hebrew "Yaveh" for "Jehovah." This gives us the form "Yachin," which at once reveals the enigma. The word Yak signifies "one"; and the termination "hi," or "hin," is an intensive which may be rendered in English by "only." Thus the word "Jachin" resolves itself into the words "one only," the all-embracing Unity.



The meaning of Boaz is clearly seen in the book of Ruth. There Boaz appears as the kinsman exercising the right of pre-emption so familiar to those versed in Oriental law--a right which has for its purpose the maintenance of the Family as the social unit. According to this widely-spread custom, the purchaser, who is not a member of the family, buys the property subject to the right of kinsmen within certain degrees to purchase it back, and so bring it once more into the family to which it originally belonged. Whatever may be our personal opinions regarding the vexed questions of dogmatic theology, we can all agree as to the general principle indicated in the role acted by Boaz. He brings back the alienated estate into the family--that is to say, he "redeems" it in the legal sense of the word. As a matter of law his power to do this results from his membership in the family; but his motive for doing it is love, his affection for Ruth. Without pushing the analogy too far we may say, then, that Boaz represents the principle of redemption in the widest sense of reclaiming an estate by right of relationship, while the innermost moving power in its recovery is Love.



This is what Boaz stands for in the beautiful story of Ruth, and there is no reason why we should not let the same name stand for the same thing when we seek the meaning of the mysterious pillar. Thus the two pillars typify Unity and the redeeming power of Love, with the significant suggestion that the redemption results from the Unity. They correspond with the two "bonds," or uniting principles spoken of by St. Paul, "the Unity of the Spirit which is the Bond of Peace," and "Love, which is the Bond of Perfectness."

The former is Unity of Being; the latter, Unity of Intention: and the principle of this Dual-Unity is well illustrated by the story of Boaz. The whole story proceeds on the idea of the Family as the social unit, the root-conception of all Oriental law, and if we consider the Family in this light, we shall see how exactly it embodies the two-fold idea of Jachin and Boaz, unity of Being and unity of Thought. The Family forms a unit because all the members proceed from a common progenitor, and are thus all of one blood; but, although this gives them a natural unity of Being of which they cannot divest themselves, it is not enough in itself to make them a united family, as unfortunately experience too often shows. Something more is wanted, and that something is Love. There must be a personal union brought about by sympathetic Thought to complete the natural union resulting from birth. The inherent unity must be expressed by the Individual volition of each member, and thus the Family becomes the ideally perfect social unit; a truth to which St. Paul alludes when he calls God the Father from Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. Thus Boaz stands for the principle which brings back to the original Unity that which has been for a time separated from it. There has never been any separation of actual Being--the family right always subsisted in the property even while in the hands of strangers, otherwise it could never have been brought back; but it requires the Love principle to put this right into effective operation.

When this begins to work in the knowledge of its right to do so, then there is the return of the individual to the Unity, and the recognition of himself as the particular expression of the Universal in virtue of his own nature.

These two pillars, therefore, stand for the two great spiritual principles that are the basis of all Life: Jachin typifying the Unity resulting from Being, and Boaz typifying the Unity resulting from Love. In this Dual-Unity we find the key to all conceivable involution or evolution of Spirit; and it is therefore not without reason that the record of these two ancient pillars has been preserved in our Scriptures. And finally we may take this as an index to the character of our Scriptures generally. They contain infinite meanings; and often those passages which appear on the surface to be most meaningless will be found to possess the deepest significance. The Book, which we often read so superficially, hides beneath its sometimes seemingly trivial words the secrets of other things. The twin pillars Jachin and Boaz bear witness to this truth. [1]

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Footnotes

[1] The following comment was made by Judge Troward, after the publication of this paper in *Expression*:

"*The Two Pillars* of the Universe are Personality and Mathematics, represented by Boaz and Jachin respectively. This is the broadest simplification to which it is possible to reduce things. Balance consists in preserving the Equilibrium or Alternating Current between these two Principles. Personality is the Absolute Factor. Mathematics are the Relative Factor, for they merely Measure different Rates or Scales. They are absolute in this respect. A particular scale having been selected all its sequences will follow by an inexorable Law of Order and Proportion; but the selection of the scale and the change from one scale to another rests entirely with Personality. What Personality can not do is to make one Scale produce the results of another, but it can set aside one scale and substitute another for it. Hence Personality contains in itself the Universal Scale, or can either accommodate itself to lower rates of motion already established, or can raise them to its own rate of motion. Hence Personality is the grand Ultimate Fact in all things.

"Different personalities should be regarded as different degrees of consciousness. They are different degrees of emergence of The Power that knows Itself."

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