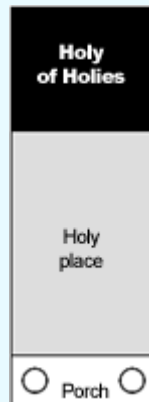


The columns of the porch of Solomon's temple

The Temple of King Solomon



Constructed on the basis of sacred geometry, the Temple was divided into three main areas connected to the macrocosm (or cosmic world) as well as to the microcosm (or individual world):

- The Porch (“Oulam”), linked to Earth in the macrocosm and to the human body in the microcosm, is flooded by daylight.
- The Holy Place (“Hikal”), related to the Atmosphere in the macrocosm and to the human soul in the microcosm, is receiving reflected daylight.
- The Holy of Holies (“Debhir”), representing the Heaven in the macrocosm and the Spirit in the microcosm, is completely dark.

On both sides of the Porch, two columns, called Jakin and Boaz, were erected. They stood alongside a “vertical” axis having its equivalent in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm world. To have an idea of the way the Temple looked, consult the Temple of Solomon.

The microcosm axis : The axis symbolizes the spiritual direction to be followed by the human being intending to rise constantly and finally reach the full realization. Within the microcosm limits, the direction called the “sushumna” stretches from the bottom of the spinal column to the

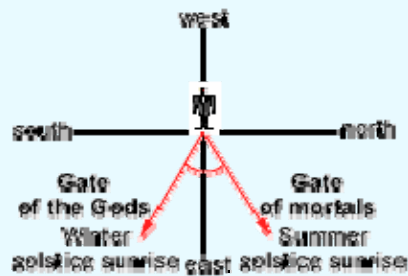
crown of the head with an extra-individual extension. Alongside the “sushumna” stand the “chakras”, which are the subtle centres of the individuality? Their successive awakening corresponds to the different stages on the axial path towards the complete realization. The passage from a stage to another consists always in the death to a previous cycle and a birth into the following. This death and re-birth process, called initiation, takes place in the Temple, heart of the inner voyage and symbolic image of the cosmos or manifested world. The key stages of human development may be related to the three domains mentioned above:

- The body is associated with the physical birth.
- The soul or psyche is linked to a second birth. Related to the domain of subtle possibilities of the human individuality, this second birth consists in a psychic re-generation producing a centred human being and corresponds to the initiation to the **little mysteries**, accessible through the **gate of mortals**.
- The Spirit, related to a third birth, is taking place in the spiritual and not psychical order any more. It gives access to the domain of supra-individual possibilities through the initiation to the **great mysteries** and the **gate of the Gods**.

Considering Hindu tradition, the **gate of mortals** gives access to the “pitriyâna”, path of the ancestors or beings of a former cycle, and the **gate of the Gods** opens the “devayâna”, path of the Gods. Although, being part of a single initiation process, the two gates differ nevertheless regarding their issue. After having been manifested at a certain stage of development within the Cosmos, the Temple or the **cosmic cavern**, the being will go through one or the other gate according to his spiritual stage of development. The **gate of mortals** gives access to the state of primordial being, go-between the ordinary man and the spiritual Being. If the being has not reached the full psychical re-generation, he will re-enter the **gate of mortals** and meet again a new cycle of the manifested world. The psychically re-generated being may then pass the **gate of the Gods** to jump from the individual into the spiritual world and leave the manifested world for ever. In other words, the **gate of mortals** is a way out-in while the **gate of the Gods** represents the final way out of the **cosmic cavern**, ultimate goal of initiation. **The macrocosm axis** : To highlight this notion, we will refer to the concept of the celestial sphere covering the horizon and used in astronomy to represent the apparent motion of stars and “wanderers” in the sky. In various traditional forms, the celestial sphere and horizon were representations of celestial and terrestrial worlds respectively. They are related through a “vertical” axis called **World Axis**. As the celestial sphere corresponds to the crown of the head in the microcosm, the macrocosm axis should prolong the spinal column of the being up to the Zenith. However, the stars seem to turn around an axis, which pierces the celestial vault in the neighbourhood of pole star. Therefore, the axis joining the North and South celestial poles is more appropriate to characterize the macrocosm than the Zenith-Nadir axis, which refers mostly to the microcosm or individual world. The Bible takes into consideration the sunrise, the dawn, the emerging region between darkness and light. As explained in the description of the celestial sphere on this site, the apparent sun orbit or ecliptic moves towards the North Celestial Pole between winter and summer solstice and in the direction of the South Celestial Pole between Summer and Winter solstice. This implies that, while noon sun is ascending towards celestial North, the sunrise point is moving alongside the horizon in direction of terrestrial North. Conversely, when

noon sun is descending on the way to celestial South, the sunrise point glides along the horizon towards terrestrial South.

The ascending phase is naturally associated with the path of the Gods (“devayâna”) and the descending phase to the path of the ancestors (“pitriyâna”). The ascending phase, from Winter

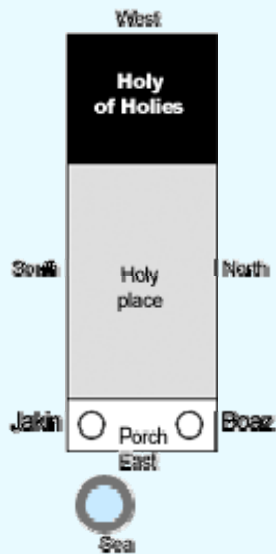


to Summer solstice towards North, appears as the way of clarity while the descending phase, from Summer to Winter solstice in direction South, is considered as the way of obscurity. This is in full agreement with the “Bhagavadgita”, which states: “fire, light, day increasing moon, ascent semester of the sun towards North” are the luminous signs leading to Brahma; “smoke, night, decreasing moon, descent semester of the sun towards South” are the dark signs of the way back to the manifestation world. So, the **gate of the Gods** may only be associated with the Winter solstice sunrise and the **gate of mortals** to Summer solstice sunrise as in the following horizon diagram:

The angle between both directions associated with sunrise at solstices depends on the latitude of the observer place. For further details regarding this calculation, refer to the position on the celestial sphere on this site.

Columns of the Temple of King Solomon

At this stage, we may identify the Temple columns with the two gates. To be allowed to do this, we need to know where the columns Jakin and Boaz stood. Their location is only a consequence of the orientation of the Temple. For some people, the Temple was oriented alongside an East-West axis and West-East for others. According to the Bible, there should not be any ambiguity, knowing that in Hebrew “right” always means South and “left” North, which indicates that the chosen orientation was facing East. Moreover the chronicler said: “As regards the brass Sea, he placed it at distance on the right side (at Southeast), so on the side of Jakin”. Therefore, the Temple was built up according to the following layout:



Facing East, the Temple looks like two sheets of an open book where the right page is read before the left (in Hebrew), where the right path (South) precedes the left (North), opening up to another world, when the page has been turned. This double aspect recalls the double face of the Roman God of initiation, Janus: his right face was looking to the past and the way back and his left one to the future, without any return (to the past). A connection with the Masonic traditional form can not be avoided here. In Scottish and French Masonic Rites, the Lodge is West-East oriented as Middle Age churches, an orientation apparently opposed to Jerusalem Temple one. Now, in (Ancient and Accepted) Scottish Rite, Jakin and Boaz stand respectively Southwest and Northwest. So, Jakin may be identified to Winter solstice sunset and Boaz to Summer solstice sunset. Apart from the fact that the columns are facing sunset instead of sunrise, there is no real difference with the disposition of Solomon's Temple. In French Rite, on the contrary, Jakin and Boaz are respectively located Northwest and Southwest. Consequently, Jakin is related to Summer solstice and Boaz to Winter solstice. This inversion, compared to Jerusalem Temple disposition, refers exclusively to a terrestrial (instead of celestial) view where the way of clarity is turned towards full light or terrestrial South (instead of celestial North) and the way of obscurity oriented in direction of darkness or terrestrial North (instead of celestial South). Indeed, this inversion is in agreement with the “Emerald Table”, which says: “what is up (in celestial order) is like what is down (in terrestrial order)” and conversely. Or, according to the Gospel words, “the first (in Heaven) will be the last (on Earth)”.

In fact, both dispositions reflect the same reality perceived at different levels (celestial and terrestrial).

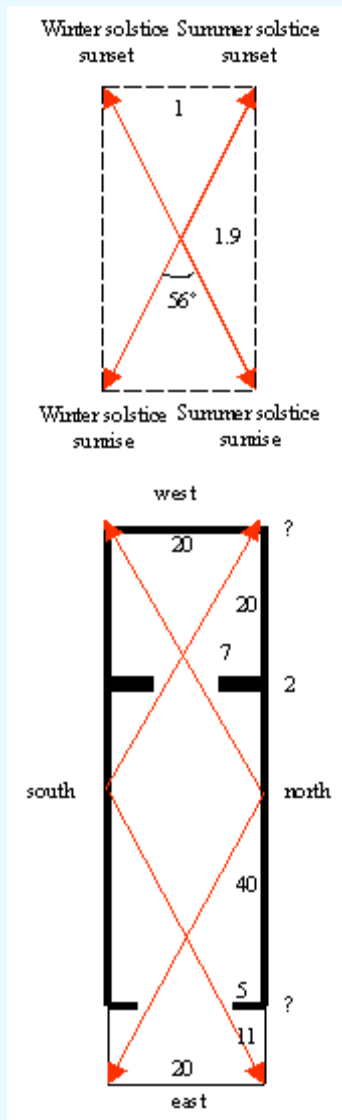
We may find, in the identification of **Jakin** and **Boaz** respectively with the **gate of the Gods** and the **gate of mortals**, a confirmation of the column names:

- **Boaz** means strength, but not in a physical sense. It refers to a higher strength, a spiritual strength of awareness of the indestructibility of the real being, the Spirit.
- **Jakin** means solidity, stability, expressing that the initiate has overcome the human life fluctuations and reached the stage of Being, standing in the eternal present.

Notice that the Temple orientation fits perfectly with the **cosmic cavern** symbolism. Indeed, the Porch was open to full sunlight (outer light), the Holy Place to the indirect sunlight (reflected light) and the Holy of Holies to the invisible or spiritual sun (inner light), also called the midnight sun in Islamic esoterism. Consequently, the visible and invisible suns may only be respectively related to light (East) and darkness (West). Darkness should not be understood here as lack of light, but as its non-manifested principle, the invisible source at the origin of its manifested or visible aspect.

The relation between the Holy of Holies and the initiation to the **great mysteries** makes quite clear why the access was restricted to Priest(s) as representatives of the spiritual power. The access to the Holy place was allowed only to persons qualified for the initiation to the **little mysteries**. In order to enter the Holy Place, the officiant had to pass through a double front door situated between the two columns. When the doors were open and while he was standing at the “centre” of the Holy place, facing East, he may have been able to see the sun rising any day of the year within the column gap. This implies that the columns touched the external sides of the angle delimited by the two directions of Winter and Summer solstice at rising sun. The result may have had some relevance for the construction of Solomon's Temple as a representation of the **cosmic cavern**.

Architectural symbolism of the Temple columns



The two directions given by the winter and summer sunrise or sunset solstices represent the diagonals of a rectangle called “solstitial rectangle”. Their intersection defines the centre of the rectangle. Its side ratio and diagonal angle depend on the latitude of the observer. The side picture provides the values for Jerusalem located at latitude 31.8° north. For more details on these calculations, consult the position on the celestial sphere on this site.

The elements gathered in Ezekiel's chronicle (refer for instance to the web site Ezekiel 41) provide some data expressed in cubits and referring to the “inner” dimensions of the Temple, which are given on the next picture.

If we superpose the appropriate scaled “solstitial rectangle” to the Temple plan, we see that it is covered twice. The fact that the two solstice rectangles do not fit perfectly in may be due to different reasons ¹, but that does not matter to this subject. Indeed, only the two following aspects are important regarding the symbolic point of view:

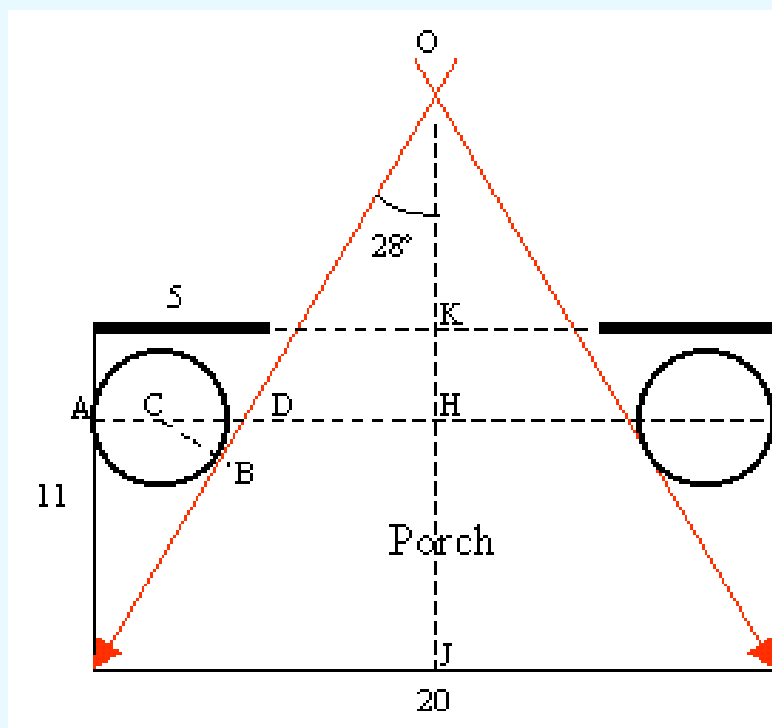
- The orientation of the two rectangles: one facing East, the other West;
- The centres of the two rectangles: one within the Holy place, the other inside the Holy of Holies.

The two rectangles may only be linked to the two gates: the lowest facing East and rising sun to the **gate of mortals**; the upper facing West and setting sun to the **gate of the Gods**. Connected to sunrise, the lowest rectangle means return to daylight and noon sun at South; linked to sunset, the highest signifies disappearing in the night and gazing at the midnight sun at North. ²

Both rectangle centres symbolize the place where the postulant was able to enlarge his view gazing at rising or setting sun. The officiant facing West sees the visible sun disappearing and the invisible coming out; when facing East, he was able to see the sunrise between Summer and Winter solstice just within the angle delimited by the centre and both columns. Interestingly, this may have had some consequence on the column position.

According to the double covering, the columns, the dimensions of which are known, were standing on the Porch and touching the external sides of the former angle. So, they could not be further from the front wall than shown on the following picture. A simple calculation allow us to evaluate this distance.

According to Bible chronicles, the columns looked like cylinders of 12 cubit circumference or



1.9 cubit radius as shown in the diagram below:

Therefore

$$CD = CB/\cos(28^\circ) = 2.2$$

$$DH = AH - AD = AH - (AC+CD)$$

$$DH = 10 - (1.9+2.2) = 5.9$$

As

$$OJ = 10/\tan(28^\circ) = 18.9$$

$$OH = DH/\tan(28^\circ) = 11.2$$

We get

$$OK = OJ - KJ = 18.9 - 11 = 7.9$$

$$KH = OH - OK = 11.2 - 7.9 = 3.3$$

So, the columns were only 1.4 cubit ($3.3 - 1.9$) away from the front wall and therefore stood

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