

THE PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE AND THE BODY

Jachin, Boaz, and the Lateral Vestibulospinal Tract as the Antigravity

Architecture of Structural Integrity

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Abstract

The two pillars of the Tree of Life — the Pillar of Mercy and the Pillar of Severity, flanking the central Pillar of Mildness — are inherited from the two bronze pillars Jachin and Boaz that stood at the entrance of the Temple of Solomon, named, in the Hebrew, ‘he will establish’ and ‘in strength.’ This paper argues that the esoteric meaning the tradition assigns to these pillars — establishment, strength, and the structural integrity of the standing Temple — corresponds with precision to the function of a specific descending neural pathway: the lateral vestibulospinal tract. Unlike the voluntary corticospinal system, which crosses to govern the contralateral body, the lateral vestibulospinal tract descends ipsilaterally, uncrossed, and performs a single structural office: it facilitates the extensor tone of the antigravity muscles of the trunk and limbs while inhibiting their flexor antagonists, holding the body upright against gravity and reflexively counterweighting perturbations of balance. It is the body’s automatic, intuitive, always-on antigravity architecture — the neural pillars that establish the standing structure in strength. The paper develops the biblical and Masonic background of Jachin and Boaz, their Qabalistic interpretation as the pillars of the Tree, and their neurological realisation in the lateral vestibulospinal tract, arguing that the pillars of the Temple and the pillars of the body are the same structural principle expressed in the register of sacred architecture and in the register of the standing human form.

Keywords: Pillars · Jachin · Boaz · Temple of Solomon · Freemasonry · Pillar of Mercy · Pillar of Severity · Lateral Vestibulospinal Tract · Antigravity · Extensor Tone · Vestibulospinal Reflex · Ipsilateral · Structural Integrity · Neurological Qabalah · Catharturgy

I. The Two Pillars of the Temple

I.1 Jachin and Boaz in the Biblical Account

The two pillars stand at the threshold of the most sacred building of the Hebrew scriptures. In the account of the construction of the Temple of Solomon, given in the First Book of Kings and again in the Second Book of Chronicles, King Solomon commissions the bronze-worker Hiram of Tyre to cast two great bronze pillars and to set them at the entrance of the Temple's vestibule. The pillar to the one side is named Jachin, and the pillar to the other Boaz. They are free-standing, flanking the entrance, crowned with ornate capitals adorned with networks of interwoven chains, rows of pomegranates, and lily-work.

The names carry the meaning. Jachin (yakhin) means 'he will establish' or simply 'he establishes'; Boaz (bo'az) means 'in strength' or 'in him is strength.' Read together, as the tradition has always read them, the two names form a single declaration: that the Lord will establish the Temple in strength — that the sacred structure stands established and strong because its establishment and its strength are divinely given. The pillars are not merely decorative or structural in the ordinary sense; they are a named monument to the principle that the standing structure is established in strength. They proclaim, at the threshold, that what stands within stands because it has been established and made strong.

This is the essential point for what follows. The pillars are the architectural proclamation of structural integrity — of the building's capacity to stand. Establishment and strength are precisely the two requirements of any structure that must remain upright: it must be established, set firmly in place, and it must be strong, able to bear the load and resist the forces that would bring it down. The two pillars name these two requirements and stand as their visible guarantee at the entrance of the holy place.

I.2 The Pillars in Freemasonry

The two pillars passed from the biblical account into the symbolic vocabulary of Freemasonry, where they became central emblems of the initiatory tradition that took the building of Solomon's Temple as its founding allegory. In the Masonic lodge, which is understood to represent the forecourt or working-space of the Temple, the two pillars Jachin and Boaz stand as markers of stability, threshold, and the duality that the initiate must pass between and ultimately reconcile. They flank the entrance to the symbolic Temple as they flanked the entrance to the historical one, and the candidate's passage between them is a passage into the work of building — the building of the self understood as a temple under construction.

The Masonic reading preserves and develops the structural meaning. The pillars are the columns of the building, the supports between which the structure rises, and the craft tradition that organised itself around the metaphor of building took them as the emblems of the principles by

which any structure — a cathedral, a lodge, a soul — is raised and held upright. The duality of the two pillars, and the requirement that the initiate find the balance between them, anticipates the Qabalistic reading in which the two outer pillars are reconciled by a third between them.

II. The Pillars of the Tree of Life

II.1 The Three Pillars and the Two Outer Columns

In the Qabalistic Tree of Life, the ten Sephiroth are arranged not only in their familiar pattern but along three vertical pillars. The right-hand pillar, comprising in the standard arrangement Chokmah, Chesed, and Netzach, is the Pillar of Mercy — the column of expansion, giving, and outgoing force. The left-hand pillar, comprising Binah, Geburah, and Hod, is the Pillar of Severity — the column of restriction, limitation, and form. Between them stands the central Pillar of Mildness or Balance, comprising Kether, Tiphareth, Yesod, and Malkuth, which reconciles the two outer columns and is the axis of equilibrium.

The tradition explicitly identifies the two outer pillars of the Tree with Jachin and Boaz of the Temple. The Pillar of Mercy is Jachin, the pillar of establishment; the Pillar of Severity is Boaz, the pillar of strength — though the traditions differ on the precise assignment of the names and on which physical side each pillar occupies, a divergence that runs through the Masonic rites and the Qabalistic diagrams alike. What is consistent across the traditions is the structure: two outer columns of opposed character, expansion and restriction, mercy and severity, reconciled by a central column of balance. The pillars of the Temple became the pillars of the Tree, and the Tree's two outer columns are the two requirements of any standing structure raised to cosmic and psychological principle: the expansive force that builds outward and the restrictive force that gives form and bound.

This is the same structural duality the Corpus develops in the executive Sephiroth. Chesed, the right-hemisphere executive vessel, is the containing breadth of Mercy; Geburah, the left-hemisphere analytical executive, is the restrictive boundary of Severity; and the two are balanced in the mediating evaluative centre of Tiphareth on the central pillar. The Pillar of Mercy expands and contains; the Pillar of Severity restricts and forms; the Pillar of Mildness balances and reconciles. The standing structure of the soul, like the standing structure of the Temple, is raised between an expansive column and a restrictive one and held upright by the balance between them.

II.2 The Pillars as Structural Integrity

Across all three registers — the biblical Temple, the Masonic lodge, and the Qabalistic Tree — the constant meaning of the pillars is structural integrity: the capacity of the structure to stand, established and strong, against the forces that would bring it down. The pillars are what hold the building up. They are the columns that bear the load, resist the lateral forces, and keep the structure upright and whole. Establishment and strength, mercy and severity, expansion and

restriction — these are the paired principles by which a structure is raised and held, and the pillars are their embodiment.

It is precisely this meaning — the pillars as the architecture of standing, of structural integrity against the forces of collapse — that finds its neurological realisation in a specific descending pathway of the nervous system. The body, too, is a structure that must stand established and strong against the force that would bring it down; and the body, too, has its pillars.

The pillars of the Temple proclaim that the structure stands established in strength. The pillars of the Tree raise the standing structure between expansion and restriction, reconciled by balance. In every register the meaning is one: the pillars are the architecture of structural integrity, the columns by which what stands is held upright against the forces of collapse.

III. The Pillars of the Body: The Lateral Vestibulospinal Tract

III.1 The Antigravity Pathway

The human body is a structure that must remain upright against the constant downward force of gravity and against the perturbations — the tilts, pushes, stumbles, and shifts — that would topple it. The neural system principally responsible for this standing structural integrity is the lateral vestibulospinal tract. It originates in the lateral vestibular nucleus (the nucleus of Deiters) in the brainstem, which receives the vestibular signals of head position and movement from the otolith organs and semicircular canals of the inner ear, and it descends the full length of the spinal cord to act upon the motor neurons of the trunk and limbs.

Its function is singular and structural. The lateral vestibulospinal tract facilitates the extensor tone of the antigravity muscles — the extensor muscles of the trunk and legs that hold the body erect — by exciting the alpha and gamma motor neurons that drive them, while simultaneously inhibiting the flexor motor neurons of their antagonists. The net effect is to stiffen the postural musculature that supports the body against gravity, providing the continuous extensor tone that keeps the structure upright. It is the body's antigravity specialist: the pathway whose office is to hold the standing structure standing.

This is establishment and strength in neural form. The lateral vestibulospinal tract establishes the body in its upright posture and maintains it there in strength, continuously, beneath conscious awareness. It is the neural realisation of Jachin and Boaz: the pathway that establishes the structure and holds it in strength against the force that would bring it down. The pillars of the Temple named the principle; the lateral vestibulospinal tract performs it in the body.

III.2 The Ipsilateral Logic: A Pathway That Does Not Cross

The structural significance of the lateral vestibulospinal tract is sharpened decisively by a feature

of its anatomy that distinguishes it from the principal voluntary motor pathway. The corticospinal tract, the great pathway of voluntary, intentional, fine motor control, crosses at the pyramidal decussation, so that each cerebral hemisphere governs the opposite side of the body. This contralateral crossing is the anatomical basis of the Corpus's account of the executive and perceptual Sephiroth, in which the left hemisphere governs the right side and the right hemisphere the left.

The lateral vestibulospinal tract does not cross. It descends ipsilaterally — uncrossed, down the same side of the spinal cord as the vestibular nucleus from which it arises — and acts upon the antigravity musculature of that same side. This ipsilateral organisation is not an incidental detail but the structural key. The postural, antigravity, standing function operates on a wholly different logic from the voluntary, intentional, crossed function. The pillars do not cross. They run straight down each side, the same side throughout, holding the structure upright on its own side as a column holds up its own portion of the building. The voluntary system crosses to reach across the body in intentional action; the postural pillars descend straight and uncrossed to hold each side erect.

This is why the pillars of the Tree, and their somatic anchors in the Corpus, are properly associated with the ipsilateral vestibulospinal architecture rather than with the crossed corticospinal system. The two outer pillars are the standing columns of the structure, and the standing columns are held by the uncrossed antigravity pathway that runs straight down each side. The crossing executive and perceptual functions move and perceive; the uncrossed postural pillars stand. The distinction between the two systems is the distinction between the structure that acts and the structure that stands, and the pillars belong to the standing.

III.3 The Counterweighting Reflex

The lateral vestibulospinal tract is not only a continuous tonic support but a reflexive, compensatory, intuitive system that counterweights perturbations of balance. This is the vestibulospinal reflex. When the head and trunk tilt to one side — whether by an intended movement or by an unexpected perturbation such as a tilting platform or a sudden push — the lateral vestibular nucleus on that side detects the deviation and sends its uncrossed command straight down the same side of the cord, reflexively activating the trunk and leg extensors on the side toward which the body is tilting. These are the 'pusher' muscles that drive the body back toward the centre. If the body begins to fall to the right, the right-side extensors fire to push it upright again.

The character of this function is worth stating precisely, because it is easily misdescribed. The lateral vestibulospinal tract is not primarily a corrective to the voluntary motor system; it does not chiefly compensate for the actions of intentional movement. It is a counterweight to gravity and to external perturbation — the forces that the standing structure must continuously stand against. Its rapid conduction supports short-latency postural corrections, faster than deliberate response, and it operates beneath and in support of voluntary movement rather than as a referee over it. When one reaches voluntarily through the crossed corticospinal system, the ipsilateral

vestibulospinal system is simultaneously adjusting the postural base so that the reach does not topple the structure. The pillars provide the stable platform on which intentional action can occur at all, and reflexively counterweight the deviations from stability whatever their source.

This is the intuitive, automatic, always-on quality that the esoteric pillars also carry. The pillars do not deliberate; they stand. The lateral vestibulospinal tract does not deliberate; it holds the structure upright and reflexively counterweights what would topple it, continuously, beneath awareness. It is the silent structural floor of the standing body, as the pillars are the silent structural columns of the standing Temple — not the intentional act raised upon the structure, but the structural integrity that makes the standing possible and keeps it whole against the forces of collapse.

The lateral vestibulospinal tract is the body's Jachin and Boaz: the uncrossed antigravity pathway that establishes the standing structure and holds it in strength, reflexively counterweighting gravity and perturbation beneath all conscious intention. It does not cross, because the pillars do not cross; it does not deliberate, because the pillars do not deliberate; it stands, and holds the structure standing, as the pillars of the Temple stand at the threshold and proclaim that the structure is established in strength.

IV. The Convergence: One Structural Principle in Three Registers

The pillars of the Temple, the pillars of the Tree, and the pillars of the body are one structural principle expressed in three registers. In the register of sacred architecture, the principle is Jachin and Boaz, the two bronze pillars that proclaim at the Temple threshold that the structure stands established in strength. In the register of the Qabalistic cosmos and psyche, the principle is the Pillar of Mercy and the Pillar of Severity, the expansive and restrictive columns between which the standing structure of the soul is raised and held in balance by the central Pillar of Mildness. In the register of the standing human body, the principle is the lateral vestibulospinal tract, the uncrossed antigravity pathway that establishes the body upright and holds it in strength, reflexively counterweighting the forces of collapse.

The correspondence is structural and exact, not merely analogical. The constant meaning across the registers is structural integrity — the capacity of the structure to stand established and strong against the forces that would bring it down — and in each register the pillars are the bearers of that integrity. The two requirements the Temple pillars name, establishment and strength, are the two requirements of any standing structure, and the lateral vestibulospinal tract supplies precisely these to the body: it establishes the upright posture and maintains it in strength. The two outer columns of the Tree, expansion and restriction, are the paired principles by which a structure is raised and bounded, and the body's standing is held by the uncrossed pathway that runs straight down each side as a column bears its own portion of the load.

The ipsilateral, uncrossed organisation of the lateral vestibulospinal tract is the neurological signature that confirms its identity with the pillars rather than with the crossing executive and perceptual functions. The pillars stand; they do not reach across. They are the structural integrity

of the standing form, not the intentional action raised upon it. And so the body's pillars, like the Temple's, are the silent uncrossed columns that hold the structure upright — the antigravity architecture by which what stands is established in strength and kept whole against the forces of its collapse. The Temple is built; the Tree is raised; the body stands; and in each the pillars are the principle of structural integrity by which the standing is established and maintained in strength.

The pillars of the Temple proclaim it; the pillars of the Tree raise it; the pillars of the body perform it. Establishment and strength, mercy and severity, extensor tone and antigravity stance — one structural principle in three registers, the architecture of standing, by which the Temple, the Tree, and the body are each established in strength and held upright against the forces that would bring them down.

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