



## Nugget

# Terrestrial and Celestial Globes

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Symbolism of the Globes.

### Summary

The symbolism of the terrestrial and celestial globes found in Masonic Lodges.

### Keywords

Terrestrial, Celestial, Globes, Furniture, Lodge

## Terrestrial and Celestial Globes

A pair of globes each surmounting a column are a central part of the symbolism Masons use to decorate their Lodges. The celestial globe is symbolically seen as the spiritual part of human nature and the terrestrial globe the material side.

In the past, a Lodge would usually have two six-foot columns, with nine or twelve-inch diameter globes, with smaller versions on the Wardens' columns. Usually one column will have a simple Ionic or Doric capital and the other a Corinthian one. Such globes, either in miniature or full size, were sometimes painted showing the continents on the terrestrial world globe and the stars on the celestial globe.

Contemplating these bodies, we are inspired with due reverence for the Great Architect and his works and being induced to encourage the study of Astronomy, Geography, and Navigation and their associated arts. They also denote the universality of Masonry, teaching us that a Mason's charity should be equally as extensive.

The terrestrial globe displays the entire surface of the earth. All nations being represented, with none given any unnatural emphasis; unlike some other globes. Thus, symbolically including the entire population of the earth all on the same level. Combine this symbol with that of the Plumb Rule, one of the working tools of the Fellow Craft degree and no matter where one stands upon the surface of the earth, if a plumb line is held at that point, it naturally points to the centre of the earth. Two plumb lines held at different points on the surface will always point, however slightly, in two different directions, but both point to the centre.

The celestial globe displays the stars in the heavens which are numerous. Every person possesses a unique combination of religious, social, political and racial characteristics, and such individuals are as numerous as the stars that one can see.

Contrary to popular belief, the celestial and terrestrial globes, were not present on the two columns which adorned the porchway to King Solomon's Temple, how could they be; given that at that time people believed the earth to be flat! It is likely they were originally 'bowl shaped' as the Hebrew word 'Goolot' (plural), or 'Goolah' (singular) means globes, bowls or vessels, and were confused in translation. An Apron circa 1810 shows the two pillars topped by bowls and not spheres. The suggestion is that what we see now is 'artistic license'.

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##END##

## Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study. Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

For further nuggets and other learning materials visit 'Solomon' at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

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### Acknowledgement:

UGLE gratefully acknowledges the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding, as the originator of this item and for their permission to publish it in this form.

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