



Nugget

Guttural, Pectoral, Manual and Pedal

Index

The four original forms of Freemasonry, linked to the four cardinal virtues.

Summary

The four original forms of Freemasonry, Guttural, Pectoral, Manual and Pedal; linked to the four cardinal virtues and symbolised by the four Tassels.

Keywords

Virtues, Guttural, Pectoral, Manual, Pedal

Guttural, Pectoral, Manual and Pedal - The original forms of Masonry

There are four original forms in Freemasonry. The Guttural; Pectoral; Manual; and Pedal.

- The Guttural is linked to the throat and refers to the penalty of my Obligation [*give the Entered Apprentice Sign*].
- The Pectoral is linked to the breast, where masonic secrets are deposited, [*give the Sign of Fidelity*] safe and secure from the popular world who are not Masons.
- The Manual relates to the hand placed on the Volume of the Sacred Law [*demonstrate by kneeling before the pedestal in front of Worshipful Master*] in token of assent to the Obligation of a Mason.
- The Pedal [*stands appropriately in North-East*] refers to the feet formed in a square at the North-East part of the Lodge, denoting a just and upright Freemason.

They have a further illusion to the four cardinal virtues, namely [*point to throat*] Temperance (Guttural); [*point to breast*] Fortitude (Pectoral); [*point with left-hand to right-hand*] Prudence (Manual); and [*stand upright, feet formed in a square*] Justice (Pedal).

These cardinal virtues are also represented in many Lodges by the four tassels at the edge of the carpet, and on the Tracing Board. The origins of this symbol are uncertain, but some old tracing boards show a cord around the edge, perhaps representing unity. An alternative and attractive interpretation is that they are the 'widow's cord' which surround a widow's coat of arms in French heraldry. This may be taken as an allusion to Hiram Abiff, who was a widow's son. As we are all brothers, it reminds us of our unity.

Taken on their own, the tassels each represent one of the four cardinal virtues; Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice.

- Let prudence direct you - this is a reminder that you should act carefully - not jumping to conclusions.
- Let temperance chasten you - keep a hold on your emotions, lest you do something you might regret in the heat of the moment.
- Let fortitude support you - draw on your inner strength in times of stress.
- And may justice be the guide of all your actions - you are to be fair in your dealings with your fellow man, always acting within the laws of God and man.

The four cardinal virtues are depicted on the ceiling of the Grand Temple in the Grand Lodge building in London. There Prudence is depicted in the North-West; Temperance is depicted in the South-East; Fortitude in the South-West; and Justice in the North-East. It may be reasonable to suppose that the matter was properly researched before being painted. It is also of interest that the symbols of the zodiac are also depicted there, three in each corner. This reminds us of nothing, apart from the fact that in the 18th century astronomy encompassed astrology, which was then a respectable subject!

By exercising these cardinal virtues we are enabled to enjoy happiness and cope better with life's sorrows. In this we should never forget that we are in the Divine presence, as represented by the Blazing Star.

##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>

Acknowledgement:

UGLE gratefully acknowledges Dickon Sandbach as the author of this document, which is an extract from 'Interval Talks', and for his permission to publish it in this form.

Disclaimer:

Every reasonable effort has been made to contact known copyright holders, but if there are any errors or omissions, The United Grand Lodge of England will be pleased to insert the appropriate acknowledgment.

The views or interpretations contained in this article are those of the author. UGLE recognises there are many different interpretations of ritual, symbolism and history.

Copyright:

All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from The United Grand Lodge of England in writing.
