



## Nugget

### Step, sign and Salute

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'Step, Sign and Salute' the start of our Masonic journey.

#### Summary

This nugget explains the process of 'step, sign and salute', concentrating upon the 'step', the start and foundation of all that is to follow.

#### Keywords

First-Degree, Step, Sign, Salute

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## Step, Sign and Salute

How many of us remember anything about our entry into the Lodge room on the night of our initiation? Do we recall what was said at the door; do we recall the door being shut while some unseen person said he would report to the 'Worshipful Master'? Maybe we remember the door being reopened and someone leading us forward. Did he say something comforting such as '*Don't worry, I will look after you*' or maybe simply, '*Step off on your left foot*', as he guided us into the Lodge-room? He may have issued that instruction again, as we made our way around what must have seemed like a vast space; given we could not see anything. That instruction '*Step off on the left foot*' was the first of our Masonic journey, and that step is one of the most important actions we take; for it is integral to the subsequent signs, secrets and salutes.

Once a candidate is initiated he is able to have the secrets of the First-Degree communicated to him. But first, he is told he must once again take a step with his left foot and then bring his right foot into its hollow thereof, thereby forming the shape of a rectangle, or the fourth-part of a square. All subsequent portions of the various degree ceremonies begin with that particular form of step. And its importance is stressed to the candidate when he is told it is the 'first regular-step in Freemasonry'. The step symbolises both forward progress and also the creation of a structure whereby two objects are put together to derive mutual strength and support. Only with that foundation of strength, can the sign and secrets of a degree be communicated and they must be based on a firm foundation. The form of the step thus reminds us of the constant need to ensure that we build our lives in the Craft regularly and well, and that wherever we are along the Masonic path we are all subject to that basic obligation to build well and live well.

It is also important that we give that step whenever we respond to the opening and closing ceremonies of the Lodge. We have all witnessed a newly-made Mason being conducted out of the Lodge-room, to be restored to his personal comforts. At which point, he is told to '*salute the Worshipful Master as a Mason*'. Some initiates may remember the need to step before the salute, but most do not, and have to be asked to take it. We all hope that the Tyler will ensure that on the candidate's return, he will have that bit of ritual off correctly.

But how many of us take the proper step, before we come to order with the sign of the degree in which we are working? We all should, but many do not. What should be done when we are called '*to order*' is to take a symbolic step. If in the first-degree, the step is made by lifting and placing the left foot down on the ground and then bringing our right foot into its hollow. We don't move forward physically but make the foundation for all that is to follow, in whatever degree we are working.

When our ancient operative brethren worked on great Churches and Cathedrals, the first step would be to set the lines of the foundations of the walls, and this they would have done by laying out the outline of a square whose dimensions would go on to determine the width, length, shape, and height of the structure, and indeed the thickness of its walls. Everything stemmed from that first step in the construction process. Today we build figuratively, but should remember that everything depends on the truth and integrity of the first step we take and its repetition throughout our Masonic careers.

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##END##

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## 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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