



## Nugget

### Angle of $90^\circ$ or the fourth part of a circle

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An exploration of the inner meaning of the phrase, 'An Angle of  $90^\circ$  or the fourth part of a circle'.

#### Summary

An exploration of the deeper meaning subsumed in the phrase, 'An Angle of  $90^\circ$  or the fourth part of a circle', as included within the Third-Degree ritual.

#### Keywords

Third-Degree,  $90^\circ$ , Circle, Genuine-Secrets

## An angle of 90° or the fourth part of a circle

Following the formation of the United Grand Lodge, a committee was appointed to revise the ritual. These expert brethren were learned in the symbolism of Freemasonry and did a remarkable job. There is hardly a word or a phrase in our ritual that is redundant. In other words, we should assume they all have meaning. Sometimes some word or words may seem slightly odd, or out of place. It is therefore instructive to examine them for their meaning, and to consider if they allude to more than one layer of meaning.

In the opening of a Fellow Craft's Lodge, the Worshipful Master ask the Junior Warden, '*What is a Square*'? The answer is intriguing. '*An angle of ninety degrees, or the fourth part of a circle*'. The first part is a normal definition, known to all who have studied even the most elementary geometry; so why the need to elaborate? The answer has to be because the apparently redundant words convey something additional. Again it is a simple truth that, if you divide up a circle into four equal quarters, with lines drawn as diameters passing through the centre, then the lines will be at right angles to one another.

At one level we could look on this as being different interpretations relevant to a 'Square Mason' and a 'Round Mason'. The former uses a square as a key working tool to lay out his work, the latter the compasses. Here we have two approaches to the problem; but it's still not really satisfying!

Let us moralise, as the lectures encourage us to do. The circle is the emblem of perfection and eternity. The definition suggests that the square is one quarter of perfection. Eternity is one form of that perfection for which we strive as mortal men and masons. The circle is drawn using the compasses, based on a centre point. It is also emblematic of the boundaries within which we should remain.

We are taught that, '*The Square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions according to the masonic line and rule, and to harmonise our conduct in this life so as to render us acceptable to that Divine Being from whom all goodness springs, and to whom we must give an account of all our actions*'. It therefore relates to our regulation of ourselves. Being within the circle, it points out that we must act on the square, but within the boundary defined by the compasses.

In the Second-Degree the lesson is to develop the mental faculty. In the third, the learning concerns the spiritual, but it is incomplete. Could this be the lesson of the circle divided into four parts? Three of which we have completed with the three degrees, but at the end of the Third Degree, our Masonic journey is incomplete as we have not found the original secrets. To render the circle of our perfection complete, we need to continue searching; and to be successful we require divine assistance. If we are found worthy, that immortal spark will burn brightly within us, and we will achieve perfection, and will have eternity in mind. That would explain the fourth of the quarters of the circle.

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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 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.

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