



## Nugget

# Allegories of the Second-Degree Tracing Board

### **Index**

Allegories within the Second-Degree Tracing Board.

### **Summary**

Address to a newly passed Brother on the allegories in the Second-Degree Tracing Board.

### **Keywords**

Second-Degree, Tracing-Board, Allegory

## Allegories of the Second-Degree Tracing Board

Before the Second-Degree Ceremony you had to answer some questions asked by the Worshipful Master, one of which was: 'What is Freemasonry?'. Your answer was: 'a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols'. Allow me to lift a corner of the veil of allegory that covers the explanation of the Second-Degree Tracing-Board.



The explanation began with the completion of King Solomon's Temple and the two pillars at the porchway or entrance in particular. We were invited to see them, not only as part of the completed physical temple, but also as a representation of strength and stability: '*For God said "In strength I will establish this mine house to stand forever"*'. A possible thought for you is that God's house is not necessarily only the Temple at Jerusalem, but rather the whole of creation, of which he is the 'Supreme Master and Architect', and that there is thus a parallel between the account of the completion of the Temple and the creation story in the Book of Genesis.

The second part of the explanation was clearly about the building of the Temple, as the workmen were still employed in its construction. When you were initiated, you were placed in the North-East corner to represent the foundation stone, as you were the temple being built. Thus the allegorical meaning is that the temple is not a physical building in Jerusalem, but rather something within you that is not yet complete and that you had just started your journey to complete it.

### **Second-Degree Tracing Board by John Harris c,1825 Courtesy of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry**

In the Second-Degree, you symbolically climbed the winding staircase to the middle chamber, a higher level, where, for the first time in your Masonic journey, you were introduced to God. Remember too that God is described as the 'Grand Geometrician of the Universe' and that you are now expected to study the Liberal Arts and Sciences, including geometry, to extend your knowledge of the hidden mysteries of nature and science, to discharge your duties as a Mason and to have an idea of the wonderful works of the Almighty. Remember also that our ritual was written by men who were highly skilled in the liberal arts and sciences during the Renaissance, some were members of the Royal Society.<sup>1</sup>

---

I invite all of you, especially those who have been raised to the Third-Degree and then exalted to the Royal-Arch and other orders, to think carefully about whether you have appreciated all the allegory behind the story of the completion of the temple, and what it might mean for you personally.

---

Endnote:

---

1 At that time, Deist thinking was at its height and this meant that they crafted their words very carefully with much embedded meaning. The term "deism" comes from the Latin word deus, which means god. Deism is the belief that God (a supreme being), or a god, exists; this belief is based solely on evidence from the natural world and human reason, apart from the revelation of the Bible or other sacred writings. Deism became important during the Age of Enlightenment in 17th and 18th century. Some aspects of deism include the belief that God is not involved in His creation, the rejection of supernatural miracles, the rejection of the Bible as the inspired Word of God (though many Deists believe it is a good book), and the rejection of the Christian belief in the Trinity.

### **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 John Roscoe as the author of this document and for his permission to publish it in this form.

### **Disclaimer:**

The views or interpretations contained in this document are those of the author. UGLE recognises there are many different interpretations of ritual, symbolism and history. It does not endorse the contents of this document or of any external websites linked to within the document.

### **Copyright:**

All rights reserved. No part of this document 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.

---