



NUGGET

The Winding Staircase - An allegory

Summary: The Trowel, once widely used in early Speculative Lodges, has returned in a new role, the jewel of the Charity Steward.

By the allegory of Jacob's Ladder, the First Degree considers our goal. We are taught how we might achieve it, through the practice of every moral and social virtue. How we may improve ourselves by our dedication to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves. We are represented by the Rough Ashlar, and have to learn how to prepare that stone for the hands of the more expert workman.

In the Second Degree, there is a parallel with the allegory of the Winding Staircase. As we ascend it, we learn about the world made by the Creator; now referred to as the Grand Geometrician of the Universe. Attaining these higher levels of knowledge is not straightforward, and this is a likely reason why the staircase is depicted as winding. You cannot rush up it, and are not even able to see what is to be found when you do arrive at its top.

When our studies are complete, we reach the top of the staircase, and arrive at the Middle Chamber, where we will receive reward for our labours. In the Middle Chamber our eyes are peculiarly drawn to certain Hebrew characters, which are represented in our Lodges by the letter G. In the emblematic sense, this is our reward, to approach closer to the spiritual centre of the building.

The message of this Degree is much more about how we can be useful members of society. We are now represented by the Smooth Ashlar, which is a stone fit to be incorporated into the Temple. Clearly there is more to come, as the Middle Chamber is still far short of the divine presence, represented by the *sanctum sanctorum*.



A Second Degree Tracing Board



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.

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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