



Nugget

Tomb of Transgression

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An exploration of the phrase, 'Tomb of Transgression' and its inner meaning.

Summary

A deep and meaningful exploration of the phrase, 'Tomb of Transgression' and its inner meaning, related to our progress in all three degrees.

Keywords

Third-Degree, Tomb, Death, Most-High

The Tomb of Transgression

In the prayer at the start of the ceremony, we supplicate the Most High, requesting that he, *'Endue [the Candidate] with such fortitude that in the hour of trial he fail not, but that passing safely under Thy protection through the valley of the shadow of death, he may finally rise from the tomb of transgression, to shine as the stars for ever and ever'*. These words say much about the meaning of this degree.

The third stage in Freemasonry is the initiation into an understanding of the mysteries of the Order. The first two have been preparatory. In the Third-Degree the Candidate is invited to renounce his former ways, and begin again with his body and mind acting in union with the Divine Spirit that is within him.

'The valley of the shadow of death' is an evocative phrase. It is where we need to rely on a *'Holy confidence that the Lord of Life will trample the King of Terrors beneath our feet'*. It suggests to us that we have been living our lives in dread of dying before we achieve the merger that blends the vital and immortal principle, that is at our centre, into our very existence. In doing so, we must yield to it, giving it authority over our personality and soul. To pass through this dreadful part of our lives, we have had to rely on the protection of God. You may recall in the First Degree, before you were initiated, you confirmed your faith in God, and the Worshipful Master replied: *'Right glad am I to find your faith so well founded: relying on such sure support you may safely rise and follow your leader with a firm but humble confidence, for where the name of God is invoked, we trust no danger can ensue'*.

In this degree the Candidate is challenged by ruffians representing the impurities of thought and action still remaining in him. His former life is extinguished and, as he is raised from the figurative grave, he leaves behind his previous transgressions. To do this he requires not just the strength of his new and improved character as represented by the Junior Warden; nor the improvement to his mind as represented by the Senior Warden; but the strength of his spirit in conjunction with the former attributes. With all of this, he is raised to shine as the stars for ever and ever.

##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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