



# NUGGET

## The Royal Arch: Completing the Craft

**Summary:** Completing the Craft - an introduction to the Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch is the continuation of Craft Freemasonry. Its members, called Companions, meet in Chapters under a Grand Chapter.



Chapters are ruled over by three Principals who rule conjointly, and the *Grand Chapter* is ruled over by three *Grand Principals*, with a Pro First Grand Principal when the First Grand Principal is a Royal Prince.

The allegory of the Exaltation Ceremony is based on the Old Testament telling of the return to Jerusalem from Babylonish captivity to rebuild the city and temple. In clearing the ground of the original temple for the foundations of the second temple, the candidate makes a number of discoveries which emphasise the centrality of God to man's life and existence. Without transgressing the bounds of religion, this leads the candidate to a consideration of the nature of God and his personal relationship with Him, whatever his religion might be.

In England, the Royal Arch is considered to be the completion of *pure ancient Masonry*. In the Craft the candidate is presented with a series of eminently practical principles and tenets which, if he practises them, he may hope to live a life pleasing to his God, however he worships Him, and of service to his fellow man.

But man is not simply a practical being, he has an essential spiritual aspect to his nature. That spiritual aspect is introduced in the Third Degree, in which the candidate is led to a contemplation of man's inevitable

destiny, and becomes the central message of the Royal Arch. In that sense, pure ancient Masonry can be seen as a journey of self-knowledge and self-discovery with the Royal Arch completing the practical lessons of the Craft by a contemplation of man's spiritual nature, not replacing but reinforcing and supporting what he has learned from his religion.

Thus, the Royal Arch leads the candidate from the practical to the spiritual and completes pure ancient masonry. A fascinating journey of self-knowledge and self-discovery beginning with the Entered Apprentice Degree and culminating in the First Principal's chair of the Chapter.

The prime qualification for admission into the Royal Arch is to be a Master Mason of at least four weeks standing, in a Lodge under the United Grand Lodge of England, or a Lodge under a Grand Lodge recognised by it.

As in all other Masonic Orders you will need a proposer and seconder who are members of the Chapter in which you seek to be exalted. If your Lodge does not have a Royal Arch Chapter, it will probably have an arrangement with another local Chapter. Check your Lodge summons which may give details of either the Chapter attached to it, a Chapter to which it supplies candidates or a member of the Lodge who is a Royal Arch Mason and will assist members interested in joining the Royal Arch.

If there are no details on your Lodge summons, you can usually identify the members of your Lodge who are Royal Arch Masons as they will normally wear the jewel of the Order with their Craft regalia. They will be delighted to be approached about membership.

If all that fails, in London you can contact the Metropolitan Grand Lodge office, and in a Province or District the Provincial or District Office respectively.





### **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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