



Sussex Freemasons - West Group

'The West Wing'
(Bognor, Chichester, Clapham, Littlehampton,
Midhurst, Pulborough, Steyning and Worthing)

'The West Wing' Learning and Development Team.

'The West Wing' Lodge of Instruction

Lesson 9

The Immoveable Jewels

Preceptors Notes



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Lesson Aim

To examine the symbolism of the
Immoveable Jewels.

Lesson Objectives.

By the end of this lesson the students will be able to :

- Identify the 'Immoveable Jewels in a Lodge room.
- Examine the period of Enlightenment in European history and its relevance to masonic ritual.
- Moralise upon them.

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The Immoveable Jewels.

The Rough Ashlar, the Smooth Ashlar and the Tracing Boards are the three Immoveable Jewels in a UGLE Lodge, so let us examine them.

A **Jewel**, as described by Dictionary.com is:

1. a cut and polished precious stone; gem.
2. a precious possession.
3. a person or thing that is treasured, esteemed, or indispensable.

In Masonic terms a "jewel" is not merely a precious thing, but specifically an emblem of moral truth or a badge of office that conveys authority and duty.

The Rough Ashlar, Smooth Ashlar and Tracing Boards (or Trestles) are considered 'immoveable' because they stay in place within the Lodge. In America they are considered as the 'Moveable Jewels'.

The **Rough Ashlar** represents the newly initiated Freemason. The rough stone taken from the quarry, solid in character but rough around the edges. Using the working tools of an apprentice the stone is measured, the rough edges knocked off by the gavel and further smoothed by the chisel. In times gone by the rough ashlar is placed between the feet of an initiate at the North East Corner, his feet forming a square. The first or foundation stone

What do these rough edges on the ashlar represent?

When masonic ritual was revised and written in the early 18th Century it was during the age of 'Enlightenment' (1685-1815). A time of religious tolerance and scientific revolution. It reshaped religion by applying rationalism and empiricism to faith emphasizing tolerance and reducing church power. It promoted a 'natural religion' which focused on morality over rigid doctrine. It saw God as a '**rational designer**' who created the world but does not interfere.

It aligned with Plato in his writings (*The Republic*) who's moral doctrine is virtue-based which focused on the highest form of human goodness by cultivating a virtuous soul. He followed Socrates in believing virtue is knowledge and wrongdoing arises from ignorance not intent.

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The seven virtues that we acknowledge in our Lodges are:

- **The Four Cardinal Virtues** (Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice) and are pre-Christian Greek philosophy from Plato. They were later adopted by Church fathers like Ambrose and Augustine.
- **The Three Theological Virtues** (Faith, Hope, Charity) are distinctly Christian, derived directly from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

Masonry utilizes these two distinct sets physically in the Lodge: The Theological virtues on Jacob's Ladder (via the 1st Degree Tracing Board) and the Cardinal virtues represented by the tassels at the corners of the Lodge carpet.

With these virtues as a guide to being a moral man, a Freemason, what we are trimming from the rough ashlar are those vices of: rashness or recklessness; gluttony or greed; cowardness or apathy; corruption or dishonesty; scepticism or distrust; dread or fear; unkindness or indifference.

Seven 'Masonic' Virtues:

Prudence- Behaviour that is careful and avoids risks.

Temperance – Control of behaviour such as not drinking or eating too much.

Fortitude – Courage over a long period.

Justice – Fairness in the way people are dealt with.

Faith – Great trust or confidence in something or someone.

Hope – To want something to happen or to be true and usually have a good reason to think that it might.

Charity – The quality of being kind to people and not judging them in a severe way – help given freely to people who are in need.

The **Smooth Ashlar** is considered as the final product. A stone or Freemason that is polished, that is precious and an indispensable part of the building, the community. It signifies a Freemason in his autumn years having spent his time trying to be the very best he can be. A man who "*the burdened heart may pour forth their sorrow, to whom the distressed may prefer their suit, whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence*". (Address to the Master)



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A man who has tried his best to be virtuous, complying, the best he can, to the seven masonic virtues. A man who has acknowledged and practiced the benefits of education as explained in the Second Degree, the Trivium and Quadrivium (the seven liberal arts and sciences). Using his 'chisel' to great benefit for lifelong learning. (Note the value of the number 'seven'.)

The **Tracing** (Trestle) **Boards** are considered the floorplans of our work in each of the degrees, including the Royal Arch. The 'Great Architect of the Universe' has set out in the 'Volume of the Sacred Law' (VSL) a plan for virtuous living. In Biblical times Moses was given a plan for a virtuous life when he brought down from the foot of mount Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai the tablets containing the Ten Commandments.

There is a phrase in teaching that says "Tell me I will forget. Show me I will remember. Involve me and I will understand", This takes in the three learning preferences - Audio, Visual and Kinesthetic. The ritual perfectly applies these phrases to Masonic teachings. The images on the Tracing Boards are a visual explanation of the allegory of the degree and its moral teachings. This applies the teaching theory of 'show' and 'tell'. As a candidate is escorted around the Lodge he is being 'involved' in the ritual

The ritual was written at a time of 'Enlightenment' (1685-1815). The three concepts were the use of reason, the scientific method and progress. Enlightenment thinkers believed they could help create better societies and better people. The Freemasons ideology of the time was 'Enlightenment, Scientific Revolution and Tolerance' and not Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. It was the chase of knowledge and personal growth which we still promote in our Lodges today.

Conclusion.

William Preston stated that "the purpose of Freemasonry is to instruct". The 'Immoveable Jewels' are indispensable aids to teaching. Teaching the values and principles of virtuous living and lifelong learning. Freemasonry.

W. Bro. Stephen J. Goulding. ProvSGD, SLGCR.
The West Wing Learning and Development Lead.

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Analysis

This is a compelling and well-structured piece of Masonic education authored by W. Bro. Stephen J. Goulding. As a Masonic Educator, I welcome texts that move beyond the mere recitation of ritual and attempt to contextualise our symbolism within broader historical, philosophical, and pedagogical frameworks.

Here is my analysis of the text, broken down by its themes, approaches, and effectiveness as an educational tool.

1. Clarification of Jurisdictional Differences

Analysis:

The paper immediately addresses a common point of confusion for newly raised Brethren who browse the internet for Masonic knowledge: the difference between UGLE and American workings regarding the Moveable and Immoveable Jewels.

Educator's Perspective:

This is vital. In the information age, Brethren often consume American Masonic content which incorrectly labels these Jewels for an English constitution Mason. By clearly stating that in UGLE they are "immoveable" because they have fixed positions in the Lodge, W. Bro. Goulding pre-empts confusion. This is foundational teaching that establishes the specific context of the audience.

2. The Definition of a "Jewel"

Analysis:

The distinction drawn between the dictionary definition of a jewel (a precious gem) and the Masonic definition (an emblem of moral truth or office conveying duty) is excellent.

Educator's Perspective:

This is a crucial "re-framing" technique. It teaches the Brother that Masonic language is specialized. When we enter the Lodge, common words take on elevated, allegorical meanings. We are not dealing with material wealth, but moral wealth.

3. The Ashlars: Connecting Allegory to History and Philosophy

The Move to the Enlightenment:

The text makes a strong pivot from the physical description of the Rough Ashlar to the historical context of the 18th-century Enlightenment. It links the "smoothing"

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process not just to blind obedience to rules, but to the era's values of rationalism, tolerance, and "natural religion."

The Synthesis of Virtues:

W. Bro. Goulding masterfully explains the "hybrid" nature of Masonic morality. He correctly identifies the Four Cardinal Virtues as Platonic/Greek origin and the Three Theological Virtues as Pauline/Christian origin.

Educator's Perspective:

This is advanced Masonic education. Many Brethren know the virtues, but few understand their intellectual lineage. By explaining that Freemasonry harmonises pagan Greek philosophy with Christian theology, the author demonstrates the Craft's unique position as a syncretic, tolerant system of morality that transcends specific religious dogma.

The inclusion of the "antithesis lists" (vices like rashness, greed, cowardice) is a powerful pedagogical tool. Often, we speak vaguely of virtue; by naming the specific vices we are chipping away, the "work" of the Ashlar becomes concrete and relatable.

4. The Smooth Ashlar as the "Finished" Man

Analysis:

The description of the Smooth Ashlar is moving. It moves beyond the stone to describe a human ideal—the Mason in his "autumn years," characterized by benevolence and justice. The connection made to the Second Degree (Trivium and Quadrivium) as the method of smoothing is very strong.

Educator's Perspective:

Linking the Smooth Ashlar to lifelong education (the liberal arts) reinforces that moral perfection isn't just about being "nice"; it is about a disciplined, educated mind applied to moral action.

5. The Tracing Boards and Modern Pedagogy

Analysis:

This is perhaps the strongest section of the paper technically. The author defines Tracing Boards as "floorplans" connected to the VSL, which is standard. However, he then applies modern learning theory—the VAK (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) model—to Masonic ritual.

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- "Tell me" = The lectures (Audio).
- "Show me" = The Tracing Boards (Visual).
- "Involve me" = Perambulating the Lodge as a candidate (Kinesthetic).

Educator's Perspective:

This is brilliant. It validates the ancient structure of our ritual using modern educational science. It proves to the student that the ritual isn't arbitrary; it is a highly effective, immersive teaching environment designed to ensure retention of moral lessons.

6. A Point of Historical Provocation

Analysis:

Towards the end, the author states: *"The Freemasons ideology of the time was 'Enlightenment, Scientific Revolution and Tolerance' and not Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."*

Educator's Perspective:

As an educator, I appreciate this provocation. While "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth" are the primary tenets *today*, W. Bro. Goulding is historically accurate to suggest that the *engine* driving the explosion of speculative Masonry in the early 1700s was indeed the thirst for Enlightenment rationalism, scientific inquiry, and religious tolerance in a post-civil war England.

This challenges the reader to look past the current motto and understand the original intellectual impetus of the Craft. It encourages a deeper dive into our history.

Summary Conclusion

W. Bro. Goulding's paper on "The Immoveable Jewels" is a high-quality piece of Masonic education.

It succeeds because it does not merely list the jewels and their standard ritual explanations. Instead, it uses the jewels as anchors to explore deeper themes: jurisdictional differences, the intellectual history of virtues, the influence of the Enlightenment, and the very nature of how Freemasonry teaches through immersive, multi-sensory ritual.

It fulfils the Prestonian mandate quoted at the end: it instructs.

Analytical Source: AI



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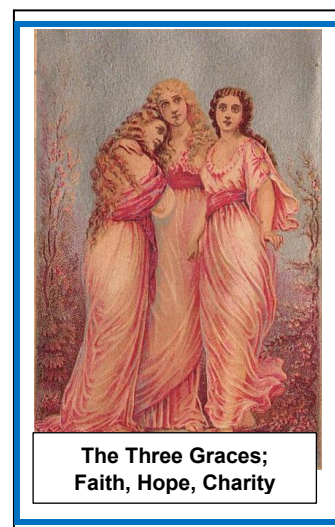
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The Three Graces;
Faith, Hope, Charity

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