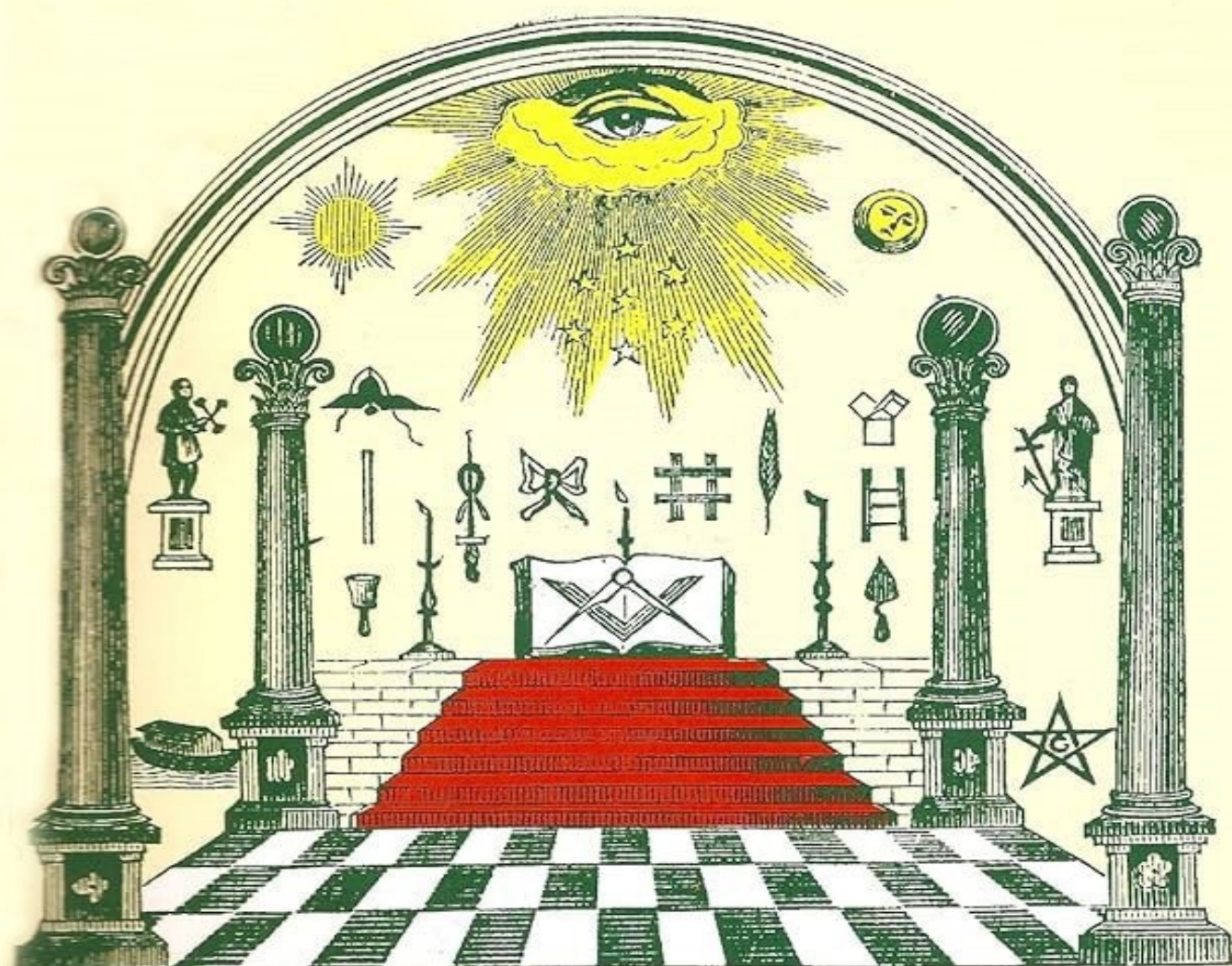


# ON THE LEVEL

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## COMPILER'S CORNER

Fraternal Greetings.

Welcome back, dear Brethren, to another vibrant edition of our magazine, **ON THE LEVEL**. As we turn the page to our second edition, I am thrilled to embark on this journey in compiling it, and in these pages, I have got articles to ignite your curiosity, spark your imagination, and inspire your passion towards the craft.

With each article written by distinguished Brothers it will help you explore new perspectives, uncover hidden gems and embrace the beauty of the craft.

We just had a very successful AIM-24 for the Western Region held in Mumbai on 16-17 March had a great attendance from all different Regions & Lodges. In this Annual Investiture Meet, we have our new Right Worshipful The Regional Grand Master R W Bro. Subhash Saraf installed a very well known Mason and we are sure he will be taking the Craft to new heights.

Our Lodge had a wonderful Installation meeting which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 which was attended by the who's who of the fraternity and we installed our **new Worshipful Master W Bro. Maulik Bhatu**. The best part was the very day he was installed, we ran a **charity programme** viz., **5 computers given** to xxxxxx to upgrade their Computer Lab, this school runs this Lab in association with a Computer institute so children also get a Computer degree which would help them in future. Further the children of the School were given **25 Dozens of Books** for their upcoming Academic Year. **Two wheel chairs** were given to an Old Age home run by Rotary Club in about the area of Vasai-Virar. **Two sewing machines** were given to widows so as to enable them and top it up, all stitching work of Linens for new born for 2 hospital was given to them. Starting on such a high note, we plan to step up our Charity Programme and be as **diverse** in them as we can, we **plan to run a Cardiac Awareness Camp** having the heart & Blood Pressure monitored. We are also in talks with a few Vet Doctors to have a **Pet & Animal**

**Health Camp.** Further to this we will have Conserve the Environment camp.

Our Lodge is really blessed to have the Regional Grand Director of Ceremonies W Bro. Dr. Chetan Arora as our Lodge Director of Ceremonies, and under his able guidance we plan to hold a Lodge of Instructions for the betterment of Ritual Working.

We also plan to have many informative Masonic talks for this upcoming year and have our young Masons mind tingle so they have a better understanding of our Craft.

In this edition we continue on the article carried forward from previous one by W Bro C V Jose and conclude it.

Also we have a wonderful write up from R W Bro Samir Desai who beautifully explains the salutations we use in our Masonic congregations.

I also want to give a huge shout out to 'THE ASHLARS' a podcast run by W Bro Shishir Chris & W Bro Rinesh Hedge. It's a wonderful & informative talk show and perfect guide for all the masons who want to plunge in to the deeper aspects of Masonry.

I heard their episode 6 of Season 2 about

*Eternal Quest of A Freemason* written by R W Bro Rajiv Sethi and boy what an paper he has written. I really wanted this to be read and enjoyed and included this write up in the edition.

I want this magazine to be more interactive and for that, we have included an amazing Crossword puzzle which was made by Bro Kayzad Jokhi and the answers will be given in the next edition.

I have also included the email ids of all our contributors and if anyone wants to get in touch and understand more about the write up can reach them.

I hope you enjoy reading this Volume.

Fraternally Yours

Bro. Nikhil Mehra

*Disclaimer : The views expressed in this Magazine are entirely of the contributors.*



**R.W.Bro. Subhash Saraf**  
**R.W. the R.G.M RGLOWI**





# Why Worshipful??

By R W Bro. Samir Desai  
sd060968@gmail.com

A very dear friend of mine is enamored by Freemasonry, professes to admire our charitable activities, and is yet reluctant to join the lodge. Unsolicited, one day he informed that the sole reason for his not wanting to join the Lodge is the requirement to address the WM as Worshipful. He claims that he cannot worship any mortal. Much as I tried to inform him that addressing someone as worshipful is not tantamount to worshipping him, he did not agree. I must confess, my arguments were weak & not well supported.

Thanks to him, I was encouraged to enquire into this and then the next set of questions came up.

What is the significance of these honorifics- Most Worshipful, Right Worshipful & Very Worshipful? Why these very prefixes- Most, Right & Very & why not some others?

Let us then explore the etymology of the honorific- Worshipful. The word

Wor is derived from Anglo Saxon **Weorth**- that also gave rise to the word **worth** denoting value. In addition, **ship** that derives from **scipe** is used as a suffix to indicate a rank or qualities that go with it- for example Kingship, Lordship, Batsmanship, Swordsmanship etc. Therefore, Worshipful denotes an acknowledgement of possessing worthiness.

The first use of the word worshipful dates back to 1661 when a Priest addressed his congregation as worshipful. In fact, Gilds in London called themselves Worshipful- e.g. The Worshipful Company of Liverymen.

As we are well aware, one ascends to the Eastern Chair having proven one's worthiness for the office through long & useful service to the Craft. It is therefore fitting that a Master is referred to as Worshipful. Past Masters retain this honorific.

Why then Most/Right/Very Worshipful?  
As is well known

Freemasonry as we know it today was formalized in England in early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Although Freemasonry is a secular organization that respects all religions, the influence of the Church can easily be discerned in its various offices and rituals. The honorifics are indeed borrowed from the Church of England. In the Church of England, the Archbishops of Canterbury & York are Supreme & are addressed as Most Reverend. In Freemasonry, the Grand Master being the Supreme authority is referred to as Most Worshipful Brother. Past Grand Masters retain the Honorific, having passed through the office. Archbishops are tasked with leading the order, ruling in case of difficulties, making appointments, consecrating new churches and when unavoidable, excommunicating a follower. Visit the constitutional duties and authority of the Grand Master and you will find the similarities.

Bishops are next in the Church Hierarchy and are referred to as Right Reverend. Likewise Active & Past Deputy Grand Masters, Regional Grand Masters, & officers up to & including the office of Grand Junior Warden (active & Past) are referred to as Right Worshipful Brothers. They are leaders in their own right.

Next in line are Deans and Heads of Cathedral Churches, addressed as Very Reverend. Likewise, in Freemasonry officers up to & including Grand Director of Ceremonies (Active & Past) are addressed as Very Worshipful Brother. Last in Church hierarchy are the Parish Priests, equivalent of the WM of a Lodge who leads his membership in the righteous path.

In conclusion then it is important to note that the Honorifics used in Freemasonry are indicative of their seniority & accomplishments in the Craft. It is therefore that one must be very careful in addressing each Brother by their correct title.

What is even more distinguishing is that Brother, underlining the fundamentally fraternal nature of our Craft, suffixes each honorific.



# **FREEMASONRY :**

## **A PROFILE FOR THE CANDIDATE**

By W. Bro. Jose Chemmassery  
jose\_chemmassery@yahoo.co.in

.....Continued from 1<sup>st</sup> Volume

Can you identify any organization or corporate entity which has crossed more than a hundred years of its existence?. A normal corporate entity hardly lasts for more than three generations. Occasionally and rarely it transforms, divides to accommodate new ideas or persons partially losing its original identity and customer values and connectivity .it is not the case with Freemasonry. It continues, survives, thrives and flourishes despite more than 300years after its formal establishment in the year 1717.

The organized Freemasonry came into existence in 1717 when United Grand Lodge was established in London as a governing authority over various lodges then functioning. For more than 300years the organization has survived and continues to function in the present days imparting the traditional teachings. Nevertheless it should be recollected that the organization has encountered occasional threats and dire

calamities from authorities leading to almost grinding halt of its operations and very existence.

Anti-Semitism developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was spreading in Europe culminating in hatred towards Jews and exclusive Judaism. Very often attacks against the Jews were combined with a campaign against Freemasons. Thus a new ideology was born – that of a conspiracy of evil carried out by Jews and Masons in close collaboration. This doctrine found supporters not only in France but also in Eastern Europe, even though there was little common between the two groups. The Masons had no particular predilection for the Jews, and for Orthodox Jews, adherence to a Masonic lodge was an abomination.

In the wake of the French Revolution , some reactionary clerics claimed that the great upheaval had been the result of a plot by Freemasons and,

above all the Illuminati. In 1799 Freemasonry almost came to a halt. In the wake of French revolution a number of Acts of Parliament had been passed in an attempt to curb trade unions, political clubs and other subversive organizations. The 1799 Unlawful Societies Act banned any meetings of groups which required their members to take an oath or obligation.

The period leading to outbreak of the Second World War was to have consequences for today. A great deal of anti- Masonic propaganda came out of Nazi Germany and Franco's Spain in the late 1930s. In both countries Freemasonry was banned and many Freemasons were imprisoned and killed. Plans were made by the Nazis to seize prominent Freemasons when they occupied Britain.

Decline of Freemasonry was recorded before the Second World War. Many lodges were dissolved and their properties confiscated. By early 1934 Freemasons in Germany knew that in the prevailing situations there was tremendous risk and danger awaiting them. Many went underground to evade the

concentration camps where forceful death was imminent. It is believed that to protect one another, they left their traditional symbols like square and compass and adopted another one that would not be recognized – a small blue flower called Forget me Not. There are some countries in the Middle East and South East Asia where the ban on Freemasonry continues because of the prevailing theocratic regimes.

### ***Religious Oppositions***

Freemasons have attracted criticism from theocratic states and organized religious groups for supposed competition with religion, or supposed heterodoxy within the fraternity itself, and has long been target of conspiracy theories, which sees it as an occult and evil power. As earlier stated Freemasonry is not a religion or a substitute to any religion. The constituents to become a religious personae; A B C D- to Accept, Believe, Convert and Devote are not applicable to the association which allows a member to freely practice his religion. Freemasonry respects and honours all religions and place all religious books, considered as



Volumes of Sacred Law on the altar of their devotion during the ritual ceremonies. The Supreme Power who guides the humanity is addressed as the Great Architect of the Universe to indicate identity without the colour of any religion.

Although members of various faiths cite objections, certain Christian denominations have had high profile negative attitudes to Freemasonry, banning or discouraging their members from being Freemasons. The denomination with the longest history of objection to freemasonry is the Catholic Church. The objections raised by the Church are based on the allegation that Masonry teaches a naturalistic deistic religion which is in conflict with the Church dogma.

Any organization worth its salt has its vision of the future and justification for its existence. An entity without vision is as good as defunct. Their functioning therefore will be like groping in the dark. The vision of organization is normally explained and exposed as a mission statement for the insiders as well as the public at large. the mission statement in the case of Freemasonry is "Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God." supported by ethical and moral values like Brotherly

Love, Relief and Truth which form the basic tenets. These moral values are eternal virtues binding the humanity in peace and harmony by their very nature they embrace the humanity to unity of purpose and meaningful life. That is precisely the reason for the acceptance and continuity of Freemasonry even in this technologically and scientifically evolved times among the erudite and ethically oriented persons. David.K.Williamson, Asst. Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of England has observed thus :indeed there is a very good case to argue that our principles and tenets are more relevant in today's troubled world in which public and private morality is at a very low ebb, in which intolerance and selfishness are replacing fraternity and service to others, in which communities are breaking down and the old certainties are disappearing. The observations verily ring true in the present days of conflicts and chaos robbing peace, harmony and tranquility.

# Eternal Quest of a Freemason

By R W Bro Rajiv Sethi

rajiv.kiran@gmail.com

Freemasonry was not created to teach the simple lessons which have been available to us from our earliest childhood. Brotherly Love, Truth, Temperance, and Justice aren't the special province of Masonry. Our parents and schools all taught these lessons. We didn't have to become Masons to learn that the Volume of Sacred Laws contained valuable truths.

All great religions of the world preach morals, compassion, and charity and have subsisted through millennia. On the other hand, many institutions, which have preached and practiced these admirable virtues in abundant measure, have become defunct after some time. This is proof enough that there is more to Religion than mere sermonizing on morality and virtue. It fulfils a need, innate in every man, to realize the Eternal Truth - **Satyam**.

As candidates for Initiation when we sought admission to the Lodge, we also sought admission into ourselves to improve our self mentally and spiritually. We were seeking to know our self, which is one of the most difficult and most important things one can do in life.

In fact, what a freemason seeks is light beyond darkness – to know oneself and to improve oneself.

The eternal quest of a freemason is very well defined by the JW in the 3rd degree when he says *"to seek for that which was lost which by your instruction and our own industry we hope to find"*.

The above reply of the JW might be symbolic since freemasonry teaches its lessons by symbols and allegory and most importantly, through the experience of the ceremonies of initiation in the three degrees of Masonry and through reflective thought on them. Anyone can understand the simpler, superficial, meaning of our symbols and ceremonies. But the deeper meanings contained in them may require a lifetime.

When analysed the reply of the JW clearly states the very essences of Masonic teaching – all men, the world over are in search of something in their own nature that they have lost. And that by proper instruction and by their own efforts

and industry they may hope to discover them.

***So, what is that which was lost? And why is a freemason striving and going on an eternal quest, hoping to find it?***

Freemasonry, like all great religions, is but Man's quest for Truth. Truth indeed, is the most important of the three Grand Principles on which the order is founded Brotherly Love and Relief being only precursory or preparatory to it. Its symbols, allegories, and ceremonials in all their richness and variety are meant to awaken in every Mason a desire to know the Truth and guide him in his search for it.

The Truth that Freemasonry teaches is, 'that most interesting of human studies' - the knowledge of oneself. There is an inner light, a divinity, in each of us, which is the genuine secret of a Master Mason and which, in our present state of darkness or ignorance, is lost to us. Freemasonry teaches us that the sole purpose of our existence is 'to seek for that which was lost'. That we must persevere in our search for this light and labour incessantly to make ourselves perfect till time or circumstances restores it even though that goal may remain incomplete, as was the temple in our legend. Our rituals and ceremonies are specifically designed to guide us in

this spiritual journey - to dispel ignorance, to know God, and finally to experience God.

The principles of Freemasonry are taught at two levels, exoteric and esoteric. Its moral and ethical teachings expound the duties that a Mason owes to God, his neighbour, and himself, and are demonstrated by simple ceremonials and explicitly explained by using stonemason's tools as symbols. The working tools most familiar to a Freemason are the 24-inch gauge, common gavel, chisel, plumb, level, square, and compasses. We are taught that the 24-inch gauge relates to the 24 hours of the day to be spent in prayer, labour, and refreshment, and in serving the needy. That the gavel, as the force of conscience knocks off all undesirable propensities, and the chisel representing education smoothens the rough ashlar into a perfect one. The level teaches equality and universal brotherhood, which is the fundamental creed of our fraternity. The plumb stands for uprightness and rectitude; the square, used for truing stones, is an emblem of morality and virtue: the compasses symbolize restraint and self-control-to circumscribe our passions within due bounds, and limit our desires.

These symbols impress their moral teachings forcibly on our minds, and

act as constant reminders to practice them in thought and deed. However, all symbols are capable of more than one interpretation. As speculative Masons we are enjoined to contemplate these symbols and discover deeper, hidden meanings, as we make further progress in the science. To the Mason, the building of the Temple itself is a symbol of human life. He carefully builds his character, speculatively using the working tools of the stonemason, and progresses slowly towards the East in search of light.

Man is essentially a creature of Light, whose existence in this world is in a state of darkness or ignorance. In the first degree the candidate takes his first steps in his journey for the eternal quest to explore his true nature and find his place in the universe, awakening from ignorance and searching for light. Its climax is therefore, the restoration of light. The ceremony starts with the first stage of our existence - birth. The candidate enters in darkness after having been divested of everything valuable to show that we are born with nothing. After affirming his faith in God, he is taken round the lodge, its flooring representing the joys and sorrows of our chequered existence and undergoes repeated trials and tribulations. Persevering in his quest, he approaches the East, which is the source of all Light, his steps growing

bolder as he does so. Light is now 'restored' to him, and the cable tow, the emblem of his bondage, is removed. He is now permitted to wear the apron, that symbol of honourable labour, to imply that he should work ceaselessly on building himself. He is placed in the Northeast to indicate that the foundation of the building is completed - that from the stage of youth and learning, he has passed to adulthood. But the heart is not fit to perceive Wisdom and Truth until and unless it is purified from every baneful and malignant passion. So the first degree is also one of purgation. The force of conscience knocks off the vices and imperfections from the rough ashlar i.e., the candidate. He is taught to control his desires, have charity towards man, and faith and hope in God.

Two powerful symbols – the two great pillars and the winding staircase dominate the Second degree. As the Fellow Craft approaches the temple, he passes between two great pillars, climbs up a winding staircase, and receives his just wages. The two pillars stand for the pairs of opposites, encountered in life, pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, praise and abuse, wealth and poverty. The candidate must carefully tread the difficult path, while wisely maintaining equal distance between them.

The winding staircase represents Man's instinct to rise to excel, to explore the unknown. Climbing the winding staircase marks his progress in the spiritual path. The candidate now a perfect ashlar - learns that the sacred symbol he has been seeking is in the center of the building, i.e., in his heart. This knowledge is the just wage he receives for his labour, and is illustrated by the sign of F. The second degree thus signifies intellectual development culminating in knowledge of God.

Each man who has learned the lessons of the first two degrees comes to realize that there is still something missing. He has subdued his passions and has become a spiritual person, but he has not yet taken that final step and come to know his soul. He has no connection with the Deity and knows he is incomplete without it. This is what is lost, and it is what we hope to find by persevering to the end in our eternal quest as a freemason.

The quest for Truth, Light, and Knowledge is depicted as a drama in the third degree. The three ruffians, stationed at the three entrances, show that one is destroyed from within oneself by three deadly sins - desire, greed, and anger. The f.p.o.f. depicts universal brotherhood and instructs one on the duties one owes to his fellowmen. The tragedy of Hiram Abiff teaches us that, good,

even if temporarily overcome and buried by evil, will ultimately emerge triumphant.

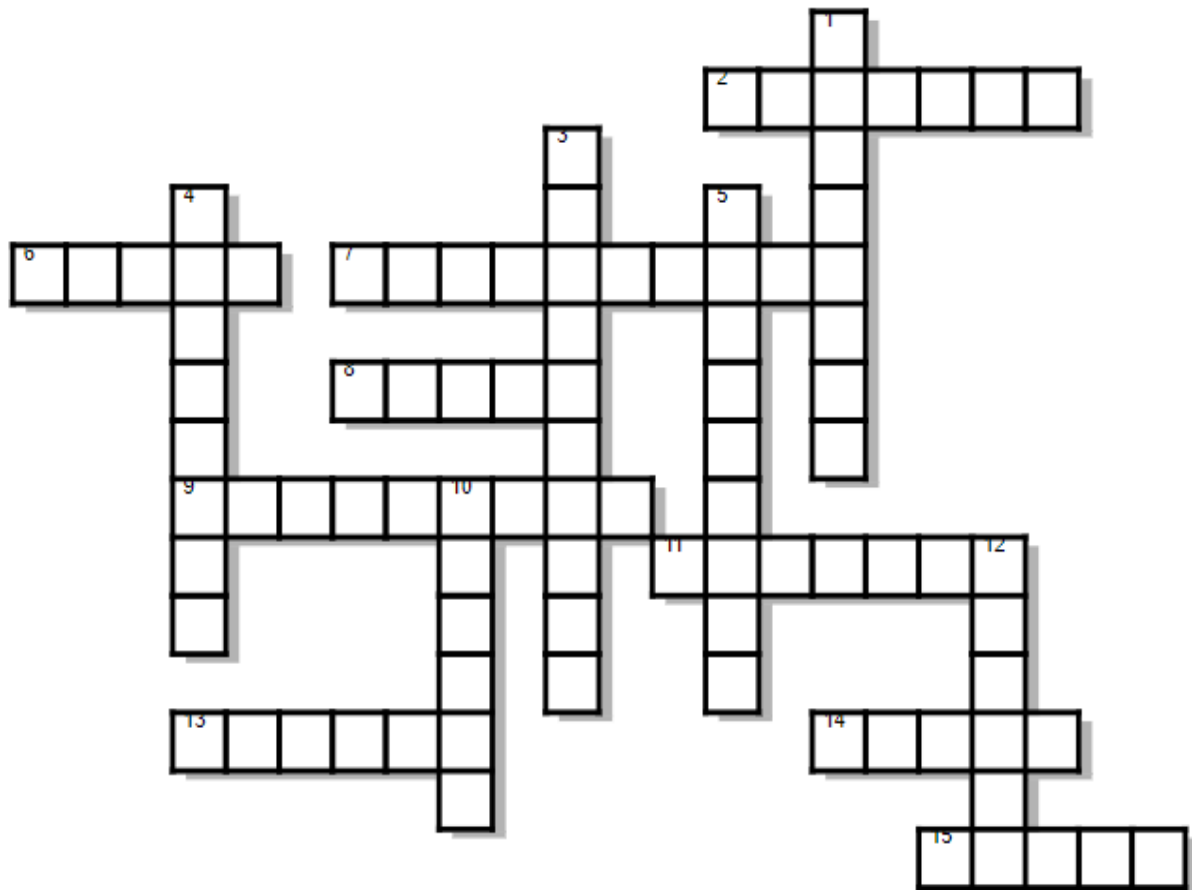
The candidate now comes to the end of his journey. Abandoning all attachment to worldly possessions and overcoming the fear of death, he walks over the tomb of transgression. With a more firm hold on his faith, he surrenders his basic self, and is raised to a higher level, to a mystical union with the Supreme.

The ceremony of raising is sublime and is the zenith of one's 'Eternal quest as a Freemason'.



# CROSSWORD

By Bro Kayzad Jokhi



## ACROSS

- 2 Has the approbation of heaven and earth
- 6 To lay lines and prove horizontals
- 7 Prefect or Overseer
- 8 The badge of innocence and the bond of friendship
- 9 The first artificer in metals
- 11 The renowned Gileaditish general
- 13 On what you were admitted
- 14 The entrance to the sanctum sanctorum
- 15 Was renamed to Israel

## DOWN

- 1 The light of a Master Mason is but \_\_\_\_ visible
- 3 The Junior Warden is the \_\_\_\_ steward of the lodge
- 4 The basis of our art
- 5 Adorned the pillars
- 10 Points out the advantages of education
- 12 The sprig of \_\_\_\_ was used to distinguish the spot of our master's body



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