



# District Grand Lodge of India S.C. & Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C.



FREEMASONS' HALL, SUKHADWALLA MARG, FORT, MUMBAI 400 001.

## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME III : ISSUE 6  
DECEMBER 2024

Edited By Bro./M.E.C. Noshir Godrej Paghdwalla, D.S.M.,  
Past Depute District Grand Master & District Grand Secretary  
Past Depute Grand Superintendent & Grand Scribe Ezra  
Hon. Grand Secretary (Scot.)/Hon First Grand Standard Bearer (Scot.)



*This Newsletter is only meant to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District, but is not its official periodical. The views expressed herein are solely that of the Editor, and not necessarily that of the District.*

## **EDITORIAL**

Oratory in Freemasonry plays a vital role in preserving traditions, conveying philosophical teachings, and inspiring reflection among members. As Freemasonry emphasizes personal development, moral instruction, and fraternity, oratory becomes a key tool for achieving these goals. While oratory comes naturally to some, yet, to most newly installed Masters it becomes a stumbling block with no idea as to how to rule and direct the Lodge.

In Masonic contexts, oratory refers to the art of delivering well-structured and meaningful speeches that often address themes such as morality, ethics, symbolism, fraternity, and personal growth. The goal of Masonic oratory is not just to inform but also to inspire contemplation and spiritual development.

Masonic oratory often draws heavily from symbols and allegories used in rituals to convey deeper truths. Speeches focus on universal values such as justice, equality, brotherly love, and truth. While drawing from esoteric sources, the message must remain clear and inspire reflection among listeners.

Every Brother installed in the Eastern Chair aspires to be an accomplished speaker both within the Temple as also at the Festive Board to follow. It is a sad reflection on the preparation of the Master-Elect, who in many Lodges is installed into the chair and immediately comes under the control of the Secretary, the Director of Ceremonies, or a host of the Lodge elders who seem to forget that their status in the Lodge is one of Past Master.

It is the Master's duty and responsibility to rule and direct his Lodge. If he is so weak that he needs constant supervision and instruction from senior members of the Lodge, this reflects on them that they have not properly trained him in preparation for his high office.

Being in control of the Lodge requires certain management skills that must be acquired well before a brother is installed in the chair of his Lodge. This should even include directions about when to stand when to gavel, and how to control the proceedings. This may be an established custom within the Lodge, but it needs to be set out in such a format that will enable the Master and his principal officers to control the proceedings smoothly and with dignity and style. As a brother approaches senior office, the demand on him as a good public speaker becomes paramount.

It becomes easy to understand the wisdom of a prospective Master to have engaged in preparation well in advance. Another golden rule' is never read your speech – always speak from notes. Try to avoid holding the papers in your hand, because if you are slightly nervous the papers will tremble, notifying to the audience that you are nervous.

The experienced speaker will write 'bullet points' down on a simple white card as a guide. These will be discreetly placed on the table in front of the speaker. The eyes should sweep across the notes, and the audience should not be aware that you are collecting information from the bullet points in front.

In conclusion, Masonic oratory is unique in its emphasis on esotericism, symbolism, and the self-improvement of its members through reflection on moral truths. Ornamented with a literature of the highest standard, the contents, if not quoted from the ritual texts, it loses its core values and would tantamount to mere story telling. Besides, it is more than just ceremonial—it is a key component of the Masonic tradition that helps reinforce its principles, nurture brotherhood, and foster the personal development of its members.

## **MASONIC LITERATURE ITS GRANDEUR, MAGNIFICENCE & PROFUSENESS**

The ritual book is a cornerstone of Freemasonry, serving as a repository for the traditions, teachings, and ceremonial practices that define the Craft. Its importance extends beyond mere documentation, embodying the principles and values that Freemasons strive to uphold. The ritual book ensures the continuity and uniformity of Masonic ceremonies across time and jurisdictions. By codifying the rituals, it preserves the integrity of practices that have been handed down for centuries. The rituals, as detailed in Masonic texts, are steeped in ancient teachings, moral allegories, and esoteric knowledge. By preserving this heritage, the literature bridges the past and present, allowing members to participate in timeless practices that resonate with universal truths.

Its richness is further augmented by the high standard of literature that goes into it. Masonic literature holds a place of profound importance within Freemasonry, particularly in its rituals. This body of work not only enriches the ceremonial experience but also provides members with a treasure trove of wisdom, history, and moral guidance. Therefore, committing the mistake of substituting the ritual in layman's language deprives the recipient of the above experience.

The rituals detailed in Masonry are rich in symbolism, using allegory to convey profound moral lessons. These lessons encourage self-reflection, ethical living, and a commitment to improving oneself and one's community. The ritual book acts as a guide for

interpreting these symbols and understanding their deeper meanings. Every gesture, word, and element of the ritual carries profound meanings. Exploring these layers reveals insights into personal growth, ethical behaviour, and spiritual enlightenment. For members, this depth transforms routine ceremonies into powerful, reflective experiences in posterity.

For Lodge officers, the ritual book is an indispensable tool in performing their roles during meetings and ceremonies. It provides the structure and specific wording needed to conduct rituals with precision and dignity, ensuring that the intended spiritual and moral impact is achieved. Hence it is imperative that during Masonic ceremonies, the actual wordings incorporated in our rituals are made use of, or else it sounds like relating a story. Beyond its role in rituals, Masonic literature is a wellspring of personal study. Books, manuscripts, and commentaries on Masonic rituals provide members with opportunities to delve deeper into the philosophies and principles of the Craft. This encourages lifelong learning and a deeper appreciation of Freemasonry's teachings.

Freemasonry spans cultures, languages, and continents. The ritual book provides a shared framework that unites members, offering a common language of symbols and practices. This fosters a deep sense of brotherhood and mutual understanding, even among brethren who have never met before. For individual Masons, studying the ritual book is a means of deepening their knowledge of the Craft. It encourages memorization, critical thinking, and contemplation, contributing to personal growth and a greater appreciation of Masonic principles. No matter how eloquent one may be in one's oratory, if one resorts to explaining the ritual in one's own words, the prolificacy of the ritual is transformed into a drab recital. Believe you me, Masonic literature reflects the accumulated knowledge and traditions of centuries. The rituals, as detailed in Masonic texts, are steeped in ancient teachings, moral allegories, and esoteric knowledge. By preserving this heritage, the literature bridges the past and present, allowing members to participate in timeless practices that resonate with universal truths.

The ritual book is to be regarded with reverence, as it contains the sacred elements of the Craft's ceremonies. It is treated with care and respect, reflecting its role as a symbol of the Masonic commitment to wisdom, morality, and enlightenment. The ritual book in Freemasonry is far more than a manual; it is a vessel of tradition, a teacher of values, and a unifying force for the fraternity. By safeguarding and disseminating the rituals, it ensures that Freemasonry remains a timeless and living institution, inspiring its members to embody its principles in their daily lives.

Masonic literature serves as a universal framework for Freemasons worldwide. It ensures consistency in ritual practices, regardless of location or language, fostering unity within the fraternity. At the same time, it reflects regional and historical variations, adding diversity and depth to the global Masonic tradition.

To conclude, beyond its role in rituals, Masonic literature is a wellspring of personal study. Books, manuscripts, and commentaries on Masonic rituals provide members with opportunities to delve deeper into the deep-rooted philosophies and principles of the Craft. This encourages lifelong learning and a deeper appreciation of Freemasonry's teachings. The richness of Masonic literature as seen in the ritual book lies in its ability to educate, inspire, and connect members across generations and cultures. By studying and practicing the rituals as conveyed through this literature, Freemasons not only honour their traditions but also cultivate personal growth, moral integrity, and a deeper sense of brotherhood.

## **THE INTRINSIC NUANCES OF THE TRACING BOARD**

Following the session on the first-degree Tracing Board, Bro. Kersi Limathwalla, Rt. Wor. D.G.M., held a similar session on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 on the second-degree Tracing Board in Scottish Freemasonry amidst a motley gathering of Craft Masons hailing from all four Jurisdictions. The Brethren were enthralled with rapt attention as the tracing Board corresponding to the Fellowcraft degree was explained. Being a visual and symbolic teaching tool used during Masonic rituals it embodies deeper philosophical lessons about moral development, the pursuit of knowledge, and self-improvement.



Clarifications regarding the Key Elements reflected on the Board like the two pillars at the entrance or porch of King Solomon's Temple signifying strength and stability, the relevance of the steps on the winding staircase –three denoting the ascent from ignorance to enlightenment, five symbolising and the five orders of architecture (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite), seven referring to the seven liberal arts and sciences (Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy) - Middle Chamber denoting a symbolic place where a Fellowcraft is led to receive wages (spiritual knowledge and personal fulfilment), Jacob's Ladder signifying the spiritual ascent from earthly existence to higher realms of consciousness, symbolizing faith, hope, and charity, et al being absorbed by all present with rapt attention

In Scottish Craft Masonry, like in other Masonic jurisdictions, the Second Degree emphasizes the transition from a novice's understanding (Entered Apprentice) to a deeper comprehension of moral and philosophical truths, embodied in the symbolism

of the Fellowcraft degree. The tracing board serves as a rich and layered tool for reflection, unlocking different meanings each time a Mason revisits it.

## **INSTALLATION OF CHAPTER RISING STAR OF WESTERN INDIA**



Installation meeting of Chapter Rising Star of Western India No.124 S.C. was held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the Freemasons's Hall, Mumbai when MEC Saifee Nasrullah, MEC Pichumani Venkatraman and MEC Rashid Contractor were installed as Zerubbabel, Haggai & Joshua respectively.

The Installation Ceremony was well attended by Companions and Guests.

## **SYMPOSIUM ON ABC OF FREEMASONRY**

The membership of Lodge Mother India under the aegis of the Grand Lodge of India is brimming with youth and they have evidently proved time and again that the young lot can effectively and successfully handle specific tasks like event planning and augment their roll by evincing interest amongst their peers.

This was corroborated on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024, when the Freemasons' Hall at Mumbai resonated with the spirit of the youth –both members and non-members – at a multi-faceted event meticulously planned for the day.

Following an early morning meeting of the Lodge, only the active office-bearers of the Lodge persevered in carrying out a raising ceremony for three candidates to the sublime degree of Master Mason while the younger lot descended to the banquet room where other young prospective non-masons, mostly youngsters were gathered to be acquainted with the principles and tenets of freemasonry.

They were treated to a lecture by Bro. Noshir Paghdiwalla District Grand Secretary of the Scottish Constitution on the finer nuances of Freemasonry and the underlying precepts it contains. Thereafter they were also treated by Bro. Noshir Paghdiwalla to a power-point presentation on "An introduction to Freemasonry" which was digested with rapt attention and very many questions they raised were responded to. It was heartening to see the interest generated culminating in a few of the eligible individuals fascinated and opting to join the Order.

The event bore testimony to the fact that by allowing youth to take part in the management of a Freemasons' lodge ensures continuity, innovation, and relevance in a changing world. By empowering younger members while still honouring traditional values, the lodge creates a sustainable structure where wisdom and energy complement each other. Successful youth engagement requires a balance—where experienced Masons mentor, guide, and trust younger members with meaningful responsibilities. This approach fosters a culture of lifelong learning, mutual respect, and shared purpose, ensuring that Freemasonry thrives well into the future.



## **LODGE IMPERIAL BROTHERHOOD**

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024, the Masonic Hall at Trivandrum witnessed the Installation of Bro. Dr. B. Venugopal at the hands of Bro. K. Ramachandran.

The Installation was conducted in the presence of a motley group of enthusiastic Brethren which was followed by a sit down banquet where the ladies of the Brethren also partook of the fare offered.

Lodge Imperial Brotherhood has been a very vibrant Lodge after its re-location from Mumbai to Trivandrum



## **SCOT :**

### **Envisaged as the “STRATEGIC CORE OPERATIONAL TEAM” OF D.G.L.I.**

SCOT can further be envisioned as a specialized body within our District focusing on the development, implementation, and oversight of strategic initiatives that align with the core values and long-term objectives of Scottish Freemasonry in India. The team was essentially to be composed of experienced, visionary, dedicated and committed brethren who bring a diverse range of skills and perspectives to the table.

Its primary purpose was meant to ensure that this Scottish Masonic organization under the aegis of the District remains a dynamic, forward-thinking, and effective force in achieving its goals, while at the same time preserving the traditions and values of Scottish Freemasonry but adapting to contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Our circulars issued from time to time generated considerable interest amongst the fraternity as evidenced by the responses to join the group, and to which, the District Grand Master added his preferences of Brethren. The initial meeting of SCOT was convened and held virtually on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

## **EXEMPLARY INSTALLATION MEETING AT BELGAUM**



Lodge Cataract No. 909 functioning at Belgaum, Karnataka is undoubtedly one of the best daughter Lodges in our fold, not only in terms of their membership numbers, but also in ritual working, charitable activities, camaraderie, et al. The deputation of District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.) on an official visit at its installation meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 led by Bro. Noshir Paghdwalla –Past Depute DGM and District Grand

Secretary and accompanied by Bro. Gautam H. from Pune and Bro. Mohan Deshpande and Bro. Shirish Danthakale from Solapur were awe struck by the meticulous organisation and ritual working thereat.

The Annual Installation Meeting where Bro. Rajesh Shingamukki was installed into the Eastern chair was a resounding success, bringing together brethren to celebrate fellowship, tradition, and the craft in a fittingly elegant setting that underscored the significance of the occasion. Besides strengthening the bonds of brotherhood by fostering fellowship and camaraderie and reaffirming the core principles of Freemasonry, it showcased excellence in ritual workings and maintaining high standards of the craft.

One of the standout features of the evening was the exemplary performance of ritual workings with a seamless flow. The brethren executed the ceremonies with precision, solemnity, and heartfelt reverence, reflecting their deep understanding and dedication to Masonic principles. The degree work was particularly noteworthy, with each officer fulfilling their roles impeccably, leaving a lasting impression

The evening featured an inspiring address delivered by the leader of the District Deputation who spoke eloquently about the enduring values of Freemasonry and its role in modern society, while at the same time elaborating on the changes in the Constitution brought into effect by Grand Lodge. He also highlighted the visionary steps being introduced by the District including the formation of SCOT (Strategic Core Organisations Team) and the Young Masons' Group. The address also implored the brethren to attend the ensuing Communication at a picturesque resort at Alibaug across Mumbai Harbour mixing business with pleasure.

Following the formal proceedings, the brethren adjourned to the Festive Board, where the spirit of camaraderie flourished. The meal was superbly prepared, and the toasts were delivered with wit and sincerity. Special mention was made of the toast to the Past Master, whose leadership throughout the year was highly commended and of the Installing Master Bro. Shashank Lengade for his magnificent eloquence.

The Annual Installation Meeting was a testament to the dedication and unity of the brethren, reaffirming the values that bind us together as Freemasons. It stands as a beacon of what can be achieved through shared purpose and mutual respect.

### **WHERE BUSINESS MEETS BLISS: A MASONIC CONVOCATION IN PARADISE**

Imagine conducting meaningful Masonic traditional business while indulging in the epitome of coastal luxury. This year's Annual Masonic Convocation and Communication is scheduled at a coastal Resort and is contemplated to be more than an event—it is meant to be a harmonious fusion of purpose and paradise, where business shall seamlessly blend with leisure to create an unparalleled experience.



Come 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025, and you shall be ready to be pampered for a well-deserved relaxing sojourn, notwithstanding your attendance at the Annual Election and Installation Convocation of Grand Chapter of United Scottish Royal Arch Freemasonry in India and Ceylon in the evening. The Annual Communication of District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.) is scheduled on the next day (viz. 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025) where a blend of pleasure, relaxation and social activities shall precede the Masonic business.

After undertaking your journey to the resort either through a Ferry, speedboat or launch –or even a cursory drive over the Atul Setu bridge across the harbour, get yourself rejuvenated by a memorable experience. For, nestled along a breathtaking beachfront, the resort serves as a perfect destination for Brethren seeking to deepen their craft while at the same time enjoying a well-deserved retreat. The meetings shall be preceded by enriching sessions in the resort's well-equipped conference halls, where various amenities settled amid awe-inspiring landscapes are bound to create an atmosphere ripe for inspiration. Under the

soft glow of bespoke lighting and amidst the resonance of shared values, transformative conversations and ceremonies ought to unfold.

But the magic shan't end with the meetings. Outside the confines of the convention halls, the resort's many facilities like an amphitheatre, auditorium, base verandahs, sprawling lawns, pool-side cafe, sports room, gymnasium, etc. await your indulgence, offering an ideal balance of work and relaxation.

Brethren/Companions and their families are invited to a welcome break from the arduous normal life and take a rejuvenating trip to ease their adrenalin and partake of the resort's other offerings. Regional gourmet dining experiences showcased by the region's finest flavours await to test your taste buds.



\*\*\*\*\*



*Wishing all Our Brethren and Companions and their families a very Merry Christmas and a joyous and Happy New Year.*

*May the advent of 2025 herald Peace, Prosperity and good health galore and may Brotherly Love prevail throughout the year.*

*Let every Social and Moral virtue cement us.*



**Merry Christmas**

**VISIT US AT**

A green-bordered box containing social media icons for WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, along with a globe icon representing a website.