



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



# NEWSLETTER

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **“THE SILENT GAVEL - LEADERSHIP IN FREEMASONRY” TRADITION, RESPONSIBILITY, AND EXAMPLE**

Leadership within Freemasonry occupies a distinctive and elevated plane, shaped not merely by administrative necessity but by centuries of tradition, symbolism, and moral philosophy. It is a system that has evolved from the operative lodges of medieval stonemasons into a speculative institution concerned with the refinement of character of men and the cultivation of virtue.

Leadership in Freemasonry is unlike leadership in the profane world. It is not measured by command, nor asserted through authority alone, but revealed in quiet example, moral strength, and the ability to inspire without compulsion. Within the Lodge, leadership is both an honour and a responsibility — one that rests not on power, but on principle.

At the centre of the Lodge sits the Worshipful Master, a figure often perceived as the head of authority. Yet, his true role is far deeper. He is not merely a ruler of the proceedings, but a custodian of harmony, a teacher of values, and a servant of the Craft. His gavel does not echo dominance — it signals order, balance, and mindful direction.

Masonic leadership begins long before one reaches the East. It is cultivated step by step, office by office, as a Brother learns the importance of patience, discipline, and attentive service. Each role within the Lodge, whether great or small, contributes to a greater whole. The Junior Warden, the Senior Deacon, the Tyler — each embodies leadership in action, demonstrating that true authority arises from fulfilling one’s duty with sincerity.

Central to this philosophy is the principle of leading by example. A Mason is taught that his conduct must reflect the virtues he upholds — integrity, humility, and brotherly love. Influence in the Lodge is not enforced; it is earned. Respect is not demanded; it is inspired.

The use of the gavel, often perceived as a simple instrument of order, carries deeper allegorical meaning. It represents the disciplined will of the leader — the ability to shape, refine, and direct. Yet, this shaping extends to human conduct and institutional harmony. It becomes emblematic of influence exercised through restraint and wisdom rather than force.

Freemasonry’s progressive system of offices ensures that leadership is not conferred abruptly but earned through experience. From the Junior Deacon’s attentive service to the Wardens’ supervisory roles, each station prepares the Brother for higher responsibility. This gradual advancement reflects an enduring principle: that effective leadership must be grounded in understanding, humility, and demonstrated commitment.

It is essential to recognize that Masonic leadership extends beyond ritual governance. The Lodge serves as a microcosm of society, wherein men are encouraged to practice virtues that transcend its walls. A Worshipful Master who governs with fairness, listens with patience, and leads with integrity sets a standard not only for his Lodge but for the broader community.

Equally significant is the emphasis on listening. A good Masonic leader understands that wisdom is often found not in speaking, but in hearing the voices of the Brethren. The Lodge thrives on unity, and unity is born from mutual respect and open dialogue. Leadership, therefore, becomes an act of balance—guiding without dictating, correcting without diminishing, and inspiring without overshadowing.

In contemporary times, when leadership is often equated with visibility, authority, or influence, Freemasonry offers a counterpoint rooted in quiet excellence. It teaches that the true measure of a leader lies not in command, but in character; not in prominence, but in purpose.

For it is through such leadership, quietly and consistently exercised, that the true spirit of Freemasonry The “Silent Gavel” thus becomes a powerful metaphor. It reminds us that the strongest leaders are not those who speak the loudest, but those who act with consistency, fairness, and purpose. They shape minds not through force, but through example; they build not empires, but men.

For in Freemasonry, the greatest leader is not the one who stands above others—but the one who helps others rise.

In the final analysis, the enduring strength of Freemasonry lies in this very principle—that its leaders do not seek to elevate themselves above others, but to elevate the Craft, and through it, the moral fabric of society.

It is preserved and passed on — unchanged in its principles, yet ever renewed in its practice.

*“Let every Brother remember: the finest gavel is not that which commands attention, but that which shapes character.”*

### **SUMMITS OF SERENITY - A Fraternal Sojourn to the Abode of the God** ***Peaks, Peace & Brotherhood: The Himachal Experience***

In the recent past, we had communicated the news of our presumptuously adventurist Bro. Mehernosh Mavalwala from Lodge K. R. Cama No. 1366 S.C. at Nagpur, igniting the latent adventurous instinct of our Brethren by planning a masonic adventurous mission to Umling La, Ladakh -the highest motorable pass in the World at 19024 feet (5798 meters) above sea level and later organising a jaunt to the lesser known Nagaland in the eastern region of India.

In the footsteps of the success of the above two junkets, this summer he has planned a very thrilling & an adventurous program to SPITI Valley, in the Western Himalayan region. Spiti Valley is located high in the Himalayas forming a remote high-altitude cold desert that separates India from Tibet.

The envisaged 12 day excursion - or expedition as some may prefer to call it - is open to Freemasons hailing from all constitutions and their loved ones. Commuting by Tempo Traveller Vans carrying 12 each, the participants shall cover a circuitous route lasting from 14<sup>th</sup> June to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026 and covering the journey as shown in the following route plan.



Total participation fees including the Registration Amount is Rs. 30,000/-per person.

INCLUSION ; Volvo tickets from Delhi to Shimla and Manali to Delhi.

Tempo Traveller 12 seater Bus from Shimla to Manali AC in Bus will be turned off on hills.

Accommodation : double sharing.

For all adventure sports activities if undertaken by you, will be on self payment basis.

Meal Plan : Breakfast & Dinner.

All payments to be made in :

Account Name : K.R.CAMA no.1366 SC, Account no. 571202010007664, IFSC : UBIN0545813 (the 5th character is zero).

Our temerarious minded Brethren desirous of joining this expedition are advised to obtain further details from:- Bro. Mehernosh Mavalwala, Secretary, Lodge K. R. Cama No.1366 S.C., Mob. No.: 7798897007 / 9422463546.

### **REJUVENATING THE QUEST FOR LIGHT:** **THE RUSTOM K. R. CAMA MASONIC STUDY CIRCLE RETURNS**

The District Grand Lodge of India (S.C.) is delighted to announce, with renewed vigour and optimism, the rejuvenation of The Rustom K. R. Cama Masonic Study Circle—a cherished institution constituted on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1935 and dedicated to the pursuit of Masonic light and understanding.

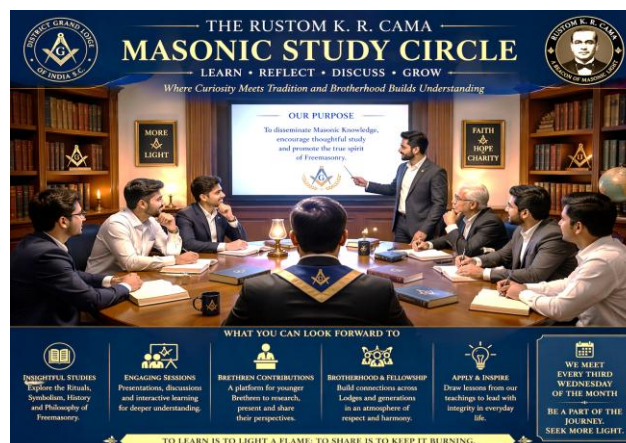
In an age where time is often scarce and distractions abound, the need for a space that nurtures reflection, intellectual curiosity, and meaningful fellowship has never been greater. The Study Circle, facing dormancy for the past few years, has now been revived not merely as a continuation of tradition, but as a dynamic and engaging platform where the timeless principles of Freemasonry may be explored in a manner that resonates

with the modern Mason — especially our younger Brethren, irrespective of the Masonic Constitution to which they belong.

The Circle convenes at Mumbai on the third Wednesday of every month, offering a structured yet welcoming environment for the dissemination, discussion, and deeper study of Masonic knowledge. Each meeting will feature a blend of short presentations, guided discussions, and interactive sessions designed to encourage participation rather than passive listening. Topics will range from the symbolism and philosophy of our rituals to the historical evolution of the Craft, its ethical teachings, and its relevance in contemporary life.

Particular emphasis shall be placed on:

- Decoding Masonic symbolism in an engaging and practical manner
- Encouraging research and presentation by younger Brethren
- Open-floor discussions that allow diverse perspectives to be shared
- Bridging tradition with modern thought, ensuring that Masonic teachings remain meaningful in today's world



The Study Circle aspires to become a vibrant intellectual hub—where curiosity is rewarded, questions are welcomed, and learning is a shared journey. It is an ideal forum for younger Brethren who seek not only to understand the words and forms of the Craft, but to internalize its deeper lessons and apply them meaningfully in their personal and professional lives.

Senior Brethren are equally encouraged to lend their experience and insight, thereby fostering a spirit of mentorship and continuity that lies at the very heart of Freemasonry.

The rejuvenation of this Circle stands as a testament to our collective commitment to Masonic education, fellowship, and growth. It is hoped that Brethren will seize this opportunity to rekindle their zeal for learning and to contribute actively to the strengthening of the Craft.

Let us come together in the true spirit of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth—to learn, to share, and to grow. All our Brethren are encouraged to enrol by contacting Bro. Shri Sinha on mobile No. 8451874918 or Bro. Victor Manickam on 8828212914.

## **THE QUIET ARCHITECTURE OF BROTHERHOOD** **WHY RITUAL STILL MATTERS**

In an age defined by immediacy, speed, and relentless innovation, it is fair to ask whether traditions rooted in centuries past can still speak meaningfully to the modern man. Freemasonry, with its allegories, symbols, and ritual forms, might appear at first glance to belong entirely to another era. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely this timelessness that gives it its enduring relevance.

Ritual is often misunderstood by those outside — and sometimes even within — our Craft. To the uninitiated, it may seem like repetition for its own sake, an elaborate choreography of words and gestures preserved out of habit. But for the thoughtful Mason, ritual is not static — it is a living architecture of meaning. Each degree, each symbol, each carefully transmitted phrase serves as a tool, not merely to instruct, but to transform.

In a world that prizes information, Freemasonry offers something rarer, i.e. formation. Ritual slows us down. It demands attention, reflection, and presence. It teaches not through argument, but through experience. One does not simply learn Masonry; one undergoes it. And in that process, we are reminded that the most important truths are not always the newest, but often the oldest—the ones that must be rediscovered again and again within ourselves.

Consider the working tools. They are simple, even humble objects, yet they carry profound moral instruction. The square teaches us to act with fairness and integrity; the compasses remind us to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds. These lessons are not bound by time. If anything, they are more urgently needed today, in a world where ethical clarity is often obscured by complexity and noise.

Brotherhood, too, takes on a deeper meaning within the framework of ritual. It is not merely a social bond or a network of acquaintances. It is a shared journey—a collective commitment to self-improvement and mutual support. When we meet upon the level, we affirm a principle that transcends status, profession, and background: that each man is engaged in the same essential work of building his inner temple.

Yet, ritual alone is not enough. Its power lies in its application. The true test of a Mason is not how well he performs within the Lodge, but how faithfully he lives its principles beyond it. Do we carry the lessons of the degrees into our daily lives? Do we practice relief, truth, and brotherly love in our interactions with the world? These are questions that no ritual can answer for us—but it can guide us toward them.

There is also a quiet resilience in Freemasonry that deserves recognition. Across centuries, through political upheavals, cultural shifts, and societal transformations, the Craft has endured. Why? Because it addresses something fundamental in the human condition: the desire for meaning, for moral clarity, and for connection. While the external world changes rapidly, these inner needs remain constant.

As we look toward the future, we need not abandon our traditions in order to remain relevant. Instead, we must deepen our understanding of them. Innovation in Freemasonry does not mean discarding the old, but illuminating it anew — finding fresh insights in ancient forms, and ensuring that each new generation of Masons does not merely inherit the ritual, but truly *engages* with it.

The temple we build in our hearts is not made of stone, but of character. Its foundations are laid in ritual, but its walls are raised in daily conduct. Each of us is both architect and labourer in this sacred work.

And so, the question is not whether ritual still matters. The question is whether we are willing to let it matter—to allow it to shape us, challenge us, and ultimately, refine us into better men. For in the quiet architecture of Brotherhood, the tools are in our hands. The design, as always, is ours to realize.

### **“TIMELESS CRAFTSMANSHIP AND GRACE IN THE HILLS”**

**- An Octogenarian Master Shines at Lodge Barton – by Noshir G. Paghdiwalla**

Nestled amidst the verdant slopes of the Sahyadri ranges, lies Lonavala - a favourite getaway amongst Mumbaiites - renowned for its lush green valleys, mist-laden hills, and tranquil environment. Here, atop the elevated locale of Rye wood, stands the Hormusji Batliwala Masonic Temple where Lodge Barton No. 475 S.C. is located amidst its vast compound and all-round greenery.

This verdure and serene backdrop provided a fitting setting during my recent visit to Lodge Barton as an invited guest of the Brethren on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 on the occasion of its Installation meeting. Notwithstanding the scorching heat generated by the sun at its summer-peak, yet, the locale served as a refreshing retreat from the bustle of urban life, being aglow with warmth and fraternal enthusiasm of the Brethren assembled and the unique charm that both the location and the Lodge itself exude.

The proceedings of the evening were conducted with dignity and grace by the Brethren ably led by Bro. Manohar Palwankar, stepping in as the Installing Master on behalf of the outgoing Rt. Wor. Master Bro. Shashank Limaye. Installed in the Eastern Chair was Rt. Wor. Bro. Sam Shavak Choksey, a veteran Mason of many decades and an octogenarian whose age belies his vigour and infatuation of ritual. With steady voice and precise delivery, he exemplified the timeless adage that Freemasonry is a lifelong journey of learning and service. His conduct of the ceremony post his installation imbued with a depth of understanding that can only be acquired through decades of dedicated Masonic experience.

What was glaringly conspicuous was the role played by other Senior Octogenarian and Nonagenarian Brethren like Bro. Nauzer Baxter, Bro. Phiroze Kattrak, Bro. Dr. Noshir Billimoria, Bro. Pilloo Pastakia and Bro. Farokh Chinoy, whose collective involvement merits deep appreciation for their commitment to the worthy cause of our

cherished Order and noting that such devotion serves as a beacon to younger Masons and a reminder that the Craft transcends age, uniting all in a common pursuit of moral and spiritual refinement.

The meeting was followed by harmonious fellowship hosted by the incoming Master, punctuated by thoughtful exchanges and a renewed commitment to the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. The Lodge's setting — amidst the scenic beauty of Lonavala — seemed to lend an added dimension of calm reflection to the proceedings, reinforcing the contemplative essence of the Craft.

In conclusion, my visit stood as a testament to the enduring vitality of Freemasonry. May Lodge Barton, under the guidance of its venerable Master, continue to flourish as a centre of light, learning, and fellowship—proving that true Masonic spirit knows no bounds of time or age.



**Seated L to R:** Farokh Chinoy, Nauzer Baxter, Mangesh Patel, Noshir Paghdwalla, Sam Choksey, Phiroze Katrak, Noshir Billimoria, Pilloo Pastakia and Shashank Limaye.  
**Standing L to R:** Manohar Palwankar, Neville Tata, Kalpesh Parekh, Khushroo Patel, and Meherwan Parbhoo

### **“Seeds of Knowledge, Acts of Kindness”**



#### ***In Service and Solidarity Youth-Led Charity in Action***

A quiet but meaningful initiative unfolded as the Brethren of Lodge St. Andrew's in the East No. 343 SC came together for a heartfelt charity drive—one notably led with energy and conviction by the younger members of the Lodge. Taking the lead from conception to execution, these youngsters demonstrated that the true spirit of Freemasonry thrives in action.

With a focus on education as a pathway to empowerment, the Lodge distributed books and essential stationery to children from daily-wage worker families and tribal communities. For many of these children, such simple resources can make a profound difference, opening doors to learning and opportunity.

Beyond the material contribution, the initiative stood as a testament to compassion, leadership, and continuity—where the next generation of Brethren not only upholds Masonic values but actively brings them to life in service of society.

### **“Bridging Lodges, Building Brotherhood”**

#### ***“United in Fellowship: A Celebration of Masonic Harmony”***



It is with immense pride that we report the deep fraternal bond between Lodge Cataract No. 909 at Belgaum and Lodge Royal Jubilee No. 742 S.C. at Solapur reaching ever greater heights.

The remarkable turnout at the joint meeting—with 14 Brethren from Cataract and 23 Brethren from Solapur gathering in true fellowship — and jointly carrying out a raising ceremony stands as a splendid testament to this enduring friendship.

Such occasions, where our Lodges come together in harmony, beautifully exemplify the true tenets of our Craft and the spirit of Brotherhood that binds us. May this cherished connection continue to grow from strength to strength, and may both the Lodges flourish in all their Masonic endeavours upholding the Masonic axiom **‘Together in the True Spirit of the Craft.’**

### **“SWORN TO SECRECY, PRONE TO SLIP-UPS”**

**Winston Churchill and the “late initiation** -Churchill was initiated into Freemasonry in 1901—but he was famously irregular in attendance afterward. A humorous story often repeated is that when asked about his participation, he quipped that he had already “taken the trouble to join,” implying that was quite enough effort on his part. It’s a very Churchillian mix of wit and mild laziness.

**Mozart and musical mischief** - Mozart, an enthusiastic Mason, incorporated Masonic themes into works like *The Magic Flute*. During lodge gatherings, he was known to improvise playful musical pieces that lightly teased fellow members. Imagine a formal meeting suddenly turning into a private concert with inside jokes baked into the music.

**The apron mix-up** - In some lodges, aprons symbolize rank or degree. A humorous incident involves a member accidentally wearing a much higher-ranking apron than he was entitled to. Rather than embarrassment, the lodge teased him that he had been “promoted by laundry error.”

**The visiting dignitary’s surprise** - A distinguished guest attended a lodge expecting flawless precision. Instead, he witnessed a series of small mix-ups—misplaced items, slightly off timing, and one member entering at the wrong moment. At the end, he smiled and said it was reassuring: “Even ancient traditions are still run by modern humans.”

**The whisper that wasn’t** - A stage whisper meant to discreetly guide a fellow member ended up being loud enough for everyone to hear—effectively turning a “secret prompt” into a public announcement.

**The synchronized confusion** - During one meeting, two senior members simultaneously gave different instructions to a candidate. Both were convinced they were right. The candidate followed neither and just stood still, which—ironically—turned out to be the safest possible choice.

