

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

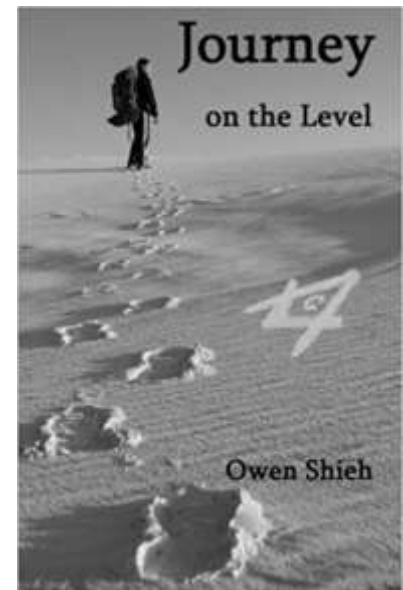
Book Review

Journey on the Level - Owen Shieh

In Freemasonry, brothers are exposed to a multitude of allegorical rituals that contain symbols and moral lessons. These symbols and moral lessons are the catalyst for the discovery of the hidden mysteries of Freemasonry; but more importantly, the pathway for us to discover ourselves and in time, create a closer relationship with our God. Many books cite the history, explanation of symbols, and the philosophies of Freemasonry, but fall short in the daily application of these items to our lives. Owen Shieh, in his book, *Journey on the Level*, masterfully takes what we have been taught in Freemasonry and shows how it can be applied, as we journey in life, to make ourselves better men.

The book begins with a short history of Freemasonry and the discussion of the philosophies as a foundation. The foundation lays the groundwork for the reader to understand the beginnings of Freemasonry and to understand how and why we do what we do today. Owen Shieh then begins to take the reader through a well-developed series of stages beginning with darkness and the recount of Plato's "The Cave". The reader is then taken through the three degrees of Freemasonry with a discussion of the tenets of each and what can be done to apply them to ourselves in an easy and understandable way all why being relevant to our current societal norms. As you begin to immerse yourself in the book, you begin to understand Freemasonry not as a simple organization, but as a way of life that makes you question yourself in a deeper way and to constantly question your thoughts, habits, and interactions with others. This book has so much rich information for thought and inner contemplation that the reviewer cannot possibly discuss all the ideas contained within; however, one portion of the book really stands out as it pertains to our emotions, poor thoughts, and our own mortality that leads to much strife and unsureness in our daily lives. Shieh discusses three challenges. He identifies the first as being our own evil passions, bad habits, and negative thoughts. With the "practice" of the tenets and philosophies of Freemasonry we can work on our rough ashlar and eventually overcome this negativity. The second challenge is events that we cannot control. We will all have things in life that test us such as finances, illness, death and other adversities; but will you have the fortitude to overcome these obstacles or fall to them. Our final challenge is impermanence. We are only given so much time on earth and one day all will come to an end. We must learn to accept that reality and value each day and use to the best of our abilities.

I highly recommend this book for the Freemason who is searching for more meaning in his daily life. *Journey on the Level* provides an insightful way of applying the tenets of Freemasonry in



the real world; so that we truly can turn our rough ashlar into smooth ones and make ourselves better men. As a bonus, the book contains a section called reflections. This section allows the reader to document portions of the book that they find most interesting and write their thoughts. *Journey on the Level* is a good read and well worth your time.

Journey on the Level is available through most major booksellers or through the author's webpage at www.journeyonthelevel.com.

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