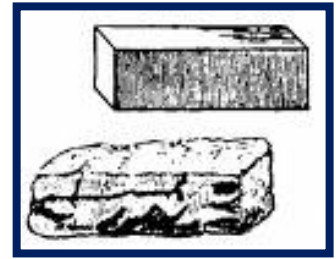


**2009 MWUGL Masonic Workshop**  
**Presenter: PM Alexander Carter, ADDGM District 31**  
**Saturday, July 18, 2009**



**ROUGH AND PERFECT ASHLER**

***GOOD MEN BECOME BETTER MEN THROUGH THE EXECUTION OF OUR MASONIC DUTY.***

**RITUAL REFERENCE – ROUGH AND PERFECT ASHLER:**

- THREE MOVABLE JEWELS:
  1. ROUGH ASHLER
  2. PERFECT ASHLER
  3. TRESTLE BOARD

The **ROUGH ASHLER** is the freestone as it comes from the quarry in its rude and natural state

The **PERFECT ASHLER** is a stone made ready by the working tools of the FC, to be adjusted and fitted for use in the building, is representative of the state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessings of GOD.

The **TRESTLE BOARD** is used by the Master Workman to draw his plans and designs, and reminds us that as operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Master on his Trestle Board, so should we endeavor to erect our spiritual building in accordance with the designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe, in the great book of revelation, which is our spiritual, moral, and Masonic trestle-board.

**Common Gavel** – An instrument made use of by operative masons to break off the superfluous corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting minds and consciences of all vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**I. OPERATIVE MASONARY**

The origins of the word ashlar can be traced back through various English and Medieval French words to Old Latin words. It is a word of ancient lineage and is associated with building stones for special uses. Ashlars are hewn stones in which all edges meet at right angles. Thus, such stones could be slabs of various dimensions or even cubes. These squared stones were used in square pavements and in walls. Some ancient walls were built with two outside faces of dressed ashlar and a space between the faces filled with rubble and mortar.

- A. **ROUGH ASHLAR** – Apprentice masons cut and raised Rough Stones from the stone quarry under the supervision of a FC and watchful eye of the Master masons. The Rough Stone

is not a mere shapeless stone found by accident but a stone roughly shaped, suggesting thereby the craft is selecting its material and not attempting to make something out of nothing.

- B. The Rough Ashlars was not a stone that was merely picked up somewhere. It was a stone that had been selected. Some work was done upon it. It was apparently a good stone. It was a stone that showed good prospects of being cable of being made into a Perfect Ashlars. If it had not been a good stone, it would never have been cut out from the quarry.
- C. Building stone obtained from the quarries is of uniform color and texture, hard tough and durable and of the best quality of its respective kind. It shall be free from decay, holes, veins, flaws, cracks, and other defects.

“And the King commanded, and they brought great stones, and costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. “And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonemasons; so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.” (I Kings, Verse 16-17).

**PERFECT ASHLAR** – Represents the dressed stone (after it has been made uniform and smoothed) by use of the working tools, the common gavel, and chisel. (The chisel; may be found in English Freemasonry but is not used in the United States as a Freemason symbol). Only after the stone has been dressed by an experienced stonemason, can it be suitable to placed into the architectural structure or building.

In ancient times, quarried stone which could be easily shaped into desired configurations was called “freestone”. Typically, freestones are limestone and sandstone. Then as now, only after refining and smoothing these rough stones into their desired shape, were the stonemasons able to “fit them for the builders use”.

### **Speculative Masonry:**

The ROUGH ASHLER is a stone, in its rough and natural state which reminds us of our rude and imperfect state by nature. The rough ashlar represents a rough, unprepared or undressed stone. Rough ashlar are symbolic of the uninitiated Freemason prior to discovering enlightenment, or man in his natural state – ignorant, uncultivated, and vicious

The candidate for membership is representative of the rough ashlar which has been smoothed and has apparent strength and solidarity. It possesses all the qualities that could make it a perfect stone for use in the construction of the Temple; however needs the hands and skills of the perfect Craftsman to bring about that result. Masonry does not accept men who are ignorant, uncultivated, or vicious.

The Rough Ashlar is imperfect; however there is somewhere within a perfect stone suitable for the builders use. Like the rough ashlar, we are rude and imperfect by nature, but like that stone, there is a useable part somewhere inside. With just a little

work from ourselves, some help from our friends and brothers, and with the blessings of God, we may become as a living stone," a more useable member of society.

Prospective members cannot, be merely picked up somewhere. The prospective member; must be selected and chosen. He must be apparently of good material. He should be just, upright and of mature age, sound judgment, strict morals and good report. He must be a man who shows good prospects and is cable; of being made into a good Mason.

#### **Symbolism of the PERFECT ASHLAR:**

1. The human soul realized through spiritual and intellectual pursuits;
2. Man educated, refined, with mind filled light;
3. The mind of man at the close of life, after a well regulated career of piety and virtue, which can only be tried by the square of God's Word, and the compasses of an approving conscience;
4. An allegory to a Freemason who, through Masonic education, works to achieve an upstanding life and diligently strives to obtain enlightenment;
5. The state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God;

Perfect Ashlars is representative of man who has allowed the wholesome influence of education to expand his intellect, restrain his passions and purify his life, he then is represented by the Perfect Ashlars, which under the skilful hands of workman, has been smoothed and squared and fitted for its place in the building.

#### **THE OPERATIVE TESTING PROCESS**

The Perfect Ashlar is for the more expert Craftsman to try and adjust his jewels on. In ancient times, with crude tools that would not even be used in this age, workman of great skill and experience produced material for the construction of the Temple having such perfection that each piece fitted perfectly into its place without adjustment or correction.

To keep this state of perfection in absolute balance, a standard must have been set whereby the workman could constantly test their tools to know that continued wear and use had not changed the measurements; even in the slightest degree.

## THE SPECULATIVE TESTING PROCESS

**Membership in a lodge does not make a man a mason. He must apply his abilities to improving all in him that falls short of that high standard set by Masonry in character and citizens building. If one is satisfied with being a Master Mason, then he falls short of anything that might be termed the Perfect Ashlars.**

### I. JEWELS

- Friendship
- Morality
- Love

### II. TOOLS

- Trowel – used to spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection.
- Plumb, Level, and Square – admonishes us to walk upright, in our several stations, before God and man; Squaring our actions by the square of virtue; and remembering that we are traveling upon that level of time to “That undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler return”
- Twenty-four-inch Gauge- dividing our time into 24 equal parts, emblematical of 24 hours in a day which we are taught to divide into three parts, whereby we find a portion for the service of GOD and the relief of a distressed worthy brother, a portion for our usual avocations, and a portion for refreshment and sleep
- Common Gavel – divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens

**WHAT IS THE STANDARD?**

**HOW DO WE TRY & ADJUST OUR JEWELS AND TOOLS?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU ACTUALLY TRY & ADJUST YOUR JEWELS AND TOOLS?**