

## NV Grand Lodge Short Lecture Series

# ROUGH AND PERFECT ASHLAR (short version)

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During the Entered Apprentice lecture, the new Mason is introduced to the **six jewels of the Lodge** when he is told there are three immovable and three movable. These "jewels" are not precious stones as one might imagine when first hearing the term jewels, but rather refer to their value to the operative builder in conducting his trade.

The Immovable Jewels are the square, level, and plumb. They are deemed immovable because they belong to fixed positions in the lodge, the East, West, and South. The three principal officers of the lodge who sit in these positions wear replicas of these operative tools. The Master wears the square as a symbol of morality. The Senior Warden wears the level as a symbol of equality while the Junior Warden wears the plumb as an emblem of upright living.

The three movable jewels are the Trestle Board, the Rough Ashlar and the Perfect Ashlar. They change and evolve.

**Today we are focused our further enlightenment on the Ashlars. A rough and perfect ashlar are stones which symbolize Man's moral and spiritual life.**

**The Entered Apprentice Lecture explains this further:**

We are taught-The Movable Jewels are the Rough Ashlar, the Perfect Ashlar, and the Trestle-board. The Rough Ashlar is a stone in its rude and natural state, as taken from the quarry; the Perfect Ashlar, one prepared by the workmen, to be adjusted by the working tools of a Fellow Craft; and the Trestle Board is for the master workman to draw his designs upon.

By the Rough Ashlar we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the Perfect Ashlar, of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by aid of a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of Deity.

### **The Ashlar**

The Rough Ashlar is a stone, rough and unhewn as taken from the quarry, the operative mason it is modeled, wrought in due form, and rendered fit for the intended structure; this represents man in his infant or primitive state, rough and unpolished as that stone. In operative Freemasonry, the rough ashlar represents a rough, unprepared, or undressed stone. In speculative Freemasonry, a rough ashlar is an allegory to the uninitiated Freemason prior to his discovering enlightenment.

The Perfect Ashlar is a stone of true die or square, fit only to be tried by the Square and Compasses; this represents man in the decline of years, after a regular well spent life in acts of piety and virtue, which can no otherwise be tried and approved than by the Square of God's Word, and the Compasses of his own self convincing conscience. Operatively, the Perfect ashlar represents the dressed stone (after it has been made uniform and smoothed) by use of the working tools of a mason. Only after the stone has been dressed by an experienced stonemason, can it be suitable to be placed into the architectural structure or building. Speculatively, a Perfect

Ashlar is an allegory to a Freemason who, through Masonic education, works to achieve an upstanding life and diligently strives to obtain enlightenment.

In Freemasonry, a potential candidate for admission brings himself and his desire to become a Mason to the attention of a Lodge. The Lodge, knowing that he is a rough ashlar, it then become the duty of the Lodge and its brethren to make certain that this rough ashlar flaws and imperfections are chipped away piece by piece evolving a brother towards becoming a perfect ashlar. The goal is then to take a good man and makes him better. We think of it as taking rough ashlar and trying to make them perfect.

The road to being the perfect ashlar is long, take time, and discipline, but through brotherly love and the seeking of more light in masonry, a mason becomes more enlightened.

#### References

Brick Masons (n.d.). Freemasonry: Rough and Perfect Ashlar. Retrieved from <https://bricksmasons.com/blogs/masonic-education/rough-and-perfect-ashlar>

Masonic Lodge Education. (n.d.). Rough and Perfect Ashlar. Retrieved from <https://www.masonic-lodge-of-education.com/rough-and-perfect-ashlar.html>