

## The work on the rough stone

During my initiation, I was invited to symbolically cut the rough stone with the mallet and the chisel, which reminded me strongly of the time when I was an operative mason. Hence the result of a strong emotion.

To define this term, I will rely on a definition stated by RAGON: *“The Rough Stone symbolizes the imperfections of the mind and the heart that the mason must apply himself to correct.”*

The new mason is a Rough Stone who must work on himself and on himself for a constant and interior work. Therefore, the Rough Stone is given to the apprentices in order to roughen it, to remove its roughness and to bring it closer to a form in relation with its destination. This rough stone is located on the north column, where the apprentices are.

The work of the mason consists in dominating his passions, submitting his will, opting for the best choices, using his reason and his feelings to conquer the mastery of himself in order to progress on the masonic path.

For the stone to take shape, the apprentice must accomplish a coherent work, he must have a reference model; he will find it to the south and opposite of the stone he is cutting. This cubic stone, all our life of Freemason will be necessary to try to approach it knowing when as an apprentice, our gestures are still uncertain and clumsy with tools that we do not master, it will be necessary to refine and polish his stone.

The fundamental symbol of the Raw Stone is that it must be cut to remove the roughness and thus make it smooth. In the training of the apprentice mason that I am, the acquisition of new knowledge is only significant insofar as it serves to perfect my morality and to give a higher pitch to my life. Therefore, I recognize myself perfectly in the latter.

Know yourself, that is to say, get in touch with your true personality, coming from your origin, your environment, your education, your social position; look for in man, what is most fundamental in him.

The mason will not only have to handle the masonic work instruments to correct his mistakes, his ignorance, his superstitions, his vices, his defects. The mason will not only have to free himself from the servitudes that come from outside, but from those that come from himself, routine, vanity, narrow-mindedness, skepticism, covetousness, greed, anger, brutality. The mason must do a work of rectification "*Rectificando*" to reach the mastery of his Art.

It is so much so that theories are not so important, a mason who would always have on his lips the words of fraternity and humanity, but who in his private life would only pursue his pleasure or his interest, without concern for his neighbor, would forget that he must constantly make the effort to polish his individual roughness, he would be the exact equivalent of the Christian who; the Gospel on his lips, would have as his only objective his own satisfactions.

Like many people, I have known intimate sufferings since I was very young, which I prefer to leave in the privacy of my home. Certain memories and old personal wounds have come to the surface. What I can say is that the impossibility to act on circumstances and the powerlessness to change things is a source of suffering. Some damaged parts of our history are sometimes hit so hard that negative energy reappears. Filled with frustration, bitterness and aggression, I made people pay for it, because they unknowingly brought out my wounds from the past.

Breaking with a victim functioning implies going back to consider the wounds of the past, trying to understand how they led me to take on a role that did not correspond to me in an attempt to reconnect with my deep individuality.

Making peace with myself is far from easy. Swept away by the demands of everyday life, I felt like I had lost myself along the way. Nevertheless, if I had been able to be the unconscious artisan of my unhappiness, I could become the conscious artisan of my happinesses. I understood that there were several important steps to rebuild myself. First of all, it is necessary to recognize and identify the wounds of life. Before going towards any reconstruction, it is essential to identify what is happening to me. What are the emotions attached to this situation? Why is this situation occurring now, in my life? What is the source, the origin? What is my own responsibility for this situation? Many questions, you may say. Perhaps, but nevertheless, essential.

Then, the fact of accepting the event, allows it to have less influence on me. Often, the fact of not accepting brings us in the negative zone of the situation and that plays against us. However, it is normal and human to deny. Denial is the 1st stage, in my opinion, of acceptance. It is often the ego that reacts. Slowly, acceptance takes place. We open ourselves to "reality". This "reality" is there, in a way, to allow us to heal in order to find our freedom.

Then comes the stage of forgiveness, which I believe is the most important. The whole process of healing and rebuilding comes in an essential phase. Forgiving ourselves. Forgiving others. Forgiving does not mean forgetting. Forgiving means giving yourself freedom. Through forgiveness, one can detach oneself from the event and its components.

Finally, we must make new choices. This is the stage where I have changed the programming that was written in me. This is the stage where I recreated a new identity. This is the stage where Freemasonry makes sense. I put in place new beliefs, new knowledge, new values. I have opened myself to a new life. I have patience, courage and perseverance. Some days I score points, I move forward. Others, I go backwards. This is normal. The important thing to remember is that if I've managed to carve out a little bit of my stone, and even if I take a few more steps back, I know I can "copy and paste" and pick up the slack.

Along the way, life will test me, probe me. All of this is to help me measure where I am in my new choices. Are my new reference points, my new markers well anchored? I am the creator of my life. I must never forget where I started. Sometimes, and this is human, I will look at what remains to be cut from my stone but I will not forget the small victories. The ones that make me progress.

For many years, I thought that change was the responsibility of others. In reality, all change must begin with oneself. Yet I have the impression that I know myself only too well. I don't think I'm wrong about my flaws, my weak points, I can see where to put the chisel first. But my rough stone seems to me tough, the handling of the mallet and the chisel being still very delicate.

I discovered this stone on the day of my initiation, which was completely insignificant to me before I came to the lodge, when the venerable master invited me to put one knee on the ground and tools in hand to execute my first work, with 3 strokes of the mallet and chisel, to symbolically begin the work

on myself. That day, the apprentice that I am became aware that he was the stone, a stone with a thousand facets of a form unusable for the building of a Masonic temple, I will have to cut this stone, to separate the coarse and unusable parts that the young initiate that I am will have been able to acquire in the profane world.

This last one which is indifferently matter and spirit, I will have to try to give it an acceptable form so as to be incorporated harmoniously in the building of the temple. This delicate task will be done without noise because the stone is interior, it will not change the external aspect, but it will deeply transform my being. My thoughts, my reflections will be more profound, my mind more receptive, more open, my actions will take time to reflect.

This work is greatly facilitated by my brothers who have opened the doors of the Lodge to me and who have made me discover this magnificent workshop of stonecutters, thus opening the way to knowledge and light.

It will certainly take me a lot of time and perseverance, but I am fully aware that this step will lead me to a universe that I did not suspect and I am delighted to be among my brothers who surround me and make me progress. I am well within my inner self and wish that the rough stone that I am will become with time a beautiful polished stone.

I have Spoken, W.:.M.:.

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