

The rough ashlar

People of the ground, trampled on, coarse, unable to move, hard, imputrescible, solitary, silent...
The symbolism of the rough ashlar is the first one that the new apprentice is asked to deepen.

During this apprenticeship, we must understand that we are both the stone and the worker who cuts this stone, the object and the subject, this stone of the path and the one who picks it up, the student who becomes his own master.

Whoever has understood this elementary symbolism has understood everything about the Masonic method. This philosophy of the first degree is not simple, it requires assiduity to transform our relationship with men and change our vision of things.

We acquire it not by intellectual reflection but very concretely by working with the raw stone. This work appears quite naturally as an effort to be made on oneself. The work of the Raw Stone only has meaning and scope if it is understood as an initiatory journey.

Because a symbol is not a simple image.

A lodge is not the assembly of Brothers that we would call "rough ashlar" at the beginning and that would become "Cut Stones", trimmed at the end, once they would have integrated well.

"Stone", because it is a building that no one will ever show us the plans, not even the project.

It is a "rough ashlar" because no one is assigned a place in advance and no one will ever be recognized or assigned one.

It is up to each person to discover that, as a stone among stones, he or she will remain forever doomed to impotence and moral solitude if he or she does not take part in the construction of the edifice, not to find a place for himself or herself but to fulfill his or her destiny.

This is why the rough ashlar does not only symbolize the new perfectible mason who would become a cut Stone when, after an effort on himself, he would be conformed to a pre-established model. This model does not exist.

The raw Stone, building material, symbolizes at the same time, without dissociating them, the mason and his contribution to the common construction, what he is but also what he serves, his self and what he evacuates from his self for the accomplishment of the human project.

We are far from the simple personal achievement.

It takes a lot of humility to accept oneself as a raw stone and it takes ambition, a real metaphysical ambition, to want a personal destiny merged with the destiny of the species and to pass from "know thyself" to "discover what you are for".

The Stone is raw because we still have to discover its destination.

There is no need to oppose raw Stone and cut Stone but to link them together. It is not two states of ourselves, contradictory and successive which would exclude each other. We will only be able to link them together with the help of the other symbols and in particular the Mosaic Pavement whose black and white tiles are a permanent reminder of the principle of duality.

By it, a poor stone of the ways accepted by all, different from all the others, becomes, by its own initiative and to accomplish its destiny, sapphire or chalcedony.

I have Spoken, W∴M∴.

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