

Two Ashlars

The word, ashlar, comes from the Latin word, 'assis', which was a board or a plank. It became 'asheler' in early English denoting a stone in the rough from the quarries without any specific dimension.

Speculative masons use the ashlar in two forms: one rough, one smooth, of the same dimensions. The rough ashlar, representing an Entered Apprentice, is a stone in its rude and natural state, emblematical of man in his natural state: possessing respectability in his community, assuming full responsibility as a citizen, a church man, and a member of his family. He has all the qualities of the perfect material of a mason but lacks the polish that comes from the continued study and practice of the great teachings of masonry.

Through membership in the Lodge, he applies himself to improving his shortcomings set by the high standards of Masonry. Through more education and the degrees of Fellowcraft and Master Mason, he progresses toward the Perfect Ashlar, a symbol of perfection. The Perfect Ashlar is more for the expert workman.

Through further education and self-development, we grow closer to a solid foundation of Masonry based on the Sacred Laws. We must constantly contemplate our own defects and shortcomings, adjusting our way of life to bring it in harmony with the standards set forth by the Great Creator symbolized by the Perfect Ashlar.

The Ashlars are not just two pieces of stone but represent what we have been And what we hope to be.