



EX ORIENTE

“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us;
what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”
Albert Pike

2019 Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master.....Rick Wade
Senior Warden.....Curtis Renke
Junior Warden.....WB Brian Conrad
Treasurer.....WB Dave Schweitzer
Secretary.....WB Russ Smith
Senior Deacon.....Greg Carroll
Junior Deacon.....James Barr
Chaplain.....Alex Walker
Marshal.....Kurt Cline
Tiler.....WB Mark Tenorio

Schedule

February 13, 2019.....MM Proficiencies

February 20, 2019.....MM Degree

February 27, 2019.....Education: Druid



LODGE CONTACTS

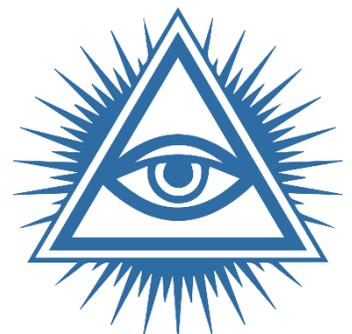
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What are Masonic Esotericists and what do they do?

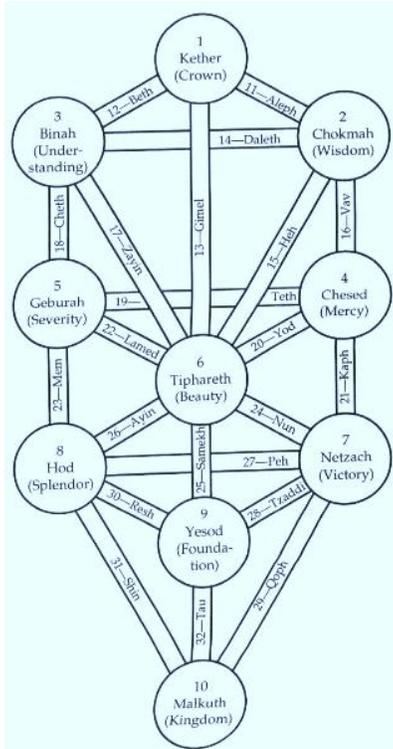
In all other respects they are usually ordinary Masons, and typically are serving the fraternity in every jurisdiction, appendant body, and official capacity. They pursue esotericism because it is a personal interest, and not because they believe it is a requirement of Masonry. To many people, Albert Pike is the epitome of a Masonic esotericist.

They are men trying to improve themselves in Masonry by examining the great questions of life. - Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is the essential nature of reality? What is wisdom, truth, or beauty?



They are Practicing introspection ("Know thyself"). -What do I really believe and value? What are my virtues and vices? What are the secret hopes and fears that influence how I think, feel and act? How do I need or want to change?

They are historians researching esoteric influences on the ritual, symbols, and philosophies of Masonry. They ask questions such as: To what extent were early Masons interested in such things as? Why were they interested in them? How did those interests affect the principles, values and ideals of Masonry as we know it today?



They are scholars performing comparative studies of ritual, symbolism and teachings among Masonry and other fraternal, philosophical and spiritual traditions. They ask questions such as: What are the parallels and differences between Masonry and other traditions? How might those parallels and differences shed more light on the meanings of our ritual, symbols, and myth?

They are students of life pursuing more light through studies in psychology, sociology, anthropology, mythology, philosophy, religion, history, languages, etc. Masonry teaches us to polish and adorn our minds, to advance ourselves in learning, to improve our relationships with others, to always seek more light, and to search for that which has been lost. Each of these noble pursuits is advanced by studies in the humanities, the liberal arts and sciences that address the individual human being, society, and culture, all of which are Masonic concerns.

They are contemplatives practicing various disciplines of meditation, including prayer. The most revered saints and respected sages of history have practiced meditation and extolled its virtues, as have a considerable number of modern psychologists and clergy. Meditation has been identified as the key that opens the door to spiritual enlightenment and lauded as an indispensable means to attain the fullest measures of peace, joy, health, artistic creativity, personal productivity, philosophical insight, and understanding and compassion for our fellow human beings. In short, meditation is understood to be a valuable working tool in achieving everything that Masonry values. "To heighten one's understanding of the basis for Esoteric Masonry, it is helpful to have a general knowledge of the history, traditions, and philosophies which formed the broader current of the mystery tradition upon which Masonic Esotericism is based."

Source: A GUIDE FOR THE NEW ESOTERIC FREEMASON, Bro. William Steve Burkle.

The Skull & Crossbones and Freemasonry--You're Doing it Wrong

by Midnight Freemason Contributors

Bro. Brian Schimian & Bro. Robert H. Johnson

In the world of Masonry, there are many symbols which represent various teachings in the Fraternity. One, however, is continually employed by many much to the chagrin of countless persons and sovereign Masonic bodies. We are, of course, referring to the skull & crossbones. In this short article, we'd like to bring to the attention of the reader and anyone else who may happen upon this article the tradition, antiquity and importance of this great symbol and to set the record straight for those who see it in a way that is outside the definitions and philosophical interpretations of Freemasonry.



Robert: In my years as a Mason, one symbol stands alone as the most powerful, and not just because of its imagery. The Skull & Crossbones is a stark symbol. It stops you in your tracks and makes you notice it. It dares you to peruse it, to understand it. It does what it is supposed to do. It reminds you of your own mortality. Countless times, I have worn a square and compass pin with a skull in the middle in place of the American standard "G" (only adopted around 1717, mind you). And when I have worn this or any other item emblazoned with this image of a skull, a skull & crossbones, or any variation thereof, I get the same response, "Rob, what's with the skull?"

My answer is usually, "It's one of the lessons of the first degree and of the third." The brothers always seem to give me a halfcocked frown and say something like, "I don't know about that." It's like a skipping record. It appears those who take issue

with the skull & crossbones being used, largely in part, seem to replace the symbolism from what it is in Freemasonry to what it means in either pop culture or their religion. To be frank, I'm a little tired of it.

One of the larger areas in which brothers complain about the use of the skull and crossbones is in the Chamber of Reflection. These Chambers of Reflection are widely used in many lodges all around the world, and their effectiveness as a tool in preparing the candidate has been extremely well documented. In place of a "prep room" they use the CoR. Chambers of Reflection and Preparation Rooms are virtually the same thing, like it or not, Brothers. The only difference is that a Chamber of Reflection has a system of quality control, it being part of the ritual, that is. It isn't a dusty old broom closet you let your candidate get dressed in. ("Take these garments and get dressed, watch out for the paint cans.")

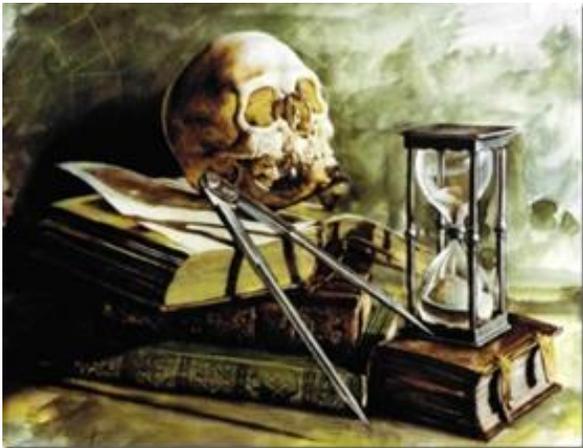
Let's get real here for a moment, on the level. We have a problem with them because they may be offensive to our particular religious sensibilities or are afraid that it will offend someone else's. If the latter is the case, then a root cause analysis would show poor education on the part of an individual lodge, and ergo is the basis for banning the practice or having an issue with the symbol. In the cases of sovereign Masonic bodies having a posture against the use of the symbol, it only solidifies our lack of confidence in the individual lodge to educate its candidates in the true symbolism we hold so dear. Either way, it's a sad state of affairs.

And yet again, I will remind you, this isn't a "devil's room" or a "witch's room" or anything that your "religious eyes" are seeing. It's a Masonic room, with symbols designed to make you think. The skull's imagery is quite antique. P.D. Newman writes of the ritual of years long past where it is referred to as "The Bone Box" which "holds the key or pass", it describing the skull as a box of bones or teeth and which has the pass because it is represented by the human tongue. It is believed that even in the oldest "Operative" Masonic lodge ever discovered in Pompeii, Italy which dates to circa 79 CE, was found a tile relief featuring...wait for it...a skull.

Brothers, the skull and crossbones is not evil. I'm sorry some of us feel this way. It is taught to you in the first degree and overwhelmingly in the 3rd degree. If we've forgotten that, perhaps we need to reread the lectures. It is the symbol of your mortality,

Memento Mori

"Remember That You Have To Die"



Brian: Lately, the subject of the Square & Compass being associated with a skull has been going around Masonic circles, especially on social media. To my surprise and utter disbelief, some sovereign Masonic bodies have actually issued statements that forbid the skull to be displayed with the Square & Compass. Not to seem pompous or take myself off the level, but I would have to suggest that these Brothers go back and read up on some ritual, starting with the Entered Apprentice degree.

According to some, displaying the Square & Compass with a skull "gives the wrong impression" because "that is not who we are"...

One of my closest Brothers had this to say: "Not understanding the Skull is like not understanding the Acacia."

The Skull stands as a bastion in Masonry as a reminder that death is ever imminent and should incite ones reflection of their own life. The skull also relates to rebirth and as a reminder for spiritual reawakening. The crossed bones are added to signify the pillars of the portico where man stands as he labors in the quarry. To say that the skull is a misrepresentation of Masonry is akin to saying that the company Apple is "evil" because their logo happens to be an apple with a bite taken out of it. Somehow the jump from an innocuous corporate logo to Eve taking a bite from a forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden makes complete logical sense to some people.

I have to say, that every time I hear about some officer getting his "jewels" in a bind over the Square & Compass and a skull being displayed together, I get closer and closer to having it tattooed on the back of my hands. I already have them tattooed on my arms. I would have to assume that there are more people in the world that are allergic to bee stings than would be offended or

get the wrong idea about Masonry by seeing a skull with the "lights". Therefore, perhaps we should remove the beehive from the ritual if we are looking to not be "offensive" to anyone.

Another Brother, whom I have had several conversations with, some on this very subject had this to say: "They tell you to not disagree with those who do not think well of masonry, uttering the "pearls before swine" stuff..... then they ban skulls because someone who isn't a mason may not like it."

Brothers, we cannot intend to make everyone happy. By attempting to do so, we begin to cut and destroy the very fabric that this Craft was built upon. We are what we are and our symbols are what they are (and have been for hundreds of years, if not thousands). I have no tolerance for opinionated ignorance, especially when it comes to Freemasonry. From the very onset of ones journey as an Entered Apprentice, we are told that what is imparted within the degrees is a scratch on the surface and we are charged to educate ourselves further. This is yet another prime example of why we should, as a fraternity, quit wasting time and dispense with the reading of the minutes. More time and effort needs to be put into Masonic Education and exploring the meaning of our symbols. Perhaps then, we will not make such decisions in haste and further degrade the things that make Masonry what I have known it to be since I was eight years old.

Conclusion: Mackey's Masonic Encyclopedia has three entries relating to the skull. The first being "The Skeleton", which is simply a symbol for death used by the ancient Egyptians, which reminded them of mortality. The second being the "skull", which it says "The skull as a symbol is not used in Freemasonry except in Masonic Templarism, where it is a symbol of mortality." And the third mention is that of the "skull and crossbones" which it defines as the following:

They are a symbol of mortality and death, and are so used by heralds in funeral achievements. As the means of inciting the mind to the contemplation of the most solemn subjects, the skull and cross-bones are used in the Chamber of Reflection in the French and Scottish Rites, and in all those Degrees where that Chamber constitutes a part of the preliminary ceremonies of initiation.



From this, we can say that it is indeed a fine symbol. A UNIVERSAL symbol which has transcended ages, cultures and languages. The symbol which reminds us that we can take nothing with us, that in death all men are equal. It represents that thing which is our transformation from this world to the next. The Grand Leveler. It is effective. Perhaps this is why some don't like it. It works so well, that it reminds us of our own mortality, our equality in relation to the rest of humanity and perhaps that hits just a little too close to home.

SOURCE: http://www.midnightfreemasons.org/2015/02/the-skull-crossbones-and-freemasonry_9.html

The articles contained in this trestle board are for educational purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the Lodge, or members of the lodge.

This trestle board was edited by Curtis Renke EDL160 SW

Trestle Board Contributions

All members of East Denver 160 are welcome to contribute to the Trestle Board. Note that our Trestle Board is not just sent to members. It is also distributed to other Lodges and to Brothers around the World who are not members of the Lodge and who enjoy reading the content. Submissions are due by the second meeting of the month for the next month's Trestle Board. Submissions can be emailed to curtis@edl160.org

"Ex Oriente" is the monthly Trestle Board of East Denver Lodge No. 160.