

THE ROSE AS A SYMBOL OF REGENERATION

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(Above: A Rose depicted on a French Masonic medal)



(Reverse side of same Masonic medal)

(Notice: The Double-Headed Eagle holds a sword with hilt on right
with sword pointed left)

(In most Jurisdictions the Sword is pointed inversely,
with hilt on left side and tip on the right)

The Rose has been a symbol of "Life" for centuries. Consequently, Freemasons, especially Masonic Rosicrucians have held the symbol of the Rose and Cross in high esteem as the emblem of our honorable Society.



In general, Freemasonry itself confines itself to "Working Tools" of the ancient stonemasons which utilized a specific purpose within their trade. As Speculative Freemasons, we adopt those implements for more noble and glorious purposes of symbolizing a way to remember how to conduct our lives by applying those symbols for good, ethical conduct.

In sort of a contrast, Masonic Rosicrucians have "adopted" symbols such as the Cross {once a literal wooden tree} and the Rose {in full-bloom from a living rose-bush} as symbols which reflect the "Life" we so cherish and remind us of the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The above Masonic token bears many of the symbols Masonic Rosicrucians hold dear: The Square & Compasses; the 5-Pointed Star, the Rose, the Cross, and even the Double-Headed Eagle of Lagash {another living creature}. On that side of the medal, the inscription reads: PRAE SI STUDIO CONSEQUAR ISTA SAT EST {Rewards will follow , if you study enough and your Faith is strong}.

As Masons, we all endeavor to study The Great Lights of Masonry which include the Holy Bible or other ancient Holy Writs. Our mortal life spans from conception or birth until our natural death. However, Eternal Life is indeed for all Eternity. It is symbolized by the emblems which constitute this long and constant cycle. The numbers of breaths an average man, woman or child takes in a lifetime is almost unable to calculate. We needn't dwell on the trivial specifics as long as we realize that despite disruptions: our lives continue even if we don't keep a running-tally. Being studious and attentive doesn't mean that we have to keep meticulous statistics. Perhaps the best way to describe the fine-balance we must strike....is just by having periods of prayer, self-examination, and a room as a Chamber for private Reflection.

Similarly, in some locales, a harsh winter may have an apparent effect of killing a rosebush: the rosebush looks like only a mere skeleton of itself; yet it is very much "alive," albeit, in a dormant condition which might resemble its death. Its buds may be non-existent in the depths of winter, yet its unseen roots beneath the soil are very much alive. In many ways, our Religious Faith Beliefs {of whatever particular religion we practice} likewise rest with a belief-system that is normally "unseen." However, the attributed outcomes are sometimes more in the eye of the beholder = the believer. Some people say that their prayers to God are seemingly answered; while other prayers may not be; while still other prayers may be answered at a later date.

Some people mistakenly fail to see God's presence in the manner they'd like; and when they don't see bright and shiny "evidence" --- some people mistakenly assume God has left them. Birds, such as the Eagle may fly South during harsh winters; yet they return North in Spring and Summer.



This ebb and flow shows us that although something may be "gone" or "away"...or even missing: the good virtues which return are comparable to that Everlasting Covenant between God and Man. Even Almighty God himself has not gone away. Almighty God is still ever-present in our lives. That is why all Masons must believe in God or in a Creator / Higher Being. That "Creator" keeps on Creating. The fields of natural grasses or intentionally planted plots are still growing year after year. Humans and other species keep reproducing. And, even if slight differences in characteristics 'evolve' with subtle changes ----we are still products of that First Creation. God has a plan for all Mankind.

It is like a Masonic friend of mine, in Maryland often says: "The finite mind of Man isn't meant to comprehend the fuller, infinite mind of Almighty God ---whose mind and power is All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and Omnipotent. Granted, some bad things may happen to good people --- yet that is no reason to "blame God." I've had my share of setbacks. I have always continued believing in God. We cannot judge things by one 'snapshot' of 'Time', nor by one or more tragic or miserable circumstances. In many ways, God granted man what many people describe as 'Free Agency'...the ability to think and act on his own ...and suffer the consequences of those actions. All that proves: is that Man is a fallible creature.

However, it may give us solace that the attributes of Nature are often more "directly administered by God" {for lack of a better phrase}. If left alone, {and barring disease, drought or other complications} a rosebush will generally show new blooms and blossoms each year. However, if a man (or if a group of men use shovels or machinery to dig-up rosebushes or even dig up a hedgerow of trees) --- that destruction interferes with God's normal seasonal plan. Granted, God gave mankind the ability to be good Stewards of the earth and have dominion over animals and birds of the air....but that is not implying that every man or woman makes good decisions. We must take due care that our pursuit of a cultivating a "better Quality of Life" doesn't impulsively deprive us of (nor mask) the "natural, God-given attributes which adorned the Earth." I would almost use the analogy: Man can be likened a barber or hair stylist to have the 'Free Agency' to prune, clip, and manicure our world. Yet, if we get carried away and clip-away too much; we may have more regrets than any bad haircut. I recently saw a little boy who tried to give himself a haircut. He clipped too much of his own hair; and he and his parents had to accept an all-over buzz-cut or crew-cut to attempt to "make it right." The intent was to go back to the baseline or basics and let things grow out of their "flawed state" into a "more perfected state" {or more acceptable or palatable state}. If only mankind's woes were as easy to correct as a bad haircut.... whereby we could simply "wait and let new growth" correct human failures. Unfortunately, it takes more effort than that.

Freemasonry is a strong champion of "adapting" to meet changing circumstances to elevate our own personal characters and giving us a circle of friends and Brothers to encourage us to improve-upon our human flaws and imperfections. "Adapting" shouldn't be confused with just arbitrary "evolution" and I'm not speaking of Evolution as a theory of how Species came into being. I'm using the word in the generic sense of 'evolution' as a



gradual transformation which allows tiny changes or minute alterations. Those slight adaptations are still fully consistent with God's overall plan.

Our emblem of the Double-Eagle sitting, and about to 'soar', is reminiscent of a period of rest and renewal before another Season takes-off, beginning the yearly renewal process anew. Let us be diligent and kind; Let us study and practice good behavior, as well as good ethics, and it is necessary that we practice those characteristics DAILY so we get back into a regular routine. If we do so, we will transform our lives into a perennial period of growth and ongoing maturity. We must nurture the noblest precepts by which the ROSE represents. It isn't quite a symbol of a rebirth, but rather, more of a revival of spirit to bolster our inner Faith. That symbolwhich we see literally growing "in the soil of earth" is also a symbol to remind us that God created the Earth and all the Universe, and all that is in it. It also reminds us of the saving Grace and immortality of the Soul, (which the Creator promised mankind) as the Bible says we will someday enter: "That Spiritual House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

For now, on Earth, we must live each day to the fullest. And, we must take our responsibilities seriously of caring for the Earth and everything that is in it. As the Masonic medal (above) suggests: We must study our own behaviors and SIMULTANEOUSLY STUDY God's Commandments as a blueprint for our lives ---and then balance the two to achieve that desired Equilibrium. Ancient Operative stonemasons used "working tools." Speculative Freemasons "adapted tools" to reflect aspects of conducting our daily life, as in "Squaring our Lives by the Square of Virtue." And, along the same lines, Masonic Rosicrucians go one step further to use "Symbols of Life" as emblematic of helping the Mason "adapt" to the delicate balance of Mankind's problems, difficulties, or confounding dilemmas to achieve a holier HARMONY to guide our paths back toward PERPETUAL good stewardship with all living creatures and all natural resources.

A great many Masons who were (and are) Masonic Rosicrucians have also been Medical Doctors. It was the noted scholar and physician: Bro.:. and Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33^o and a Knight Templar who stated that the Eagle is used as a symbol of "Divine character" showing our members how to poise their fledgling wings "to soar from the dull corruption of Earth to a higher and holier sphere." Everything of virtue in this world is precious to some degree. Once, we recall that most things have traces of "life" and growth" within them --- whether is the new growth comparable to a rosebush with its new buds and blooms or the new growth of a maturing Eagle spreading its wings in readiness for flight -- -- we will be better equipped to handle our own inner maturity by celebrating our own inner joys and healing our own inner sorrows ---and those of others.



Sources / References / Exhibits /Recommended Readings:

- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33^o and a Knight Templar.
- Archives of The Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada.
- Archives Grand Lodge of Kansas A.F. & A.M
- Macoy's Masonic Manual by Robert Macoy, 33^o and a Knight Templar. Fifteenth Edition. New York. Published in New York, Year 1861 by Clark, Austin, Maynard & Company located at 3 Park Row & 3 Ann Street, New York, New York. "A Pocket Companion for the Initiated".

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