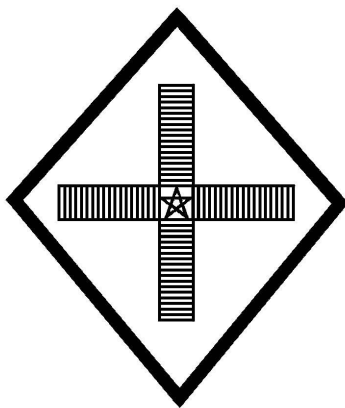


Societas Rosicruciana
In
Anglia



Notes for the Zelator

Notes for the Newly Admitted Frater

Introduction

Congratulations on your admission as a Zelator of the Society. You will have already been given a copy of the Ordinances (the Regulations of the Society), By-Laws, and the Zelator ritual. The purpose of this leaflet is to introduce you to the Aims and Objects of the Society and its areas of study. Also included are some Points of Contemplation which are designed to assist you in your study of the Zelator Grade so that you can show that you are sufficiently prepared to be advanced to the next Grade. You are also invited to write a short paragraph on each of those topics and to send them to your College Coordinator of Studies who will be pleased to assist your researches.

S.R.I.A. and Freemasonry

You will have doubtless been informed by your proposer that our Society is not just another Masonic Order or Degree, in fact it is not truly masonic at all. It is based on the Society of Rosicrucians, and it was only in relatively recent times (mid-19th century), at its reformation, that its membership was restricted to Christian Freemasons. This was done in order to ensure the highest quality of membership; with brethren whose character, fidelity and discretion had already been fully tested.

Aims and Objects

Although the character and teachings of the Society are Christian, its Objects are left very wide in order to encourage the widest possible personal study and to enable the sharing of knowledge and wisdom from a range of cultures and religious practices. At your admission you were told that “Our objects are mutual aid and encouragement in working out the great problems of life, the advancement of science, the propagation of knowledge and the diffusion of that glorious revelation”. In our Ordinances we read that our purpose is “Searching out the Secrets of Nature; to facilitate the study of the system of Philosophy founded upon the Kabbalah and the doctrine of Hermes Trismegistus, which was inculcated by the original Fratres Rosae Crucis, AD 1450, and to investigate the meaning and symbolism of all that now remains of the wisdom, art and literature of the ancient world”

Allegory and Symbol

The doctrines of the ancient Mystery Schools were expressed in allegorical form and with the use of symbols. To the uninitiated they were unintelligible, but the initiated were made aware of the meanings carefully hidden in these writings and in the ceremonies through which they had passed. Freemasonry, a descendant of the ancient Mystery Schools, uses this method to inculcate moral and spiritual truths, and our Society of Rosicrucians is no exception in this regard. As to the true meaning of our ceremonies and their personal relevance, that is something which can only be gained by personal study and application, all of which is enhanced by what we share at our college meetings.

Knowledge, Truth and Wisdom

Throughout the history of mankind, the spiritual leaders and sages of the world have told us that all knowledge comes from within, that truth is something which we perceive within our self, and that Wisdom is acquired as the result of our response to life's experiences; but it cannot be taught.

At your first entry into the College, the Celebrant informed you that our Society is not the repository of all Truth, but rather, is composed of brethren who seek after Truth and Wisdom, and that our Society has a system of instruction and a method which will help each Frater along the path to Truth. You were also advised that “Our aim is to be good, our desire to be humble, our study to be wise”. Now the inquirer after Truth will find that his first steps tread on the confines of the impenetrable; that he is constantly finding himself out of his depth; that all his knowledge, no matter from what source it may proceed, tends to become transcendental; that he is led inexorably from the intellectual to the moral, from the physical to the spiritual. In many ways we might use that wonderful phrase from the Craft “The light of a Mason is darkness visible.” Nevertheless, you were encouraged to proceed on your Quest, though the way seems long and the soul is at times weary, and to toil on towards the utmost pinnacles of Wisdom, to the Source of Wisdom which is God made manifest.

What you have already been told in the Zelator ceremony makes it very clear that knowledge is not to be confused with wisdom. Knowledge lies mainly in the observation of facts and phenomena, and in tracing the underlying principles; but discrimination in the application of knowledge is ‘wisdom’. Perception of Truth by the human intellect can only be partial and approximate, and our perception (understanding) of it will change during our lifetime. But we can perceive enough ascertainable truth to stimulate further enquiry and speculation, which never ends. We are all travellers on the road to Truth; we are all fellow-pilgrims on our Quest, in our search for the meaning of our life and being

The Kabbalah

On your admission to the Society, you were told that “Among the secrets of Nature are the writings of the Kabbalists which include the demonstration of the Eternal Essence of God, the key to the government of the Universe, and the powers and properties of numbers”. The Kabbalah, the esoteric doctrine of the Jews, is one of the keys to greater knowledge in the Society, and it is referred to in more detail in higher Grades. In the Kabbalistic system, letters and numbers are interrelated, and this system can assist the seeker to delve more deeply into the layers of meaning contained within scripture. The Tree of Life, that great glyph of the Kabbalah, with its Sephiroth (Principles) and linking Paths, is a ladder to God and a mirror to ourselves and we can all benefit from a study of this method of spiritual development.

With regard to the power and properties of numbers, some information is provided in this Grade. It is an important branch of symbolism, and is a key to the symbolism of the Craft and other degrees in Freemasonry as well as S.R.I.A. But, as with the Knowledge Lectures in the higher Grades, it is up to the Frater to do the work and study; what is offered in the Lecture is only intended to be an introduction to the subject

Conclusion

The ceremony of your admission as a Frater of the Society is not only a formal introduction to the S.R.I.A., but it also provides an indication as to the direction for your studies and the conduct that you are to pursue. You begin your membership of the Society as a Student, and when you progress to the 2nd Order (Grade V) you have the responsibility of being a Teacher, and then in the 3rd Order (from Grade VIII) you are a Ruler. That there are ceremonies for all the various Grades indicates that there are important stages in this instruction, a progressive revelation of knowledge. In a sense, certain keys are put in your hands, but it is up to you to open the doors of knowledge and understanding, as we journey together in solving “the great problems of life”.

There is no end to this acquisition of knowledge, but sooner or later we are forced to turn inward and look at the centre, rather than the circumference of the circle. “Man know thyself” could well be our motto, and the Society has much to offer the seeker who desires to achieve this understanding of himself, of life, and of the world in which he lives.

As a member of this ancient and honoured Society of Rosicrucians, you have an exemplar to follow, our revered founder Christian Rosenkreutz, whose life and teachings are set out in the 17th century publications called the ‘Fama Fraternitatis’ and the ‘Confessio’. He provided a wonderful example of “The duty and beauty of service”, not only to his Fratres, but also to all humanity. As a modern-day version of this Fraternity, we can but do our best; to do good to all and to seek “The vision splendid”.

Finally, as we can read in the Fama, our life and work on this Earth is that “Finally man might understand his own nobleness and worth and the reasons why he is called the Microcosm, that perfect reflection of the Macrocosm of the Divine Creator”.

The History of the Fraternity

Part 1

There was, in or about 1610, a curious and anonymous Latin text that was circulated among the learned of Europe. It purported to be an account of a secret fraternity of adepts but how far it represented historical truth, or how far it could be regarded as symbolical truth in its form as a parable, has never been decided. In any case, internal evidence shows it most certainly was the work of an illuminated adept and such is the nature of the document that it is regarded as a fountainhead of the popular tradition concerning Western occultism.

The object of that Fraternity was to attain knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of Nature hitherto unknown: to induce great wisdom, which would renew and reduce all arts to perfection, so that man might understand his own nature and worth, and why he is called the microcosm. Although theology, physics and mathematics do manifest the truth, it must also be said that the pride, the covetousness and the blinkered views of the learned do not permit them to agree together. It was to this end that "Our most godly and illuminated Brother C.R.C., a German, chief and originator of our Fraternity, hath much and long time laboured."

He was born in 1378 and was descended from noble parents, but by reason of poverty was placed in a cloister at five years of age, where he learned Latin and Greek indifferently, and became associated with a Brother P.A.L., with whom he planned to go to the Holy Land.

On this journey Brother P.A.L. died at Cyprus, and Brother C.R.C. went on to Damascus, intending to go on to Jerusalem. But because of ill-health, however, he remained at Damascus, where he greatly impressed the Turks. It was here that he became acquainted with the wise men of Damascus and Arabia, who taught and showed him about the wonders of Nature that they had discovered. Although only 16 years of age, the Arabians received him, not as a stranger, but as one whom they had long expected, and they called him by his name, and showed him many secrets.

He learned there the Arabian tongue; physics; mathematics and translated the book "M" into Latin. After three years he went on into Egypt where he sojourned for a short while before sailing to Fez. Here the Arabians instructed him, and he became acquainted with those beings, which we call the Elementals, who revealed to him many of their secrets.

As regards the work in Fez, he confesses that their magic was not altogether pure, and that their Qabalah was defiled by their religion; but he was still able make good use of their knowledge which not only served to increase his own faith but further confirmed to him the perfect harmony of the whole world, and in that tune and melody of God, with Heaven and Earth.

He stayed for two years but then left Fez and sailed to Spain, hoping to exchange his knowledge with the learned men in Europe, however they made a mockery of his learning. All that is except one man whose name was Paracelsus who studied and complemented his work.

After many painful travels, our loving Father C.R.C. at last returned to Germany where he built his house and there spent a great deal of time in meditation on philosophy, alchemy and mathematics. Five years later however there came about a change in his life and he was joined by three others in his work, who we know as; Bros. G.V., J.A., and J.O.. With these three he entered into an obligation that they would all be faithful, diligent and secret, and that they would commit carefully to writing all that he should direct and instruct.

Thus did Christian Rosencreutz form The Fraternity and thereby the root stock from which we are sprung

Recommended Reading

There are a number of books available on the Rosicrucians and Rosicrucianism in general. Two that are recommended are:

The Rosicrucian Enlightenment -Frances Yates

The Rosicrucians -Christopher McIntosh.

On the subject of the Kabbalah the introductory books of note are:

The Tree of Life -Halevi

Qabalah -John Bonner

For more in-depth reading on the Kabbalah:

Mystical Qabalah -Dion Fortune

Garden of Pomegranates -Israel Regardie

The books of: Gareth Knight and

William Gray

A useful book on the subject of Numbers is:

The Key to the Universe -Curtis

The Questions set out below are designed to assist the Frater in his understanding of the Grade of Zelator as well as his preparation for the Grade of Theoricus. You are invited to write a short paragraph or a series of ‘notes’ on each subject and to send them to your College Co-ordinator of Studies who will be pleased to receive them and discuss them with you.

Subjects for Contemplation

1. What did you seek and what brought you to this Society?
2. What are the Aims of the Society?
3. What do the Four Ancients represent to you?
4. What do the letters IHVH and INRI signify, how are they related and how is the latter represented in the college?
5. What do you understand by the maxim “As above, so it Is Below, but after another fashion.”?
6. Numbers have meanings other than their arithmetical value, how explained?
7. How many rounds are there on Jacob’s Ladder. and what do they signify?
8. What do you understand by the words “The Tree of Life”?
9. What is inscribed on the jewel of our Society?
10. What do you understand by the name “The Rose of Sharon”?

John Paternoster & Fred Shade