

An interview with Frater A.V.I.A.F.



As part of the 120 year anniversary of the founding of the Order of the Golden Dawn, the Hermetic Virtues magazine published a special edition with interviews of various modern GD leaders. Since my answers relate to our beloved Order, they are included in this issue of the Splendor Solis. I do encourage you however to also support the Hermetic Virtues and purchase the magazine, and thus also be able to read the thoughts of Chic and Tabatha Cicero, John Gilbert, Mark Griggs, Sam Webster, and Pat Zalewski. (www.hermeticvirtues.org)

1. How did you become aware of the Golden Dawn?

In the 1980's I read a series of books that centered on the occult. They were all in Swedish and quite expensively produced, and had titles like "Magical Societies", "Witchcraft", etc. In the "Magical Societies" book, there was an extensive chapter on the Golden Dawn, with many nice colour reproductions. The combination of the remarkable stories of some of its key members, the short list of teachings and the colour pictures truly triggered my imagination. Back then, I didn't know that there existed modern GD orders, since Internet was far away in the future, and international occult magazines were far away from Sweden.

2. What was it that interested you first in the Golden Dawn?

Some years after having read about the GD,

my girlfriend bought the GD tarot deck (by Wang and Regardie). I can't say I was too interested in that, but decided to buy a deck as well so that we could explore the tarot together. I chose the Thoth deck, and the more I studied and worked with the cards, the more I realized that I had to study (and practise) magic, Kabbalah, Egyptian mythology (etc) to truly decipher and expound the cards. Thus, knowing that Crowley used to be a GD member, and having read that the Thoth deck was based upon GD symbolism (but perhaps because I had bought Crowley's "Magick in Theory and Practise" and couldn't make much out from it; it felt like a University book, where I was trying to enter the kindergarten), I bought Regardie's Yellow brick edition, followed by Kraig's "Modern Magick". The reason I came to the GD was quite certainly because I unconsciously held it in high esteem, due to the books I had read years earlier, and I deeply believed it to be the best system of magical teachings.

3. Why did you decide to follow that path?

After having read plenty of its history, and then starting to perform the first rituals by myself, I was sold. It was like getting access to a complete new world, and I was so amazed that it was just lying there, waiting for anyone who would turn their eyes in that direction. I soon became the boring esotericist who only wanted to talk about magic, Egyptian mythology, Kabbalah, rituals and inner experiences.

(Today I have found other ways to be just as boring.)

4. What keeps you on this path?

Although I probably should know better, I still consider the GD to be the best system of magical teachings. When I started studying and working with the GD path, I was extremely uninterested in Christianity and in fact had problems using Christian symbolism that I could not trace back to earlier sources. (And no, I was not a Satanist but just very secularized...) It took several years before I suddenly realized that not only was I using Christian symbols without any problems, but I also could identify myself as a follower of mystical Christianity. Being able to work with people around the world in a tradition we all love - who could ask for anything more?!

5. What are in your belief the main targets of the GD path?

It succeeds in gathering a majority of the currents and teachings within the Western Hermetic Tradition into a comprehensible and workable synthesis.

6. What do you believe is the most important factor in the Great Work?

To know oneself, and thus to every day try to know more of oneself. This is not, however, always best achieved through magic and the GD, and I wholeheartedly agree with Regardie that students of the esoteric path should also undergo therapy.

7. In the past there were restrictions on who was admissible to study the path – the distant past was different, at least regarding the gender of the students. Do you believe that there are still things which should disqualify anybody from becoming a GD student?

I think that anyone who is interested in the GD path should study and work by themselves for awhile, before really becoming and committing to be a GD student. Generally speaking, I can see positive aspects of being a bit more mature before entering the GD path, but also more mature people can enter for all the wrong reasons. If one only wants to satisfy some personal curiosity, I am inclined to say that the person needs to do some more per-

sonal work to see what lies behind it. However, since in my experience, it takes at least 1-2 years before the real reasons make themselves known (or before one is able to accept the real reasons), one shouldn't be too fast with disqualifying anyone.

8. In your experience, what are the qualities that facilitate the greatest success for a new order member?

Inspiration, motivation and sincerity.

9. There have been lots of discussions about what to consider when choosing how to follow the GD path. What do you see as the most important things to look out for?

I think sound judgement must rule. The GD was never supposed to be a sect (although it at times, more or less, became that), but instead aimed to encourage its members to think for themselves, and so to speak become independent. So much material is available today, which makes it easy to follow a GD path on a strict personal basis, and several internet based lists make it easy to get in touch with other students.

If you consider joining a GD Order, see if you can get some personal communication with a representative of the Order, and contemplate what is actually being said when they present themselves. Where is the focus? Do they tend to spend more time on working with and perpetuating the tradition, or on fighting with other Orders? Do they present the teachings/system as it was traditionally done, or in what way have they changed it and if so - why, and how does that relate to ones personal desire and vision?

10. What factors should a new student who has chosen the GD path observe most carefully?

Always be true to yourself. No Order can ever be the "solution". It can only present working tools and aid in a learning process. Be conscious about your projections. Don't ever expect anyone else to do the work for you.

11. What do you believe are the most important facets of the work of an Order?

To both perpetuate and preserve the teachings, so that the tradition neither stagnates nor

disintegrates. To present the tradition as truthfully as is possible, while at the same time being able to adjust and adopt the interpretations to the language and needs of the present time. In short, they must carry on a living tradition. In regards of its members, to always seek to give them the best possible aid to advance through the initiatic journey, both in regards of personal tutorship, initiation rituals and curricula.

12. What convinced you to form your own order?

We wanted to form the order that we ourselves wanted to join. The vision was to bring together the essence of the core streams of the western hermetic tradition under the apophthegm of the Rosicrucian ideal as stated in the Fama and Confessio: a brotherhood, working in secrecy, focused on a sincere inner development of its members, thereby affecting the world at large, without any interest of financial gain. This inner development, we believe, is possible as a result of building up and balancing the two pillars of magic and mysticism by initiations and personal work, thereby taking the advantage of both the more rapid processes of magical work and the more introspective processes of mystical work.

Even though we focus much on the roots, care has also been taken to spread an atmosphere of pragmatism; the various traditional rituals and the underlying philosophy, although studied from many perspectives, must be allowed to flourish and be personalized in each member's sphere of sensation. Thereby is the bone structure, as provided by the tradition, made into a living flesh and body by the individual work, and the inner inspiration becomes a life-giving and vitalising blood.



Furthermore, the political turbulence that has accompanied the hermetic tradition in so many of its various societies, where fights over “true” lineages, high grade secrets and even more secret Orders behind the secret Orders, is something we by all means wanted to avoid. The focus should be, on all levels, on the inner developments and the Great Work and not on trivial disputes.

13. The modern face of the Golden Dawn has many different expressions. What were the main factors that influenced your order when determining the curriculum and the way your group works?

The GD/RR&AC tradition, with its teachings, rituals and initiations, were the main factor upon which we wanted to build the order. However, after having worked with that tradition for a decade, and seeing how many of the old and modern Orders worked, we also wanted to offer something with a more mystical side to it, which could counterbalance the magical work and initiations of the GD/RR&AC. We first contemplated using the Martinist and Gnostic traditions for this, but after a while we decided to put them outside the main order, since they are both “complete” traditions in their own sense. (They are now both run as independent orders and traditions.) Instead, we incorporated a Rosicrucian church (the Ecclesia Theurgica Apostolica Rosae+Crucis), which ordinations present a mystical approach to each Sefirah (and traditional GD initiations). In the 5=6 grade and above, we draw inspiration from a wide range of Rosicrucian and Hermetic traditions, from the Asiatic Brethren, the Gold und Rosenkreuz, several Arcana Arcanorum, the Rose-Croix d’Orient, the EASIA-EASIE, etc.

14. What do you feel is special about the way your order follows the GD tradition?

The overall intention is to provide a system and vehicle for those interested in either magic or mysticism, or both. Our personal opinions are that they will meet anyway, sooner or later, but it might be “healthier” if they meet sooner. For those inclined, we aim at providing an inspiring structure with room for personalized work and more options to choose from in the inner order than they will ever have time to explore. Thus each member, after having been

trained in the Outer Order, can (and is supposed to) choose one or two areas in which to specialize. This means that everyone can bring out their own genius in their work, and thus also develop the traditions further.

15. What do you believe are your most important contributions to helping students on the path?

A sound combination of structure, teachings and tutoring, by which the students become more and more self-reliant as they progress on the path.

16. We all know that the original Order was founded by imperfect people 120 years ago, who made mistakes. Why do you believe that it is possible to build upon their work today?

Being humans, they were certainly imperfect in many ways. However, they also (at least at times) succeeded in manifesting a divine spark and managed to put together a very impressive hermetic system based on a multitude of earlier sources. When one studies the curricula and rituals of older Orders, it is easy to see the great genius that the founders of the GD and RR&AC manifested. Thus, they laid a very good foundation from which a legion of Orders and traditions for the last century draw inspiration.

17. What do you interpret to be the significance(s) of the 120th anniversary?

To have more GD Orders collaborate and realize that they all share a great responsibility in the Great Work.

18. What makes the Golden Dawn relevant in our current world?

The GD presents both a structure and tools for helping students to personally work with an esoteric tradition. It offers a path for individual esoteric work together with likeminded students in what can be defined as a modern version of a gnostic path, i.e. a path where the important factor is one's own work, experiences, insights and realizations and how that can be communicated to fellow students in a non dogmatic way.

19. Why do you believe that people are becoming interested in such traditions as the Golden Dawn today?

In today's more and more secularized world, there are many who have a great need for mystical work, something which they don't find to be offered in traditional churches or religions. Then the mystical and magical side of the world will always make people interested in exploring their relationship with God, man and nature. And then there will always be some people who just want to conjure demons...

20. How do you envision the future of the Golden Dawn?

My vision is that the various GD Orders will all recognize that they can co-exist and in various ways perpetuate and preserve the tradition. More students can, hopefully, thereby realize the Great Work and achieve true wisdom, perfect happiness, the summum bonum.

