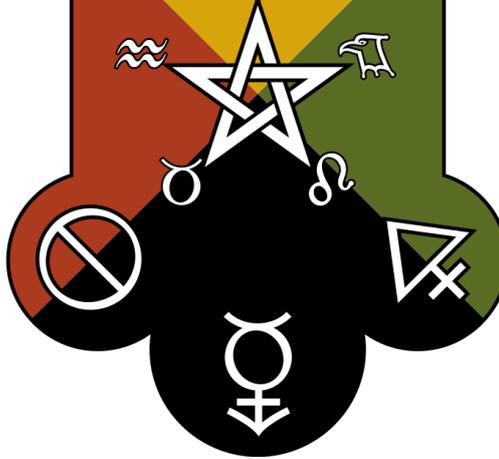


# The Rose Cross

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Along with many other Rosicrucian Orders, one of the SR+C's central emblems is that of the Rose Cross. In the original Golden Dawn, members were required to construct their own Rose Cross once they reached the 5=6 Adeptus Minor grade; in the SR+C, we receive the golden cross in the 1=10 Juniorus grade. Using Golden Dawn symbolism, our Rose Cross is full of complex layers which are based on the 22 Hebrew letters, as well as the zodiacal signs, the planets, and the elements. Much has been written about the many levels of symbolism which comprise the Rose Cross, and I encourage all of the Order's members to examine these sources at length and in detail. In this essay, however, I wish to approach the Mystery of this beautiful emblem from a different point of view: that of an initiatory and meditative symbol that we can use in our everyday lives.

The Rose can be thought of as the Rose of Creation. Where does it come from and what perpetuates it? The answers to these questions are keys to the Mystery. This Rose is alive. It grows constantly. Considered from this perspective, we see that Creation is not something that happened a very long time ago, but something that is always occurring. What is it that makes the Rose continue to grow? If we think of the Rose as a manifestation of that which cannot be understood in words, as the Form given to the Force which is the beating heart and source of Universal Energy and Consciousness, we take a step closer to understanding why the Rose as symbol is so very useful.

The Cross is the other part of this symbol, and like all crosses it implies the balance of the four elements, but also the principle of self-sacrifice. This can be experienced and understood in many ways. In the SR+C, our sacrifice very often is to ourselves, or more accurately, to our Higher Self. Our intense magical work makes it imperative to give up whatever stands in our way to reach the Divine. This sacrifice of ourselves, to ourselves, allows us to reach a state of purity wherein we can have a direct impact on the Universe. Our vehicle for doing this is the Rose.

Through our inner work (understanding our own psychology, old patterns, tendencies, and the ways in which we are impure or imperfect) and our outer work (manifesting our inner understanding by making choices about our lives, work, and partners, as well as how we treat our external environment), we are given the tools to affect the Rose. As we develop, as we come to understand ourselves and the Divine within us, we have the opportunity, and even the responsibility, to aid in the Rose's growth. In which direction do we want to take the entirety of Creation? The choice is ours, and the purity of intention comes through our work with the Cross.

We can use the Rose Cross emblem to gauge our feelings and our states of mind, and help us to achieve a purer state. An excellent

meditation is to sit with an image of the complete Rose Cross in front of you (with all the Hebrew letters, pentagrams, hexagrams, and alchemical symbols). Using the breath, bring yourself into a passive, non-thinking state. Then allow yourself to choose a place from which to begin—a petal of the Rose, for example, or an arm of the Cross. Note which part of the Rose Cross it is, and how you feel about it. Does it attract or repel you? Is it a force you are familiar with, and what are your associations with it? Now move around inside the entire Rose Cross symbol. Go from petal to petal, from arm to arm, from corner to triangle. Feel the symbol pull you and lead you. Do you feel like going forward, or retreating back? Do you tend towards the center of the Rose, or out towards the arms of the Cross? Are you finding yourself in a pentagram, and if so, which one? Keep in mind that the symbol is not flat; it is three-dimensional, and this can allow you to climb up or down to the petals or other symbols, which can give deeper layers of meaning to your Path.

Do this meditation for about ten minutes, as fast or as slow as you feel it, breathing at each stop, and notate the journey through the Rose Cross as you go through it. Looking through the journey afterwards, the layers of symbolism can give us some insight into where we are psychologically, emotionally, mentally, or in the everyday; and it can give us keys to what needs to happen next. Like with any method of skrying, the symbols need to be learned and understood. This meditation can give the impetus to learn the language hidden in the Rose Cross; or, if you are already very familiar with it, to actively make use of those symbols.

This meditation can also be done with a specific magical intention or question in mind. And the most complete way of understanding the Rose Cross is to recognize when you find yourself in parts of it during your everyday life. This can occur when the magical and the mundane no longer are separate, and we are living the Rose Cross through living our lives.

