

OUR FOOTPRINTS

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Frater Michal Eben was born on October 7, 1954 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He attended Czech Technical University in Prague, specializing in electro-acoustics. He spent five years at the Research Institute of Radio and Television and twelve years at the musical theatre “Semafor” as a musician (keyboards, musical arranger, and band-leader). He later became a self-employed computer specialist, typographer, and typesetter.

In 1993, Frater Eben became a member of AMORC and quickly became involved in typesetting the monographs and monthly bulletins. In 1995, he was employed in the AMORC administration office in Prague. In 1996, Frater Eben was nominated as an “acting” Grand Master and in 1997, was elected as Grand Master for the Czech and Slovakian Language Jurisdiction.

Frater Eben is married, has two daughters, a son, and two grandchildren. At the present time, he is ardently studying the Portuguese language.



Dear Fratres and Sorores,

The title of this discourse could be a bit misleading, as I’m not going to trace our footsteps throughout the history of our Order. There are so many works about this topic! Additionally, I’m not a good historian. Despite this, I don’t underrate the role of historical studies; however, on the occasion of the anniversary of establishing our venerable Order in America, I feel obligated to take a glimpse at our past, not at individual

events themselves, but rather at principles and methods with which we—as humble students of Rosicrucian mysticism—must apply in order to influence society, that is, to leave some traces, or *footprints*. We must also speak about the future.

There are very many works about the development of the human civilization, so let me skip the obvious and common facts.

Nevertheless, let’s have a brief look at our approach to history, as it would be silly not to learn from it. After all, this is the reason we were given memory, right? So, if our development is going to turn toward the positive, we can’t omit learning from our mistakes. For this reason we were endowed with the ability to speak, write, read and in general, to share our impressions, experiences and opinions with others, so that they might learn from our mistakes and, in return, we might learn from theirs.

Now, there should be one more important detail emphasized and remembered: there is always a time delay in sharing or transmitting such information. What could be the possible consequences of this?

There are some systems where their own output values or trends are fed back as input and are used over and over; we call this “feedback.” If such information adds favorably to the current trend, thus increasing its effect, it’s called positive feedback. Under some circumstances, positive feedback may cause the system to freeze up, i.e., to reach a condition in which its output is locked at its maximum or minimum state. Although it is stable, it cannot develop any more, or it can respond only to large events while ignoring the small ones. While such a technique could be useful in filtering out interference or noise—for example, in electronic data transmission —, in nature, however, the so-called negative feedback prevails. This means that the output information fed back into it is used to *control* or *regulate* the state of a system by opposing current trends within it. Let’s keep in mind, though, that in reality all the systems interfere and do not exist in purely negative or purely positive feedback state.

For example, let’s take a common float valve, which uses a negative feedback mechanism to control the water level in a

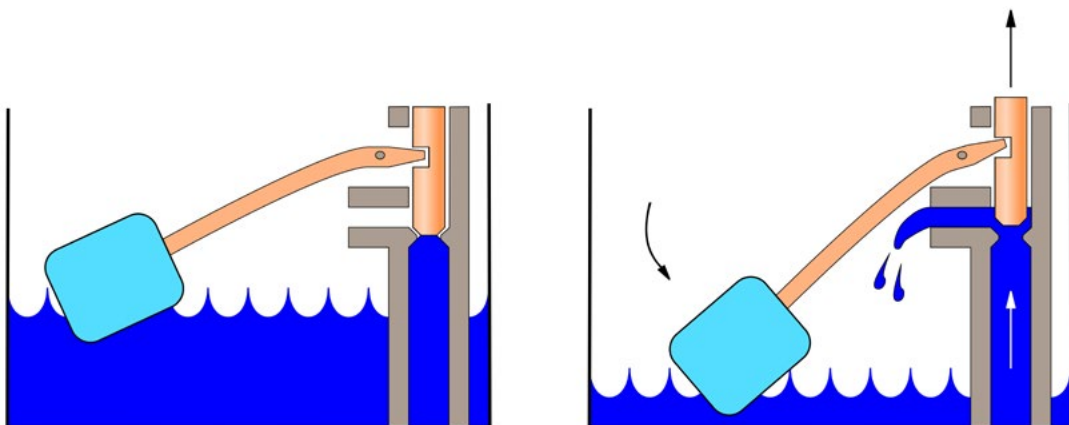
tank. When the water level drops, the float valve opens the water feed, causing the tank to fill up. After a certain water level is reached, the valve gradually closes the water supply to keep the tank full, but not overflowing.

How then does society develop? Could we apply our teachings about cycles to society? Could we even apply this principle of feedback to the human community? The past knowledge of such a community could possibly be used to stabilize its development, in other words, to learn from the previous mistakes, as we have already mentioned.

In nature we can observe cycles in everything. These cycles can have quite different frequencies, or different periods of repetitions. Nevertheless, no event repeats in exactly the same way, because other cycles of a totally different frequency and origin might be involved, as there are no completely isolated events in nature.

Here is where *delay* enters the stage. It’s not the case of the float valve mentioned above, but if we return to the feedback analogy in society, there is always a lag in delivering information—or input—if we still stick to our rather technical analogy within an isolated system. This is the case of many natural phenomena.

An example of a cycle in economics could be an increasing production of



certain goods up to the point when everyone is fed up with it. At some point in time the excess of supply over demand occurs. This subsequently leads to the decreasing of production, and later to demand exceeding supply, and the whole cycle is then repeated.

It may even be mathematically proven that such a time delay in a system with feedback inevitably leads to its periodic functioning, more precisely to harmonic oscillations. You undoubtedly have anticipated where I'm heading with this. Our Order teaches about the cycles of life, cycles of development, cycles of Spirit energy, and so on, and although the latter does not lend itself to such terms as "matter" or "time," we can still use such an analogy with physical cycles—or vibrations, if you prefer—to better our understanding.

As I mentioned before, the interference of natural phenomena applies to all of these; however, in the case of a purely periodic cycle, there would be no real development, only a repeating of the same events over and over. So here we come to the conclusion that the cycles involved might be superimposed over some other cycle that has a much longer duration. Inversely, when looking at the details of our own lives we could similarly notice the smaller and smaller cycles until we reach the vibration of Spirit, which together makes up our worldly existence, from our material bodies on up to the noblest ideas we are able to produce.

Thus we are coming to the popular view of history as being a spiral. In this way we can learn from our own history by observing the spiral levels "below us," choosing what could serve us in our future and determining the pitfalls to avoid. We must; however, keep in mind that what we see as our past is just the past; it is not the way forward. We should learn not to

keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again. So far we believe that we are progressing in a positive direction, so let's avoid any regressions. But remember, a regression is nothing but a regression; it is not the direction we want to follow. Should we follow the way of regression, we would subsequently return to a behavior prior to what we used to proudly consider "civilized."

In a broader sense, we need to even pay attention to trends that appear from time to time that call upon our "return to nature." If not, this might result in losing our independence and our virtues—like compassion, mercy, or standing up for the weak; we would regress into becoming tigers, as the French writer Vercors wrote; tigers that prefer the smell of fresh meat to watching a wonderful sunset. Such an attitude could consequently lead to racism and even possibly to the extermination of the weakest ones in society.

Well, let's look forward instead. Let's observe the waves in our past, and similar to windsurfers, let's catch the proper wave and glide on it. Let's keep in resonance with the frequency of the Cosmic and then we will achieve whatever we want.

Why am I talking so much about vibrations, cycles, and their types? Because understanding them is a key to our enlightenment.

Any elastic environment, be it a weight on a spring or the surface of water, exhibits the possibility of oscillation upon being fed or excited with an external source of energy. Usually such a system demonstrates an inclination toward a single frequency, which is called "the resonance." If we properly study how the system resonates, we can use it for different purposes. These physical laws could be analogically applied to other realms, such as those of electronics.

Let's take an example of a child's swing. When we observe how it moves, we can help keep it swinging by pushing it gently in the proper direction, using the proper power and at the proper moments. If we fail to do so, the swing gradually stops swinging, or in the worst case, we could even cause the child to fall to the ground. Here the feedback is realized by our observation of the natural rhythm of the swing and acting accordingly, so as to compensate for the slowing of the swing, caused by friction, air resistance and similar natural forces.

That is in fact an example of an oscillator, a device that produces harmonic waves. Using the feedback and an external power, there is a way to keep the device producing sinusoidal or harmonic waves. Examples of such oscillators can be pipes, where the elastic, oscillating media is a column of air, or the string of a musical instrument, and so on.

Speaking of resonance, there are a couple of ideas that we can take advantage of even in the realm of metaphysics.

Let's consider for example the compliance of the rhythm of sleep with the rhythm of the Sun. It seems natural, but it is very important for our health, so let's not take it for granted.

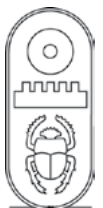
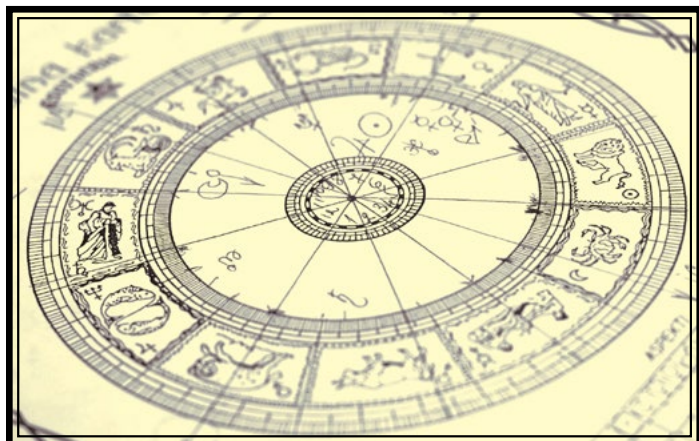
Let us extend this idea—do the stars influence human beings? This is a very popular opinion but at the same time, a questionable one. We cannot deny the fact that there exists a certain concordance between the two, but wouldn't a better explanation be to accept the fact that both stars and humans are subordinate to the same principles? This is not limited solely to stars and people. So, why stars? Stars

are very distant, relatively easy to observe, and unlike most earthly phenomena, they are not—at least in our remote view—affected by a plethora of foreign influences that don't apply to humans.

That leads us back to the topic of resonance. We can use our understanding of stars and their interrelations to perceive Cosmic cycles and adapt ourselves to them, in a way similar to that of the sleep cycle. For the same purpose of discovering the Cosmic cycles and synchronizing ourselves with them, we can use other more or less traditional aids, like the tarot cards, and so on.

In the material world there are not only harmonic cycles, but also other cycles. If I return to the analogy of the electronic oscillator, there is also something called the *relaxation oscillator*, which is a nonlinear circuit that produces a non-sinusoidal, i.e., non-harmonic, repetitive output signal, such as a triangle, a sawtooth or a square wave. Such devices produce periodic signals and are dependent on being fed by an external power supply. They are not very stable, but can be synchronized easily, as they don't have a fixed resonance frequency of their own.

An electromechanical example could be a common electric buzzer, where the electromagnet attracts the magnetic keeper, which in turn breaks the electric power, causing the keeper to be released,



thus connecting the power again, and so on and so on.

The relaxation periodic processes are, of course, not limited to electronic circuits; they often appear in living organisms governing, for example, the heartbeat and other processes. Social sciences and economics also describe periodic processes, which are predominantly of a relaxation nature.

Thus we can often observe developments that end in disaster and then are restarted. Such a disaster need not always be a catastrophe, despite the fact that it can look like one from our momentary point. For example, we generally consider a wildfire to be a disaster; however, in some parts of the world, wildfires are necessary for maintaining the proper cycles of nature. This is an example of a relaxation cycle with positive consequences.

Anyway, how do we perceive cycles of any kind? If they are not extremely slow, or extremely fast to our senses, we perceive them very well. In fact, this is the only way to sense anything, as the human senses are incapable of perceiving steady values.

Heraclitus once said: “It’s in change that we find purpose.” But not only this—we

are *unable* to perceive, for example, velocity per se. We are simply not able to sense that at this very moment our Earth with each and every one of us is orbiting the Sun at the speed of 30 kilometers per second. All that we can actually sense are the *changes* of velocity, *changes* of direction—or the acceleration vector, if you prefer,—*changes* of our ambience, and so on. Additionally, all that we see or hear are merely vibrations, whether electromagnetic or mechanical.

What about our footprints then? So far I have only attempted to explain how humanity evolves and how it can perceive its own development. While there are harmonic cycles, we also know there are non-harmonic ones, sometimes manifesting as revolutions or even wars.

But if we look at the influence of the Rosicrucian teachings throughout history, we don’t notice any such sudden changes caused by them. Instead, we were always those, who served more as examples, not those commanding the masses.

In very old historical cities, you have undoubtedly noticed the appearance of stone staircases that have been worn-down in places, where throughout centuries possibly millions of pilgrims’ feet have walked on them. Such a process

is extremely slow and imperceptible, although it is possible to measure it using exact scientific methods and instruments. What escapes our senses is the fact that a single contact of a shoe with the hard stone causes the tiniest bit of the stone to wear away. Such a process is unquestionable and



inevitable, as well as are its implications: every staircase will someday wear down to the state when it would need to be repaired or replaced.

And this is, in essence, the method of leaving our mark behind. Slowly, patiently and steadily we spread our knowledge that “cannot be purchased with gold, named, nor transmitted by a simple command,” as is said in one of our rituals.

Coming back again to the analogy of the stone staircase that reaches the condition of being totally worn-down, we, as Rosicrucians, could also eventually reach a breaking point, as we are in fact speaking of a relaxation cycle. But as we don't cause any harm, as in the analogy, but enhancement instead, our breaking point would not be a critical state, but rather the break-through, which we call illumination.

Rosicrucians have always represented a tiny minority of humanity and this will probably never change. Then how can we influence the majority? It seems to us that minorities, acting in an evil manner, have it easier than we do. Their influence seems to penetrate all of society.

For example—we all have locks on our doors, don't we? We don't need them to protect ourselves from bad weather—a simple door with a handle or latch would suffice. But because we fear that some criminal might enter our house, we have to invest in the security of our property and the protection of our family. In most parts of the world it's not a common occurrence to meet a burglar. Fortunately they represent a very small minority of the population, but the entire population must act to protect themselves against these criminals. It has always been like this—and it's a good business, by the way.

A modern example could be an antivirus computer program. Most of us have one. If you value your data and your work, it's

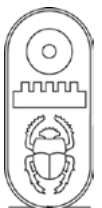
a must, despite the negative impact on the computer's performance. This is caused by a relatively few villains trying to penetrate our computers to steal information or to amuse themselves by causing havoc.

So, how can we act in a positive way and yet leave traces behind? The way we have always done—by setting an example of being good friends, good citizens, good human beings. We are members of an honorable Order, and the word “order” implies—among other things—a concept of chivalry.

Much has been written about knights, and although the most common artistic renditions display them solely from the exoteric point of view with an emphasis on their heroic exploits, their mission has always been to serve the truth and provide protection for the weak. As one of the monographs of the Illuminati Degree says: “From the perspective of mysticism, a real knight is one who leads a holy war with oneself and not with some external enemy.”

Being a knight, in its true meaning, incorporates concepts such as honor and privilege, as well as strength and power symbolized by the sword, and the resulting responsibilities. The sword that “shall not be drawn without Justice and shall not be sheathed without Honor,” as stated in one of our rituals.

The present time does not call for knights in their traditional form. There is no time for armor or courtly songs. But there are still virtues such as politeness, courtesy, chivalry, protecting the weak, respect, and so forth. Increasingly, it seems to me that this is what our world is sorely missing. Kurt Vonnegut wrote: “I wish that people who are conventionally supposed to love each other would say to each other, when they fight, ‘Please—a little less love, and a little more *common decency*.’”



This could be applied beyond personal relationships, for example, to relationships between groups, between nations, between minorities, between religions. If we do not have respect for the needs and the desires of others, we will condemn ourselves as a humanity to a shameful but well deserved demise.

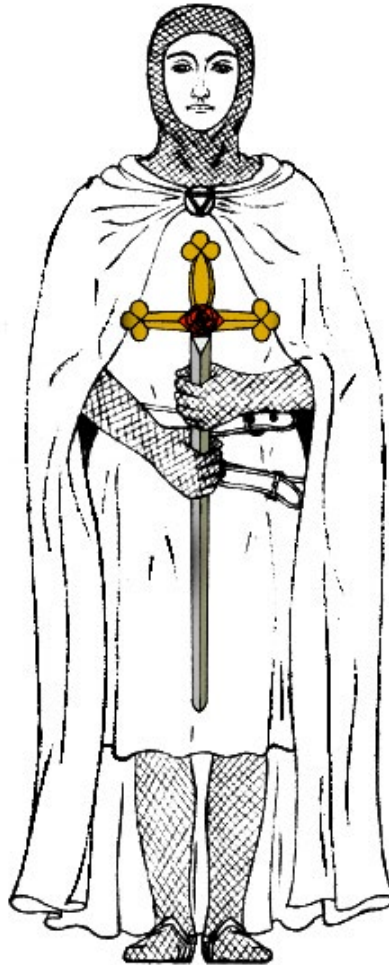
Although we may hold the sword in our hands, let's never forget its shape—the cross. And it is this cross that should always control our deeds. To be a knight in all meanings of the word. To keep the world evolving in a harmonious way.

Our traditional teachings talk about the 108 year cycle of the Order. As we are now closely approaching the end of the active period, you may ask what will follow. Will we enter a passive phase? How will it look?

There's no need to worry. My belief is that these periods don't apply to the spiritual essence of the Rosicrucian Order, similar to the soul personality that exists beyond the cycle of reincarnation, even though its earthly vehicle does not. (But because the soul personality evolves in this way, a significant influence on it exists.)

Because the Order has never before spread all over the world like it has today, it would be mere speculation to estimate that the 108 year cycle applies to the Order as a whole or to the individual Grand Lodges separately. The fact is, as was stated before, there are many cycles involved and intertwined, so we would have to take into

account not only the cycles just mentioned, but also the influence of all the personal cycles of the members. In other words, if the 108 year cycle is a Cosmic cycle, then it will apply. If it is a human cycle, it might or might not happen, and its start and end may differ from place to place.



The change, of course, will not happen suddenly, the way the sunrise is not similar to switching a light on. Although we know the exact time of sunrise, the day begins gradually. And, analogically, the waning of our active cycle would appear slowly, even unnoticed at first. Besides, the number 108 does not need to be taken literally, but rather symbolically.

Be that as it may, every one of us must find his or her own way. From the Order's teachings, some can take the healing techniques, others study his or her relationship to philosophy, still others begin the study of Kabbalah; however, we should all adopt the moral message of the Rosicrucian tradition, concentrated in

the idea of chivalry. And this could simply be called common decency.

Let's never underrate the responsibility for our own acts; in every moment of our lives we are creating the future. That's why we should be careful of our present. At the same time, we should be aware that our present inevitably and immediately becomes our history. Thus, we should learn from history, as it was once the "present" of our predecessors.

So, how about our footsteps for the future? The time may come when it may be safer not to present ourselves publicly as Rosicrucians. Should our role in the upcoming period “shrink” from being the promoters, keepers, or teachers of our esoteric traditional teachings to become merely hidden or obscured guardians of it, do not consider it unimportant. Perhaps, to an observer, our role might seem to diminish, from guarantors of the esoteric tradition to becoming the educators of morality, the knights of decency. But even this wouldn't be unimportant. On the contrary, it might be just what the world needs most and what would eventually rescue it.

However, this is not to say that the mystical part of our teaching would fade away; perhaps this aspect of our tradition would merely move into the background and give way to another one, more necessary for that particular epoch.

Let us present ourselves in the spirit of our knighthood heritage and pass on the light of our tradition in the most discreet form—by our examples. Examples to other people, especially to children whom we can positively influence in their future development. And even though children, of course, love and admire knights, it

is not necessary to support our actions with gleaming armor and other profane crutches—it's enough to lead them to decency, respect and love for all creatures. To teach them to perceive, appreciate and be grateful for the beauty of creation that surrounds us.

This also applies to adults. Anyone can brandish a sword or flaunt worldly honors. It is equally easy to take offense and insult somebody due to a small insignificant trinket. This is often what we see today, and it seems to be world-wide. Very few can admit their mistakes, forgive, be tolerant, and seek common ground instead of finding differences and being intolerant. Let us not stunt this virtue of chivalry, this sacred ideal, according to which the Rosicrucians behave—the world needs it.

We will always be the ones who push the child's swing, gently, safely, and in a proper rhythm. Let us become, or continue being, the knights of harmonic development rather than revolutionists.

Let us permanently strive to find equilibrium and moderation. We must, at any price, make sure our footprints are always pure and of high moral qualities. *This* is our eternal task.

So Mote It Be!

