

## BYLAWS AND GUIDELINES FOR TEMPLES OF THE E.S.S.G



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# I. Definition of the Order and Its Purpose

## Article 1. Definition of the *Egregora Sancta Stella Gnostica* - a Ritual magickal order

The four words that are shown in italics above make up the esoteric motto and name of this magickal Order, and these words are dedicated to the future evolution of the practice of ritual magick within the Western Esoteric tradition. They can be essentially defined by the following statement:

*The Group Mind or Soul exists in the Perfection of the Individual Spiritual Experience, and through its Realization and Convocation with other Equal Individual Souls, the individual seeker discovers union with the Absolute Spirit. This process of spiritual and magickal evolution has been built into a Socially Organized Occult Initiatory Group which seeks to inspire each Individual Seeker to discover, freely create and ultimately, to find recognition for his or her greater Spiritual Work.*

This convocation of individual seekers exists as a *Star* organization, where each facet or point of the star is a person, his/her path and life-experience. Thus a facet is equally important to the definition of the *whole group*; but one individual facet is no more important than any other. Each facet relies on the equal representation of others in the group for the over-all form of the star group. The Star Group itself is of greater importance than the individual member, because it assists the individual to expand his/her spiritual and magickal capabilities. The method for joining such a group must always be strictly voluntary, for only those individuals who are free may do so. This Star Group may be enlarged or even repealed by one or all individuals participating. The fundamental organizing law for a Star Group is that the rule of the whole lies completely within the consensus of the whole.

The Order of the E.S.S.G. is an occult organization dedicated to the propagation of the knowledge of Ritual Magick. The Order of the E.S.S.G. represents the tradition of Magickal Orders of the past, but in no way claims to be either a legitimate off-shoot, nor a continuation of any past organization. The Order of the E.S.S.G. also makes no claims of an historically verifiable lineage or connection which would link it with any other organizations that may have existed in the past or the present. The only legitimacy which the E.S.S.G. as a Western Magickal Occult Organization claims is that each of its members sincerely seek occult knowledge and personal perfection. The Order seeks to emulate the ways of the Perennial Philosophy of the Ancients, and through its continual metamorphosis, bring new insights into the present era. The members of the Order aspire to master this Occult knowledge, which is the heritage of all students of the Western Esoteric Path. The Order of the E.S.S.G. is a confederation of students of the Western Magickal Tradition who have come together

to share their knowledge, dreams, initiations and aspirations.

The Egregora Sancta Stella Gnostica is an Occult and Ritual Magickal Order which, as its name suggests, is guided by the unfolding process of Individual *Gnosis*. Therein a seeker thoroughly explores his/her Full-Potential Self in the company of other like-minded mages. The word *Egregore* is of Greek origin and means a Group-Mind or Group-Soul, but it is the Over-Soul of the World and the individual that the word itself implies. The Group Mind of the magician is the Genius or Angel (*Nous as the Bornless One*) that guides humanity to its destiny, which is Godhood. The Gnostic Egregore is the being and power of spiritual evolution; thus signifying that the *Nous* (the Super Conscious state of Mind where one experiences the Union of Being) is the key to unlocking all Spiritual Wisdom or the *Gnosis* of one's being. When an individual seeker is *unlocked* in this manner, shedding forth his or her light in all its glory in the presence of other seekers, the process itself causes a chain-reaction, becoming an example to the other members of the group as they achieve this illumination for themselves. The unfolding waves of illumination enriches the group spirit, causing other affiliated seekers and groups to undergo the process, too.

The words *Sancta Stella* (in the motto of the Order) represent the *Spiritual Star* that is the symbol of the highest aspect of the Individual Self (the personal egregore or bornless one), and it imparts to the seeker its own variation of the Union of Being. Thus, the Sancta Stella or Sacred Individuality establishes that the path of Spiritual Knowledge culminates in the union with our own Sacred Being. This Individual Sacred Gnosis also reveals to us the collective unity of all spiritual beings, and thus causes the knowledge of the Spirit to become available through creative occult speculation and magickal ritual performance to numerous seekers at one time. It represents the core principle behind the four words embodied within the initials of the E.S.S.G. which are the motto of this Magickal Order.

The four words of the motto of this Order represent the core of significance around which all other considerations for life must revolve, especially for those members who are part of its initiatic body. It is this motto that gives to the Order its unique character and perspective.

## Article 2. The Guiding Factors for the Functioning of the Order

### THE TEMPLE

When a group of like-minded individuals gathers together to form a group of magicians practicing the rituals that are from the Grimoire of the Order, that group shall be known as a Temple of the Order of the E.S.S.G. A Temple must receive legitimate recognition from either an already established Temple or from an Initiate of the E.S.S.G. of at least the 3rd Degree. The other conditions for receiving recognition by the Order of the E.S.S.G. for the establishing of a Temple are as the following: 1.) That the group shall have at least five active members, 2.) That the group shall have a permanent space dedicated to ritual workings, and 3.) That the group shall have demonstrated a consistent gathering of its membership for one year prior to official recognition.

Once a Temple of the Order is recognized, it is considered a legitimate temple. Temples are self-governing and autonomous entities. There is no recognizable hierarchy outside the Temple which may intervene or intrude in internal Temple affairs. All positions of leadership and all pertinent decisions are established by internal group consensus. All decisions within a Temple are the sole business of the membership of that Temple. Leaders are chosen and rotated/elected annually and are installed on the Anniversarium of the First Temple of the E.S.S.G., which was February 13, 1988 (also the 100th Anniversary of the Golden Dawn).

The spiritual practices of the Temples of the Order shall be nondenominational and nonsectarian. The principle belief amongst the practitioners of this Esoteric Path is that all religions are equally valid and therefore to be equally respected and credited. The common beliefs of all world religions represent the basis of all Esoteric Truth.

### THE INDIVIDUAL

All seekers should strive to master their own Individual Gnosis through the assistance and interaction of other members of their group. Through the creative and dynamic interplay of spiritual personalities, the possibility for growth is accelerated. The sharing of knowledge also reduces the possibility for self-deception and personal bias. When such a harmonious state is established, then it is possible for growth to occur in a healthy manner and for new ideas to be tested and incorporated into the *lore* of the group, thus speeding the over-all process of spiritual growth for the individual and expanding the group's esoteric base of knowledge.

The smallest allowable group recognized within the Order is the Temple, consisting of at least five individuals. However, it does and can occur that a single individual will find him/herself outside of a Temple organization. The Initiate can continue the process of spiritual and magickal growth without a Temple until such a time as a group may form and establish a Temple. Those individuals who wish to join the Order and seek initiation but do not live near any already organized temple may communicate with the nearest Temple and gain the knowledge, experience and initiations necessary to become a sponsor of a Temple in one's local area.

Groups of individuals should also emulate the Gnostic Communities of the first and second centuries by discovering their own spirituality and interconnections with the Deity through creative esoteric speculation and ritual magickal techniques. The E.S.S.G. is a Magickal Order based upon the traditions of the Western Mystery Tradition and incorporates both ancient knowledge and new approaches.

### **Article 3. The Importance of the Holy Grail in the Order and the Role of Feminine Spirituality**

The Order of the E.S.S.G. recognizes that one of the principle spiritual quests in Western Occultism is the reclamation and revitalization of Feminine Spirituality. The resurgence of Wicca and Goddess worship has shown the need for Feminine Spirituality in our culture; particularly the emphasis of the Feminine as a source of power, meaning, and positive transformation. It is believed that the reinstatement of Feminine Spirituality in our culture will have the effect of causing an ultimate equality in the political and social arena, eliminating the inequalities that currently exist between different genders, races and socio-economic classes.

In addition to the above, the Order has instituted a symbol for the Feminine Spirit within the context of its magickal and mythical lore, and this symbol is the *Grail*. The Grail is perceived as a transformational symbol and so has no ultimate form itself. However, the Grail symbolizes the Feminine Spirit as the Primal Origin and Source of all Spirituality and also the *Container* of the Knowledge of the Soul, and so it functions as the medium of the Individual Seeker's quest for wisdom and growth. This symbol may also have a representative in the form of a Grail Priestess who is the embodiment of the Gnosis that all members of the Order metaphorically seek. She is required to be represented at all Initiation Ceremonies and at all the Grail Mystery Celebrations, acting as the Physical Manifestation of the Inward Mystery of the Feminine Spirit. The Quest for the Holy Grail as depicted in romances of the Middle Ages becomes reinterpreted to signify the spiritual quest of the Individual for the Source of Enlightenment and Inspiration, the *Vision of Gnosis*. The Five manifestations of the Grail as the Lance, the Sword, the Chalice, the Dish and the Stone

represent the five Alchemical Transformations which bring about the permanent state of spiritualization. Thus these techniques become the pattern and theme for the Order and allow the seeker to emulate in an accelerated manner the natural process of spiritual growth and personal mastery.

Also, the Grail Mystery embodies the characteristics of three processes which form the basis of the Tripartite Enlightenment of Spiritual Illumination. These states are represented by the Great Mother, Her Son and Her Daughter.

The Great Mother is depicted as the Power of Inspiration, and so She is called **Marah Sophia** (*the Mystery of Wisdom*). Her Son is the Illumination caused by the Understanding of that which Inspires us, and he is called **Lux Christos** (*Initiatory Light*). Her Daughter is the *Manifestation of the Spirit as Sacramentation*, and she is called **Brigit** (after the Mythological St. Brigit, who represents the Strength of Spiritual Light). These three personages represent the stages which the individual undergoes when in the ecstatic rapture of enlightenment, and this state is both celebrated and undertaken by the Initiates of the E.S.S.G.

The Grail and its analogue, the Feminine Spirit, are the most important symbols in the Order of the E.S.S.G.; and therefore, the role of women in the Order is considered more particularly aligned to the pertinent outer issues of social change and evolution than other past magickal orders. This is because of the fact that women will be undergoing a greater spiritual transformation in the decades ahead and will require a greater spiritual process to assist them than men. It is the purpose of this Order to participate in this social evolution for the betterment of the personal spiritual lives of both women and men.

#### Article 4. The Spiritual Beliefs of the E.S.S.G.

Although the Order is not dominated by any particular religious creed or belief, there are certain beliefs which are Occult in nature and particular to the practice of magick.

The Ultimate Spiritual Being, which is called by many names and worshiped in many religions is called the **Absolute Spirit** in the Order, and is defined as the Pre-existent Union of the Archetypal Spiritual Male and Archetypal Spiritual Female principles. Another name for this entity is the *Unity of Being*. This Spiritual Being is emulated in magickal rituals where the Unconscious and Conscious polarities of the mind merge and become the essential conscious experience of the spiritual process. Through it, an individual feels connected to everything and everyone, and also guided and protected by something more vast and contiguous than the normal spectrum of human awareness. This being represents the body of the *Mystery of Esoteric Spirituality* in that it is both immanent to the individual and transcendent to all of humankind.

Because magick is experienced as the joining of polarities; therefore, there must be Archetypal Masculine and Feminine figures for this joining to be facilitated. However, in the Magickal Arts, all magicians strive to attain the assumption of the Godhead to which they have aligned themselves. In this fashion, the Archetypal Masculine Deity becomes the male magickal practitioner and the Archetypal Feminine Deity becomes the female magickal practitioner as they assume their Godhead alignment. This establishes the concept that men and women, when initiated as magicians, become as Gods and Goddesses themselves. But only when they are united, is the true Unified Being (as the essential Deity) emulated. Thus the boundaries between divinity and humanity are to the initiated magician only a matter of different levels of consciousness.

The Individual Human being consists of three causal bodies, as conceived in the Esoteric Philosophy of the Qabbalah. The first body is the Transcendental Spirit which contains all the Karmic and Higher Purpose impulses, and this body is an individual's link to the Higher Spiritual Realms of Intuition or Pure Intellect and Love. The second body is known as the Imminent Soul and this body holds all the facets of one's individual personality, life experiences, and attitudes. The Imminent Soul refracts the Transcendental Spirit so that it becomes relative to the individual and his/her personal circumstances. The third body is the Vital Form and this functions as the medium which condenses the Soul's Identity and Personality through the emotions, instincts, and needs of the physical body. All three of these subtle bodies join to form a dynamic whole that represents the entire spectrum of the highest and lowest motivating forces operating within the Individual's life process. (Compare these three concepts to the Neshemah, Ruach and Nephesh as discussed in Qabbalistic lore.)

The experiences of very High or Altered States of Consciousness, such as the celebrated Samadhi of the Hindu Sages, and Super Consciousness of Western Psychology have demonstrated the operation of a fourth principle in the functionality of the individual human being. This fourth principle is called the *Higher Self*, or the *Bornless One* or, in antiquity, the *Holy Guardian Angel or Genius*. The Higher Self is the autonomous link between the Absolute Spirit, which is in perpetual union with all consciousness, and the Transcendental Spirit which represents the highest level of personal individuality. This principal link is tentative in human nature; which is to say that it may be terminated by willful or negligent actions on the part of the individual. It may also be enhanced, and can therefore allow for a greater volume of the transformational powers of Unified Consciousness to flow into the individual self. This, of course, represents the goal of the magician; to become a perfect and unbiased channel for the Absolute Spirit to affect and alter sentient beings existing in the lower levels of conscious awareness. The assumption of the Godhead and performance of the Bornless Rite are the two major magickal steps to obtaining the beginning stages of this unbiased connection. However, the complete process requires an immense amount of self transformation and spiritual purification, as well as maintaining the ultra-conscious state of spiritual illumination for each and every moment of wakefulness.

As the Individual has a guide for obtaining the transformational powers of Unified Consciousness through the Bornless One, so too does the Order of the E.S.S.G. have its own guide in the symbolic patronage of the Archangelic Intelligence known as *Chiramael*. This Archangel is first an expression representing the combination of the two Hebrew words, Chiram (Royalty) and El (God), thus signifying the *Royalty of God*, being literally, the *Sangreal* or Blood-Royal of the Absolute Spirit. This is an allusion to the change which gradually takes place in the individual as he or she begins to evolve from a physical being based in materiality, to a spiritual being based in pure spirit. The blood is also an allusion to the sacral blood which is the Wine of the Eucharist; and the body, which has become a temple for the Spirit, an allusion to the Host of the Eucharist. The second representation of Chiramael is that it is the Archangelic Intelligence of the Spiritual Process of Initiatory Transformation and the Guide of the Grail Mystery wherein one experiences the Rapture of the Spirit through profound Inspiration and Illumination. No written material has listed this angelic being; however, there have been found vague allusions to such an entity (*the Guardian and Guide of the Threshold*) and as such, the need to identify this Spirit has prompted the delineation of its name and personal characteristics. It is therefore necessary for each senior initiate of every Temple to Invoke and even Evoke the Archangelic Spirit of Chiramael, for it has been delegated as the embodiment of the Egregore of the Order.

There are also in all systems of the occult and in magick the concept of the Seven Planes of Consciousness, and the Order of the E.S.S.G. accepts the functional and magickal definition of these seven planes. The highest plane is the Celestial or Absolute plane wherein dwells the infinite awareness of the Absolute Spirit or Unity of Being. At this level all consciousness is fused into a single massive awareness that has no specific focus but is uniformly focused throughout its being. The next level is the Spiritual plane which holds an awareness of the unity of consciousness but can also function as separate entities. In the Qabalah, this would be analogous to the Briatic and Yetziratic worlds merged into one single world. In some systems the Spiritual plane is therefore divided into Upper and Lower spiritual planes. The next level is the Mental plane and this is where the Universal Mind has its focus; for this plane is the root of individual consciousness or egoic consciousness and represents the highest level within which most humans are able to function. The Mental plane represents pure cognition and intellect devoid of any bodily intrusions. The next level is the Astral plane. The Astral plane is divided into two levels, the Higher Astral and Lower Astral planes. The Higher Astral plane is the abode of the Planetary Intelligences and represents the Root of the Mental plane; for the Planetary Intelligences are the building blocks for individual consciousness and are also analogous to the Seven Rays. The Lower Astral plane is the abode of Elementals and Primitive emotion based thought-forms, known as Talismantic Elementals. Also this plane is the abode of many fantastic and illusory entities. The next level down is the Aetheric plane, and this plane is the abode of raw physical emotions and bodily energies, feelings, bodily needs and desires. The lowest level is the Physical plane and this represents the abode of all material living things and inanimate objects.



In addition to the above agreed upon esoteric concepts, the Order has a basic structural spiritual hierarchy which may vary from temple to temple in terms of the names and personalities chosen. However, the structure itself is an important factor in making each Temple relative to each other, and thus to the Order as a whole. The following list is a guide to the most basic structure which must be adhered to in order for a Temple to consider itself a legitimate representative of the Order. These concepts are most generalized, and therefore do not infringe upon creative speculation, which is an important part of the collective growth of the individual members of a Temple of the E.S.S.G. The list contains the following Seven items with brief explanations.

- a. The highest spiritual being is believed to be expressed as the Union of Archetypal Polarities or the Fusion of All Conscious Sentience. The key concept is the Union of Being as produced from Non-being.
- b. The process of individual spiritual attainment is perceived as consisting of three processes: Inspiration, Illumination and Sacramentation.
- c. There is a Spirit of the Eggregore which is the Archangelic Intelligence who functions as the Guardian and Guide of the Threshold of Initiatory Evolution and who is the Spiritual Patron of the Grail Mysteries. (Although the name Chiramael is preferred for the reasons given above, the Order will not dispute the usage of another name, so long as its essence remains the same.)
- d. There is an Ogdoad of Magickal Personages who can be either historical or mythological, but all who are chosen must be consistent to one selected tradition within the Western Mystery Tradition so as not to create confusion or dissonance. All personages must be made analogous one each to one of the four elements in a consistent fashion and they must consist of four male and female figures. All historical personages must be deceased, and preferably have their origin within another era.
- e. The Qabbalistic Hierarchy and Correspondences are accepted in their many variations and from any historical period of promulgation, as part of the Spiritual Hierarchy of the E.S.S.G. In addition, the Gnostic and Enochian Hierarchies are also accepted. The former is accepted in selected degree based upon the discretion of the membership of each Temple. The Enochian Hierarchy of Spirits and Servitors, as extracted from the Enochian Tablets, are accepted in their entirety and in their most current form.
- f. The Seven Rays are defined as Spiritual Intelligences representing the Seven Archetypes of Consciousness. As based upon the Ancient Egyptian system of the Seven Causal Bodies and the Theosophical writings of Leadbeater and Alice A. Bailey (as the Mysterious Master Adept D.K.); the Seven Rays consist of the seven different states of consciousness or seven articulated expressions of the Universal Intellect. These of course

compare to the Planetary Intelligences of the occult scholars of antiquity.

- g. The Grail Vision of Transformation has Five Methods of Manifestation. These represent the five-fold process of becoming a Spiritual Being as interpreted in the ancient tradition of Alchemy and within the Grail literature.

The systems of magick are many and varied, even within the Western Mystery Tradition. However, the primary magickal system that is used within the current lore of the Order of the E.S.S.G. is the Enochian System of Magick. This system is subject to various interpretations and uses. But the Enochian system of magick has become synonymous with High Ritual Magick, which is the focus and medium of spiritual attainment within the Order. Other systems and methods of attainment are encouraged but should be compatible within the framework of High Ritual Magick. It is necessary that the focus and medium of attainment be consistent between Temples of the E.S.S.G. so that the Order as a whole can retain its solidarity and maintain the integrity of its purpose.

The process of Initiation consists of the twenty-two stages of the Transformational Underworld Cycle of the Hero as defined by Joseph Campbell in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. These stages are subject to interpretation, but the whole process must consist of the twenty-two stages in order for it to be complete and effective. The symbolic correspondences and attributes of each of the twenty-two stages are defined by ancient sources (the trumps of the Tarot, and the twenty-two pathways of the Qabbalah) and by modern sources (the depth psychology of C.G. Jung). Initiations are the personal affirmations of an individual's spiritual development. Therefore, the individual may make alterations in the substance but not the structure of established initiation rituals.

The Degrees consisting of First to the Fourth are particularly well founded upon the ancient traditions of Esoteric Orders and represents the core of the Order, its established tradition and orientation, such as it is. It is also the prerogative of the individual to write and perform personal initiations outside the scope of the Order. These may be shared and experienced by other members of the Temple and may become personalized ordeals that are adopted by the Temple for the enrichment of the membership. The important point here is that initiation rituals should be both consistent with the individual's need and the established (but ever evolving) tradition of the Order. The Degrees consisting of Fifth through the Tenth are not covered here because they consist of ordeals tailored to the individual initiate, and as such, they are given only as mere structures for the adept to write and construct as he or she sees fit. The responsibility of the Adepti to their own process of spiritual evolution is therefore, absolute. The Order relies upon the membership of its temples to enforce the Discipline of Quality and General Appeal to the development and maintenance of its initiatory lore.

## **Article 5: The Calendric Cycles as Celebrated by the Membership of the E.S.S.G.**

Each temple shall celebrate the same Calendric cycle, but the rituals and the spiritual emphasis may vary considerably from temple to temple. The Calendric Celebrations represent the perfect venue for the practice of writing group rituals and ceremonies. The necessary elements are the basic dates and the range of research data as is presently available and found in the Western Mystery Tradition. The following is a list of those dates deemed of spiritual importance to the Order of the E.S.S.G. It will be noted that these are well defined by folk tradition and by historical precedent.

- Candlemass February 1st
- The Anniversarium of the Egregore February 13th
- Vernal Equinox March 21st
- Beltane May 1st
- Summer Solstice June 21st
- Autumnal Equinox September 21st
- Michaelmass September 29th
- Samhain October 31st
- Winter Solstice December 21st

These seasonal celebrations (except the Anniversarium) represent the four Quarter points and the four Cross-Quarter points of the four Seasons. Michaelmass is somewhat out of synch with the other seven. However, because temples of the Order always close after Midsummer (June 21st), the traditional cross quarter celebration of Lughnasadh is not represented. It has been found that the productive efforts of groups tend to fall considerably after Midsummer and they do not pick up again until the Autumn. The seasonal activity of the Temple within the Order is therefore properly terminated with the Summer Solstice and does not reconvene until the first week of September. In addition, the celebration of the Anniversarium is for the installation of the new officers of the Temple and to commemorate the installation of the first Golden Dawn Temple in 1888. The Golden Dawn was and still is the primary definition of the traditional Magickal Order and therefore is remembered with veneration. The Anniversarium ritual should therefore be retained intact and inviolate.

There shall also be established a Vision Quest which will be enacted in the Spring and in the Autumn. It shall consist of an outdoor gathering and working within a secure natural environment, thus expanding the operating base of the Temple.

The Grail Mysteries have their own Calendric cycle that is based upon the lunar cycle instead of the solar. These are five events that occur during a sixty-one day period that begins with the first Sunday after the first Full Moon following the Vernal Equinox. The following is a list of each of these events and their relative occurrence to the first event.

- a. **Eosmass** - As stated previously, this Celebration occurs on the first Sunday following the first Full Moon after the Vernal Equinox. It takes the place of the traditional Celebration of Easter.
- b. **Ascension** - This rite occurs forty days after Eosmass and is always on a Thursday; being the Thursday following the fifth Sunday after Eosmass.
- c. **Pentecoste** - This rite occurs fifty days after Eosmass and is the Seventh Sunday after Eosmass.
- d. **Trinialti** - This Celebration occurs fifty-seven days after Eosmass and is the Eighth Sunday after Eosmass.
- e. **Anthrophos** - This Celebration occurs sixty-one days after Eosmass and eleven days after Pentecoste; being the Thursday after Trinialti and the end of the Grail cycle.

## **Article 6: The Internal Hierarchy of the Temple of the E.S.S.G.**

The Temple hierarchy consists of a Magister Templi (Master of the Temple) and a Hiereus. The Magister is responsible for coordinating and organizing all Temple activities including Calendric celebrations, initiations, and group magickal activities. The Magister must function through an established group consensus and seek to help the members of the group to interact in a harmonious and creative manner. The role of the Magister is that of a consecrated leader, and he/she is rotated during the Anniversarium. Therein, it is conferred upon an individual who is prepared to devote a year to the needs and concerns of the Temple. Others may act as the Magister in rituals, but the consecrated Magister bears the full responsibility for all activities within the Temple.

The Hiereus acts as the assistant and primary support person for the Magister, and when the Magister is absent, may assume the responsibility and duties of the Magister. The Hiereus is the understudy, and as such he or she assumes the position of Magister after the reign of the prior Magister is concluded. The position of Hiereus is elected by a consensus of the Temple membership. The Magister is the former Hiereus rotated into that position, unless, of course, the membership of the Temple desire the Hiereus to step down or remain in place for another year. The latter would only occur if the Hiereus was considered too inexperienced to assume the role of Magister, or that the current Magister was needed to fulfill extremely necessary actions begun during his or her period of rule. The key point is that both the Hiereus and the Magister hold their positions by group consensus, and group

consensus may relieve them of that responsibility if necessary. The two positions, then, have all the responsibility but none of the authority of other hierarchical positions of power.

The Temple may also choose an Auctor as the person who acts as the group *Seer* or *Visionary*. The Auctor is also consecrated during the Anniversarium and holds the position for a year. The Auctor, however, due to his or her special abilities, may continue to hold this position for consecutive terms. As long as the group consensus is in agreement, he or she may continue in this office. However, it is good idea for the position to be rotated on occasion so that new individuals will have the opportunity to test their divinitory skills and develop them to the highest degree possible. The Auctor directs all group divination and skrying sessions, keeping the Temple's Magickal diary for the group and noting all phenomenon and the planetary hour in which it occurred. The Auctor may even intercede on behalf of the group, acting as a liaison between the Temple and the Inner Planes. The Auctor is the Spiritual Eye of the Temple and represents the key person to receive specific insights and revelations concerning individuals, the Temple, or even the World.

## **Article 7: The Curriculum and the Process of Initiation as Established for the Temples of the E.S.S.G.**

The emphasis of the Order of the E.S.S.G. is the study and the mastery of the Western Mystery Tradition. This includes all the topics that explore the myriad facets of the Ancient and Perennial Philosophy consisting of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Alchemy, Astrology, the Qabbalah, various forms of Divination and Ritual Magick. Other studies may include Psychology (C. G. Jung), Mythology (Joseph Campbell) and Religious Mysticism (M. Eliade, W. James, Idries Shah or Ken Wilber). Eastern philosophies such as Taoism, Tantra, Sufism, and Yoga (Hatha, Prana, Yantra, Mantra, Raja) are also effective additional areas of study. The key point is that Esoteric Knowledge has no boundaries and even Modern Physics may be an applicable study for the understanding of metaphysical concepts. However, aside from Ritual Magick, the E.S.S.G. as an organization does not place an emphasis on any particular system or perspective, deeming them all to be correct and appropriate within their specific context. Also, the E.S.S.G. shall remain politically nonaligned, but shall always strive for the basic freedoms of self expression and personal religious preference; working to keep these freedoms pure and intact.

The policy of initiation and the affirmation of an individual's quest for recognition shall consist of the following guidelines, which shall be individually applied on each seeker on a case by case basis by the elders of the Temple.

1. The final judgement in the decision for initiation must lie with the initiate him/herself. The candidate must not only desire to be elevated to another grade but also be able to demonstrate, if necessary, the capability and maturity that such an elevation demands.
2. A ritual of initiation is an affirmation of that which must already exist within; otherwise the initiation may either fail to solidify an individual's spiritual process or it may cause him/her spiritual and psychological damage. The initiate is the arbiter of the decision to be initiated, however, the other members (elders) may refuse to affirm and therefore take part in an initiation deemed unprepared and undeserved.
3. There is no real measurement of spiritual achievement and maturation, however, there are obvious subjective qualities that effect an individual's style of life and his/her ability to face important personal issues and creatively resolve them. The elders of the Temple shall judge an individual's worthiness by the way in which he or she governs his/her own spiritual life process.
4. The Order of the E.S.S.G. has adopted certain guidelines for objectively determining a candidate's worthiness for initiation. These consist of tasks which when successfully performed determine the knowledge and capability of the candidate. However, it is also necessary to consider one's subjective sentiments as stated above in order to properly evaluate a candidate. The following is a list of degree related tasks to objectively judge a candidate's worthiness for initiation.
  - First Degree: The successful experience of the Vision Quest.
  - Second Degree: The Mastery of the 16 Elementals.
  - Third Degree: Mastery of the 28 Talismantic Elementals.
  - Fourth Degree: Mastery of the process of Invocation and Evocation.
  - Fifth Degree: Establishment of the Priestly Discipline.
  - Sixth Degree: Establishment and Mastery of the Vault of the Adepti.
  - Seventh Degree: The Mastery of the Seven Rays as defined as the Seven systems of Gnostic magick.
  - Eighth Degree: The Mastery of the 32 Evolutions of the Greater Abyss.
  - Ninth Degree: The Mastery of the 128 Evolutions of the Greater Abyss.

- Tenth Degree: The Assumption of Godhead, Its Mastery and Manifestation as the Avatar.
- Eleventh Degree: The Assumption of Non-being.

## **II. Bylaws and Functional Guidelines**

### **Article 1: Definition of the Order and Temple Membership**

Through group consensus an individual is considered a member of a temple of the E.S.S.G. and functions as such with all the prerogatives it entitles as long as this consensus is unchallenged. However, once an individual is initiated or takes the vow of ethics during the Anniversarium and is thus recognized as a member of the Order, he/she remains forever bonded with it, whether or not he/she is actively involved in a functioning temple, or even practicing occultism. Thus an individual may quit the company of his/her fellow members of a temple but still be considered an active member of the E.S.S.G.

### **Article 2: Financial Obligations of the Temple**

All temple properties are owned in common by the membership. The Temple members should contribute to the collective organizing of the Temple. Contributions may be determined by consensus to be set at a definite minimum or may be open to the giving of gifts by individual members. All temple property, its care, use and disposition is the responsibility of the Magister of the Temple. No single member may expropriate temple property for exclusive individual use unless that property rightfully belongs to that individual.

### **Article 3: Resolving Conflicts & Determining Consensus**

Each Temple of the E.S.S.G. is autonomous and therefore has the right to determine its own destiny, and to resolve group and personal issues without outside interference. Therefore, when issues arise or when the group must revise its spiritual direction, a meeting shall be called and established when a majority of interested parties are able to attend.

The Magister has the right to facilitate this meeting or he/she may defer that right for the greater objectivity of another individual. If the Magister is the central party concerned with the issue, then the group shall elect an objective party to facilitate.

The Facilitator will organize the meeting and allow each individual an uninterrupted say upon the issue. Then the process of finding a consensus within the group is initiated. This process may continue beyond the duration of the meeting and involve more meetings to be convened. Absent members should be consulted for their opinion and concerns prior to the meeting date, or at least reviewed later for final consideration. The facilitator should also



compose an agenda if there are a number of issues, and determine the allotment of time for each individual to talk, within reason.

Consensus is defined as the state wherein no members actively oppose an agreed upon resolution of an issue and more than half actively favor it. This includes all members, including those who are absent.

If an important issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the Temple may have to split up; the faction not in agreement becoming a new Temple and establishing its charter in the traditional manner. The remaining members will continue the maintenance of the old Temple and its associated properties except those items owned exclusively by departing members. Some temple properties may be split between the old and new Temples, if the members of both can agree about which items should be given to the new temple.

#### **Article 4: The Function of Elders**

An elder is a member of a Temple who has either held the position of Magister or who was one of the parties responsible for the establishment of the Temple (his/her signature appears on the First Page of the Temple Charter).

When there are 3 or more elders established in a given Temple, they may form a council of elders and assist the Magister in over-seeing the direction and growth of the Temple. The elders are considered esteemed and knowledgeable guides who are not invested with any authority that would allow them to control the Temple, thwart the will of the consensus of the membership, or usurp the responsibility of the Magister. The council of elders may alter the conceptual doctrine, rituals and beliefs of the Order, as found acceptable to the Temple membership. The council of elders represents the highest authority on matters pertaining to the Order and its structure, and has the power to cause radical changes to the Order.

Until a Temple has established a council of elders, they should not undertake to radically change or alter the framework of the Order as presented to them by their sponsors. A mature Temple may conceive of an entirely new source and basis for creating their own expression of the E.S.S.G. Thus, there can be many diverse Temples practicing almost exclusive systems of magick and metaphysics while maintaining an analogy to the original concepts of the Order, as they are herein defined.

## **Article 5: Establishment of the Temple Charter**

The primary requirement for a group of occultists to form a Temple of the E.S.S.G. is to receive recognition from an already established initiate of the Order (at least 3rd Degree) who thereby becomes the sponsor of the Temple. Other initiates (of a higher or lesser degree) will act as witnesses to the Act of Sponsorship. There must be three individuals involved, the Sponsor and two initiates acting as witnesses. A charter is drawn up by the sponsor and signed by him/her and the two witnesses, and given to membership of the Temple. The sponsor need not be a member of the Temple, nor for that matter do the witnesses need to be members. Uninitiated witnesses, however, must be members of the Temple. The group seeking membership must fulfill the three basic preconditions, and these are already stated above.

The next step in establishing a Temple is to determine a name and a function for the Temple, and choosing amongst the membership individuals to fill the positions of the Magister Templi, the Hieres and the Auctor. The third step is the proper performance of the Anniversarium Egrediorum ritual with the Sponsor acting as the Elder. The Charter is signed by the membership, and their path is sealed for a year as the Oath of the Order is taken by each. The membership may also invoke the Spiritual Patron, Chiramael.

After the above items are completed the Sponsor then delivers to the new Temple the magickal and ceremonial lore and esoteric doctrine as it exists, and assists the Temple for one year, functioning as its elder until the first Magister assumes the position of elder after completing his/her period of service at the conclusion of the second Anniversarium ritual. Afterwards, the Temple shall tend to its own affairs as an autonomous entity and the sponsor, if no longer an active member, shall withdraw his/her guiding authority.

## **Article 6: Networking**

Individuals, Temples and Councils of Elders are encouraged to network and communicate their ideas, concepts, new rituals and accepted alterations of E.S.S.G. doctrine and tradition for the purpose of sharing and establishing their diverse perspectives. Suggestions for improving communication would be the creation of an Order Newsletter or a web page on the Internet. Gatherings may be sponsored by Temples and they may invite various selected members of the Order to attend, or to allow any interested members or outside parties to attend. Gatherings may be local, regional, national, or even international. However, at least one temple must sponsor the event to ensure its legitimacy.

Those who wish to be public speakers on behalf of the Order may do so, however, the names and identities of other members, the activities of Temples, internal Temple issues as well as

the written materials and individual lore of Temples of the Order shall not be revealed! Let Karma and the Spiritual Hierarchy determine the fate of indiscrete revelations; but members may protect themselves and publicly deny all knowledge of the Order without harming their internal spiritual connections. The Temple shall deal with indiscretions as it sees fit and shall move to protect the privacy of its membership, activities and spiritual lore. Otherwise, networking is a personal predilection and merits the free choice of the individual whether to get involved or remain anonymous.

## **Article 7: The Pyramid of Powers and the Prefect Initiation Degree**

The works of the Pyramid of Powers were written to assist the intermediate student to acquaint him/herself with the basic knowledge necessary to make use of the Grimoire of the E.S.S.G. There were complaints that without a proper introduction, the rituals of the Grimoire of the Order were too complex and difficult to learn. The Pyramid of Powers therefore acts as the appropriate bridge between the worlds of the intermediate student and the accomplished adept.

Because the Pyramid of Powers system includes an initiation ritual which can be used to pass through four initiation rites (one for each Element), the Order of the E.S.S.G. must evaluate and determine the significance of students who enter the Order through the initiations of the Pyramid of Powers. This evaluation will also determine the relationship between the Pyramid of Powers system and the Order of the E.S.S.G.

The initiation ritual of the Pyramid of Powers is called the Prefect Initiation rite, and when the student performs it, this act is the crowning achievement of his/her ability to function as a magician. However, the Prefect initiation degree represents a level of ritual competence that makes the intermediate student ready to take up the challenge of harnessing the Grimoire of the Order. Thus, the Prefect initiate begins his/her sojourn in the Order as the entry grade of initiates of the E.S.S.G. The Prefect initiation acts as the Zero Degree in regards to the Neophyte which is considered the First. Yet this station is also a place of honor; for the accomplishments of the Prefect initiate within the system of the Pyramid of Powers represents a degree of development which prepares the student to swiftly progress through the initiatic degrees of the Order. It is for this reason that the Order of the E.S.S.G. shall accept any individuals as members who have passed through the initiations of the Prefect rite of the Pyramid of Powers. The Prefect has the right to petition the Order for immediate membership, and upon examination of his/her ritual diary, receive recognition as a defacto Neophyte. Prefect initiates may then seek a Temple of the E.S.S.G. and request admittance, or they may choose to found their own temple and receive a charter of recognition from the Order.

When several students form a working group for practicing the ritual disciplines of the Pyramid of Powers, then it is only natural for them to progress to the Prefect initiation ritual, and to participate in each other's initiation. Such an organization, as long as it contains at least five students, would qualify as a temple of the Order. This would entitle them to request for a Temple Charter and access to the ever growing Grimoire of the E.S.S.G. They may choose to learn and master the ritual lore by themselves, or they may seek a guide to temporarily assist them. The teacher should be at least a 3rd Degree initiate of the Order. The same qualifications for establishing a Temple of the E.S.S.G. would apply to the students of the Pyramid of Powers. Besides the necessity of having five members and working together for a year, they must be able to prove that they each performed the Prefect initiation ritual. That proof would consist of magickal diary entries and the signatory of witnesses.