

FIAT LUX

The modern Masonic Rosicrucians was founded in 1866 by Robert Wentworth Little as a literary organization for the collection and deposit of archeological and historical subjects pertaining to Freemasonry. Its stated purposes were to inspire a greater disposition to obtain historical truth, seek out the secrets of nature, and the study of philosophy and symbolism. This gives the Masonic researcher a wide latitude, particularly when one considers that Freemasonry has assimilated symbols and concepts from various and sundry sources, Hebrew lore, the Egyptian mysteries, the Cabalah, alchemy, Knights Templar, the Companionship, the Steinmetz, and Aristotlean science, just to name a few.

Our ritual grades, Theoricus, Practicus, Zealator, Philosophus, etc, are derived from the Greek language and contain esoteric aspects of theosophy— that is, an examination of physical phenomena to acquire mystical insights into divine nature. One such grade, Zealator, uses Aristotle's four basic elements of matter: air, water, earth and fire.

It seems rather strange in this day and age to revert to the theories of Aristotle who did not believe in experimentation to prove a maxim. Once he reasoned something to be true, it became an irrefutable fact in his mind. Among his "undeniable truths" was that women have more teeth than men, and children conceived when the wind blew from the north were healthier. Though Aristotle was married twice, the thought never occurred to him to actually count his mate's teeth, or one can imagine him sending his wife to check the weather vane when he felt amorous.

Nevertheless, a number of Masonic scholars believe that philosophers and theologians of yore possessed a greater insight into the nature of divinity than we do today. Since Francis Bacon's time (early 18th century), most seekers of knowledge have been concerned with the physical rather than the metaphysical aspect of the universe.

We as Masonic Rosicrucians are charged with the duty of investigating the material world in order to glean a glimpse into the spiritual. For the purpose of this paper, let's make a brief examination of light.

What exactly is light? No one really seems to know. It is theorized that it is composed of photons and at one time was conceived to be a wave. Later the scientific community proposed it to be particles, then particles riding on a wave, and still later particles traveling as a wave. The results of light can be seen in illumination, heat, and with lased light—precise surgery. We know each color of light possesses its own frequency and can be separated by a prism. We are also told that biological things called rods and cones within the eye are what perceive and interpret light.

Light to a Mason and to a Rosicrucian has a greater intrinsic value than its mere physical attributes. Our fraternity has often been referred to as “the Sons of Lights and in fact that is the title of the opening ode of my Lodge. Light is the first request of a candidate when asked what he most desires.

Man throughout the ages sought the emblematic and mental illumination associated with light. The ancient Egyptians designated the hare as the hieroglyphic symbol of the eyes because that animal supposedly always had its eyes open. The hare, therefore, became the symbol of moral illumination, which was to be revealed to the neophyte in contemplation of divine truth. It is also interesting to note that in ancient Hebrew, the word for hare is “arnabet”, which is composed of the word “aur”—light and “nabat”- to see.

The alchemists of the Middle Ages sought light, which they called lux. Some historians misconstrued the word as meaning a base material or a substance of the philosophers stone. Most historians today concur that the lux that the alchemist was seeking was the knowledge of the universe.

The Jewish cabalists, besides examining the Torah for the numeric passages for prophetic and arcane meanings, possessed definite theories on light. Their belief was that before the creation of the world, all of space or the universe was filled with an infinite quantity of intellectual light that, through its emanation, produced all future worlds.

The gnostics believed that light emanates from the divine or the supreme being—Gad. Pythagoras and Zoroaster proposed that light was the first emanation from the eternal God and that light is the mother and father of all.

Light has been defined at various times as intelligence, information, knowledge, and truth. It is the latter two, knowledge and truth, that we seek. By the study of ancient writing and relics, we hope to acquire the anagogic level of understanding, that is the highest degree of knowledge.

Research into the mysteries of such antiquities as the Dead Sea scrolls and the philosophies of the Essenes, the Catharists, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Dionysiacs, and etc., will surely shed light on our comprehension of the universe and perhaps, the divine Creator. Just as some say our perceptors of lights, the eyes, are windows to the soul, the ancient mysteries may be the windows to conceptualization of the cosmos.

While this research may be painstaking and may not result in a “Eureka” revelation as was experienced by Archimedes when he discovered buoyancy and displacement, it will add to our store of light and knowledge.

Our hope is that the light revealed is not as the illumination described in Plato's analogy of the cave. That is, all we perceive are the shadows on the rear of a cave and not reality or the source of light.

The quest for light is a noble endeavor, one which the Freemason and the Rosicrucian cannot in good conscience abandon. To quote Albert Pike, whom many hold in high esteem, Masonry (the quest for light) is a search after life.

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