

ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

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Neophyte Lecture

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SUPREME TEMPLE, ROSICRUCIAN PARK, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

"Consecrated to truth and dedicated to every Rosicrucian"

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings before the Sign of the Cross!

I have been wondering, since our last lecture was sent to you, whether you appreciated the meaning, importance and symbolism of the paragraphs in the lecture that pertained to fire. You know that the mystics of old were accused of being fire-worshippers as well as sun worshippers, and sometimes we hear it said today that the Rosicrucians are probably fire-worshippers in some sense or some way, because they have such a high admiration for the symbols of fire. It occurred to us, in preparing our members step by step for the higher work of our teachings, that we should touch again upon this subject of fire and give you every opportunity to be familiar with the true symbolism of fire and its relationship to mysticism.

We not only intend to instruct you in those laws and principles that will make you proficient and efficient in the affairs of your daily life, but also make you acquainted with that knowledge which will enable you to discuss your Rosicrucian Order and your membership in an intelligent way with those who may ask questions. We want our members to be thoroughly instructed and trained in the whole art of mysticism, symbolism, and arcane knowledge, as well as developed along lines that will make them masterful in their personal affairs.

We know that the members of our organization are not of that class of occult students who are satisfied to read superficial books and treatises upon the subject of occultism and jump easily to false conclusions and ideas; and for that reason we feel absolutely safe in presenting to them, from time to time, such sidelights in regard to the ancient, mystical teachings as are of intense interest.

Fire has always been something more or less worshiped by the primitive minds, and it still holds a great element of mystery for the child mind in youth, and for the speculative mind in adulthood. The basis for this is the fact that it is one of the great mysteries of life or of the universe, and we can see that this is so by the great emphasis given to it throughout all sacred literature, including the Christian Bible. Did you ever stop to think how many passages in the Bible relate to fire, and how many of the wonderful miracles, or visions, or transcendental experiences recorded in the Bible have an association with fire? In all of the religions of today, fire, and its symbolism, is referred to, and we do not believe there is any intelligent clergyman or priest of any denomination who would wilfully leave out of his Biblical reading or text, the reference to fire that he finds in the course of his reading, solely because someone might think that he was paying homage to fire-worshippers.

Of course, we are aware of the fact that in some countries, and among some primitive tribes, fire is still considered to be such a great mystery that it is worshiped in various forms as a mysterious expression of the gods or the devils. But that is merely an ignorant misunderstanding of a very wonderful principle, and we should not judge all

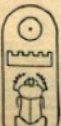


mankind by this standard. It would be just as fair to say that all men in civilized lands were afraid of fire, or jump around fires, because we find children in civilized lands doing so.

Reverting to sacred literature, we find that fire was used on all the altars and that these altar fires were lighted with considerable ceremony. Usually the ceremony was like that given in Leviticus 1:7, "The sons of Aaron shall put the fire upon the altar and lay the wood in order upon the fire," and throughout Jewish symbolism we find that the "ever-burning fire" symbolized Jehovah's continual sacrificial worship. We find that this is a modification of the heathen principles, where the idol Vesta had a fire called the Magian Fire. Even the use of incense in the ancient Temples originated through the desire to have some small fire burning that could be easily handled and easily controlled. Later on, the mystics found that by using certain kinds of incense, in connection with the fire, certain rates of vibration would be released into the air and these would have an effect upon the vibratory conditions in the temple or room. This latter reason explains the use of vibrations in connection with our experimental work. We find in the Hebrew sacred literature that fire, by its power-penetrating, all-consuming agency, symbolized the holiness of God which consumed sin as a thing that cannot abide in His presence.

Students of the Christian religion, by turning to the New Testament and reading Hebrews XII:29 and X:27, will find this thought of the consuming power of fire fully explained, and that God is called a "consuming fire". This will explain why, in some high ceremonies and masses of the Christian churches, fire is used as the symbol of the presence of God. In Revelation II:18 you will find that the risen Lord's eyes are like a flame of fire, and the flame of fire is often used to mark the various manifestations of the Lord in the New Testament.

Another very important symbolism in connection with fire is its relationship to the purifying processes as stated in last week's lesson. The ancient alchemists had their fires and crucibles for the purpose of purifying gross matter and making it more refined. Fire was used symbolically by the mystics for the purpose of purifying the grosser elements of human nature and for purifying the spirit and body of man. This is why fire was eventually used as a symbol of the principle in purgatory or hell. It would render man pure, after his sinful existence, and prepare him for his ultimate admission into Heaven. This allegory was used to carry out the ancient symbolism of fire as a purifying agency, but the translators of the ancient writings failed to see the allegory and believed that it referred to a place of fire in a literal sense, and for ages men looked upon hell and purgatory as being literal places. Advanced education on the part of science and the higher understanding of man, as he has evolved during the past few centuries, has enabled the average person to realize that neither purgatory nor hell



were literal places with literal fires, but spiritual and mental states, or conditions, in which a symbolical fire of a spiritual nature, rather than of a physical nature, actually purifies the body and mind of man. We find St. Paul, in the New Testament, explaining this very well when he tells us that the fire of hell is to try the works of man, and that the fire of purgatory is to try the persons of men.

In another mystical sense, fire is not only a purifying agent but is really an expression of one of the highest manifestations in nature. If you really knew, and could physically see with your physical eyes, what goes on when you light a match and apply it to the wick of the candle and the wick of the candle starts to burn and continues to burn, you would see practically half of the laws of nature being illustrated to you. All that you notice from a casual point of view, when a candle is burning, is that the wax around the wick disappears. You think, then, that it is the wax that is burning. But if that is so, why is a wick necessary? Why will that candle cease to burn if you put a glass over it and make it air-tight? Why must there be certain air vents in the oil lamps upon your tables or in the oil stoves that heat your rooms? Why must air mix with the gas in order to burn in a gas stove? Something more than the gas, or the oil, or the wick is burning, and this invisible something, plus the laws that make it possible and that are being demonstrated, forms a wonderful lesson from the alchemical point of view.

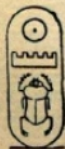
Then think also how fire changes the nature of things. After you have burned the match, what have you left? Science tells us, and absolutely proves, that no material thing in the world is ever completely destroyed or partially destroyed, and that there is no more matter on the face of the earth today than there was at the beginning of time, and that, despite the great fire and changes and actions on the part of man, there will be just as much matter on the face of the earth a million years from now as there is today. Fire may consume but it does not destroy. When you light a match and let it burn to the last bit, you may have consumed the match but you have not destroyed the matter of which it was composed. What makes a match? Not the wood alone, nor the sulphur on its end, nor other chemicals connected with the sulphur—a match is a device of wood with chemical elements added to it, made in a certain shape and for a certain purpose. The piece of wood without the chemicals at one end would not be a match. It might be a toothpick. On the other hand, the chemicals by themselves, without being attached to the piece of wood, would not constitute a match. When fire burns a match, and leaves nothing but a piece of charcoal, you have destroyed only that which you know as "a match". You have not destroyed any of the things that compose it. What you really have done is to change the nature of the things that compose it, but the things themselves still remain. The piece of wood is now a piece of charcoal. The chemical elements have changed their nature into gas and passed off in invisible fumes that you can no longer see. During the process of changing you had a



flame. The flame was the fire. The flame manifested the chemical changes that were taking place in the wood, and in the chemical on the end of the wood.

A great process in the principles of alchemy is really contained in what occurs in the lighting and burning of a match, and to show you how a simple process may contain some of the profound laws of nature let us call your attention to the fact that in the early part of June, 1926, a wonderful discovery was announced by Dr. C. E. de M. Sajous, Professor of Endocrinology of the University of Pennsylvania. He said that after twenty-five years of research he had discovered that the heat in the human body is produced by the action of oxygen on phosphorus. When the match burns, as we have just explained, the flame and the heat are the result of the action of oxygen on phosphorus. The Doctor said that science has known for centuries that oxygen acted on the human body, but they have not known how. Now he announces that they have discovered that the lecithin, which is found in all the cells of the body, contains phosphorus, and that the oxygen in the air, acting on the phosphorus, releases the heat and this heat maintains the temperature of the body. So you see that when you strike a match and burn it you are, in a simple way, applying one of the most profound principles of nature. This fact has been known to Rosicrucians for many years. We are glad that science made this discovery and now takes the fact out of the realm of mystery, or arcane teachings, and puts it before the world as a scientific fact. Incidentally, you will see by this great discovery the knowledge that was possessed by the ancient mystics and what they meant by their allegorical writings, when they wrote of the "Philosopher's Stone", meaning the great secret force of life, or the great elixir of life. They claimed that the idea that by the presence of the mineral in the blood of life, or in the body, the philosopher's stone was there. By this allegory you will see how carefully they veiled the exactness of their knowledge from the profane world.

Thus we see that fire is a great changer, or solvent, or modifier of things in nature. The ancient mystics used to look upon Fire, Air, and Water as being the three great holy elements in nature, because they found that these things played a great part in the development of nature, in the changing of things, and in the production of things. Just as water is a great solvent, used in chemistry and in many of the every-day processes for the purpose of changing the nature of things, so fire and air are used. Water was easier to understand than air, and air was easier to understand than fire. Fire, as we have said, was the greatest mystery of all and the primitive minds of men could not but think that fire came from Heaven, just as air and water did, and that, because of its warmth, its rapidly consuming nature, and its ability to illuminate and be seen at great distances, it was the expression of the holiness of God and in some cases it was considered to be associated with the eye of God. For that reason we find some Biblical references to the fire that came from the eyes of God, or the beams of light and fire that came from the eyes of the holy men, etc.



In our work we use fire symbolically to represent a high manifestation of the spiritual energy in the world. We know that fire is the result of a high rate of vibrations, and we know that by the use of this high rate of vibrations we can change many things. When we say fire, we also mean one of the results of fire: namely, heat.

Going back to the match again, let us call your attention to the fact that charcoal is often used for medicinal purposes. It can be eaten and taken into the system without any danger from disease or germs of any kind. It is often mixed with preparations and is used sometimes as the basis of pills and tablets because of its pureness. In other words, fire has burned a piece of wood and has eliminated from the wood all its impurities and left a very pure product. Fire will destroy germs, and hence heat and fire are used for sterilizing purposes, whereas extreme cold or freezing merely suspends their animation. Germs can be preserved in ice and while they will not be active in that state, as soon as the ice melts they will be released again. Germs placed in extreme heat or boiling water, however, are changed in their nature to such an extent that they are no longer germs of the kind they were before they were heated. If they possessed destructive qualities these destructive qualities are removed. Therefore, throughout many of the higher experiments we use fire for the purpose of refining certain elements in our natures and in the natures of things we have to deal with. We hope that you now understand the real meaning of fire as used in religion, in mysticism, and in our teachings.

Going back to the allegory of fire, as used in the Christian and some other religions, let us say that the torment of your mind, the crying aloud of your conscience, the torture of your soul's conviction or self-condemnation as related to your sinful acts, constitutes the fire of hell and purgatory. The voice of God, or the Cosmic mind within you, decrying and chastising you when you have done wrong, is the fire of God or the fire of the Heavens consuming your sin, purifying your soul, purging your mind and refining your nature. Such hell-fire and such flames of purgatory are experienced here and now, sometimes daily and, with some unfortunate persons, almost hourly. For this reason we should not have the mistaken idea that we may safely go through life in sin and error, committing unjust and unfair acts, and be free from the burning, consuming flames of the fires of hell or Heaven until we reach a state beyond this life. No man has such freedom from the fire, but must suffer it in some way before he passes beyond. This is the true mystical point of view; and while it may be presented in a slightly different way from that presented by the Christian doctrine, or other religions, it is not inconsistent with what was taught by the Master Jesus or the great Avatars of the past. We must bear in mind that Jesus reminded His Disciples of this and told them that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. We add to this that the fires of hell and the tortures of purgatory are ever present in this life, at every turn, and are the ultimate conclusion of every wrong act, every sinful commission or omission, and of every evil thought.



You will do well to meditate upon the great principle, as well as the symbolism of fire, for a part of this evening, and let it be like a holy light upon the altar in our temples, and all great temples, as a warning that the conscience of God and the consuming fire of His great laws are ever watchful and ever present in our lives.

You are now about midway in the Third Grade of the Neophyte studies; and you are approaching the turning point of your studies and your development. During all of the past weeks two definite principles of our organization have been at work. First, the study of the lectures and the testing of some of the experiments have been arranged to arouse a certain inner development within your Divine or Infinite consciousness so that there may be a quickening and an awakening of dormant powers and faculties there. You could not possibly be aware of what development has taken place at the present time. Even a musician who has been practicing the scales on the piano for twelve or fifteen or more weeks is not aware of what he has actually accomplished in the development of finger ability and note reading until he later comes to apply that development in connection with other forms of music. Then he has a keen appreciation of what actually occurred during his early periods of practicing and development. The same is true in regard to what has been taking place within your inner consciousness during the past six or seven months.

Second, the Master of your Class and other officers connected with the organization have had an opportunity to make contact with you in various ways psychically, mentally, and spiritually. Through these contacts we have learned how to help you most in your future development and how to help you in your health and the realization of your desires.

Therefore, your past period of study with us has been gradually laying the foundation for the greater work that is to be given very shortly. You will find as you go along with us that there are many ways in which that intimate contact is being maintained, between you and various members and officers of the organization, that makes for spiritual progress as well as earthly mastership over the many problems that face us. We hope, of course, that you will continue making your contacts with the Cathedral of the Soul, for therein we all come together more often and make contacts that are very important in many ways.

Fraternally,

THE MASTER OF YOUR CLASS.

