

READERS' QUESTIONS

Who Are the Manichees? The Cross and Roses Meditation

WILL YOU please give me some information concerning the Manichees? In *The Cosmo-Conception* Max Heindel stated only that they were a higher order than the Rosicrucians.

The history books seem to indicate that they are extinct, and that St. Augustine belonged to them.

Answer: Mani (or Manes or Manicheus) was born near Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia somewhere around 216 A.D., and died around 277 A.D. His father is supposed to have been a member of the sect of "Baptizers." Orthodox people do not admit that he was a Christian, but we believe that he was Gnostic Christian. Mani called himself "I, Mani, the Apostle of Jesus Christ," and said that he had come to fulfill Christ's prophecy of the "Comforter" who would teach the fullness of Truth. He combined Zoroaster's teachings and Buddha's teachings (probably also Taoism) with the New Testament. Being a Persian he did not deem it necessary to become a Jew first in order to be a Christian. Hence Manicheanism did not have much to do with the Old Testament. Orthodoxy refuses to accept as Christian anyone who does not accept the Old Testament along with the New. Many early Christians clung to their own scriptures; the Greeks and Egyptians clung to Hermes Trismegistus along with the Gospels.

Mani evidently felt that he had solved the problem of good and evil and the nature of reality. His basic system was like that expounded in the gospel of Truth discovered some years ago at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. To this he added the extensive angelology of the Persians—just as the Jews had done earlier. Aramaic was the official language of the Western Persian Empire, and Aramaic is the Eastern dialect of the same language that Hebrew is the Western dialect of. In other words, the Persians had the same angel words as the Hebrews, in Aramaic, which was the language spoken by Jesus Himself. Mani wrote in Syriac and Persian, and in

"code" or cyphers. Many Manichean books were discovered in the 1930's.

The legend of the Light Elves and Night Elves mentioned in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo Conception* indicates that the Manicheans had undertaken to solve this problem of the conquest of evil in just the way that Max Heindel describes. However, the so-called Manichean teachings on the nature of Truth and Reality were not original with Mani. As said, they were found in the *Gospel of Truth*, written somewhere around the middle of the second century, whereas Mani lived in the third.

Zoroastrian angelology is, of course, a true part of Christianity and esoteric Judaism. There is no question but that during the Exile the Hebrew prophets in Babylon and Persia worked hand-in-hand with the Zoroastrian Teachers. Even the Bible indicates that.

The exoteric Manicheans, however, are not the Inner Mystery School of which Max Heindel speaks as even now working on the chief problem of the Jupiter Period. Just as The Rosicrucian Fellowship is the exoteric preparatory school for the Order of the Rose Cross, so the Manichean movement, including the Catharists and Albigenses of Southern France, represents the external representative of a great Mystery School on the inner Planes.

But virtually all of the basic spiritual concepts of Manicheanism are also to be found in Rosicrucianism, because these are, of course, universally and eternally true. Wherever minds are open to Truth, these concepts will be revealed. Only bigotry keeps them out.

So far as the Manichean cosmogony is concerned, that is just a matter of science. It was partly based on "revelation" (reading in the Memory of Nature) and partly on external scientific discoveries. Modern scientists are reworking their cosmogony, modifying the Nebular Hypothesis, and making new discoveries in evolution, the nature of matter, etc. All of these changes will eventually be incorporated into the religion of the Aquarian

Age, which will therefore have a new cosmogony.

Yes, St. Augustine was a member, but he never entered the esoteric school. In Manicheanism there was a very complete inner teaching, and this Augustine did not get. He was one of the “auditors,” in the outer school, similar to our category of “students.” He quarreled with a Manichean lecturer on a matter of astronomy, and then joined the Roman Catholic Church, into which, in fact, he had been born. His mother, Monica, was a devout Catholic and prayed continually for his restoration to her Church.

Due to bitter persecution from all sides, the exoteric Order of Mani was driven undercover, but the Manicheans simply disguised themselves in any way possible and worked from within the ranks of their enemies. Mani was crucified by the Persian priesthood, bigots and persecutors who did not like Mani’s Christianity. Mani’s Order existed in Europe and Asia for more than a thousand years, and it may be restored in some form with the next few centuries.

Question: What is the meditation on the black cross and the seven red roses?

Answer: The cross in the early versions of the Rosicrucian emblem was shown as black, including the original cross planted on Mt. Ecclesia to commemorate the founding of the Rosicrucian Fellowship’s Headquarters. In referring to the Foundation Day ceremonies in his November 1911 Letter to Students, Max Heindel writes: “*We made a large cross of the same style as our emblem, and on the three upper ends we had painted, in gilt letters, the initials: C. R. C. These, you know, represent the symbolical name of our great Head, and designate our emblem as the Christian Rose Cross, which conveys an idea of beauty and a higher life so different from the gloom of death usually associated with the black cross.*”

In fact, the Rosicrucian Order, for which the Fellowship is the authorized Preparatory School, is named after its Founder, Christian Rose Cross (*Rosenkreutz* in German), a name which, as stated in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, embodies “*the manner and the means by which the present day man is transformed into the Divine Superman. This symbol, ‘Christian Rosen Kreutz,’ [The] Christian Rose Cross, shows the end and aim of human evolution, the road to be traveled, and the means whereby that end is gained. The black cross, the twining green stem of the plant, the thorns, the blood red roses—in these is hidden the solution of the World Mystery—Man’s past evolution, present constitution, and particularly the secret of his*

future development” (p. 519). The emblem has undergone some evolution, including the conversion of the cross from black to white. In anticipation of the first Probationer’s meeting on June 3, 1913, a Mt. Ecclesia carpenter had cut out two crosses. Mrs. Heindel had painted one of them black with a white border on one side and the reverse side white with a black border. But Max Heindel said what was needed was a pure white cross, together with seven red roses. The second cross was, accordingly, painted all white. For this meeting Mrs. Heindel affixed the white cross to a golden star which she had painted upon a blue curtain and fastened three white roses within a garland of red artificial roses. However, after the emblem was unveiled, the two white side roses slowly slipped down “as if invisible fingers were moving” them, until they were held by a bottom leaf of the most beautiful central rose about two inches below the lower limb of the cross. “*The vibrations in the room became so high that some were spellbound. Max Heindel attempted to rise in order to speak but was so overcome that his voice failed him while tears streamed down his cheeks. All those present were assured that the thirteenth Brother, Christian Rosenkreutz, was present in his vital body. After a few words from Max Heindel, all disbanded in silence.*”

Thus the single white rose positioned at the crux of the four arms of the cross was confirmed. It signifies: (1) the indwelling Spirit (Ego) radiating its four instruments (physical, vital, and desire bodies and mind); (2) the etheric larynx that will be able to speak the creative word; (3) for healing services it represents the heart of the invisible helper; (4) and, generally, it symbolizes the aspirant’s ideal of purity of life, “the path of chastity.” The five-pointed star symbolizes “*that inestimable influence for health, helpfulness and spiritual uplift which radiates from every servant of humanity,*” which is the soul body, St. Paul’s *soma psuchicon*. The seven red roses signify: (1) human blood cleansed from passion, making possible the occult development of seven etheric centers of the vital body, correlated with the seven ductless glands and; (2) the purification of the desire nature, which promotes development of the seven centers of the desire body (see illustration in the *Cosmo* pp. 68-69), latent in most persons, but capable (as with the etheric centers) of becoming extrasensory organs, making possible various superphysical abilities—thus, in both above instances, occasioning the Rosicrucian salutation: “May the roses bloom upon your cross.” Since this composite emblem is nothing less than a symbol of God in manifestation, continued meditation upon it will richly inform the student. □