

READERS' QUESTIONS

Manichaeism; Remembering Past Lives; Correcting Color Blindness

QUESTION: Will you please give me some information concerning the Manichees? In *The Rosicrucian 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 Mani did not deem it necessary to become a Jew first in order to be a Christian. Hence Manichaeism 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 for which Hebrew is the Western dialect. 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 “fable” 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 Manichaeism 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 come in. 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 Manichean, but never entered the esoteric school. In Manichaeism there was a very complete inner teaching, and this Augustine did not assimilate. He was one of the "auditores," members of the outer school, like our own "students." He quarreled with a Manichean lecturer (Faustus) on a matter of astronomy and other issues, and 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 esoteric 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 within the next few centuries.

REMEMBERING PAST LIVES

Question: I do not seem to have any remembrance of my past lives. Is there some way to learn of my past incarnations?

Answer: Yes, there is, though it may take you some time. The ability to read at will in the

Memory of Nature requires for most people much persistent effort in living the spiritual life that results in the unfoldment of the inner faculties. However, patient persistence always accomplishes its object.

Some people who have not yet developed positive clairvoyance may for a specific reason be shown in a dream or vision an experience that occurred in a past life. Mediums may also get such information, but since their development is negative, it cannot be depended upon.

CORRECTING COLOR BLINDNESS

Question: Will you please explain the cause of color blindness? Can it be cured?

Answer: Vision is produced through a chemical action of the color elements in the rods and cones which line the outer surface of the retina; every color being activated by its contrasting color. Upon this fact is based the philosophy of color vision, including color blindness.

Ignorance relative to this chemical process has led many physicians to believe that color blindness is incurable. However, it has become known that blue elements are required to perceive and take cognizance of the red, its contrasting color; and red elements to perceive the blue. In like manner yellow elements are needed to perceive the violet, violet elements to perceive yellow, indigo elements to perceive orange, etc. Accordingly, if an individual cannot distinguish red properly, the blue elements must be inactive in the rods and cones mentioned.

To arouse the needed activity to overcome any certain form of color blindness, one may apply the principle of similars or contrasts which repel or arouse. For example: For ten minutes at a time each day, look through a blue glass or a blue lens at any light source that does not cause pain, and gradually the perception of red will become more clear. This exercise can be used for any form of missing color perception; that is, by looking at light through a glass of contrasting color for ten minutes periods for about three days. This is the remedy which Edwin Babbitt, M.D., author of the well-known textbook, *Principles of Light and Color*, found successful in his widespread practice. □