

HIDDEN ORIGINS OF ROSICRUCIANISM

"Strictly speaking, the Rosicrucians do not now even exist, the last of that fraternity having departed in the person of Cagliostro." - *HPB*

EXCERPTS FROM "OCCULTISM OR MAGIC" in "A MODERN PANARION" p. 38-46

Originally published under the title "A Few Questions to Hiram" in "The Spiritual Scientist" July 1875, four months before the Theosophical Society was founded. This article, which is worth reading in its entirety, was H. P. Blavatsky's *first* public mention of her connection with Brotherhoods of Adepts. She wrote about the Eastern Initiates in much more specific and detailed terms later on.

Rosicrucianism . . . was but a sect after all, one of many branches of the same tree.

. . . the dogmas and formulae of certain sects differ greatly. Springing one after the other from the great Oriental mother-root, they scattered broadcast all over the world, and each of them desiring to out-rival the other by plunging deeper and deeper into the secrets jealously guarded by Nature, some of them became guilty of the greatest heresies against the primitive Oriental Kabbalah.

While the first followers of the secret sciences, taught to the Chaldaeans by nations whose very name was never breathed in history, remained stationary in their studies, having arrived at the maximum, the Omega of the knowledge permitted to man, many of the subsequent sects separated from them, and, in their uncontrollable thirst for more knowledge, trespassed beyond the boundaries of truth and fell into fictions. . . .

As the primitive Christian religion divided, in course of time, into numerous sects, so the science of Occultism gave birth to a variety of doctrines and various brotherhoods. So the Egyptian Ophites became the Christian Gnostics, shooting forth the Basilideans of the second century, and the original Rosicrucians created subsequently the Paracelsists, or Fire Philosophers, the European Alchemists, and other physical branches of their sect. (See Hargrave Jennings' *Rosicrucians*.) To call indifferently every Kabbalist a Rosicrucian, is to commit the same error as if we were to call every Christian a Baptist on the ground that the latter are also Christians.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross was not founded until the middle of the thirteenth century, and notwithstanding the assertions of the learned Mosheim, it derives its name neither from the Latin word Ros (dew), nor from a cross, the symbol of Lux. The origin of the Brotherhood can be ascertained by any earnest, *genuine* student of Occultism, who happens to travel in Asia Minor, if he chooses to fall in with some of the Brotherhood, and if he is willing to devote himself to the head-tiring work of deciphering a Rosicrucian manuscript - the hardest thing in the world - for it is carefully preserved in the archives of the very Lodge which was founded by the first Kabbalist of that name, but which now goes by another name. The founder of it, a German Ritter [i.e. a Knight, a member of the German nobility], of the name of Rosencranz, was a man who, after acquiring a very suspicious reputation through the practice of the Black Art in his native place, reformed in consequence of a vision. Giving up his evil practices, he made a solemn vow, and went on foot to Palestine, in order to make his *amende honorable* at the Holy Sepulchre. Once there, the Christian God, the meek, but well-informed Nazarene - trained as he was in the high school of the Essenians, those virtuous descendants of the botanical as well as astrological and magical Chaldaeans - appeared to Rosencranz, a Christian would say, in a vision, but I would suggest, in the shape of a materialized spirit. The purport of this visitation, as

well as the subject of their conversation, remained for ever a mystery to many of the Brethren; but immediately after that, the ex-sorcerer and Ritter disappeared, and was heard of no more till the mysterious sect of Rosicrucians was added to the family of Kabalists, and their powers aroused popular attention, even among the Eastern populations, indolent and accustomed as they are to live among wonders. The Rosicrucians strove to combine together the most various branches of Occultism, and they soon became renowned for the extreme purity of their lives and their extraordinary powers, as well as for their thorough knowledge of the secret of secrets.

As alchemists and conjurers they became proverbial. Later . . . they gave birth to the more modern Theosophists, at whose head was Paracelsus, and to the Alchemists, one of the most celebrated of whom was Thomas Vaughan (seventeenth century), who wrote the most practical things on Occultism under the name of Eugenius Philalethes. I know and can prove that Vaughan was, most positively, "made before he became."

The Rosicrucian Kabbalah is but an epitome of the Jewish and the Oriental ones, combined, the latter being the most secret of all. The Oriental Kabbalah, the practical, full, and *only* existing copy, is carefully preserved at the headquarters of this Brotherhood in the East, and, I may safely vouch, will never come out of its possession. Its very existence has been doubted by many of the European Rosicrucians. One who wants "to become" has to hunt for his knowledge through thousands of scattered volumes, and pick up facts and lessons, bit by bit. Unless he takes the nearest way and consents "to be made," he will never become a practical Kabbalist, and with all his learning will remain at the threshold of the "mysterious gate." The Kabbalah may be used and its truths imparted on a smaller scale now than it was in antiquity, and the existence of the mysterious Lodge, on account of its secrecy, doubted, but it does exist and has lost none of the primitive secret powers of the ancient Chaldaeans. The lodges, few in number, are divided into sections and known but to the Adepts; no one would be likely to find them out, unless the Sages themselves found the Neophyte worthy of initiation. Unlike the European Rosicrucians - who, in order "to become and not to be made," have constantly put into practice the word of St. John, who says "Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force," and who have struggled alone, violently robbing Nature of her secrets - the Oriental Rosicrucians (for such we will call them, being denied the right to pronounce their true name), in the serene beatitude of their divine knowledge, are ever ready to help the earnest student struggling "to become" with practical knowledge, which dissipates, like a heavenly breeze, the blackest clouds of sceptical doubt.

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"As for Rosicrucianism, whatever calls itself by that name is self-convicted as an imposture. Rosicrucians were forbidden to disclose their connection with the Order, or to pose as teachers, or as being in possession of any peculiar knowledge whatsoever. Their only visible mission in the world was to "do good by stealth and blush to find it known." Whoever calls himself a Rosicrucian has thereby proved that he is not one. . . . Certainly it would be correct to say that there is more practical occultism in a single chapter of the *Ocean of Theosophy*, for example, than in all the books on Rosicrucianism and Alchemy and Kabbala that are now obtainable. If the Rosicrucian student of the middle ages had received under his initiation oath one-hundredth part of the information contained in the *Secret Doctrine* he would have considered himself as blessed among men. And there are casual footnotes in the *Secret Doctrine* containing occult information that Paracelsus, for example, would never have dared even to hint at." (from "U.L.T." Magazine, San Francisco, 26th December 1914)

"Today it is not uncommon to find those who have temerity [i.e. audacity] enough to dub themselves "Rosicrucians"."

William Q. Judge, "Echoes from the Orient" p. 35