

The New Age of Erotic Freedom—Part 1 of 2

*A growing interest in sacred sexuality is driving a new sexual revolution.
Start living universal sexual freedom—because you love yourself,
you love others, and you love our planet.*

You have heard of the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. Today we greet the full daylight of that New Age.

If you think for a moment about the coming of dawn, you know that, at first, there is a faint, almost imperceptible brightening in the east. After a long period of gradually growing light, dawn arrives as the first rays from the sun directly strike our location, bringing a new level of illumination. Then, in a relatively brief period of time, about two minutes, the entire solar disk stands clear of the horizon, bringing the shock of full daylight and the foundation of our new day.

The material part of this New Age has been brought about primarily through Information Technology, or IT, though the implications of these innovations reach far beyond the world of simple communications. As our social world develops ever closer and broader bandwidth links, we will find ourselves living in much more intimate relationships, though many may be technologically mediated.

The first light of the New Age begins with the invention, development, and exploitation of the printing press—the ability to rapidly and accurately duplicate written records for dissemination and/or preservation. Suddenly it was possible for scholars to share their knowledge with others easily and accurately, transcending both time and space.

Suddenly, people began to collect, preserve, and publish knowledge. While scribes had long preserved knowledge by manual copying, such work was error prone and laborious. The enhanced dissemination of knowledge had radical effects on society as, for example, the Judaeo-Christian Bible was widely published in translation to common language (i.e., not Latin or Greek), with the result that much original understanding of doctrinal priorities was lost, as orthodox Christianity was uprooted and lost in a wave of ignorant literalism.

The past and fate of the apparently dominant orthodoxies of different world religions do not concern us here today, for they are matters of the past. Today we look forward to planetary salvation from the collective fear and ignorance of humanity, which threatens to destroy all we hold dear. To take the next step forward in pursuit of our planetary destiny, we must help humanity to embrace the truth of love without fear or guilt.

It is from traditions of knowledge outside the dominant orthodoxies that we must seek the missing pieces of our ship of destiny. These traditions, ideas, and experiences began to be recorded and disseminated after the invention of printing. Successive centuries would see increasing circulation of publications and information dealing with matters foreign to both church and king. "Pagan" concepts of natural, environmental, and erotic power inevitably appeared to challenge authority in some way and were often violently suppressed, to say nothing of the psychological violence the society inflicted on its most vulnerable, on its children in the name of an ignorant authority.

Publication, however, accomplished with increasing efficiency, assured that material did survive, so that successive generations of scholars could filter the thoughts of the past, conduct their own experiments, draw their own conclusions, and preserve and disseminate the results of their work for others of similar interests. By the 17th century, the founding documents of Rosicrucianism had been published in many languages throughout Europe, generating a wave of interest in esoteric understanding of reality.

What is Rosicrucianism? Rosicrucianism is a deistic faith that worships Love, revealed through Truth, as the highest good. It has grown out of the ideas and ideals of Freemasonry. If you think of the original masons as the first guys to figure out how to pile up rocks in a stable and useful way, then their practical knowledge gradually became the basis of the highly rational work we recognize as engineering. Within this community of rational thinkers, some took an interest in rational exploration of matters of thinking and emotional inspiration or superconsciousness.

We call this domain of experience the "transphysical".

According to tradition or myth, the first logical explorers of the transphysical domain emerged in ancient Egypt within the community of designers and builders of the massive monuments of that society. Over time, the students of the objective (the builders) drew away from the students of the subjective (the mystics) and each developed their own secrets. The mystics formed small privileged cults or secret societies, such as the cult of Aten Ra (the Solar Disk) that retained a monotheistic vision from the late 18th dynasty and the heretical pharaoh Ikhnoton at their cult center in Memphis.

Supposedly some secret groups survived to the 14th century, when unknown individuals committed themselves with severe and terrible oaths of loyalty and secrecy to the work of preparing their legacy of knowledge for presentation to the world. We do know that, in the early 17th century, at Kassel, in the German state of Hesse, a remarkable book was finally published and slowly began to gain readers and followers.

This document, the *Fama Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis* (*Legend of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*), which was soon translated into several languages, took emerging progressive elements in Europe by storm and was almost certainly one of the principal inspirations for the Enlightenment of the 18th century. It tells the story of a man named Christian Rosenkreuz, who travels to the east, learns the great secrets of reality, and returns to found this secret order, which is now pleased to bring you this wonderful book designed to acquaint the public with our views. At this time there was nothing overtly erotic or sexual about this book, unless you had been initiated into the various levels of symbolic meaning attached to some parts of the material.

In the 18th century we begin to pick up a visible historical thread with the emergence of the United States as a democratic republic founded on then popular Rosicrucian principles. The numerous opposing cults of Christianity and European mercantilism, locked in deadly competition in Europe as the power of king and church waned, seeded the new world with their most adventurous and fanatical members—their true activists and troublemakers. It took the deistic idealism of Rosicrucianism, shared by most of the “Founding Fathers,” a faith in the possibility of “unity without uniformity,” to make it possible to fuse the diverse attitudes and interests of this group of variously disposed “Christians” into a functioning nation.

We can look back to this time and see many threads of esoteric knowledge involving sex and faith being exposed to examination by the public. Of course, relatively few people were sufficiently open minded or fearless to examine the evidence fairly, much less try the new ideas out for themselves. Those who did so tended to come from the most aristocratic and privileged classes, who could undertake such adventures without fear of exposure and condemnation, and the poorest and least privileged, who intuitively felt the sacred zeal of all who are not distracted by fear and greed, and had nothing to lose in reputation.

I would like to briefly mention two extraordinary appearances of erotic occultism or sex magick in the United States in the 19th century at the height of the spiritualist movement, which was the primary public venue in which the subject was addressed.

Around 1850, Paschal Beverly Randolph began to actively write and travel on lecture tours in the US, Canada, and Europe, appearing as a trance medium and spiritual practitioner. He styled himself “The Rosicrucian” and wrote and lectured prolifically and publicly on sex magick, which he, like the Christian Rosenkreuz of legend, claimed to have learned during his youthful travels in the “east.” For 25 years his writing and social contacts would dominate the understanding of sacred sex and virtually define the “the western tradition.”

The other instance was contemporaneous. Born into abject poverty as the children of carnival performers, the sisters Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Clafin were trained by their parents as cold readers, psychic performers, and clairvoyants in a frontier community of hidden knowledge that drew on European folk traditions, which had survived centuries of Christianity and would yet need to survive rational materialism. By 1860, when Randolph was at his peak, these sisters were also emerging as leaders of the spiritualist movement and the suffragist movement in the US.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, these sisters opened a salon in New York City, where their varied abilities in sexual healing and spiritualism attracted the attention of Cornelius Vanderbilt, who, in 1870, enabled them to operate the first woman-owned brokerage on Wall Street. They used the profits from this operation to fund a weekly magazine extolling the benefits of free love, legalized prostitution, and other aspects of an erotically open society.

Randolph died at age 49 under suspicious circumstances, but his legacy inspired many scholars to recover the ideals of sex magick in the decades to come.

In the meantime, Woodhull became the first woman to run for President of the United States in 1872. In short order the forces of conventionalism, including the suffragist circle she had created through her personal work and eloquence, and the international socialist movement, which she launched in the US, turned against her free love agenda and the sisters left the US for England, where they prospered.

Victoria Woodhull created the suffragist movement that rejected her most basic beliefs in favor of social accommodation. Paschal Beverly Randolph inspired the founding of Rosicrucian orders that persist in different forms today in the US, but all open ones have rejected his most basic beliefs in favor of social accommodation as well.

In England in the late 19th century the recovery of lost knowledge became an interest of Rosicrucian scholars who founded a secret order known, for short, at the Golden Dawn. Well-know cultural and social figures, such as William Butler Yeats were active members. Although the Golden Dawn did not explicitly teach sex magic, one of its members, Aliester Crowley, was a follower of Randolph's idea of erotically informed Rosicrucianism and went on to establish his own communities of practice.

By the turn of the century, it was Crowley who was to most clearly enunciate the ideal of a New Age. He claimed to have received a direct revelation of the opening of the New Age, the Age of Aquarius, at the vernal equinox of 1904, through a supernatural contact. Crowley published his three-day revelation as "The Book of the Law" and built much of his career with occult and secret societies around this

text. Without going into excessive detail, there are certain concepts that are presented in the book that are the core of the revelation and are central to the belief systems of the esoteric society, Ordo Templi Orientis, which Crowley developed, and the exoteric religion, Thelema, which Crowley founded.

A key concept, which Crowley and his associates developed, is “the Law,” as presented in his revelation, which was published as *The Book of the Law*. Here is the statement:

Love is the Law, Love under Will

Do what thou Will shall be the whole of the Law

Without going into detailed explanation, this is generally understood to say that that Love (the desire to do good to others) is the supreme design of the universe, but that this Love is empowered to act by the power of Truth (which is the true will of the individual). It then says that Love, acting by the power of Truth is all and only what it takes to fit into the supreme design of the universe. Those of us who take this direction literally understand it as a call to the most intense inner dedication to Love through Truth.

A second key concept is captured in the statement from *The Book of the Law*, “Every man and every woman is a star.” This is interpreted to mean that each individual, like a single star, has its own, independent trajectory through space and time on all levels of fact, meaning, and value so that none conflict and whenever many are clustered together it is in a community of service to higher good.

A third key concept is “The Crowned and Conquering Child”. The idea is that the spirit of the people of the oncoming age will be fresh and open like a child. Child-like, but not childish. And such people will be free of the fears that turn the human heart from the truth. They will truly know the truth and the truth will truly set them free. The idea can be seen as a more complete expression of what Jesus meant by saying, “The meek shall inherit the earth.”

With Crowley’s inspiration, the first direct rays of sunlight struck our planet at the dawn of the New Age, the “Age of Aquarius,” the complete restoration of human society to a state of cosmic innocence and grace, which will permit this planet to develop its spiritual and social potential.

Now, after slightly more than 100 years, we can see the full solar disk upon the horizon, calling us forth to the full glories of the New Age. At last we can speak openly of matters that remained hidden even in the last century. The dead hand of preservation of a weak and incompetent culture has given way to the inspiration of destiny, enabling us to wisely replace the defective foundations of the old, so that human progress towards a universally loving and caring society can proceed and accelerate.