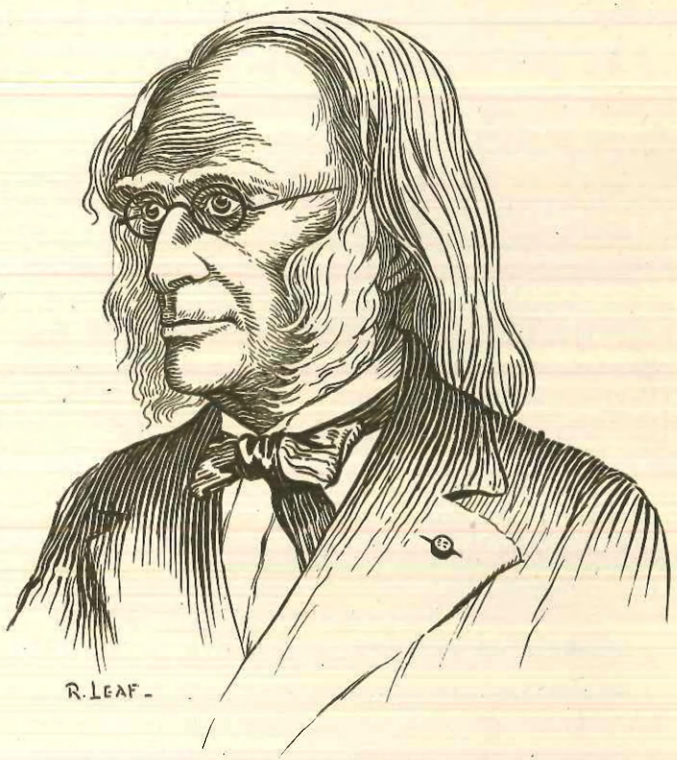

ADOLPH FRANCK

1809-1893

THE KABBALAH

OR

THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY
OF THE HEBREWS

BY

ADOLPH FRANCK

REVISED AND ENLARGED TRANSLATION

BY

DR. I. SOSSNITZ

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Published by

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25 Mount Hope Place

New York City

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF MY UNFORGETTABLE TEACHER
AND FATHER

JOSEPH L. SOSSNITZ

GREAT KABBALIST, THOROUGH SCIENTIST,
TRUE PHILOSOPHER
AND INDEFATIGABLE SEEKER
FOR TRUTH

IN HUMBLE DEVOTION
THE TRANSLATOR

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES

MORRIS REISS PRESS
NEW YORK

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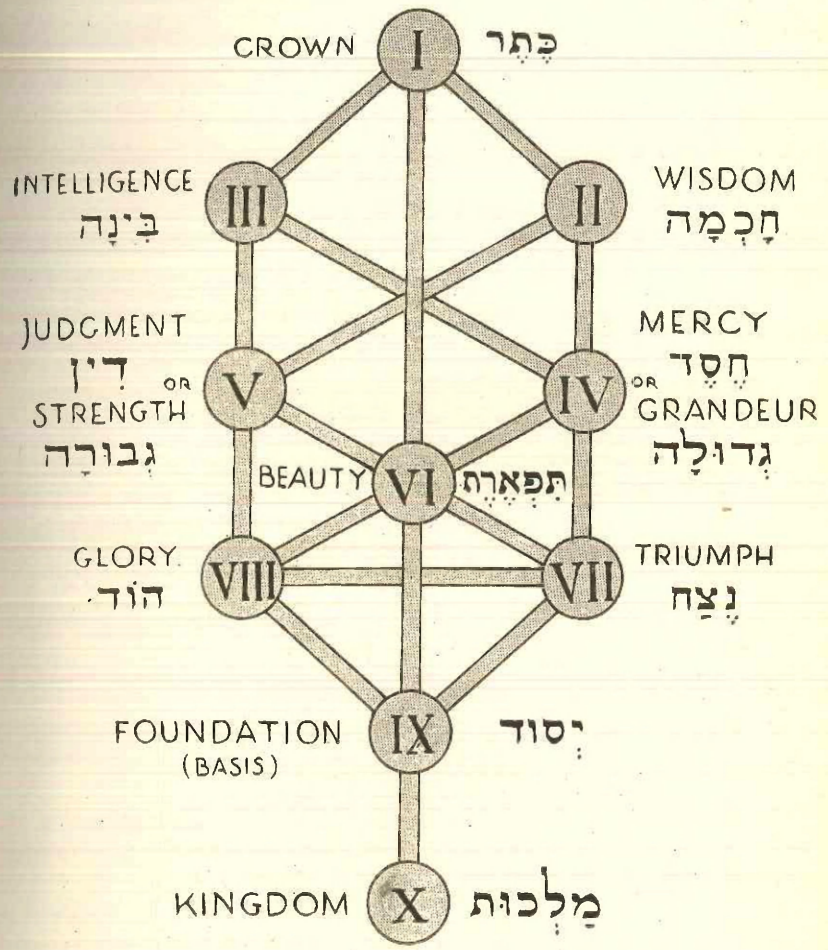

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

It would be presumption on my part were I to follow the example of the German translator and write a lengthy preface on the merits of this book. It would be but a poor imitation, at best. Any one willing to take the trouble to study the biography of the author and his German translator will admit that the devotion to impassionate philosophy of the one and the intimate acquaintance with Talmudic lore and Jewish Religious Philosophy of the other justly grant them undisputed authority to speak on the subject treated of in this work, and entitle them to a respectful hearing by all those desiring an unalloyed exposition of the Kabbalah. I lay claim to none of these qualifications, and will therefore confine my remarks to the make-up of this translation.

My efforts have been directed primarily to a popularization of the subject treated here, and I have therefore avoided, as much as possible, any complicated phrases or obscure expressions often met with in works treating subjects of this or similar nature. My notes are rather of an explanatory nature and tend to enlighten the reader on some points he may not be familiar with. At times, though, I was compelled to take the part of a critic; especially where I met with discrepancies between the French original and the German translation. In such cases I was naturally compelled to look for arbitration in the original sources, and I had to venture my own opinion at times when neither the translation of the author nor that of the German

translator seemed to render the true meaning of the original Hebrew or Aramaic text (as, for example, note 15 and note 46 in Part II, Chap. III).

I have translated all the notes made by Dr. Jellinek, and followed his example in omitting the translation of the Appendix. His reason for doing so seems to me to be justified. There are English translations of these extracts, and, besides, such diatribes do not contribute to the knowledge of and enlightenment on the Kabbalah with which this work is concerned. I have added, instead, an Appendix by Dr. Jellinek on the "Bibliographical Notices on the Zohar" which, I am sure, will amply repay the reader for my omission of the Appendix of the French text. I have also added an Index for the convenience of those readers who may wish to use this book as a reference.

For any inaccuracies and mistakes which may have crept into this translation I ask the indulgence of the kind reader and critic, and I shall ever be thankful for any corrections offered in good faith. The task of translating was to me by no means an easy one; for the work developed mostly during the minutes snatched from an often busy practice, and during the hours usually assigned to physical and mental rest—from midnight to dawn.

New York, May, 1926. I. Sossnitz.

PREFACE TO THE GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST FRENCH EDITION

By

Adolph Jellinek

None of the gnostic systems has so often been compelled, under the hands of the critics, to change its birthplace as the so-called Kabbalah; no monument of Oriental Philosophy[1] has called forth such conflicting hypotheses as to the time and place of its composition, as the universal code of the Kabbalists, the Zohar; finally, no writer of the history of philosophy has until now undertaken to translate the picturesque, metaphorical language of Jewish gnosis into the reasoning mode of expression of abstract thinking.

I shall leave out of consideration the great array of Jewish and Christian disciples of the Kabbalistic system; it is too strongly dominated by the essential mysticism that prevails in all parts of the Kabbalistic system, to be able to reach the necessary sobermindedness. The opinion of a Pico de la Mirandola, of a Reuchlin, has as much critical value as that of an ordinary

[1] This term introduced by Mosheim is still to be put forward in the investigations of gnosticism, "for"—as Baur (the Christian Gnosis, p. 4) justly remarks—"the very name is to express at once the demand to place oneself in an entirely new and peculiar atmosphere, and to make use of an entirely different gauge than the usual one of our critical reason and phantasy for the speculations that present themselves here." This viewpoint of orientalism should generally be adhered to in religious philosophy.

Zoharist or of a Hassid; the presumptive higher illumination does not permit the intellect to come to its senses.

Those critics who stand outside the sanctum of the Kabbalah have, indeed, brought to light wonderful conjectures bearing on the age and the origin of the same. Some (Buddeus, Kleuker, Osiander) set the Kabbalah in the age of the patriarchs, and let it march, side by side with the Mosaic teachings, on the road of oral tradition as an esoteric teaching, a Secret Doctrine. The Talmudic tradition (תורת שבעל פה) claims no less, indeed, for itself; it is maintained that this, too, is an oral part of the divine revelation descended from Moses (compare Maimonides, Introduction into the Mishnah). Yet, *this* tradition which bears only on the material, sensual side of the *Law,* could never have paved its way to the people, were it not sanctioned by descent and religious national custom.

Others, (Basnage, Brucker) believed they had found the cradle of the Kabbalah in Egypt. This opinion is, as it were, a continuation of the one which holds that the Mosaic Law and Mosaic Doctrine is a property pilfered from the Egyptian priesthood. Richard Simon and Berger let the founders of the Jewish gnosis, in company with the Greek creators of the doctrine of Numbers and Ideas, be schooled by the Chaldeans; Wachter, Joachim Lang and Wolf (author of Bibliotheca Hebraea) looked for the source of the Kabbalah in Pagan philosophy. Yet, these opinions lack a definite historic foundation, and have justly been rejected by the author of this work. (Compare Tholuck, "de Ortu Cabbalae," p. 3-4.)

In company with another author of a French work (Matter, "Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme") Franck defends the view that the Kabbalistic science evolved from the theology of the Parsees.[2] Against this opinion Gieseler (in the review of Matter's

[2] Though Mr. Franck agrees with Matter in the turning point of the investigation—in the pre-Christian, Zoroastrian origin of the Kabbalistic philosophy—yet there prevails the great difference between them in that, while the latter considers the relation of the Kabbalah

work, theologic studies and criticisms, year 1830, I, 381-383) made some objections referred to also by Baur (p. 70). "Although," says Gieseler, "we fully recognize the proven influence of Parseeism upon Judaism, yet we would not explain it by any syncretic inclination of the latter, in so far as syncretism refers to an external union of materials innerly strange to one another. Never, indeed, were the Israelite people further away from mixing strange opinions with their religious belief, nor of recognizing any relationship to any other religion, like the Persian for instance, as just since the exile. The influence of the Persian system upon the Jews consisted in that it induced them to a development of analogous seeds resting in their doctrine by representing itself to them as a complete system in some points; at which the Persian doctrine development, unknown to them, surely helped to influence as a pattern. It is always the more developed doctrinal system which acts upon the less developed one, even when the latter places itself to the former in the most decided contrast. . . . We first take side with Massuet against Buddeus by denying the pre-Christian origin of the Kabbalistic philosophy. The exegetic quibblings which developed later into the so-called Kabbalah Symbolica are older, it is true; but we are obliged to doubt that the philosophic system of the Kabbalists originated from such early times, because neither Josephus nor Philo mention it, because the system of Philo relates to the Kabbalistic system evidently as the earlier to the later, and because the historical traces of the Kabbalah are so very young. Accordingly, we can not consider the Kabbalah (which, by the way, does not seem to us of such close relationship to the Zoroastrian system) as a source of the Christian gnosis."

It is indisputable that the Jews resisted the invasion of strange opinions into their religious belief, especially since the

to the Zoroastrian system as that of a copy to the original (la Kabballe se montre auprès du Zoroastrisme comme la copie auprès de l'original), the first one proves the great advance of the Kabbalah on Zoroastrism. Besides, the mode of investigation of *our* author is quite a different one.

exilé; yet, it can be proven to the contrary, that they looked for and found in the Bible every wisdom otherwise unknown to them or not indicated therein by *clear words*. Philo endeavored to prove in the Scriptures the wisdom of all peoples; the Talmudists (R. Gamaliel, R. Joshua ben Hananiah, R. Johanan in the name of R. Simeon ben Yohai, R. Meir, R. Joshua son of Levi, R. Chiya son of Aba in the name of R. Johanan, Mar Sutra, Rabbina, R. Ashi.—See Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Sanhedrin, last chap.) demonstrated the resurrection from the Bible; the entire line of Jewish religious philosophers, from Saadia the Fayumite to Dr. Hirsch of Luxembourg, have piled upon the Bible strange elements in the endeavor to view it in the light of the prevailing philosophy of the times.

The influence of the Persian system upon the Jews must appear further on more powerful than any other. With the first cessation of political independence of the Jewish state, with the first exile, the Jewish spirit awakened; doubts arose, problems were created, the solution was attempted. The most important questions of the "when" and "how" of the genesis of beings, of the destiny of the universe were not satisfactorily answered by the simplicity of the Mosaic records; on the other hand, though, they clung still closer to the old belief. A new change of ideas took place in Babylon; every conflict with previous conceptions could be avoided by the use of the Kabbalah Symbolica. And what doctrine could better be brought in accord with the Mosaic tradition than the Persian? Johannsen (the Cosmogenic Views of the Hindoos and Hebrews, Altona, 1833) was really in earnest when he represented the Mosaic cosmogony as a system of emanation! The Hindoo designation of God before the creation of the world by *svajambhu* and *tad,* as given by Johannsen, p. 10, is, in fact, found with the Kabbalists in the explanation of the אהיה אשר אהיה — I Am that I Am.

The Kabbalist—to retain this term—had to shrink from the new and dangerous ideas easily exposed to misinterpretation, and

which underwent considerable modifications at his hands and under the influence of Judaism; and it is only natural that the Kabbalistic doctrine, just because it is so similar to the Persian, should have become a *secret* instruction, did not press itself forward, and was known to only a few during its first stage. It originated gradually, however, and stayed free of the Greek elements that influenced Philo. With reference to the not very clear relationship of the Kabbalah to Parseeism, this counts as a merit of the Kabbalistic system; the Kabbalah is not a copy of Zoroastrism—as Mr. Matter maintains—but rather an evolution of the latter connected with various modifications.

The question of the origin and age of the Kabbalah is most closely connected with the inquiry as to the time and place of the composition of the Zohar. This question does not seem to us to have been sufficiently answered. The Zohar, in its entire range, contains no less than an uniform system;[3] repetitions are often found there; passages are met with which have been borrowed from the Talmud and Midrash; the language is of various coloring;[4] and because the system developed gradually, there must of necessity be found therein graduations. From the Zohar, then, we are to be shown what doctrines formed its original elements; how it developed under the hands of various teachers; what elements of other writings are found therein; in short, a criticism of the entire Zohar according to its individual passages would have to be given. This we shall attempt in a future work: "The Composition of the Zohar." (Unpublished—Transl.)

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[3] Thus we find on the very first page of the Zohar—according to the Sulzbach edition and generally all those bearing the name of זהר גדול—traces of the Hindoo cosmogony which, though, have been modified by the author through the influence of Judaism. In explaining the creation, it speaks there of the "seed" (אפיק אינון תולדין מההוא זרעא דאזדרע ביה) which is immediately modified by transmutation in the "letters." (מאן ההוא זרעא אינון אתוון וכו').

[4] It is noteworthy that in the old passages the Jerusalemean בוצינא appears for the Babylonian שרגא. Comp. Nedarim, 66b; Fuerst, "Lehrgebaeude der aramaeischen Idiome," p. 17.

I have now to say something about this work, my translation, correction and addition.

The source from which the historical writers of philosophy have until now drawn their knowledge of the Kabbalistic system, is Knorr v. Rosenroth's "Kabbala Denudata;" "from this rich and voluminous work, though"—as Molitor (The Philosophy of History, II, 9) judges—"the reader will get only a hazy inkling but not a clear and distinct conception of the Kabbalah." The real *philosophic* value of the Kabbalah is, on the whole, neglected in Rosenroth's work. Moliter's erudite work, "Philosophy of History or on the Tradition," does not contain, as yet, in the three volumes which have appeared at this writing, an objective representation of the Kabbalistic system. The author himself says (II, 12) that "for the present the whole *should be considered merely as a free philosophic attempt,*" and promises to develop the Kabbalah with the Kabbalists' own words in the fifth volume.

Besides, an impartial representation is hardly to be expected from Moliter, who "studio disciplinae Judaeorum arcanae ipse prorsus factus est Judaeus Cabbalisticus—himself became a Jewish Kabbalist through the study of the ancient doctrine of the Jews" (Tholuck, p. 4), and who had great faith in the younger Kabbalistic works and commentaries. The work of Mr. Franck, where the Kabbalah is developed impartially and commensurate with our times, from the oldest fragments of the Zohar, must be welcome to the writer of the history of philosophy and to all those who want to know the *philosophy* of the Kabbalah. The investigation on the age of the Kabbalah, the authenticity of the Kabbalistic main works, as well as the investigation on the relationship of the Kabbalistic system to other systems of philosophy and religion, is also given here for the first time in detail and complete.

In the translation of the French original I have endeavored to render its contents faithfully. The translated passages from the Sefer Yetzirah, the Zohar and the Talmud and the new-

hebraic works I have always compared with the originals. The Spanish quotations from Jacob Abendana's translation of the Cuzari by Judah-ha-Levi, as well as the appendix, have been omitted; the first ones are of no use to the German reader, the latter contains only a translation of Solomon Maimon's report on the sect of the Hassidim (see Maimon's biography, part I, ch. 19) and Peter Baer's representation of the Zoharites (Peter Baer, History, Doctrines and Opinions of all past and present religious sects of the Jews and of the Secret Doctrine or Kabbalah II, 309 ff.).

The correction referred to, I would rather call an outward one. The quotations from the Kabbalistic works were so corrupt,[5] the reference to page numbers full of mistakes (at times absent altogether), the annotations were so often misplaced,[6] that I was compelled to spend much time upon correction. Believe me, it is only necessary to look at the folio volume of the Zohar, edition Sulzbach, to see that it is no small trouble and loss of time to look there for a given passage.

Yet, in carefully comparing the translation with the original, other corrections will be found which I have not expressly indicated by a footnote. Thus, for example, there is nothing more contrary to the spirit of Kabbalism than to translate אוריתא with "Law" (loi). To the allegoric method of the Kabbalah even the Law is so familiar as to lose its inherent rigidity.

The annotations and the appendix make up the addition. For the completion of the "Biographic Notes on the Zohar" I have made use, besides the Kabbalah Denudata, also of "Die Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden" (Devotional Sermons of the Jews) by Zunz, the book ראביה by Milsahagi, and the seventh volume of the new-Hebrew annual כרם חמד. The representation of the so-called Kabbalistic tree was also added first to the translation.

May 20th, 1844. AD. JELLINEK.

[5] Compare only for example p. 155, note I, of the French original.

[6] P. 142, note ** is to be struck and part of note 3 must refer to p. 143.

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND FRENCH EDITION

FRANCK

It is almost half a century, in 1843, since this book saw the light for the first time. It is nearly as long since it was introduced into public and private libraries. This public eagerness to take notice of a metaphysical and religious work could but astonish us; it is explainable by the subject covered therein and by the very name of the Kabbalah. Since that time, long past, I have often been requested, in and out of France, to publish a second edition of my volume of 1843. For several reasons I refused to satisfy this desire. Compelled by circumstances, as professor of physical and international law, at the College of France, to devote all my activity to studies which are of general interest, it was difficult for me to return to a subject of research which did not seem to me to respond any more to the spirit of the times. Then again, I would have been obliged, because of the nature of the objections raised, to relegate to second place that which makes up the merit and charm of the Kabbalah, that is to say, the philosophic and religious system it contains, in order to discuss first certain bibliographical and chronological questions. I lacked the courage and did not consider it useful to impose upon myself this sacrifice.

The situation is quite different now. Disgusted with positivistic, evolutionistic and brutally atheistic doctrines which dominate our countries to-day, and which seek to domineer not alone science but society as well, many minds have turned to the Orient, the cradle of religions and the primitive fatherland of

mystic ideas; and among the doctrines which they endeavor to restore to honor, the Kabbalah is not forgotten. I shall give several proofs.

We must know that under the name of the Theosophical Society, there exists a vast organization which, coming from India, passed to America and Europe, sending out vigorous ramifications into the United States, England, and France. This association is not left to chance; it has its hierarchy, its organization, its literature, its reviews and its journals. The principal organ in France is the *Lotus*. This is a periodical publication of very great interest, which borrowed from Buddhism the foundation of ideas, making no pretense to bind to them the minds by forbidding new researches and attempts at changes. Upon this Buddhistic foundation are often developed speculations and textual quotations borrowed from the Kabbalah.

There is even a branch of the Theosophic Society, a French branch by the name of Isis, which published during the last year a previously unpublished translation of the Sefer Yetzirah, one of the two Kabbalistic books considered the oldest and most important. What gives merit to this translation, or, above all, what makes valuable the commentaries that accompany it, I do not consider it my duty to examine here. I will only say, in order to give an idea of the thought that inspired the author of this work, that, according to him, "the Kabbalah is the only religion from which all other cults emanated." (Preface, p. 4.)

Another *Review,* also consecrated to theosophical propaganda, and in which necessarily the Kabbalah occurs often is the one which was founded, and which is managed and edited, for the most part, by Lady Caithness, Duchess of Pomar. Its name is the same as the one given by the great German theosophist Jacob Boehm to his first work—"The Dawn." The purpose of the *Dawn* is not entirely the same as that of the *Lotus*. Buddhism does not hold there first rank to the detriment of Christianity; but with the aid of an esoteric interpretation of sacred texts,

the two religions are brought in accord and presented as the common source of all other religions. This esoteric interpretation is surely one of the principal elements of the Kabbalah; but this also is made to contribute in a direct manner, under the name of Semitic Theosophy. I do not undertake to guarantee the correctness with which it is expounded. I limit myself to point out the lively preoccupation of which it is the object in the very curious work of the Duchess of Pomar.

Why not speak also of the Magazine *Initiation,* although it is no more than four months in existence? The very name *Initiation* tells us a great deal, it puts us upon the threshhold of a good many sanctuaries closed to the profane; and this young *Review,* which, in fact, bears upon its cover the title "Philosophic and Independent Review of the Higher Studies," is dedicated exclusively to science, or, at least to matters of research, to subjects of curiosity and conjectures, suspected most in the eyes of established science and even in the eyes of that public opinion which passes as an organ of common sense. Among these figure, in a general manner, Theosophy, Occult Sciences, Hypnotism, Freemasonry, Alchemy, Astrology, Animal Magnetism, Physiognomy, Spiritualism, etc., etc.

Wherever the subject of Theosophy springs up, one is sure to see the Kabbalah appear. The *Initiation* does not fail to obey this law. The Kabbalah, "the Sacred Kabbalah," as she calls it, is dear to her. She appeals often to its authority; but one notices, particularly in its second number, an article from the pen of Mr. René Caillé, on the "Kingdom of God" by Albert Jouney, where the doctrine of the Zohar, the most important of the two Kabbalistic works, serves as basis to a Christian Kabbalah formed from the ideas of St. Martin, styled the "Unknown Philosopher," the unconscious renovator of the doctrine of Origenes. That which Abbot Roca proposes in one of the first numbers of the *Lotus* is also a Christian Kabbalah.

I shall be permitted also not to pass entirely in silence the

Swedenborgian journals which appeared lately in and out of France, especially the "General Philosophy of the Students of Swedenborg's Books."[1] But the Church of Swedenborg, or the "New Jerusalem," although represented by its adepts as one of the most important forms of Theosophy, can surely not join the Kabbalah simply because it leans upon an esoteric interpretation of sacred books. The results of this interpretation and the personal visions of the Swedish prophet resemble but little, barring a few exceptions, the teachings contained in the Kabbalistic books—the Zohar and the Sefer Yetzirah. I shall rather stop to consider a recent work of great erudition, a doctor's thesis presented not long ago to the Faculty of Sciences of Paris, which did not receive the measure of attention of which it is worthy: "Essay on Egyptian Gnosticism, its development and its Egyptian origin," by M. E. Amélineau (Paris, 1887).

This dissertation, written for an entirely different purpose, demolishes entirely the criticism which sees in the Kabbalah nothing but fraud hatched in the head of some obscure rabbi of the thirteenth century and continued after him by unintelligent and unscientific imitators.

Amélineau discovers for us in the fathers of gnosticism, who were absolutely unknown in the thirteenth century, mainly in Saturninus and Valentin, a system of theogony and of cosmogony identical to the one of the Zohar; and not only are the ideas alike, but the symbolical form of language and the manner of argumentation are also the same.[2]

In the same year in which Mr. Amélineau, by his doctor's thesis, delivered at Sarbonne, avenged the Zohar from the attacks delivered against it by the skepticism of our times, another German scholar, Mr. Epstein, restored to the Sefer Yetzirah, also a target for the objections of modern criticism, a part at least of its great antiquity. Although he does not permit it to go back to Akkiba,

[1] Published by Villot, 22 rue de Boisey, Taverny (Sein-et-Oisee).
[2] I have cited several examples in the Journal of Scholars, April and May numbers, 1888.

and still less to the patriarch Abraham, he establishes, at least, through decisive reasoning, that it is not any later than the fourth century of our era.[3]

This is something already. But I do not doubt, that by paying more attention to the depth rather than the form of the book, and by searching for analogies in the most ancient products of gnosticism, it will be possible to go back still further. Do not numbers and letters to which the entire system of the Sefer Yetzirah is traceable, play just as great a role in Pythagorism as in the first system of India? It is the rage nowadays to rejuvenate everything, as though the spirit of the system, and, above all, the mystic spirit were not just as old as the world and will not last as long as human mind will last.

Here, then, we have reason to believe that the interest found in the Kabbalah during so many centuries, in Christianity as well as in Judaism, in the researches of Philosophy as well as in the speculations of Theology, is far from being exhausted, and that I am not entirely wrong in republishing a work which may serve to make it known. After all, if it only answers the wish of a few curious ones, it will suffice to dispute the right to count it among books entirely useless.

Paris, April 9th, 1889. A. FRANCK.

[3] Epstein, M'kadmonios Ha-Y'udim, Beitraege zur Geschichte Juedischer Alterthumskunde, Vienna, 1887.

PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR

A doctrine with more than one point of resemblance to the doctrine of Plato and Spinoza; a doctrine which in its form rises at times to the majestic tone of religious poetry; a doctrine born in the same land, and almost at the same time, as Christianity; a doctrine which developed and spread during a period of more than twelve centuries in the shadow of the most profound mystery, without any supporting evidence other than the testimony of a presumptive ancient tradition, and with no apparent motive than the desire to penetrate more intimately into the meaning of the Sacred Books—such is the doctrine found in the original writings and in the oldest fragments of the Kabbalah[1] when shifted and purified of all their dross.

It occurred to me that, at a time, when all historical researches, and the history of philosophy in particular, have

[1] The Hebrew word קבלה (Kabbalah), as its root קבל indicates, expresses the action of receiving: a doctrine received by tradition. The word Masorah (מסורה) designates the action of transmitting; a doctrine transmitted by tradition. The orthography herein used has been used in Germany a long time (Kabbalah instead of Cabbala). It seems the orthography best fitted to the pronounciation of the Hebrew term, and it is the orthography recommended as most exact by Raymond Lullus in his book "de Auditu Kabbalistico."[1a]

[1a] The possible reason that the Kabbalists preferred to call their doctrine קבלה (acceptio) and not מסורה (traditio)—compare Peter Beer: Geschichte, Lehren und Meinungen aller bestandenen und noch bestehenden religioesen Secten der Juden u. s. w. Vol. II, p. 4—may be found in their desire to avoid a name in which the term "teaching" is especially conspicuous; for the secret doctrine was to be imparted only to the pious who has been well tried and who has attained full manhood.—Jellinek.

acquired so much importance; at a time when the belief is prevalent that the human mind may reveal itself in its entirety only in the totality of its works—that such a subject, considered from a viewpoint far above every sect or party spirit, may justly lay claim to participation. That even the difficulties which surround such a subject, and the obscurity offered in its ideas as well as in its language, may promise indulgence to one daring to treat it.

But this is not the only reason why the Kabbalah recommends itself to the attention of serious minds. It should be remembered that from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the middle of the seventeenth century, it exercised a considerable influence over theology, philosophy, natural science and medicine. It was the spirit of the Kabbalah which inspired a Pico de la Mirandola, a Cornelius Agrippa, a Reuchlin, a Paracelsus, a Henry Morus, a Robert Fludd, a Van Helmont, and even a Jacob Boehm, the greatest of all those who went astray in searching for an universal science, *one* science that would take upon itself to show us the very essence of the connection of all things in the very depths of divine nature. Less bold than a modern critic soon to be mentioned, I dare not now pronounce the name of Spinoza.

I do not pretend to have discovered an entirely unknown land. On the contrary, I must say that years will be required for a review of all that has been written concerning the Kabbalah, if it were only from the moment when the press first bared its secrets. But what contradictory opinions, what impassioned judgments, what fantastical hypotheses, and, taking it all together, what inassimilable chaos in that mass of Hebrew, Latin and German books published under all forms, and furrowed by citations in all languages! And mark well, that the discord shows itself not only in the appreciations of the doctrines to be made known, or in the so very complicated problem of their origin, but presents itself in no less a conspicuous manner in the very exposition of the doctrines. For that reason the more modern way of

studying the matter is not to be considered useless if it bases its work upon original documents, upon the best accredited traditions, and upon the most authentic texts; and, if at the same time, it embraces all that is good and true in previous researches.

But before entering upon this plan of research, I deem it necessary to set before the reader a rapid review of the works which gave rise to this original idea, and which, in some measure, contain the elements of this work. It will thus be possible to have a more correct idea of how far science succeeded with this mysterious subject, and of what nature is the task endowed upon us by our predecessors. To accomplish that task is the aim of this preface.

I shall not speak of the considerable number of modern Kabbalists who wrote in Hebrew. Individually, their distinguishing features are of so little importance, and, save for a few exceptions, they penetrate so little into the depths of the system, that it would be very difficult and equally tedious to mention each one separately. Suffice it to know that they divide themselves into two schools, both founded in Palestine at about the same time, the middle of the sixteenth century. One was founded by Moses Corduero,[2] the other by Isaac Luria[3] who was regarded by a few Jews as the forerunner of Messiah.

Notwithstanding the superstitious veneration which these two instilled into their students, both were but commentators who lacked the gift of originality. Corduero, at least, kept close to the meaning of the original writings, although not entering deeply

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[2] In Hebrew the name is ר' משה קורדואירו, and perhaps the pronounciation should be Cordovero. Of Spanish origin, he flourished toward the middle of the sixteenth century, in Sephath, in Lower Galilee.* His principal work was the "Garden of Pomegranites" (פרדס רמונים) published in Cracow. His little treatise on Mystic Ethics, "Deborah's Palm Tree" (תמר דבורה), was published in Mantua in 1623.

* More correctly in Upper Galilee.—Jellinek.

[3] In Hebrew Luria's name was ר' יצחק אשכנזי or, abbreviated האר"י. He also died in Sephath in 1572. Apart from detached treatises which show no proof of authenticity, he published nothing more. But his disciple, Chaim Vital, collected all his opinions into one system and embodied them under the title עץ חיים.

into their spirit; while Luria almost always deviated from the true text in order to give free rein to his reveries which, in reality, were dreams of a diseased mind—aegri somnia vana. I need not say which of the two I have consulted most frequently; but I can not refrain from remarking that the prevailing opinion places more importance with the latter.

I shall set aside those writers who made but a passing mention of the Kabbalah; writers like Richard Simon,[4] Burnet (Archaeologic Philosoph. ch. 4) and Huttingen;[5] or those who, confining their researches to biography, bibliography and history proper, do no more than indicate the sources where to look, as, for instance, to Wolf,[6] to Basnage,[7] and to Bartolocci;[8] in a word, to writers who are content to sum up, sometimes to repeat what others have said. To the latter class belong, as far as our subject is concerned, the authors of the "Introduction to the Philosophy of the Hebrews,"[9] and the modern historians of philosophy who more or less, copied Brucker, as Brucker himself put under contribution the more neo-platonic and Arabic than the Kabbalistic dissertations of the Spanish rabbi Abraham Cohen Herrera.[10] After all these eliminations I have still to put forth prominently a number of authors who have made a more serious study of the esoteric doctrine of the Hebrews, or to whom we must at least accord the credit of having drawn that doctrine from the profound obscurity where it had remained hidden until the close of the fifteenth century.

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4 Critical History of the Old Testament, tome I, ch. 7.

5 Thes. philolog. and in other writings—Discursus gemaricus de imcestu, etc.

6 Bibliotheca Hebraica, Hamb., 1721. 4 vols. 4 to.

7 Histoire des Juifs, Paris and the Hague.

8 Magna Bibliotheca Rabbinica. 4 vols. fol.

9 J. F. Buddeus, Introductio ad Historiam philosophiae Hebraeorum, Halle, 1702 and 1721. 8 Vo.

10 Yerira or Herera, belonged to the seventeenth century. His chief work, "Porta Coelorum" (the Gate of the Heavens) was composed in Spanish, his mother tongue, and translated first into Hebrew then into Latin by the author of the Kabbalah denudata. (This will be spoken of further on in this book.)

The first who revealed to Christian Europe the name and the existence of the Kabbalah, was a man who, despite the deviations of his ardent imagination, despite the dashing ardor of his enthusiastic mind, and perhaps even because of the force of these brilliant defects, gave vigorous impulsion to the ideas of his century, we mean—Raymond Lullus (Raimundus Lullus). It would be difficult to say just how far Raymond Lullus was initiated in this mysterious science, and what influence it exercised over his own doctrines.

Under no consideration will I affirm with a historian of philosophy[11] that Raymond Lullus drew from this science the identity of God and Nature. That much is certain, though, that he had a lofty idea of the Kabbalah, and that he regarded it as a divine science and as a true revelation, whose light shone for the illumination of the rational soul;[12] and it is permitted to suppose that the artificial methods used by the Kabbalists to link their opinions with the words of the Holy Writ, and their frequent use of the substitution of numbers and letters for ideas and for words, contributed a great deal to the invention of the Great Art (Ars Magna). It is worthy of note that Raymond Lullus has already made the distinction between ancient and modern Kabbalists more than two and a half centuries before the existence of the two contending schools of Luria and Cordovera, the period to which some modern critics wished to ascribe the birth of the entire Kabbalistic science.[13]

The example given by the Majorcan philosopher remained unimitated for a long time; for after him the study of Kabbalah was forgotten until the time when Pico de la Mirandola and

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11 Tennemann, Geschichte der Philosophie, Vol. VIII, p. 837.

12 Dicitur haec doctrina Kabbala quod idem est secundum Hebraeos ut receptio veritatis cujus libet rei divinitis revelatae animae rationali... Est igitur Kabbala habitus anima rationalis ex recta ratione divinarum rerum cognitivus; proper quod est de maximo etiam divino consequutive divina scientia vocari debet.—"De Auditu Kabbalistico, sive ad omnes scientias introductorium." Strasburg, 1651.

13 Ibid, as above. The opinion here mentioned will be fully discussed further on, in Part I of this book.

Reuchlin came to throw light again upon a science which, save to a circle of adepts, was until then known only by name and existence. These two men, who were equally admired by their century, for the boldness of their minds and for their extensive learning, were yet very far from entering into all the depths and into all the difficulties of the subject.

Pico de la Mirandola made efforts to reduce to a few propositions[14]—the sources of which he does not indicate and between which a connection can hardly be found—a system just as extensive, just as many sided and just as strongly built as the one which is the subject of our investigations. It is true that these propositions were originally intended for public discussion and for development by argumentation; but in the state in which they reached us they are unintelligible, not only because of their brevity, but also because of their isolation; and it is surely not in a few far-fetched digressions, scattered haphazardly through works of the most diverse character, that one would hope to find the unity, the development or the proofs of truth which we have a right to demand from a work of such importance.

The other one was not carried so far away by his imagination; he was more systematic and more lucid, but he was less learned and, unfortunately, had not the gift of drawing from the richest sources which were most worthy of his confidence. No more than the Italian author who, though born after him, was in advance of him on this road,[15] did Reuchlin cite his authorities; but it is easy to recognize in him the scant critical spirit of Joseph of Castile[16] and not of the spurious Abraham ben Dior,[17] a

[14] Conclusiones cabalisticae, numero XLVII, secundum secretam doctrinam sapientium Hebraeorum, etc. Vol. I, p. 54 of his works, Basle edition. They were first published at Rome in 1486.

[15] Reuchlin was born in 1455; Juan Pico de la Mirandola in 1465.

[16] In Hebrew יוסף גיקטילא, Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla. He was the author of a book entitled: "The Gate of Light" שער אורה which Paul Ricci translated into Latin and which Reuchlin apparently took as basis for his "de Verbo Mirifico."

[17] He is known under the name of ראב"ד (RABD), i.e., Rabbi Abraham ben David, or ben Dior. His commentary on the Sefer

commentator of the fourteenth century, who mingled Aristotelian ideas and all that he knew of the Greek traditions as interpreted by the Arabians, with his Kabbalistic knowledge. Besides, the dramatic form adapted by Reuchlin is neither precise nor serious enough for such a subject; and it is not without vexation that one sees him graze the most important questions in order to establish, by means of a few indefinite analogies, an imaginary affiliation between the Kabbalah and the doctrine of Pythagoras.

Reuchlin contended that the founder of the Italian school was a disciple of the Kabbalists, to whom he owed not only the foundation but also the symbolical form of his system as well as the traditional character of his teachings. Whence arise those subtleties and perversions which equally disfigure the two orders of ideas that one endeavors to mingle. Of the two works which have established Reuchlin's fame, only one, "de Arte Cabbalistica" (published in Hagenau, 1517, fol.), contains an ordered exposition of the esoteric doctrine of the Hebrews; the other, ("de Verbo Mirifico") which, in fact, was the first published,[18] is only an

Yetzirah (in Hebrew) was printed with the text at Mantua in 1562, and at Amsterdam in 1642. Because of the likeness in names, ben Dior was for a long time confounded with another widely known Kabbalist, who died at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and who was the teacher of Moses de Leon, to whom it was attempted to attribute the compilation of the Zohar. (See Geiger's "Scientific Journal for Jewish Theology," Vol. II, p. 312.)

[18] Published in Basle in 1494, fol. As this work is extremely rare and of great interest to the history of Mysticism, I feel obliged to give here a summary idea of its contents. Like "de Arte Cabbalistica" it is in the form of a dialogue carried on by three persons: an epicurean philosopher named Sidonius, a Jew named Baruch, and the author himself, who translated his German name by the Greek word Capnio. The dialogue is divided in as many books as persons. The first book, devoted to a refutation of the Epicurean philosophy, is nothing more than a simple reproduction of the arguments generally used against that system. We shall not linger here any longer.

The second book aims to establish that all wisdom and all true philosophy came from the Hebrews; that Plato, Pythagoras and Zoroaster have drawn their religious ideas from the Bible, and that traces of the Hebrew language are found in the liturgy and in the sacred books of all other nations. The author finally arrives at the explanation of the different names of God. The first, the most celebrated of all, the ego

sum qui sum, (the "I Am that I Am" אהיה), is translated in Plato's philosophy by τὸ ὄντως ὤν. The second name, the one we translate by He (הוא), i.e., the sign of the immutability of God and of His eternal identity, is found also in the Greek philosophy, in the θατερὸν as opposed to ταυτὸν.

In the Sacred Scriptures God is called by still another name, a third name—Fire (אש); and, in point of fact, was it not in the form of a burning bush that God first appeared to Moses on Mount Hereb? Is it not He whom the prophets called the devouring fire? And again, is it not He of whom John the Baptist spoke when he said "I baptize you with water, but the one who cometh after me shall baptize you with fire"? (Matthew III, 11). The fire of the Hebrew prophets is identical with the Ether (αἰθὴρ) spoken of in the hymns of Orpheus. But all these names given to God are, in reality, but one name, which shows us the divine substance under three different aspects.

Thus, God is called the Existence because all existence emanates from Him. He calls Himself Fire, because it is He who illumines and vivifies all things. Finally He is always *He*, because He eternally remains like Himself amidst the infinite varieties of His works. As there are names which express the substance of God, so there are names which relate to His attributes, and of such are the ten Sefiroth or Kabbalistic categories to be mentioned frequently in this book. But when abstraction is made of all the attributes of God, and even of every definite point of view under which the divine substance can be considered; when an effort is made to represent the Absolute Being as retired within Himself, showing no definable relation to our intelligence, then He is designated by the name to pronounce which is forbidden—by the thrice holy Tetragrammaton that is to say by the word Jehovah (שם המפורש—Shem Ha-mforesh.)

There can be no doubt that the Tetractys of Pythagoras is an imitation of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, or that the cult of the Dekas was invented in honor of the ten Sefiroth. It would be difficult to form an idea of all the wonders the author discovers in the four letters that form, in Hebrew, the word Jehovah. These four letters allude to the four elements, to the four essential qualities of bodies (the point, the line, the plane and the solid), to the four notes of the musical scale, to the four streams in the earthly paradise, to the four symbolical figures of the chariot of Ezekiel, etc. What is more, every one of these letters, when considered separately, offers us a no less mysterious significance.

The first (י—Yod) which is also the sign of the number ten and which, by its form, calls to our mind the mathematical point, teaches us that God is the beginning and the end of all things; for the point is the beginning, the first unit, and the ten is the end of all enumeration. The number five, expressed by the second letter (ה—Heh) shows us the union of God and of Nature; of God as represented by the number three, that is to say, by the Trinity; of visible Nature as represented, according to Plato and Pythagoras, by the Dyad. The third letter (ו—Vav) is the sign of the number six. Now this number, venerated also by the Pythagorean school is found by uniting the Monad, the Dyad and the Triad, which is the symbol of all perfection. The number six is symbolical also, from another standpoint, of

the cube, of the solids or of the world; we must, therefore, believe that the world bears the imprint of divine perfection. The fourth letter (ה—Heh), finally, is the same as the second, and, consequently, we find ourselves once more in the presence of the number five. But here it corresponds to the human soul, the rational soul, which holds the centre between heaven and earth, just as the number five holds the centre in the decade, the symbolical expression of the totality of all things.

And now we come to the third book, which has for its object the demonstration of the principal dogmas of Christianity by the same methods. The whole book is given by the mouth of Capnio; for it is upon the ruins of the sensualistic or exclusively pagan philosophy and upon the pretended Kabbalistic traditions, interpreted by Baruch in the preceding book, that the edifice of Christian theology is to be erected. A few examples will, I hope, suffice to give an idea of the method followed by the author, and of the way in which he affixes his general views to the history of religions. In the very first verse of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," he finds the mystery of the Trinity. In fact, by arresting our attention at the Hebrew word (ברא—Bara) which we translate by "create," and by considering each one of the three letters that form it as the initial of another word entirely distinct from the first, we obtain three terms which mean Father, Son and Holy Ghost (אב-בן-רוח הקדש—Av-Ben-Ruach Hakodesh).

In the words taken from the Psalms (Ch. CXVIII, v. 22), "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone," we find, by use of the same method, the two first persons of the Trinity (אבן —Aven, בן—Ben, אב—Av). It is again the Christian Trinity that Orpheus wished to designate in his "Hymn to the Night" by the words νύξ, οὐρανός, because Night, the engender of all things, can be αἰθήρ, nothing less than the Father. The Heavens, this Olympus, which embraces all beings in its immensity, and which is born of the Night, means the Son; and finally, Ether, called by the ancient poet "the breath of fire," is the Holy Ghost. Translated into Hebrew the name Jesus (י"ה"ש"ו"ה) is the name of God plus the letter ש (Shin) which in the language of the Kabbalists is the symbol of fire or light of which St. Jerome spoke in his mystical interpretation of the alphabet as the sign of the Word (λόγος). This mysterious name is, therefore, a complete revelation which shows us that Jesus is God Himself, conceived as Light and Word (λόγος), or the Divine Word.

Even the symbol of Christianity, the cross, is plainly indicated in the Old Testament, either by the tree of life which God placed in the earthly paradise, or by the supplicating attitude of Moses when he spread his arms towards heaven to implore for victory of Israel over Amalek; or, finally, by the miraculous rod which changed the bitter waters into sweet in the desert Morah. According to Reuchlin, God manifested Himself to man under three different aspects during the three great religious periods ordinarily distinguished since the creation, and to each of these aspects there corresponds a name which characterizes Him perfectly. During the reign of Nature He is called the "Almighty" (שדי—Shaddai) or, rather, the "Fructifier," the "Maintainer of Man." Such is the God of Abraham and of all the patriarchs.

introduction to the first volume. This introduction, however, is conceived from a personal viewpoint, although it appears to be a simple development of a more ancient idea. It is in this book that the author, under pretence of defining the names consecrated to God, gives free course to his mystical and venturesome spirit; it is there that he makes efforts to prove in a general manner, that all religious philosophy, whether of Greece or of the Orient, originated in the Hebrew books; and it is here that he lays the foundation for that which later on is called the "Christian" Kabbalah.

Dating from that epoch Kabbalistic ideas became the object of more general interest, and they came to be regarded as serious and important not only in works of erudition, but also in the scientific and religious movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is at that time that there appeared successively the two works of Cornelius Agrippa, the learned and curious imaginations of Postel, the repertory of the Christian Kabbalists published by Pistorius, the translations of Joseph Voysin, Kirchner's researches on Oriental Antiquity as a whole, and, finally, the résumé and perfection of all these works, the "Kabbalah Unveiled."

In Cornelius Agrippa we find a dual personality; one, the author of "de Occulta Philosophia" (published in Cologne in 1533 and 1531), the enthusiastic defender of all the reveries of mysticism, the impassionate adept of all the fantastic arts; and the other, the discouraged skeptic who deplores the uncertainty and the vanity of the sciences."[19] It is certainly not the first personality, as one might suppose, which rendered the most service to the study of the Kabbalah. On the contrary, by losing sight of the

During the reign of Law, or from the time of the revelation of Moses to the beginning of Christianity, He is called the "Lord" (אדני—Adonai). because He is King and Lord of the chosen people. During the reign of Grace, He is called "Jesus," the "Deliverer," (יהשוה—Y'hoshu-ah) a point of view that does not lack truth and grandeur.

[19] "De Incertudine et vanitate scientiarum." Cologne, 1527; Paris, 1529; Antwerp, 1530.

metaphysical side of the system, i.e., of its very essence and real source, and by adhering solely to its mystic form, developing the latter to its ultimate consequences—astrology and magic, he contributed not a little in turning away from the Kabbalah the grave and serious minds.

But Agrippa, the skeptic, Agrippa recovered from all his intoxications, and, so to speak, restored to the use of reason, recognized the rare antiquity of the Kabbalistic ideas and their relationship to the various sects of Gnosticism;[20] and it was also he who pointed out the resemblance between the diverse attributes recognized by the Kabbalists, otherwise called the ten Sefiroth and the ten mystic names spoken of by St. Jerome in his letter to Marcella. (De Occulta Philos., lib. 3, ch. 11.)

As far as I know, Postel was the first to translate into Latin the most ancient and the most obscure monument of the Kabbalah: "The Book of Formation" (Sefer Yetzirah),[21] a work ascribed at times by a fabulous tradition to the patriarch Abraham, at times even to Adam himself. As far as can be judged from this translation, which is as obscure as its text, it appears to us in general to be faithful. But nothing useful can be gathered from the commentaries which follow the text and in which the author, simulating the apostle of some new religion, uses his wealth of erudition to justify the deviations of an unruly imagination. Postel is also credited with an unpublished translation of the Zohar which we have searched for in vain among the manuscripts of the royal library.

Pistorius has set for himself a more useful and a more modest aim. He endeavored to unite in one single collection all the writings published on the Kabbalah or imbued with its spirit; but

[20] "Ex hoc cabalisticae superstitionis judaico fermento prodierunt, puto, Ophitae, Gnostici et Valentiniani haeretici, qui ipsi quoque cum discipulis suis graecam quamdam cabalam commenti sunt," etc. De Vanitate scient, c. 47.

[21] Abrahami patriarchae liber Jezirah, ex hebraeo versus et commentariis illustratus a Guilelmo Postello. Paris, 1552, 16mo.

for unknown reasons he stopped his work when it was but half done. Of the two enormous volumes which were originally to comprise the work, one was devoted to all the Kabbalistic books written in Hebrew, and, consequently, under the influence of Judaism; the other was devoted to the Christian Kabbalists, or to use the words of the author, "to those who professing Christianity are always distinguished by a pious and honest life, and whose writings, therefore, no one would repulse as Jewish ramblings."[22] This was a wise precaution taken against the prejudices of his age. But only the last volume appeared.[23]

This volume contains, besides the Latin translation of the Sefer Yetzirah and the two works of Reuchlin already mentioned, also a mystical, altogether arbitrary commentary on Pico de la Mirandola's theses,[24] a Latin translation of the work of Joseph of Castile which served as basis for "de Verbo Mirifico" and, finally, different treatises of two Jewish authors, one of whom was led by the study of the Kabbalah to embrace Christianity; this one Paul Ricci (Paulus Riccius), the physician of Emperor Maximilian I; the other is the son of the renowned Abravanel, or Judah Abravanel, better known as Leon the Hebrew.[25] The latter doubtless merits a distinguished place in the general history of Mysticism by his "Dialogues on Love,[26] of which there are

[22] Scriptores collegi qui christianam religionem professi, religiose honesteque vixerunt et quorum propterea libros, tanquam judaicam delirationem, detestari nemo potest.—Praef., p. 2.

[23] Artis cabalisticae, h.e. reconditae theologiae et philosophiae scriptorum. Tome I. Basel, 1587, fol.

[24] Archangeli Burgonovensis interpretationes in selectiora obscuriorque Cabalistorum dogmata. Ib. supr.

[25] An exhaustive character sketch of him and his times (by Delitsch) is given in Fuerst's "Orient," Year 1840.—Jellinek.

[26] They were translated into Italian under the title, "Dialoghi de amore, composti per Leone Medico, di natione hebreo e di poi fatto christiano," Rome 1535, 4to, and Venice, 1541. It is to be noted, though, that he is cited by Herrera among the Jewish philosophers (philosophorum nostratium) as Rabbi Judah Abarbanel. (Irir. Porta coelor. Dissert. II, ch. 2).

several translations in French.[27] But, as his work bears but indirectly upon the Kabbalah, it will be sufficient to point out casually from one of the most important viewpoints the ideas whence similar conclusions were drawn.

Ricci, who paid more attention to the allegorical form than to the mystical foundation of the same traditions, contents himself by following Reuchlin's lead at a distance; and like him, he tries to demonstrate, by Kabbalistic procedure, all the essential beliefs of Christianity. This is the character of his work "Of the Heavenly Agriculture."[28] He is also the author of an introduction to the Kabbalah[29] in which he confines himself to the summing up, somewhat briefly, the opinions expressed by his predecessors. But unlike them he does not date back the tradition which he explains, to the patriarchs or to the father of the human race. He is content in the belief that these traditions were already in vogue at the time when Christ began to preach his doctrine, and that they have paved the way for the new covenant; for, according to him, those thousands of Jews who adopted the Gospel without abandoning the faith of their fathers were no others but the Kabbalists of those days.[30]

I shall yet mention here Joseph Voysin, whose chief merit

[27] There is one Latin translation by Sarasin; three French by Sauvage, Pontus de Thiard and du Parc; four Spanish by Montesa, Garcilasso de la Vega, Yahija and Juan Costa of Arragonia.—Jellinek.

[28] "De celesti Agricultura," comprising four books. The first is a refutation of the philosophers who repulse Christianity as contrary to reason; the second is directed against modern Judaism, against the Talmudic system, and endeavors to prove through symbolic interpretation of the Scriptures that all the Christian dogmas are found in the Old Testament; the third aims to reconcile the opinions which divide Christianity by making each one do his part, and by calling all to catholic unity; in the fourth volume only does the author treat of the Kabbalah and of the use that can be made of it for the conversion of the Jews.

[29] Isagoge in Cabbalistarum eruditionem et introductoria theoremata cabalistica.

[30] " . . . Cabala cujus praecipui (haud dubie) fuere cultores primi hebraeorum Christi auditorum et sacram ejus doctrinam atque fidei pietatem amplectentium, aemuli tamen paternae legis." De Coelesti Agricultura, lib. IV, ad init.

about the Kabbalah is that he faithfully translated from the Zohar several texts on the nature of the soul,[31] and then hasten to works more important at least because of the influence they exerted.

The name of Kirchner can not be spoken without deep reverence. He was a living encyclopedia of all the sciences. No science was entirely beyond his prodigious learning, and there are several, notably Archaeology, Philology and Natural Sciences, that are indebted to him for important discoveries. But it is also known that this remarkable scholar did not shine through those qualities which go to make up the critic and the philosopher, and that at times he exhibits even uncommon credulity. Such is the character he shows all through his exposition of the doctrines of the Kabbalists.[32] Thus, he does not doubt for a moment that the Kabbalah was first brought to Egypt by the patriarch Abraham, and that from Egypt it spread gradually through the remainder of the Orient, mingling with all the religions and all the systems of philosophy. But, while conceding this imaginary authority and this fabulous antiquity, he despoils the work of its real merits. The profound and original ideas, the bold creeds the Kabbalah contains, and the striking views it darts into the foundations of every religion and morality, escape entirely his feeble perception, which is struck only by the symbolical forms, the use and misuse of which seem to exist in the very nature of mysticism. The Kabbalah exists for him only in this gross envelope with its thousands of combinations of numbers and letters, its arbitrary ciphers, and, finally, its more or less fantastic procedure by means of which it forces the sacred script to lend such meaning as to find access to minds rebellious to all authority save the Bible. The facts and the texts which I have brought together in this volume aim to destroy this strange point of view and, therefore,

[31] Disputatio cabalistica R. Israel filii Mosis de anima, etc. Adjectis commentariis ex Zohar; Paris, 1655. His Theologia Judaeorum contains nothing of the Kabbalah.

[32] Oedipus Aegyptiacus, vol. II, part I. This work was published at Rome from 1652 to 1654.

I shall not dwell upon it any longer. I will say only that Kirchner, just like Reuchlin and Pico de la Mirandola, knew but the works of the modern Kabbalists, the majority of whom halted midway on the road to wisdom at the dead letter and senseless symbols.

On the subject occupying us, there is today no work more complete, more exact and more worthy of respect due to much labor and sacrifice, than that of Baron of Rosenroth or "the Kabbalah Unveiled."[33] There are precious texts in that book which are accompanied by generally faithful translations, among them the most ancient fragments of the Zohar, the most important work of the Kabbalah; and where there are no texts it gives extensive analyses and very detailed tables. It contains also either numerous extracts or entire treatises from modern Kabbalists, a kind of dictionary which prepares us more for the knowledge of things than of words.

And, finally, under pretext, and perhaps in the sincere hope of converting the adepts of the Kabbalah to Christianity, the author collected all the passages of the New Testament which show any resemblance to their doctrine. Yet, there must be no illusion as to the character of this great work; like its predecessors it does not throw any more light on the origin, the transmission or the authenticity of the most ancient monuments of the Kabbalah. In vain, too, will one look there for a regularly ordered and complete exposition of the Kabbalistic system. It contains only such material which, perforce, must enter into a work of this nature; and, even when considered from this single point of view, it is not beyond the lash of criticism. Although much too severe in some of his expressions, Budde was not unjust when he said: "it is an obscure and confused work in which the necessary and the unnecessary, the useful and the superfluous, are thrown together pell-mell, in the same chaos."[34]

[33] Kabbala Denudata, seu Doctrina Haebraeorum transcendentalis, etc., tome II, Solisb., 1677, 4 to, tome II, liber Zohar restitutus. Franck, 1684, 4to.

[34] "Confusum et obscurum opus, in quo necessaria cum non neces-

With a better choice, his work might have been richer and less extensive. In fact, why did he not leave the dreams of Henry Morus, which have nothing in common with the mystic theology of the Hebrews, in their proper place, that is in the collected works of this author? And I would say the same of the pretended Kabbalistic work of Herrera. This Spanish rabbi, remarkable for his philosophical erudition, was not content to substitute the modern traditions of the school of Isaac Luria[35] for the true principles of the Kabbalah; but he found also the secret of disfiguring these principles by mingling with them the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Avicenna and Pico de la Mirandola—in short, all that he knew of the Greek and Arabian philosophy.

Modern historians of philosophy have taken chiefly Herrera for their guide in the interpretations of the Kabbalah, probably because of the didactic order of his dissertations and the precision of his language. And as such a guide has been accepted, no wonder that quite recent origin has been ascribed to this science, or that it was looked upon as a faint imitation, a badly disguised plagiarism of the other well known systems! Finally, since the author of the "Kabbalah Denudata" was not willing to adhere to the most ancient sources and to acquaint us through more numerous quotations with the originality and interesting facts hidden in the Zohar, why this predilection for the commentaries of Isaac Luria, which no one in possession of his reason can stand reading? Would not the sacrifices and the laborious vigils which, by the author's own avowals, it cost him to bring to light those sterile chimeras, have been better employed upon the long chain of Kabbalists still too little known, beginning at Saadia, around the tenth century, and ending with the thirteenth century at

sariis, utilia cum inutilibis, confusa sunt, et in unum velut chaos conjecta."—Introd. ad Philos. hebr.

[35] He himself said that having been taught by Israel Serug, the immediate disciple of Luria, he was of Luria's school.—Porta coelor., IV, ch. 8).

Nachmanides? In this way, by including all the traditions composing the Zohar, we would have had before our eyes the entire chain of Kabbalistic traditions, starting with the moment when they were first written down until the point when their secret was completely violated by Moses de Leon.[36] Had this task been too difficult, it would, at least, have been possible to have devoted some space to the esteemed works of Nachmanides,[37] the defender of the celebrated Moses ben Maimon, and whose Kabbalistic knowledge inspired admiration so intense that it was said to have been brought to him by the prophet Elijah from heaven.

Despite its gaps and its numerous imperfections, Rosenroth's conscientious labor will stand forever as a monument of patience and erudition, and it will be consulted by all who will want to know the products of thought among the Jews, or by those who wish to observe mysticism in all its forms and in all its results. It is owing to his deeper knowledge of the Kabbalah, that this doctrine has ceased to be studied exclusively either as an instrument of conversion or as an occult science. It has taken a place in philosophical and philological research, in the general history of philosophy and in rational theology which has attempted by its light to expound some of the difficult passages of the New Testament.

The first whom we see taking this direction is George Wachter, theologian and distinguished philosopher, who, because of the independence of his mind, was falsely accused of Spinozaism, and who was the author of an attempt to reconcile the two

[36] Information concerning all the names cited will be found in the first part of this book.

[37] Nachmanides or Moses ben Nachman, called by abbreviation Ramban (רמב"ן), was born in Granada, and flourished toward the close of the thirteenth century. He was a doctor, a philosopher and, more than all, a Kabbalist. His chief works are: "Commentary on the Pentateuch" (ביאור על התורה), "The Book of Faith and Hope" (ספר אמונה והבטחון) and the "Law of Man" (תורת האדם)

sciences to which he had consecrated equal devotion.[38] Wachter's attention was first turned to the Kabbalah in this way: A protestant of the confession of Augsburg, seduced by this system to which he was otherwise a stranger, converted himself publicly to Judaism, discarded his real name (Johann Peter Speeth) and took the name of Moses Germanus. He foolishly challenged Wachter to imitate him and engaged with him in a correspondence from which sprang a little book entitled "Spinozaism in Judaism." (Amsterdam, 1699, 12mo, in German.)

The book does not throw much light upon the nature or upon the origin of the Kabbalistic ideas, but it raises a question of the highest interest: Was Spinoza initiated in the Kabbalah, and what influence did this doctrine exert upon his system? Until then it was the almost general opinion among scholars that there is quite a close affinity between the most important points of the science of the Kabbalists and the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion. Wachter undertook to demonstrate that these two orders of ideas are separated by an abyss; for, in his opinion, the Kabbalah is nothing but atheism, the negation of God and the deification of the world, a doctrine which he believed to be that of the Dutch philosopher and to which Spinoza gave a more modern form.

We need not investigate here whether the two systems, per se, are well or ill-judged, but whether there is some ground for the theory of their affinity or for their historical succession. The sole proof given (for I do not count more or less far-fetched analogies and resemblances) consists of two very important passages, indeed, one drawn from "Ethics," the other from Spinoza's letters. The last named reads: "When I affirm that all things exist in God, and that in Him all things move, I speak like St. Paul, like all the philosophers of antiquity, although I express myself in a different way, and I even dare to add: like all the ancient Hebrews, as far

[38] The work in which he pursued that aim has for title: "Concordia rationis et fidei, sive Harmonia philosphiae moralis et religionis Christianae." Amst., 1692, 8vo.

as can be judged by certain of their traditions which have been altered in many ways."[39] Evidently, nothing but the Kabbalistic traditions are referred to in these lines; for those which the Jews collected in the Talmud are either recitals (Haggadah) or ceremonial laws (Halakah).

The passage from "Ethics" is still more decisive. Having spoken of the unity of substance, Spinoza adds: "It is this principle which some of the Hebrews seem to have perceived as through a cloud when they thought that God, the Intelligence of God and the objects under the action of that intelligence, as of one and the same thing."[40] The historical sense of these words can not be mistaken if we juxtapose them with the following lines translated nearly literally from a Kabbalistic work, the most faithful commentary to the Zohar: "The knowledge of the Creator is not like the knowledge of the Creatures; for with the latter the knowledge is apart from the known subject. This is designated by the following terms: the thought, he who thinks and that which is thought of. The Creator, on the contrary, is Himself the Knowledge, the One who knows, and the One known. God's way of knowing does not really consist in applying His thought to things outside of Himself. It is by cognizing and knowing Himself that He also cognizes and knows all that exists. Nothing exists that is not united with Him and which He could not find in His own substance. He is the prototype of all Being, and in Him all things exist in the purest and most accomplished form; so that the perfection of the creatures is in this very existence by virtue of which they find themselves united

[39] Omnia, inquam, in Deo esse, et in Deo moveri cum Paulo affirmo, et forte etiam cum omnibus antiquis philosophis, licet alio modo, et auderem etiam dicere, cum antiquis omnibus Hebraeis, quantum ex quibusdam traditionibus, tametsi multis modis adulteratis conjicere licet. —Epist. XXI.

[40] Hoc quidam Hebraeorum quasi per nebulam vidisse yidentur, qui silicet statuunt Deum, Dei intellectum, resque ab ipso intellectas, unum et idem esse.—Eth. part II, prop. 7, Schol.

with the source of their being; and in measure as they deviate from it, they sink from that sublime and perfect state."[41]

What conclusion can be drawn from these words? Is it that the ideas and the Carthesian method, that the altogether independent development of reason, and above all, that individual estimates as well as the errors of genius, count for nothing in the most audacious conception of which the history of modern philosophy can give an example? This would be a strange paradox which we would not even attempt to refute. Moreover, it is easy to see by the very citations given as authority, that Spinoza had but a very summary and uncertain idea of the Kabbalah, the importance of which he could have recognized only after the creation of his own system.[42] But, strangely, having stripped Spinoza of all originality for the benefit of the Kabbalah, Wachter turned that doctrine itself into a miserable plagiarism, a characterless compilation to which have contributed all the centuries during which it remained unknown, all the countries where the Jews were dispersed, and, consequently, the most contradictory systems. How could such a work be more atheistic than theistic? Would it not teach pantheism rather than one God distinct from the world? Above all, how had it taken in the "Ethics" the form of severe unity, the inflexible vigor of the exact sciences?

But we must do Wachter the justice to say that he modified his opinions considerably in a second volume on the same subject. (Elucidarius Cabbalisticus, Rome, 1706, 8 vo.) Thus, according to him, Spinoza is no longer the apostle of atheism, but a true savant who, enlightened by a sublime science, recognized the

[41] Moses Cordovero, "Pardes Rimonim," fol. 55a.

[42] He knew the modern Kabbalists much better, or, at least some of them, against whom he did not spare some abusive epithets: Logi etiam et in super novi nugatores alique kabbalistas, quorum insaniam numquam mirari satis potui. (Tract. theolo. polit., ch. 9.) It would be absurd to wish to apply this phrase to the Kabbalists in general.

divinity of Christ and all the truths of the Christian religion.[43] He naively confesses that he judged him previously without having known him, and that he was influenced against him by prejudices and excited passions when he recorded his first impressions.[44] He makes equally an honorable apology to the Kabbalah by distinguishing two essentially different doctrines by that name: the modern Kabbalah lies under the weight of his scorn and anathema; but the ancient Kabbalah which, according to him, lasted until the council of Nice, was a traditional science of the highest order, the origin of which loses itself in mysterious antiquity. The first Christians, the oldest fathers of the Church, had no other philosophy;[45] and it is this philosophy which led Spinoza upon the road of Truth. The author stubbornly insists upon this point and makes it the centre of his researches.

Though in its entirety very superficial, and at times far from accurate, this parallel between the doctrine of Spinoza and that of the Kabbalists contributed not a little to the enlightenment of the minds as to the true significance of the Kabbalah; I speak of its character and its metaphysical principles. That parallel led to an examination which proved that the theory which had caused so much surprise and scandal, the theory that God is an unique substance and the immanent cause and real nature of all that is, was not new, that it appeared already before, at the cradle of Christianity, under the very name of the religion. But this idea is also met with somewhere in a no less remote antiquity. Where, then, is the origin of this idea to be looked for? Is it Greece, or Egypt of the Ptolomaeans that have given it to

[43] Non defuerunt viri docti, qui posthabita philosophia vulgari, reconditam et antiquissimam Hebraeorum sectarentur. Quos inter memorandus mihi est Benedictus de Spinoza, qui ex philosophiae hujus rationibus, divinitatem Christi atque circa veritatem universae religionis christianae agnovit.—Elucid. Cab. praef., p. 7.

[44] Ib. supr., p. 13.

[45] . . . Haec philosophia, ab Hebraeis accepta, et sacris Ecclesiae patribus tantopere commendata, post tempora nicaena mox expiravit.—Ib. supr.

Palestine? Is it Palestine which found it first? or is it necessary to go back still further into the Orient?

Such are the questions which occupied the minds primarily, and such also is the meaning attached to the Kabbalistic traditions since that time by all save a few critics who are peculiarly attentive to nothing but form. It is no longer a question of a certain method of interpretation applied to Holy Writ, nor of mysteries far beyond reason, which God Himself revealed whether to Moses, to Abraham or to Adam, but it is a question of a purely human science, of a system representing within itself the entire metaphysics of an ancient people, and, therefore, of great interest to the history of the human mind, once more a philosophical viewpoint that dislodged Allegory and Mysticism.

This spirit is shown not only in Brucker's exposition, where it is perfectly in place, but it seems also to be generally prevalent. Thus, in 1785 a learned association, the Society for the Investigation of Antiquities at Cassel, opened an academic competition on the following topic: "Does the doctrine of the Kabbalists, according to which all things are engendered by the emanation of the very essence of God, come from the Greek philosophy or not?" Unfortunately, the answer was much less sensible than the question. The work which carried off the prize—very little known and not deserving to be known—certainly does not cast any new light upon the very nature of the Kabbalah and what concerns the origin of this system, it contents itself with reproducing the most defaced fables.[46] It shows the Kabbalistic ideas in the hymns of Orpheus and in the philosophy of Thales and Pythagoras; it makes them contemporaries of the patriarchs, and, without any hesitation it hands them to us as the ancient wisdom of the Chaldeans. It is less surprising when it is known that the author was of the sect of the Illuminati who, following the

[46] On the nature and origin of the Kabbalists' doctrine of Emanation. Riga, 1786, 8.

example of all such associations, dated its annals back to the very cradle of humanity.[47]

But Rational Theology—as it is called in Germany—that is that absolutely independent method of expounding the Holy Scriptures, of which Spinoza gave an example in his Theologic-Political tractat, made frequent use of the Kabbalah. As I said before, it made use of it for the purpose of explaining divers passages in the letters of St. Paul which referred to the heresies of that day. It desired also to find therein the explanation of the first verses of the Gospel of St. John, and tried to make it useful either for the study of Gnosticism or for the study of ecclesiastic history in general.[48] Tiedemann and Tennemann, at the same time, had given the Kabbalah a kind of deed of possession in the history of philosophy, which was at first consecrated to it by Brucker. There soon appeared the school of Hegel which could not fail to make use of a system wherein it found, under another form, some of its own doctrines.

A reaction against this ever famous school was surely not slow in coming, and it is evidently under this sentiment that the useless work "Kabbalism and Pantheism" was written. The author of that little book strives to prove, at the expense of the evidence, that there is no resemblance between the two systems which he undertakes to compare; for it often happens that the passages which he uses as bases of his arguments are diametrically opposed to the deductions he draws from them. Besides, as far as erudition is concerned, he is far inferior to most of the writers who preceded him; and does not surpass them either by criticism of the sources or by philosophic appreciation of the ideas, notwithstanding the pedantic attire and luxury of citations with which he pleases to surround himself.

Finally, Herr Tholuck, a man who is justly entitled to eminent rank among the theologians and orientalists of Germany,

[47] See Tholuck, de Ortu Cabbalae, Hamb., 1837, p. 3.
Tholuck, de Ortu Cabbalae, 1837, p. 4.
[48] Kabbalismus et Pantheismus by M. Freystadt, Koenigsberg, 1832.

recently also desired to contribute to this subject his knowledge and skilled criticism. But as he concerns himself with one particular point, the origin of the Kabbalah, and as any appreciation of his opinions would demand profound discussion, I have reserved comment of him for the body of this work, as a more opportune time. This refers also to all the modern writers, whose names, although deserving a place here, have as yet not been mentioned.

Such are, in substance, the efforts made until now for the discovery of the meanings and the origin of the Kabbalistic books. I do not wish to have the conclusion drawn that all must be started anew again because one is struck only by those books which are incomplete. On the contrary, I am convinced, that the labors and even the errors of such distinguished minds can not be ignored without punishment to those wishing seriously to study the same subject. Even were it possible, in fact, to approach the original monuments without any aid, it would, nevertheless, always be necessary to know beforehand the various interpretations which have been given to them to the present day; for each one of these correspond to a viewpoint well founded in itself, but which becomes faulty when one sticks to it exclusively.

Thus has the Kabbalah—to corroborate what has just been said and to sum up briefly the foregoing—been accepted by some who had in view only its allegorical form and mystical character, with mystic enthusiasm as an anticipated revelation of Christian dogmas; others took it as an occult art, struck by the strange figure, the queer formulas under which it loves to hide its real intention, and by the relations it incessantly establishes between man and all parts of the universe; others, finally, took hold above all of its metaphysical principles and tried to find therein an antecedent, either honorable or dishonorable, of the philosophy of their times.

It is easy to understand that with partial and incomplete studies governed by various prejudices, one can find all this in

the Kabbalah without necessarily contradicting the facts. But, in order to have an exact idea and to find the place which it really holds among works of intelligence, it should be studied neither in the interest of a system, nor in the interest of a religious belief; on the contrary, one will endeavor for the sake of truth only, to furnish to the general history of human thought some elements as yet too little known. This is the aim I desire to reach in the following work for which I spared neither time nor research.

AD. FRANCK.

INTRODUCTION

Although one finds in the Kabbalah a complete system on things of a moral and spiritual order, yet it can not be considered either as a philosophy or as a religion; I mean to say, it rests, apparently at least, neither upon reason nor upon inspiration or authority. Like most of the systems of the Middle Ages, it is the fruit of the union of these two intellectual powers. Essentially different from religious belief, under the power, and one can say, under the protection of which, it was born, it introduced itself, thanks to peculiar forms and processes, unnoticed into the minds. These forms and these processes would weaken the interest of which it is worthy, and would not always permit conviction of the importance which we believe to be justified in attributing to it, if, before making it known in its different elements and before attempting the solution of questions incident thereto, we do not indicate, with some precision, the place it occupies among the works of thought, the rank it should hold among religious beliefs and philosophic systems, and, finally, the requirements or laws which could explain the peculiar means of its development. It is this we shall attempt to accomplish with all possible brevity.

It is a fact, proven by the history of entire humanity, that moral truth, the knowledge which we can acquire about our nature, our destiny and the principle of the universe, were, at first, not accepted on the strength of reason or conscience, but by the effect of a power which was more active upon the minds of the people, and which has the general attribute of presenting

to us ideas under a nearly material form, sometimes under the form of a word descended from heaven to human ears, sometimes in the form of a person who develops them in examples and actions. This power, universally known as Religion or Revelation, has its revolutions and its laws; notwithstanding the unity that rules at the bottom of its nature, it changes its aspect, like philosophy, poetry and arts, with the centuries and countries. But, at what time and at what place this power may come to establish itself, it can not off-hand tell man all that which he needs to know, not even in the sphere of duties and beliefs which it imposes upon him, nor even when he has no other ambition but to understand it in so far as is necessary for his obeisance to it.

In fact, there are in all religions, dogmas which need to be explained, principles the consequences of which remain to be developed, laws without possible application, as well as questions totally forgotten which, surely, touch upon the most important interests of humanity. The work of answering to all those needs calls for great mental activity; and the intellect, therefore, is impelled to the use of its own powers by the very desire to believe and obey. But this impulse does not produce everywhere the same results and does not act upon all intellects in the same manner.

Some intellects will not yield any place to individual independence; they drive the principle of authority to its last consequences, and set up, side by side with written revelation where nothing but dogmas, principles and general laws are found, an oral revelation, a tradition or perhaps a permanent power infallible in its decisions, a sort of living tradition which furnishes explanations, forms and details of religious life; and which produces, if not in faith, in cult and symbols at least, an imposing unity. Of such are the orthodox of all beliefs. Other intellects trust no one but themselves, that is to say, their power of reasoning to fill these gaps and to solve the problems in the revealed word. All authority other than that of the holy texts appears to them as an usurpation; or, if they do follow it, it is

only when it is in accord with their personal feelings. But, little by little, their mental forces, their reflection and judgment gain in firmness and development, and, instead of exerting themselves on the religious dogmas, they rise above these and seek in their own reason, their own conscience, or in the conscience and reason of their fellow-men—in a word—in the works of human wisdom, the beliefs which they were once obliged to let descend bodily from heaven.

Finally, there is in this sphere a third class of thinkers—those who do not admit tradition or, at least, whom tradition and authority can not satisfy, and who certainly can not or dare not use reasoning. On the one hand they are too high-minded to admit the revealed word in a natural and historic sense which accords with the letter and spirit of the masses; on the other hand, they can not believe that man can dispense entirely with revelation, or that truth reaches him in any other way than by the effect of divine teaching. It is because of this that they see nothing but symbols and images in the greater number of dogmas, precepts and religious tales; that they search everywhere for a mysterious, profound meaning in accord with their thoughts and feelings, but which, because preconceived, can not be found in or interpreted into the sacred texts except by more or less arbitrary means.

It is principally by this method and by this tendency that the mystics are recognized. I do not say that mysticism did not show itself sometimes in a bolder form. At a time when philosophical habits had already held sway, mysticism finds in this very consciousness the divine action, the immediate revelation which it claims to be indispensable to man. It recognizes it either in the feelings or in the intuitions of reason. Thus it is, to cite an example, how mysticism was conceived in the fifteenth century by Gerson.[1] But when mystical ideas require the support

[1] "Considerationes de Theologia Mystica." From the very beginning this proposition confronts us: Quod si dicatur omnis scientia procedens ex experientiis, mystica theologia vere erit philosophia.

of external sanction, that support can be produced only in the form of a symbolical interpretation of what people call their Holy Scriptures.

These three tendencies of the mind, these three ways of conceiving revelation and of continuing its work, are found in the history of all the religions that have struck roots in the human soul. I shall cite only those religions which are nearest to us and which, therefore, we can know with more certainty.

In the bosom of Christianity, the Roman Church represents tradition and authority in their highest degree of splendor. We find reason applied to faith not only in the majority of Protestant communions, among the defenders of the so-called rational exegesis, but also among the scholastic philosophers who were the first to subject religious dogmas to the laws of syllogism and who showed the same respect for the words of Aristotle that they showed for the words of the Apostles. Who does not see symbolical mysticism with its arbitrary method and exaggerated spirituality in all the agnostic sects, in Origen, in Jacob Boehm, and in all who follow in their steps? But no one carried the system as far, nobody formulated it as frankly and as boldly as Origen whose name we shall yet meet in this book. If we glance at Mohammed's religion, if among the many sects it brought to light, we stop at those which show a decided character, we are immediately struck by the same spectacle. The Sunnis and the Chiits, whose separation came from the rivalry of individuals rather than from a marked difference of opinion, equally defend the cause of unity and orthodoxy; but, the first, in order to attain their purpose, admit in addition to the Koran a collection of traditions—the Sunnat—from which they derive their name; the others, the Chiits, reject the tradition, but replace it by a living authority, a sort of continued revelation, in as much as one of the most essential articles of their belief is that after the prophet,

Consid. 2d, He goes even so far as to define the nature of this experience. Experientiis habitis ad intra, in cordibus animarum devotarum. (Gerson.)

his apostle Ali and the Imams of his race are the representatives of God on earth.[2]

Islamism had also its scholastic philosophers, known by the name of Motecallemin,[3] and it had also a large number of heresies which seem to have joined the doctrine of Pelagius to the rational method of modern Protestantism. This is how a celebrated orientalist defined the latter: "All sects of the Mutazilahs agree generally in that they deny the existence of attributes in God, and they endeavor particularly to avoid everything that could injure the dogma of the unity of God; and then, in order to maintain the justice of God and ward off any idea of injustice from Him, they accord to man full liberty of his own actions and deny God all interference with them; finally, they agree in teaching that all the knowledge necessary to salvation is within the province of reason, and that it can be acquired solely by means of the light of reason before, as well as after, revelation."[4]

The Karmates, whose existence dates from the year 264 of the Hegira, embraced the system of allegorical interpretations and all the opinions serving as bases for mysticism. If we are to believe the author already quoted—who does nothing more than translate the words of an Arabian historian—"they called their doctrine the science of the inner faculties, and which consists in turning the precepts of Islamism into allegories and in substituting things founded on imagination for external observance, as well as allegorizing verses of the Koran and giving them forced interpretations." There is more than one point of resemblance between this doctrine and the doctrine which we aim to make acquaintance with.[5]

[2] Maracci, Prodromus in ref. Alcor., B, IV. De Sacy, Exposé de la religion des Druzes, introduction.

[3] The rabbis converted the name to מדברים which means speakers or dialecticians.

[4] De Sacy, Introduction à l'exposé de la religion des Druzes, p. 37.

[5] I shall cite but one of those points. The Karmathians hold that man's body, when standing, represents an *Alef;* that when kneeling, it represents a *Lam,* and that when prostrate, it represents a *He.* So the

Finally we come to Judaism, from whose breast, nourished by its spirit and its essence, sprang the two rival creeds already cited. We have intentionally reserved the last place for Judaism, because it leads us naturally to our subject. Besides the Bible, orthodox Jews recognize traditions which receive from them the same respect as the precepts of the Pentateuch. At first transmitted from mouth to mouth and scattered everywhere, then collected and edited by Judah the Holy[6] under the name of Mishnah; and, finally, prodigiously augmented and developed by the authors of the Talmud, they now leave not the smallest part to reason and liberty. Not only do they deny in principle the existence of these two moral forces, but they strike them with paralysis by usurping their places everywhere.

They cover all actions from the expression of exalted moral and religious feeling to the vilest functions of animal life. They have counted, regulated and weighed everything in advance. It is despotism of every day and of every instant against which one is inevitably compelled to fight with trickery if he does not want to substitute a higher authority in its place. The Karaites, who must not be confounded with the Saducees whose existence does not reach beyond the destruction of the second temple[7]—the Karaites are, in a way, the Protestants of Judaism; they reject, apparently, the tradition and pretend to recognize nothing but the Bible, I mean the Old Testament, for the explanation of which reason seems to them to be sufficient. But others, without ceasing to be believers and admitting the principle of revelation, and who certainly form no religious sect, have succeeded in giving Reason a much greater and a much finer place in the domain

body of man is like a book wherein one reads the name of *Allah.* (See De Sacy's Introduction à l'exposé de la religion des Druzes. p. 86, 87.) According to the Kabbalists, the head of a man forms an *Yod* (י); his two arms hanging on either side of his breast, form a *He* (ה); his bust forms a *Vav* (ו); and his two legs, surmounted by a basin, form another *He* (ה). So that his entire body represents the thrice-holy name, Jehovah. (Zohar, 2nd part, fol. 42, published in Mantua.)

[6] Better known as Judah ha-Nassi (the Prince).—Transl.

[7] Peter Beer. History of the religious sects of Judaism. 1st part. p. 149.

of Faith. These are they who would justify the chief articles of their belief by the very principles of Reason; who would reconcile the legislation of Moses with the philosophy of their times, that is that of Aristotle, and who have founded a science entirely similar in its name and in its objects to the Arabian and Christian scholastics.

The first, and beyond a question the boldest of them, is the celebrated Rabbi Saadia, who at the beginning of the tenth century was at the head of the academy of Sura in Persia; and whose name is cited with respect by Mussulman authors, as well as by his coreligionists.[8] After Saadia came Abraham Ibn-Ezra, Rabbi Bachye, Arabic author of an excellent moral and theological treatise;[9] and Moses Maimonides, whose stupendous reputation was detrimental to the many, who, coming after him, defended the same cause. Those among the Jews who saw in the law only a gross exterior under which was hidden a mysterious meaning, much higher than the historical, literal meaning, divided themselves into two classes, the distinction of which is of great importance to the aim we have set.

To one class, the inner, spiritual meaning of the Scriptures was a philosophical system somewhat favorable, it is true, to mystic exaltation, but drawn from a source entirely foreign; it was, in short, Plato's doctrine a little exaggerated, as it was later on in the school of Plotinus, and mingled with ideas of Oriental origin. This is the character of Philo and all those who are customarily called "Hellenizing Jews," because, mixed among the Greeks of Alexandria, they borrowed from the latter their language, their civilization, and such of their philosophic systems as could best reconcile with the monotheism and religious legislation of Moses.[10]

The others obeyed the impulse of their intelligence only. The ideas they introduced into the sacred books, in order to make it appear that they had found them there, and then to pass them on in the shadow of mystery, it is true, and under the protection of revelation, these ideas are entirely their own, and constitute a system truly original and truly grand which resembles any other system, whether philosophical or religious only in that it comes from the same source, in that it was called forth by the same causes, in that it responds to the same needs, in short, in that it rests upon the general laws of the human mind. These are the Kabbalists[11] whose opinions must be drawn from original

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8 The commentary which he wrote in Arabic on the Sefer Yetzirah, one of the most ancient monuments of the Kabbalah, is of wholly philosophical meaning, and it is wrong that he is counted by Reuchlin and other historians of the Kabbalah among the defenders of that system. His book, "Beliefs and Opinions" (האמונות והדעות), translated from the Arabic into Hebrew by Rabbi Judah ben Saul ibn Tibbon, very probably served as model for the famous book of Maimonides entitled "Guide for the Perplexed" (מורה נבוכים—Moreh Nvuchim). From the first lines of the preface Saadia frankly places himself between two opposing parties; "those," he said, "who, because of incomplete researches and ill-directed meditations, have fallen into an abyss of doubt; and those who regard the use of reason as dangerous to Faith."

He admits four kinds of knowledge: 1st, that which comes through the senses; 2nd, that which comes through the mind or through the conscience—as when we say that falsehood is a vice and truth a virtue; 3rd, the knowledge which furnishes us intuition and reasoning—as when we admit the existence of the soul because of its operations; 4th, the authentic tradition (ההגדה הנאמנה) which should take the place of science with people who are not in a condition to exercise their intelligence.*)

*) The Hebrew commentary attributed to Saadia is forged. Comp. Rapaport, Biography of R. Saadia. Note 30, Munk, Notice sur Rabbi Saadiah Gaon. p. 14-15.—Jellinek

9 This work is called חובות הלבבות —"The Duties of the Heart." The author lived around 5921 (1161).

10 They are mentioned in this passage of Eusebius:
Τὸ πᾶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος εἰς δύο τμήματα διήρηται. Καὶ τὴν μὲν πληθὺν ταῖς τῶν νόμων κατὰ τὴν ρητὴν διανοίαν παρηγγελμέναις ὑποθήκαις ὑπῆγε, τὸ δὲτερον τῶν ἐν ἕξει τάγηα, ταύτης μὲν ἠφίει, θειστέρᾳ δὲ τίνι καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐπαναβεβηκείᾳ φιλοσοφίᾳ προσίχειν ἠξίον θεορίᾳ τε τῶν ἐν τοῖς μότοις κατὰ διανοίαν σημαινομένον. (Euseb. 1. 8. c. 10.)

The author puts these words in the mouth of Aristobulus, who could not have known the Kabbalah.

11 Although we shall later on find opportunity to speak at length of Philo, it is necessary to point out here his distinction from the Kabbalists with whom several historians confounded him. First, it is almost certain that Philo was ignorant of Hebrew, a knowledge of which, as we shall soon see, is indispensable to the Kabbalistic method. Then again, Philo and the Kabbalists differ no less in depth of their ideas. The latter admit

sources to be known and justly appreciated; because, later, cultured minds supposed that they honored them by mixing them with the ideas of the Greeks and Arabians. Those, who through superstition remained strangers to the civilization of their times, gradually abandoned the deep speculations of which they were the result, and conserved only the very gross means originally designed to disguise their boldness and depth.

First of all we shall try to determine near what time we find the Kabbalah fully formed, in what books it was preserved for us, how these books were formed and transmitted to us, and, finally, what foundation we can lay upon its authenticity.

We shall make an attempt to give of it a faithful and full account, to which we shall, as much as possible, make the authors themselves of this doctrine contribute; passing their language into ours with as much exactitude as our feeble means may permit. At last, we shall occupy ourselves with the origin and influence of the Kabbalah, and ask whether it was born in Palestine, solely under the influence of Judaism, or, whether the Jews borrowed it from a foreign religion or a foreign philosophy. We shall compare it successively with all previous and contemporaneous systems which will offer us any resemblance to it; and we shall finally follow it to its most recent destinies.

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but one principle, the immanent cause of all that exists; the Alexandrian philosopher recognizes two, one active, the other passive. The attributes of God, according to Philo, are Plato's ideas which have no resemblance whatever to the Sefiroth of the Kabbalah. Ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν, τὸ μὲν εἶναι δραστήριον αἴτιον, τὸ δὲ παθητὸν καὶ ὅτι τὸ μὲν δραστήριον ὁ τῶν ὅλων νοῦς ἐστιν εἰλικρινέστατος κρειττωντε ἢ ἀρετὴ καὶ κρείττων ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ κρείττων ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν τὸ δὲ παθητὸν ἄψυχον καὶ ἀκίνητον ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, κινηθὲν δέ, σχηματισθὲν καὶ ψυχωθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦ, etc. Philo, de Mund. opific.

PART ONE

Chapter I

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE KABBALAH

Enthusiastic partisans of the Kabbalah declare it to have been brought down by angels from heaven to teach the first man, after his disobedience, the way to recover his primal nobility and bliss.[1] Others supposed that the lawgiver of the Hebrews, during his forty days' stay on Mount Sinai, received it directly from God, that He transmitted it to seventy old men who partook with Him of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that these passed it on by word of mouth until the time when Ezra was given the order to transcribe it together with the Law.[2] But, no matter how carefully we may read all the books of the Old Testament, we shall fail to find a single word which refers to secret teachings or to a doctrine more profound and more pure, reserved solely for a small number of the elect.

Since its origin, until its return from the Babylonian captivity, the Hebrew people, like all nations in their infancy, knew no other organs of truth, no other ministers to the mind, save the prophet, the priest and the poet; and in spite of the obvious difference among them, the latter is often confounded with the previous ones. Instruction was not the province of the priest, he simply attracted the eye by the pomp of religious ceremonies. And as to the teachers, those, indeed, who raise the religion to the rank of Science and who replace the inspirational language with a dogmatic strain, in short, as to the theologians, there is no

[1] See Reuchlin, de Arte Cabalistica, fol. 9, 10, ed. Hagenau.
[2] Pico de la Mirandola, Apology, p. 116 et sequ. tome I.

mention of either their name or their existence during that entire period.

It is only at the beginning of the third century before the Christian era that we first see them appear under the general name of Tannaim, which means teachers of the tradition; for it is in the name of this new power that everything, not clearly expressed in the Scriptures, was taught. The Tannaim, the oldest and most respected of all teachers in Israel, formed, as it were, a long chain, the last link of which is Judah the Pious, editor of the Mishnah, who collected and transmitted to posterity all that has been uttered by his predecessors. Among these are the supposed authors of the oldest monuments of the Kabbalah, R. Akkiba and Simeon ben Yohai, with his son and his friends.

Immediately after the death of Judah, towards the close of the second century of the Christian era, a new generation of teachers starts who are called Amaraim (אמוראים) , because, not constituting any longer an authority in themselves, they only repeated and better explained all they learned from the previous ones, making known those of their words which have as yet not been published. These commentaries and new traditions, which multiplied prodigiously for more than three hundred years, were finally united under the name of Gemara גמרא, i.e. termination and completion of the tradition.[3] It is, therefore, in these two collections, religiously preserved since their formation until this day and united under the name of *Talmud,*[4] that we must, above all, search, if not for the very ideas which form the foundation of the Kabbalistic system, at least, for some data on the origin and epoch of their birth.

In the Mishnah (Haggigah, Sec. II) we find this remarkable passage: "The story of the Creation (Genesis) is not to be explained to two, the story of the Merkaba (Heavenly Chariot)

[3] I believe that the root גמר in גמרא is to be taken not in the biblical sense, perficit, but in the talmudical sense, didicit, docuit. גמרא is, accordingly, but the pure Aramaic expression for the synonym תלמוד.—Jellinek.

[4] תלמוד, i.e. the study of the science.

not even to one, unless he be wise and can deduce wisdom of his own accord. אין דורשין לא במעשה בראשית בשנים ולא במרכבה ביחיד אלא אם כן חכם ומבין מדעתו

The Talmud (Haggigah, 13a) cites a Beraitha (a Mishnah not included in the collection of R. Judah), where R. Hiya adds: "When the summaries of the chapters may be transmitted to him." מוסרים לו ראשי פרקים

A rabbi of the Talmud, R. Zerah (ibid) is still more severe, for he adds that even the summaries of the chapters may be divulged only to men clothed with high dignity, or[5] known by their extreme prudence; or, to translate literally the original expression, "who carry within them a heart full of solicitude." אין מוסרים ראשי פרקים אלא לאב בית דין ולכל מי שלבו דואג בקרבו

Evidently this can not refer to the text of Genesis or to that of Ezekiel wherein the prophet tells of his vision on the banks of the river Hebar.[6] The entire Scriptures were, so to speak, in the mouth of everybody; from time immemorial, the most scrupulous observers of all the traditions have made it their duty to read them through in their temples at least once during the year. Moses himself incessantly advised the study of the Law, by which the Pentateuch is universally understood. After the return from the Babylonian captivity, Ezra read it aloud before the assembled people (Ezra, II, 8). It is just as impossible that the words quoted express the interdiction to give any interpretation to the story of the creation and to that of Ezekiel for the purpose of making them comprehensible to oneself or to others; the question here is that of an interpretation, or rather of a doctrine, which, although known, was taught under the seal of mystery; of a science furnished with a fixed form as well as fixed

[5] I digressed here from the original text which has "et," because the talmudical passage quoted by the author does not intend to refer both requirements to the same person. According to another variation of this talmudical passage, where instead of ולכל מי, והוא is read, the translation of the author is justified.—Jellinek.

[6] Compare the commentaries of Rashi and of the Tosaphoth to that Mishnah.—Jellinek.

principles, since we know the manner of its division and since it is shown to us divided into several chapters each one of which is headed by a summary.

For it is to be noted, that Ezekiel's vision has nothing in common with all this, because it fills not several chapters, but only one, and precisely the one which is first in the works attributed to this prophet. Moreover, we see that this secret doctrine comprised two parts which have not been accorded equal importance; for the one part could not be taught to two persons, while the other could not be divulged at all, not even to one person, although he satisfied the severest conditions imposed upon him. If we are to believe Maimonides—who, although a stranger to the Kabbalah, could not deny its existence—the first half, entitled "The Story of Genesis or of the Creation" (מעשה בראשית) taught the science of Nature, the second half called "The Story of the Chariot" (מעשה מרכבה) contained a treatise on theology.[7] This opinion was also accepted by all the Kabbalists.[8]

Here is another passage wherein the same fact is presented to us in a no less evident manner. "One day R. Johanan said to R. Eliezer: 'Come, I will teach thee the story of the Merkaba.' The latter replied: 'I am not old enough for that.' When he became old, R. Johanan died, and some time later R. Assi came to him and said: 'Come, I will teach thee the story of the Merkaba.' R. Eliezer answered: 'Had I considered myself worthy, I would have learned it from R. Johanan, thy Master' " (Haggiga, 12a). We see by these words that, in order to be initiated into this mysterious and sacred science, it was not

[7] Morah Nebuhim, pref. מעשה בראשית הוא חכמת הטבע, ומעשה מרכבה הוא חכמת האלהות.

[8] That by מעשה בראשית was understood a theory of cosmogony similar to that of the Zohar, is evident also from a Gemara passage to the quoted Mishnah. "R. Eliezer said: Adam reached primarily from earth to heaven; but after he sinned, the Holy One (praised be He!) laid his hand upon him and made him smaller. אמר רבי אלעזר אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע וכיון שסרה הניח הקב"ה ידיו עליו ומיעטו. (Haggiga, fol. 12a). Compare Zohar, Part III, fol. 83b. Sec. : כיון דחטא אתחשר ואועיר נרמית —Jellinek.

sufficient to be distinguished by intelligence and by eminent position, one had to attain also an advanced age; and even when all these conditions, equally observed by modern Kabbalists,[9] were fulfilled, one was not always so sure of his intelligence or moral force to accept the burden of these formidable secrets, which were not absolutely without danger to the positive belief and to the other observance of religious law.

Here is a curious example told by the Talmud itself, in an allegorical language which it afterwards explains. "The teachers taught: Four (persons) entered the garden of delight, namely: ben Azai, ben Zomah, Aher and R. Akkiba. Ben Azai looked around and died. To him may be applied the verse of the Scriptures: 'Precious[10] in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' (Psalm CXVI, 15). Ben Zoma also looked around and lost his reason. The Scriptures say of (such as) him: 'Hast thou found honey, eat so much as is sufficient for thee; lest thou be filled therewith and vomit it' (Prov. XXV, 16). Aher made ravages in the plantations. Akkiba entered in peace and came out in peace."[11]

This passage can not possibly be taken literally, in the sense that it refers to a material vision of the splendors of another life; for, above all, the Talmud never uses the purely mystical terms of the text quoted when speaking of Paradise.[12] For, how can we admit that a man could lose either faith or reason, as it happened to two of this legend, if, while still on earth, he had become aware of the heavenly powers awaiting the elect?° We must, therefore, agree with the best reputed authorities of the

[9] They are not permitted to read the Zohar or other Kabbalistic books before they reach the age of forty.

[10] According to the literal conception of this Talmudical passage, should have been translated by "heavy," "heavily," "disagreeable." Compare Rashi to the same passage.—Jellinek.

[11] Tractat Haggiga, 14b.

[12] Paradise is always called גן ערן (the Garden of Eden), or the World to Come (עולם הבא); while here the word פרדס (Pardes) is used, which the modern Kabbalists have also consecrated to their science.

Synagogue, that the Garden of Delight entered by the four doctors, is nothing else but the mysterious science spoken of before;[13] a science dangerous to weak intelligences, because it may lead them either to insanity or to errors more fatal than impiety. It is this last result that the Gemara wishes to indicate when it says in speaking of Aher, that he made ravages in the plantations. It tells us that this person, so famous in Talmudic narrations, was before this one of the wisest teachers in Israel; his real name was Elishah ben Abuah, which was substituted by Aher to indicate the change in him.[14] And, in fact, when he issued from the allegorical garden into which his fatal curiosity had led him, he became an open infidel. He abandoned himself, says the text, to the generation of evil,[15] he lacked morals, betrayed his faith, led a scandalous life, and some people even accused him of the murder of a child. Where, really, is his first error to be found? Whither have his researches into the most important secrets of religion led him? The Jerusalem Talmud plainly states that he recognized two supreme principles,[16] and the Babylonian Talmud, from which we have taken the whole of this story, gives us to understand the same thing. It informs us that when Aher saw in the heavens the power of Metatron, the angel next to God,[17] he exclaimed: "Perhaps there are, far be it, two supreme powers."[18]

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[13] In hac Gemara neque Paradisus neque ingredi illum ad litteram exponendum est, sed potius de subtili et coelesti cognitione, secundum quam magistri arcanum opus currus intellexerunt, Deum ejusque palabra de Dios es su escritura; y la consideracion de Dios es su majestatem scrutando invenire cupiverunt.—; Huttinger, Discur. Gemaricus, p. 97.)

[14] The literal meaning of the word Aher (אחר) is another, another man.

[15] In the Talmud really: נפק לתרבות רעה or יצא—Jellinek

[16] שחשב שיש שתי רשויות.

[17] מטטרון is apparently composed of the two Greek words μετὰ θρόνος. According to the Kabbalists, the angel who bears this name really presides over the world of Yetzirah, or the world of Spheres which comes immediately after the world of pure spirits, the world Beriah, called the Throne of Glory, (כסא הכבוד), or simply the Throne (כורסייא).

[18] שמא חס ושלום שתי רשויות הן[a]

We need not dwell too long upon this portion of our subject, for we must cite other, more significant facts; yet, we can not refrain from remarking that the angel, or rather the hypostasis called Metatron, plays a very great part in the Kabbalistic system. It is he, properly speaking, who governs this visible world; he reigns over all the spheres swinging in space, over all the planets and celestial bodies, as well as over all the angels who conduct them; for above him is nothing but the intelligible forms of the divine essence, and spirits, so pure, that they can not exercise any immediate action over material things. It has also been found that his name, interpreted in numbers (גימטריא) is no less than the synonym of the All-Mighty.[19]

The Kabbalah is undoubtedly, as we shall soon prove, much further removed from dualism than from that which is nowadays called in a neighboring country, the doctrine of absolute identity; yet, is not the allegorical way in which it separates the intelligible essence of God and the ruling power of the world able to explain to us the error indicated by the Gemara?

Our last citation, drawn from the same source, and accompanied by Maimonides' reflections, will, I hope, complete the demonstration of this capital point, that a certain philosophy, a religious metaphysics was, so to speak, orally taught among some of the Tannaim, or the most ancient theologians of Judaism. The Talmud informs us that in earlier days three names were known as the expressions of the idea of God, namely, the famous tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, and two names foreign to the Bible. One of these two names was composed of twelve letters, the other of forty-two. The first, though forbidden to the majority, circulated freely enough inside the schools. "The

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[a] I adopted here the version of Dr. Jellinek rather than that of the author, as coming nearer to the meaning of the original Hebrew text.—Transl.

[19] The word Metatron (מטטרון) like the word Shaddai (שדי) which is translated by "Almighty," results in the number 314.

wise men," the text says, "taught it once a week to their sons and to their disciples."[20]

The twelve-lettered name was originally still more widely known. "It was imparted to everybody. But when the number of the impious multiplied, it was entrusted to the most reticent among the priests, and these tried to make it inaudible by the singing of their brethren, the priests."[21] Finally, the name composed of forty-two letters was looked upon as the most holy of the mysteries.[22] "It was taught only to the one who was discreet, of ripe age, neither high-tempered, nor immoderate, nor stubborn, and who was gentle in his associations."[23] "He who has been instructed in this secret," adds the Talmud, "and guards it with vigilance and a pure heart, may count on the love of God and on the favor of men; his name inspires respect, his knowledge is protected against oblivion, and he finds himself heir to two worlds, the world we now live in and the world to come."[24]

Maimonides very ingeniously remarks that there is no name composed of forty-two letters in any language, and that this would be still more impossible in the Hebrew language where the vowels are not part of the alphabet. He, therefore, thought himself justified in concluding that the forty-two letters formed several words, each one of which expressed a definite idea or a fundamental attribute of the Supreme Being, and when taken all together, they formed the true definition of the divine essence.[25] The statement, continues the same author, that the name just spoken of embraced a study in itself, and that the knowledge thereof was entrusted to the wisest only, undoubtedly means that,

20 שם בן ארבע אותיות חכמים מסרו אותו לבניהם ותלמידיהם פעם אחת בשבוע.

21 Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Berachoth and Maimonides, Moreh Nebuhim, Part I, ch. 62.

22 שם בן ארבעים ושתים אותיות קדוש ומקודש. Ib. supr.

23 ואין מוסרים אותו אלא לפי שצנוע ועומד בחצי ימיו ואינו מוזם ואינו משתכר ואינו מעמיד על מדותיו ודוברו בנחת עם הבריות. Ib. supr.

24 Ib. supr.

25 Maimonides, Moreh Nebuhim. ואין ספק שהמלות ההם מורים על ענינים בהכרח הענינים ההם יקרבו לאמתת ציור עצמו יתעלה.

in order to define the essence of God, the peculiarity of God and of things in general would either have to be better elucidated or further developed. This is surely also the case with the four-lettered name; for, how is it possible to suppose that a name so frequently met with in the Bible, and to which the Bible itself gives the sublime definition of "ego sum qui sum" was kept a secret which was imparted once a week by the wise men into the ears of a few chosen disciples? That which the Talmud calls the knowledge of the names of God, concludes Maimonides, is, therefore, nothing but a small part of theology or metaphysics (קצת חכמה אלהית) and it is for this reason that it has been said to be proof against oblivion; for oblivion is not possible to ideas which have their seat in active intelligence, that is, in reason.[26]

It would be difficult not to yield to these reflections, recommended no less by the common sense of the free-thinker, as well as by profound science and the generally recognized authority of the Talmudists.[27] We shall add here one more observation, undoubtedly of very questionable importance in the eyes of common sense, but which is not valueless to the order of ideas which these researches bear, and which we shall be obliged to accept as an historical fact: By counting all the letters that compose the Hebrew names, the sacred, essential names of the ten Sefiroth of the Kabbalah, and by prefixing to the last name of the Sefiroth the conjunctive particle "v" (ו)—as it is done in all enumerations and in all languages—we obtain exactly the number 42.[28] Is it not, therefore, possible to think that this is the thrice holy name which even to the elite of the wise men was

26 Ib. 1. c. וכבר התבאר בספרים המחוברים בחכמה האלהות שזאת החכמה אי אפשר לשכחה ר"ל השגת השכל הפועל.

27 Maimonides is not only the author of the philosophic work entitled "Moreh Nebuhim," he has also composed under the title of "The Strong Hand" (יד חזקה) a great talmudical work which is to this day the indispensable manual of the rabbis.

28 Here are the names and the figures which indicate the number of their letters: 5 5 3 3 5 5 5 4 4 3
כחר חכמה בינה גדולה גבורה תפארת נצח הוד מלכות ויסוד.

tremblingly confided? We would also find therein the full justification for all the remarks made by Maimonides.

For, first of all, these forty-two letters do not really form one name, as usually accepted, but several words. Then again, each one of these words expresses, in the opinion of the Kabbalists at least, an essential attribute of the divinity, or, what is the same thing to them, one of the necessary forms of existence. Finally, all together represent, according to the Kabbalistic science, according to the Zohar and all its commentators, the most exact definition of the supreme principle of all things that our minds are capable of conceiving. As such a concept of God is separated by an abyss from common belief, all precautions taken to prevent it from leaving the circle of initiates is very well understood. We certainly shall not insist upon this point, the importance of which, to say it again, we in no way exaggerate; we are satisfied for the moment to have shown, even to the evidence, the general result of the passages quoted.

At the time, then, when the Mishnah was edited, there existed a secret doctrine on the Creation and the Divine Nature. The manner of its study and division was agreed upon, and its name excited a kind of religious terror even among those who could not have known it. But, for how long had it existed? And if we can not determine with precision the date of its birth, is there any way of telling when the deep shadows formed that shrouded its origin? It is this question which we shall now attempt to answer. In the opinion of the historians most worthy of our confidence, the editing of the Mishnah came to an end no later than the year 3949 of the creation, 189 years after the birth of Christ.[29] We must also bear in mind that Judah the Holy did but collect the precepts and traditions transmitted to him by the Tannaim, his predecessors; the words cited at first by us, and which forbid the imprudent delivery of the secrets of the Creation and of the Merkaba, are, consequently, older than the book that

[29] See "Shalsheleth ha-Kabbalah, or the Chain of Tradition," by R. Gedalya, p. 23b, and David Gans' "Zemach David," p. 23a.

contains them. True, we do not know the author of these words, but this in itself is further proof in favor of their antiquity; for, had they expressed the opinion of one man only, they would not have been clothed with legislative power, and, as is usually done under such circumstances, the name of the person responsible for them would have been mentioned.

Besides, the doctrine itself necessarily precedes the law that interdicts its disclosure. It must have been known and must have acquired already a certain authority before the danger of its dissemination, not to say among the people, but among the doctors and masters in Israel was recognized. So, without undue boldness, we may date it, at least, from the end of the first century of the Christian era. This is precisely the time when Akkiba and Simeon ben Yohai lived, to whom the Kabbalists attribute the composition of their most important and most celebrated works. In this generation must also be included R. Jose of Zippora (ר' יוסי דצפור) whom the Idra Rabba—one of the most ancient and most remarkable fragments of the Zohar—counts among the intimate friends and most fervent disciples of Simeon ben Yohai. It is evidently to him that the talmudic treatise, from which we have drawn the majority of our citations, attributes a knowledge of the holy Merkaba.[30] Among the number of authorities who testify to the antiquity, if not of the books, at least of the Kabbalistic ideas, we do not hesitate to count the Chaldaic translation of the Five Books of Moses by Onkelos.

This famous translation was looked upon with such great respect, that it was regarded as a divine revelation. The BabylonianTalmud (Tract. Kidushin, 49a) supposes that Moses received it on Mount Sinai at the same time when he received the written and oral law, that it came down to the time of the Tannaim by tradition, and that Onkelos received but the glory for transcribing it. A great many of the modern theologians have

[30] ר' יוסי יודע במרכבה הקדושה.

believed they have found in it the foundation of Christianity. They maintained particularly that they had recognized the second divine person in the word Memra (מימרא), which really signifies the "word," or the "thought," and which the translator has placed everywhere for the name of Jehovah.[31]

This much is certain, that there rules in this translation a spirit opposed to that of the Mishnah, of the Talmud, of common Judaism, and even of the Pentateuch; in short, the traces of mysticism are not rare there. Whenever it is only possible or of particular importance, an idea is substituted for a fact or an image, the literal meaning is sacrificed to the spiritual meaning, and anthropomorphism destroyed in order to show the divine attributes in their nakedness.

At a time when the worship of the dead letter degenerated into idolatry; at a time when men passed their lives in counting the verses, the words and the letters of the Law;[32] at a time when the official preceptors, the legitimate representatives of religion, saw nothing better to do than to crush the intellect as well as the will under an always increasing mass of external practices, that aversion for everything material and positive, and the habit of often sacrificing grammar and history to the interest of an exalted idealism, infallibly reveal to us the existence of a secret doctrine which has all the characteristics and all the pretensions of mysticism, and which, undoubtedly, does not date from the day it dared to speak in a clear language. Finally, without attaching too much importance to it, we can not refrain from laying stress upon the following: We have already remarked, that in order to attain their aims and to introduce, in some manner, their own ideas into the very terms of the revelation, the Kabbalists resorted at times to more or less irrational means. One of these means, which consisted in forming a new alphabet

31 See especially Rittangel's commentary and translation of the "Sefer Yetzirah," p. 84.

32 Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Kidushin, 30a. From this, according to the Talmudists, comes the word סופר, which really means "to count," but which is translated by "Scribe."

by changing the value of the letters, or better, by substituting one for the other according to a definite order, is frequently employed in the Talmud, and made use of in a translation older than the one just spoken of, namely, the Aramaic paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel,[33] contemporary and disciple of Hillel the Aged (הלל הזקן), who taught with great authority during the first years of the reign of Herod.[34]

To be sure, such procedures may serve equivocally the most diverse ideas; but men do not invent an artificial language, the key to which is intentionally hidden, unless they have resolved to hide their thoughts, if not from all, at least, from the mass of the people. Furthermore, although the Talmud makes frequent use of similar methods, yet, the one we describe and which we believe to be the oldest, is entirely strange to it. Taken alone, this last fact would undoubtedly be of small demonstrative power, but added to those which already occupied our attention, it ought not to be disregarded. If we take them all together and compare them with one another, we are justified in stating, that there spread among the Jews, before the end of the first century of the Christian era, a profoundly venerated science, distinct from the Mishnah, the Talmud and the Sacred Books,—a mystic doctrine engendered evidently by the need of reflection and of

33 We refer here to the Kabbalistic alphabet called Ath Bash, את בש, because it consists in giving to the first letter Aleph, א, the value of the last letter Thau, ת, and again reciprocally, in replacing the second letter Beth, ב, by the one before the last letter of the alphabet, the Shin, ש, and so on with the rest. By means of this procedure the Chaldaic paraphrasist translates the name Sheshach, ששך (Jeremiah, LI, 41), which gives no sense, by Babel, בבל. In the same manner he translates also לב קמי (ib. LI, 1) which means "the heart of my adversaries," by כשדים, which signifies Chaldeans. It is supposed that the Hebrew prophet, a captive in the empire of Babylon could not name it expressly when threatening it with the vengeance of heaven. But such a supposition becomes incomprehensible when, in the same chapter and under the influence of the same sentiment, the names of Babel and Chaldeans are often repeated. However, this translation was preserved by St. Jerome (see his works, 5. IV, "Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah") and by Rashi.

34 See Shalsheleth ha-Kabbalah, fol. 18, a and b, and Zemach David, fol. 19a, Amsterdam edition.

independence, and I would even say, by the need of philosophy; and which, nevertheless, invoked in its favor the united authority of tradition and Scriptures.

The guardians of this doctrine, whom, from now on, we do not fear to designate by the name of "Kabbalists," should not and can not be confounded with the Essenes, whose name was already known at a much earlier epoch, but who still preserved their customs and beliefs until some time under the reign of Justinian.[35] In fact, if we refer to Josephus, (De Bello Jud., 8, I), and Philo, (De vita contemplativa, in his collected works), the only ones deserving confidence on this point, the aim of this famous sect was essentially a moral and practical one; it endeavored to make dominant among men the kind of equality and brotherly love which was later on taught with such glitter by the founder and apostles of Christianity. The Kabbalah, on the other hand, was, according to the oldest testimonies brought by us, entirely a speculative science, which claimed to unveil the secrets of the Creation and of the Divine Nature.

The Essenes formed an organized society, very similar to the religious communities of the Middle Ages. Their outer life reflected their feelings and their ideas, and, besides, they admitted into their midst all those who distinguished themselves by a pure life, not excepting even women and children. The Kabbalists have always shrouded themselves in mysterious darkness, from the time of their first appearance to the time when the press betrayed their secret. At rare intervals, and with the greatest precaution, they opened their portals half-way for some new adept who was always chosen only from among the select minds, and whose advanced age warranted his discretion and wisdom. Finally, in spite of the all too pharasaical rigidity of their observance of the sabbath, the Essenes were certainly not afraid to reject publicly the traditions, to give Morality a very conspicuous preference over Cult, and even to retain in the latter

[35] Peter Beer, part I, p. 88.

neither the sacrifice nor the ceremonies commanded by the Pentateuch.

Like the greater number of Christian mystics, and like the Karmathians among the followers of Islam, the adepts of the Kabbalah followed all the external practices; they were generally careful not to attack the tradition which they themselves invoked in their favor; and, as we have already noted, several of them were counted among the most revered doctors of the Mishnah. We may also add that later on they were seldom found to be untrue to these habits of prudence.

Chapter II

THE KABBALISTIC BOOKS

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SEFER YETZIRAH

We come now to the original books in which, according to the most wide-spread opinion, the Kabbalistic system took form since its birth. Judging from the titles[1] which have come down to us, the books were very numerous. But we shall consider only those which time has conserved for us, and which commend themselves to our attention by their importance as well as by their antiquity. There are two of the latter kind which fully correspond with the conception which we can form of the "History of Genesis" and of the "Holy Merkaba" according to the Talmud. One, entitled the "Book of Formation," ספר יצירה, contains, I do not say a system of physics, but such a system of cosmology as could have been conceived in an epoch and in a country where the habit of explaining all phenomena by an immediate action of the first cause must have stifled the spirit of observation, and

[1] The Sefer Ha-Bahir, ספר הבהיר, attributed to Nehunya Ben Hakanah, a contemporary of Hillel the Aged and of Herod the Great, is frequently cited: and to this day different fragments, evidently spurious, are quoted as from that work. Such are also the fragments collected under the title of "The Faithful Shepherd," רעיא מהימנא, ordinarily printed with the Zohar as a commentary. Otherwise, nothing has remained to us but names and a few rare citations from the following authors frequently mentioned with the greatest respect by the Zohar: Rabbi Jose the Elder, ר' יוסי סבא; Rabbi Hamnuna the Elder, ר' המנונא סבא; and Rabbi Jebi the Elder, ר' ייבי סבא.*

* According to Peter Beer, part 2, p. 28, also R. Kruspedai, ר' ברוספראי—Jellinek.

where, consequently, certain general and superficial relations perceived in the external world, must have passed for the science of nature. The other is called the Zohar, זהר, or Brightness, according to the words of Daniel: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."[2]

The Zohar treats more particularly of God, of spirits and of the human soul, in a word, of the spiritual world. We are far from according the same importance and the same value to these two works. The second, much richer and much more extensive, but also more difficult, must, no doubt, hold the most prominent place; but we shall begin with the first, which seems to us to be the most ancient of the two.

Talmudic texts, of which neither the sense nor the age have been well established, were invoked in favor of the antiquity of the Sefer Yetzirah. We shall pass in silence these as well as the legends and the controversies to which they give rise. Our observations will bear only upon the foundation of the book which we aim to make known. They will suffice to make the character appreciable and to demonstrate the lofty origin.

1st. The system contained in it responds in every respect to the idea conveyed by the title of the book. We are assured of the fact by the words of the first proposition: "With the thirty-two marvelous paths of wisdom the world was created by the Eternal, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, the Living, the Almighty, the Supreme God Who dwells in Eternity, Whose name is sublime and holy."

2nd. The means employed there to explain the work of the creation and the importance given to numbers and to letters, make us understand how ignorance and superstition abused later this principle; how the fables mentioned by us spread; and, finally, how the so-called practical Kabbalah was formed, which gives to numbers and to letters the power to change the course of nature.

The form is simple and grave; nothing that resembles, even

[2] Daniel, XII, 3. והמשכילים יזהירו כזהר הרקיע

faintly, demonstration or argument; there are nothing but aphorisms distributed in fairly regulated order, but as concise as the ancient oracles. One striking fact is that the term which was later on used exclusively for the designation of the soul, is still used here as in the Pentateuch to designate the living human body.[3]

True, there are several words of foreign origin in the book: The names of the seven planets and the name of the Celestial Dragon, mentioned several times in the book, belong, evidently, to the language as well as to the science of the Chaldeans, who exercised an all-powerful influence over the Hebrews during the Babylonian captivity.[4] But the purely Greek, Latin and Arabic expressions, seen in large numbers in the Talmud and in the more modern writings where the Hebrew language serves philosophy and science, are not found there.

Now, it may be admitted as a general, and I may almost dare say, as an infallible principle, that all works of this nature wherein the civilization of the Greeks and the Arabs take no part, may be regarded as prior to the birth of Christianity. We surely admit that it would not be difficult to find vestiges of the language and philosophy of Aristotle in the work now under consideration,

[3] We refer here to the word Nefesh, נפש. It is evident that it can not be applied to the soul in any of the following passages: 1, When it is said of those who, according to the literal meaning of the word, "came out of the loins of Jacob," כל הנפש הבאה ליעקב מצרימה יצאי ירכו, Genesis XLVI, 26; 2, When it is permitted to prepare on the first day of Passover only that which every man must eat, את אשר יאכל לכל נפש הוא, לבדו יעשה לכם Exodus, XII, 16; 3, When every one is ordered to inflict sufferings upon himself on the tenth day of the seventh month, in expiation of his sins, כל הנפש אשר לא תענה בעצם היום הזה ונכרתה מעמיה, Levit. XXIII, 29. If it be true that, in designating the soul, the word Neshamah, נשמה, is used in preference to Nefesh, yet the latter, at least, is never used by the Talmudists or by more modern writers to designate the body. All, without exception, make use of the word Guf, גוף, which is not met with even once in the Sefer Yetzirah.

[4] These names, excepting those which designate the sun and the moon, do not belong to the Chaldaic language; they are a translation of Chaldean names. They are: נוגה, supposed to be Venus; כוכב, Mercury; שבתאי, Saturn; צדק, Jupiter; מאדים, Mars; חלי, which designates the Dragon, is Arabic.

and to which we attribute, without fear, this character. When, for instance, after the above quoted proposition of the thirty-two marvelous paths of Wisdom which served for the creation of the universe, it adds that there are also three terms: that which counts, that which is counted, and the very action of counting, translated by the oldest commentators as: the subject, the object, and the act of the reflection or the thought,[5] it is impossible not to recall this celebrated phrase of the twelfth book of Metaphysics; the intelligence comprehends itself by grasping the intelligible, and it becomes the intelligible by the very act of comprehension and cognition; so that the intelligence and the intelligible are identical.[6]

But it is evident that these words were added to the text, for they are connected neither with the proposition which precedes them, nor with the one following them; they do not recur under any form in any other place of the book; whereas the use of the ten numbers and the twenty-two letters which form the thirty-two means applied to the creation by divine wisdom, is explained at great length. Finally, we can not understand how these words could find place in a treatise which deals with nothing but the relations that exist between the different parts of the material world. As to the difference in the two manuscripts reproduced in the Mantua edition, one at the end of the volume, the other amidst the diverse commentaries, they are far from being as great as certain modern critics would have us believe.[7]

After an impartial and detailed comparison, it is found to be

[5] בג' ספרים בספר וספר וסיפור, according to the author of the Cuzari, Rabbi Judah ha-Levi, the three terms designate the Thought, the Word, and the Scriptures, which in Divinity are identical, although in man they are separate. (Cuzari, 4th part.) According to Abraham ben Dior, they relate to the subject, the object, and to the very act of knowledge, דעת יודע והידוע, or also שכל משכיל ומושכל. See Abraham ben Dior's commentary to the Sefer Yetzirah, p. 27a.

[6] Αὐτὸν δὲ νοεῖ ὁ νοῦς κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ; νοητὸς γὰρ γίγνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν ὥστε ταυτὸν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν. — Metaphysics, Book 12.

[7] See Wolf, Bibliotheca Hebraica, vol. I. Bayle, Dictionn. crit., article Abraham. Moreri, same article, etc.

based entirely upon some unimportant variants such as may be met with in all works of great antiquity, which suffered, by this very fact, during several centuries from the inattention or from the temerity of commentators. In fact, in both are found not only the same foundation and the same system considered from a general point of view, but also the same division and the same number of chapters, placed in the same order and devoted to the same subject matter; what is more, the same ideas are expressed in the same terms. But we do not find any more that perfect similarity in the numbers and places of the diverse propositions which, under the name of Mishnah, so clearly distinguish one from another. Here repetitions, there abbreviations; here united what is separated elsewhere. Finally, one appears also more explicit than the other, not alone in the words, but in the meanings as well.

We do not know, and consequently can not cite, more than one passage where the last difference is visible: At the end of the first chapter where it is the question of enumerating the principles of the universe which correspond to the ten numbers, one manuscript very simply says that first of all comes the spirit of the Living God; the other adds that this spirit of the Living God is the Holy Spirit which is, at the same time, Spirit, Voice and Word.[8] Doubtless this idea is of the greatest importance; but it is not lacking in the manuscript where it is not so clearly formulated. It constitutes, as we shall soon prove, the basis and the result of the entire system. Moreover, the Book of Formation was translated and explained in Arabic at the commencement of the tenth century, by Rabbi Saadia, a high methodical and wise mind, who considered it one of the most ancient and one of the first monuments of the human mind.[9] Without according any exaggerated value to this testimony, we shall add that all the

[8] Mantua edition, fol. 49a, קול ורוח ודבור זהו רוח הקודש.

[9] Saadia begins his Arabic preface with the following words: הדא כתאב יסמא כתאב אלמבאדי מנסוב אלי אברהם אבינו עליה אלסלאם. "This book is called: Book of the Beginnings; it is attributed to our father Abraham (peace be with him)." Munk, 1. c.

commentators who succeeded him during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, expressed the same conviction.

Like all works of a very remote epoch, the one under consideration also lacks the title as well as the name of the author; but it closes with these strange words: "And when our father Abraham had considered, examined, fathomed and grasped the meaning of all these things, the Master of the Universe manifested Himself to him, called him His friend, and entered into an eternal covenant with him and his posterity. Abraham then believed in God, and that was counted unto him as a work of justice; and the glory of God was called upon him; for it is to him that these words apply: I have known thee before I formed thee in the womb of thy mother." This passage can not be considered as a modern invention. Wtih only a few alterations it exists in the two texts of the Mantua edition, and it is found in the oldest commentaries. It is our opinion that in order to give more interest to the Book of Formation, it was supposed, or it was desired to have others suppose, that the things contained in the book were precisely those observed by the first patriarch of the Hebrews, and which gave him the idea of a God, One and All-Powerful.

There exists, besides, a tradition among the Jews, according to which Abraham had great astronomical knowledge, and that he raised himself to the idea of the true God solely by observing the spectacle of nature. The words quoted above, nevertheless, have been interpreted in a most gross material way. Abraham himself was taken as the author of the book wherein his name is mentioned with religious respect. Moses Betril's commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah begins thus: "It was Abraham, our father (peace be upon him!) who wrote this against the wise men of his time who were incredulous concerning the principles of Monotheism. This is, at least, what R. Saadia (the memory of the just be blessed!) believes in the first chapter of his book entitled "The Philosopher's Stone." I give his own words: The wise men of Chaldea attacked Abraham, our father, in his belief.

Now, the sages of Chaldea were divided into three sects. The first sect pretended that the Universe was subject to two primal causes which were entirely contrary in their way of action; one was busy destroying what the other produced. This opinion is that of the dualists who rest their theory on the principle that there can be nothing in common between the author of good and the author of evil. The second sect admitted three primal causes. As the two contrary principles, of which we have spoken, reciprocally paralyze each other, and as nothing can be accomplished in this manner, they recognized a third, deciding, principle. The third sect, finally, confessed no other God but the sun in which it recognized the sole principle of life and death." (See Sefer Yetzirah, Mantua edition, p. 20, 21.)

Notwithstanding such an imposing and universally respected authority, the opinion just noted has not even one adherent nowadays. The name of the patriarch has long since been replaced by that of Akkiba, one of the most fanatical champions of the tradition, one of the numerous martyrs of his country's liberty, and one who would have been counted by posterity among the heroes most worthy of admiration had he played a part in the ancient republics of Athens and Rome.

This other opinion is, no doubt, less improbable than the first one; yet, we surely do not believe it better based. Although, whenever mentioning him, the Talmud represents Akkiba as an almost divine being, and although it ranks him even above Moses,[10] yet he is not presented in any place as one of the luminaries of the Merkaba or of the science of Genesis; nowhere are we led to surmise that he wrote the Book of Formation, or any other book of that nature. On the contrary, he was positively reproached for not having entertained very lofty ideas of the nature of God. "Until when, Rabbi Akkiba," said Rabbi Jose the Galilean to him, "until when will you continue to profane the Divine

[10] Babyl. Talmud, Tract, Menahoth, 29b.

Majesty?"[11] The enthusiasm he inspired was caused by the importance he accorded to the tradition, by the patience with which he knew how to draw from the traditions rules for all actions of life,[12] by the zeal with which he taught during a period of forty years, and, perhaps, also by the heroism of his death. The twenty-four thousand disciples attributed to him do not bear out the fact that the Mishnah forbade to divulge even the least important secrets of the Kabbalah to more than one person.

Several modern critics have fancied that two different works were known under the same title "Sefer Yetzirah;" one attributed to the patriarch Abraham, has long since disappeared; the other, much more modern, is the one conserved for us. This opinion is founded upon gross ignorance. Morin, author of "Biblical Exercises,"[13] borrowed it from a chronicler of the sixteenth century, who, speaking of Akkiba, said: "Akkiba is he who drew up the Book of Formation in honor of the Kabbalah; but there is another Book of Formation composed by Abraham, to which Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (abbreviated, Ramban), wrote a great and marvelous commentary.[14]

This commentary, written at the close of the thirteenth century, but printed in the Mantua edition several years after the chronicle just cited,[15] evidently relates to the book now in our hands. Most of the expressions of the text are faithfully preserved therein, and it is evident that it was not read by the historian whose words we have cited. Besides, the first who wrote the

[11] Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Haggiga, 14a. אמר לו ר' יוסי הגלילי עד מתי אתה עושה שכינה חול.

[12] Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Haggiga, 14a. It is said he knew how to deduct "heaps" of principles from the smallest particulars of the Biblical words. תילי תילין על הלכות.

[13] Morimus, Exercitationes biblicae, p. 374.

[14] והוא חבר ספר מכילתין וספר היצירה על הקבלה ויש ספר יצירה שחבר אברהם אשר הרמב"ן חבר פירוש גדול ונפלה עליו. Shal-sheleth ha-kabbalah, fol. 20b.

[15] The first edition of the Sefer Yetzirah is the Mantua edition published in 1565; while the Chronicle, just mentioned, Shalsheleth ha-kabbalah (The Chain of Tradition) was printed already in Imola in 1549.

name of Akkiba instead of the name of Abraham was a Kabbalist of the fourteenth century, Isaac de Lattes, who in his preface to the Zohar asked: "Who permitted Rabbi Akkiba to write the book which has been orally transmitted since Abraham?"[16] These words, which we have tried to preserve faithfully, are evidently contrary to the distinction which we wish to destroy; and, yet, this distinction rests, in the last instance, on that authority only. So the author of the Book of Formation is as yet not discovered; nor is it *we* who are to rend the veil which hides his name. We even doubt whether this is possible with the feeble elements at our disposal. But the uncertainty on this point to which we are condemned, does not always reach the propositions which we think to have demonstrated and which, if need be, may suffice to satisfy the purely philosophical interest which we must look for in these matters.

[16] Isaac De Lattes really combined both statements by saying: מי התיר לר' עקיבה לכתוב ספר יצירה וקראהו משנה שהיתה שומה בפיהם בקבלה מאברהם אבינו ע"ה ובא הרמב"ן הנודע בשערים מהללו וחבר עליו פי' ארוך. "Who permitted R. Akkiba to write the book 'Sefer Yetzirah' which he called Mishnah and which they received by way of tradition from Abraham our father (peace be upon him!)? Why, again, came R. Moses ben Nahman, whose fame is so wide-spread, and made an exhaustive commentary to it?"—Jellinek.

Chapter III

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ZOHAR

A much more lively interest, but also more serious difficulty follow the literary monument still to be considered by us. The Zohar, or the Book of Brightness, is the universal code of the Kabbalah. Under the modest form of a commentary on the Pentateuch, it touches, with absolute independence, upon all questions of a spiritual nature, and, at times, it rises to the height of doctrines which even in our day the strongest intellect may be proud of. But it is very far from always maintaining the same heights. Very often it sinks to a language, to sentiments and to ideas which betray the lowest degree of ignorance and superstition. Side by side with the virile simplicity and naive enthusiasm of the Biblical times, we find names, facts, informations and habits which set us amidst an epoch of the earliest Middle Ages.

This inequality in form as well as in thought, this fantastic mixture of characters which differentiate the very widely separated times, and, finally, the almost absolute silence of the two Talmuds, and the lack of positive documents until the close of the thirteenth century, have given rise to the most divergent opinions upon the origin and the author of this book. We shall present them according to the most ancient and the most faithful witnesses; we shall then attempt to judge them before rendering a decision on this difficult question.

All that has been said, all that is still generally thought nowadays of the formation and of the antiquity of the Zohar, is

summed up impartially by two authors whom we have already cited several times. "The Zohar," says Abraham ben Solomon Zacuto, in his "Book of Genealogies,"[1]—"the Zohar, whose rays illumine the world,[2] and which contains the most profound mysteries of the Law and of the Kabbalah, is not the work of Simeon ben Yohai, although it has been published under his name. But it was edited by his disciples according to his words, and his disciples themselves confided the care of the continuation of their task to other disciples. Written as were the words of the Zohar by men who had lived long enough to know the Mishnah and all the opinions and precepts of the oral law, they are, for that reason, all the more in harmony with the truth. This book was not discovered until after the death of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and of Rabbi Asher, who knew of it."[3]

Rabbi Gedaliah, author of the famous chronicle "The Chain of Tradition,"[4] expresses his opinion on the same subject in the following words: "Toward the year five thousand and fifty of the Creation (1290 Christian era) there were different persons who claimed that all the parts of the Zohar written in the Jerusalem dialect (the Aramean dialect) were composed by Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, but all those written in the sacred language (pure Hebrew) ought not to be attributed to him. Others affirmed that Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, having discovered the book in the Holy Land, sent it to Catalonia, whence it passed to Aragon and fell into the hands of Moses de Leon. Finally, several people have thought that Moses de Leon, who was a learned man, had drawn all these commentaries from his own imagination, and that he published them under the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and his friends, in order to derive great benefit therefrom

[1] יוחסין, pgs. 42 and 45. The author of that book flourished in 1492.
[2] It must be remembered that the word Zohar signifies Brightness.
[3] The first mentioned of the two renouned rabbis, after passing the greater part of his life in Spain, died in Jerusalem in 1300. Rabbi Asher flourished in 1320.
[4] שלשלת הקבלה (Shalsheleth ha-Kabbalah), Amsterdam edition, fol. 23, a and b.

from the learned quarters. It is added that he acted thus because he was poor and crushed by burdens."[5] "As far as I am concerned," adds the same author, "I hold that all these opinions are baseless, and I believe, to the contrary, that Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and his pious association did really say all these things and many more, but it may be that they were not properly drawn up in those days, and after they have been dispersed in several portions for a long time, they were finally collected and put in order. This is not astonishing; for it was thus that our master, Judah the Pious, edited the Mishnah, the different manuscripts of which were at first scattered to the four corners of the earth. In like manner Rabbi Ashi also composed the Gemara."

We see by these words, to which modern criticism has not added much of a decisive character, that the question we are now considering has already been solved in three different ways. Some maintain, that, barring a few passages written in Hebrew—which do not exist nowadays in any edition or in any known manuscript —[6] the Zohar pertains entirely to Simeon ben Yohai; others, just as exclusive in their view, attribute it to an impostor called Moses de Leon, and do not date it earlier than the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century; others, finally, have endeavored to conciliate these two extreme opinions by supposing that Simeon ben Yohai contented himself with the propagation of his doctrine through oral teaching, and that the memories thereof left by him either in the minds or in the note-books of his disciples, were not united until several centuries after his death in the book in our possession to-day under the name of the Zohar.

Considered in the absolute sense, taking the words we have quoted literally, the first of the two opinions is hardly worthy

[5] This is also found in the very rare Constantin edition of the "Book of Genealogies." This passage, which is missing in the other editions, is quoted in Ari Nohem (ed. Fuerst) p. 58ff. and in Hasagoth (ספר ראבי"ה —Sefer Raviah) by Milsahagi, p. 29a.—Jellinek
[6] There are two ancient editions of the Zohar which served as models for all others: the Cremona edition and the Mantua edition, both published in the year 1559.

of serious refutation. Let us first look at the fact which was to serve as its basis and which we shall borrow from the Talmud:[7]

Rabbi Judah, Rabbi Jose and Rabbi Simeon were together one day, and near them was a certain Judah ben Gerim.[8] Rabbi Judah opened (the conversation) and said: "How beautiful are the works of this nation (the Romans). They let bridges, markets and public baths be erected!" Rabbi Jose kept silence; but Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai answered: "Whatever they erected is to their interest only. They built markets to attract prostitutes: they built baths for their own pleasure; and they built bridges to levy taxes on." Judah ben Gerim went out and told what he heard, and caused it to reach the ears of Caesar (the Roman government); and the latter rendered the following judgment: "Judah, who exalted shall be raised in dignity;[9] Jose, who kept silence, shall be exiled to Cyprus;[10] Simeon, who spoke ill of me, shall be put to death." Accompanied by his son, he (Rabbi Yohai) immediately repaired to the house of study, whither his wife brought him daily a loaf of bread and a bowl of water.[11] But as the proscriptive decree became too oppressive, he said to his son: "Woman is light-minded, and when tortured perhaps, may betray us." They, therefore, left this place to hide in a deep cave.

There, by a miracle, a St. John's bread tree and a spring of water was created for them. Simeon and his son stripped themselves of their clothes, and, buried to their necks in sand, they

[7] Babylonian Talmud, Tract. Sabbath, fol. 3b.

[8] בן גרים. The literal meaning of this name is "descendant of proselytes." The inference is that, according to a sentiment very common among the ancients, his foreign blood was the cause of his treason.

[9] There is a play upon words in that text: שיעלה (sh'yaleh), יתעלה (yith-aleh), the one *who raised* (sc. laudibus), shall *be raised* (sc. dignitate).—Jellinek

[10] Josephus, d. b. j. I, 3, ch. 3. Ζέπφωρις μεγίστη τῆς Γαλιλαίας πόλις.—Jellinek

[11] The original has "gardienne" (overseer); but the word דביתהו usually means "wife."—Jellinek.

passed all day meditating upon the Law. Twelve years they thus spent in the cave, until the prophet Elijah came, placed himself at the entrance of the cave and exclaimed: "Who will announce to the son of Yohai that Caesar is dead, and that the proscription has been revoked?" They went forth,[12] and saw people sow and plow.

It is said (although not vouched for any longer by the Talmud) that during these twelve years of solitude and proscription, Simeon ben Yohai, aided by Eleazar his son, composed the renowned work to which his name is still affixed. Were even the fabulous details separated from the narrative, it would still be difficult to justify the inference drawn from it; for it is not told what were the results, or what was the object of the meditations, in which the two proscripts tried to forget their suffering. Then again, there are a multitude of facts and names found in the Zohar which Simeon ben Yohai, who died a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the second century of the Christian era, could certainly not have known. For instance, how could he have spoken of the six portions into which the Mishnah is divided, when the latter was written nearly sixty years after his death?[13] How could he have mentioned the authors and the procedure of the Gemara which commences at the death of Judah the Saint, and ends only five hundred years after the birth of Christ?[14] How could he have learned the names of vowel

[12] The story of the flight and sojourn of ben Yohai in the cave is represented more fully in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractat Shebuoth, ch. 9. Midrash Rabba to Genesis Sec. Vayishlah; to Koheleth, par. חופר גומץ; to Esther, par. גם וישתי, where the time of the sojourn is given as thirteen years. The famous Jewish archaeologist Rapaport had attempted to bring in accord the chronological part of this story with the Roman history. (See the Hebrew Year Book "Kerem Hemed," Vol. 7, p. 182-185.)—Jellinek

[13] Zohar, Mantua edition, 3rd part, fol. 26.—ib. fol. 29b. We prefer to cite the last passage in which the six treatises of the Mishnah are compared to the six steps of the supreme throne: שית סדרי משני איהו שש מעלות לכסא.

[14] All the terms of the Talmudic discussion are enumerated in the following passages: וימררו את חייהם זו קושיא בחמר דא ק"ו ובלבנים דא

signs and other inventions of the school of Tiberias which, at most, can not reach back earlier than the beginning of the sixth century?[15]

Several critics have suggested that under the name of the Ishmaelites the Zohar refers to the Mohammedan Arabs who are so designated in all the writings published by modern Jews. The following passage, in fact, makes it difficult to deny that interpretation:

"The moon is at the same time the sign of good and the sign of evil. The full moon signifies the good, the new moon signifies the evil; as it holds equally the good and the evil, the children of Israel and the children of Ishmael have alike taken it as the rule of their calculations.[16] If an eclipse takes place during the full moon, it is not a good omen for Israel; if, on the contrary, the eclipse takes place during the new moon (an eclipse of the sun), it is a bad omen for Ishmael. Thus are verified the words of the prophet (Is. XXIX, 14): The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid." But it must be noted that these words do not belong to the text; they have been borrowed from a much less ancient commentary, entitled "The Faithful Shepherd," which has been slipped into the Zohar by the first editors, on their own authority, wherever they thought to have found a gap.

A passage even more decisive could have been found in the Zohar; for the following is what a disciple of Simeon ben Yohai pretends to have heard from the mouth of his master: "Woe to the moment when Ishmael was brought forth and invested with the sign of circumcision! For, what did the Lord do, Whose name be blessed? He excluded the children of Ishmael from the celestial union. But as they held the merit having adopted the sign of the covenant, He reserved for them here below a

לבון הלכה ובכל עבודה בישדה דא ברייתא אשר עבדו בפרך דא תיקו Vol. III, fol. 153a. Mantua ed.

[15] Genesis, col. 152 and 153:—Lev. 57b,—Mantua ed. Vol. I, fol. 24b.

[16] ומיהדא איהו טוב ורע מונין בה ישראל ומונין בה בני ישמעאל.

portion in the possession of the Holy Land. The children of Ishmael are, therefore, destined to reign over the Holy Land, and they shall hinder the children of Israel from returning to it. But it shall last only until the time when the merit of the children of Ishmael shall be exhausted. They will then excite terrible wars on earth; the children of Edom will unite against them and war upon them, some on land, some on sea, and others near Jerusalem. Victory will rest now with one, now with the other; but the Holy Land will not be delivered into the hands of the children of Edom."

To understand correctly the sense of these lines, it is sufficient to know that with the name of Edom the Jewish writers (I speak of those who made use of the Hebrew language) designated first Pagan Rome, and next Christian Rome and all ancient Christian peoples in general. Now, as there can be no question here of Pagan Rome, the intention was doubtless to speak here of the strife of the Saracens against the Christians, and even of the crusades before the fall of Jerusalem. As to the prediction of Simeon ben Yohai, I need not tell what place it is to hold in our judgment. But I shall not dwell any longer upon the demonstration of these facts, generally known now and vyingly repeated by all modern critics.[17] We shall add only one last observation which, I hope, will not be without merit for the conclusion which we are desirous to reach at last. In order to gain the conviction that Simeon ben Yohai cannot possibly be the author of the Zohar, and that the book is not, as has been maintained, the fruit of thirteen years of meditation and solitude, it is necessary to pay some attention to the stories which are almost always mingled with the exposition of the ideas. Thus, in the fragment entitled Idra Zuta, אדרא זוטא, of which we

[17] מטפחת הספרים, 3rd part, fol. 281b, Mantua ed.* See Peter Beer, "History of the sects in Judaism," 2nd part, p. 50ff.—Morinus, Exercitat. biblic. liber II, exercit. 9.—Wolf, Biblioth. hebr.

* The place of printing and number of volumes are given wrongly. This book was printed in Altona in 1768 in two volumes.—Jellinek.

hope to translate a great part, and which forms in every respect an admirable episode in this vast compilation, it is told that when near death, Simeon ben Yohai summoned the small number of his disciples and friends, among whom was also his son Eleazar, for the purpose of giving them his last instructions.

"Thou," he said to Eleazer, "will teach; Rabbi Abba will write, and my other friends will meditate in silence."[18] The master Yohai is seldom introduced as speaking. His doctrines are delivered orally by his son or his friends, who again come together after his death to communicate to one another what each one remembered of his teachings, and to enlighten themselves mutually on the common faith. The words of the Scriptures: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," were thought by them applicable to themselves.[19] When some of them meet on the highway, their conversation immediately turns upon the habitual subject of their meditations, and some passage of the Old Testament is then explained in a purely spiritual sense. Here is an example taken at random from thousands: "Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Jose were together on a journey. Rabbi Judah then said to his travelling companion: 'Tell me something from the Law, and the divine spirit will descend to us; for as often as man meditates upon the words of the Law, the spirit of God either joins him or goes before him to lead him'."[20]

Finally, as has been said before, books are also cited, of which only widely scattered fragments have come down to us and which necessarily must be considered more ancient than the Zohar. We translate yet the following passage which might be believed to have been written by some disciple of Copernic, were we not compelled, even denying its every authenticity, to date it, at least, from the end of the thirteenth century: "In the book of Hamuna

18 ובך אפרנא לכו ר' אבא יכתוב ור' אלעזר ברי ילעי ושאר חבריא בלבייהו ירחשון Part III, p. 287b.

19 Part III, fol. 59b.

20 Part I, fol. 115b.

the Elder it is fully explained that the earth turns upon itself like a sphere; that some people are above, others below; that all creatures change their appearance to the climate of each place, although keeping always the same position; that certain places on earth are light, while others are in darkness; that some have day while others have night; and that there are countries where it is always day, or where night lasts but a few moments at least."[21]

It is quite evident, accordingly, that the author of the Zohar, whoever he may have been, had not even intended to attribute the book to Simeon ben Yohai, of whose death and last moments he tells.

Are we, then, forced to honor an obscure rabbi of the thirteenth century, an unfortunate charlatan who, necessarily, must have devoted long years in writing it, and who yielded only to the cry of misery and to the hope of relieving it by such slow and uncertain means? Surely not! And even were we content with examining the intimate nature and the intrinsic value of the book, we shall have no trouble at all in demonstrating that this opinion has no better foundation than the first one. But we have still more positive arguments to combat it. The Zohar is written in an Aramean language belonging to no particular dialect. What scheme could de Leon have had in mind by making use of this idiom which was not in use in his time? Did he, as is maintained by a modern critic already quoted,[22] desire to impart a semblance of truth to his fictions by making the various persons under whose names he wished to pass off his own ideas, speak the language of their epoch? But since he was in possession of such widespread knowledge, a fact admitted even by those whose opinions we combat, he must also have known that Simeon ben Yohai and his friends were counted among the authors of the

21 ובספרא דרב המנונא סבא פריש יתיר דהא כל ישובא מתנגנגא בעינילא כבדור אלין לתתא ואלין לעילא Part III, fol. 10a.

22 Cum auctor esset recentissimus, linguaque chaldaica sua actate prorsus esset extincta, eamque Judaei doctiores raro intelligerent, consulto chaldaice scripsit, ut antiquitatem apud popularium vulgus libris suis conciliaret.—Morinus, Exercitatt. bibl. 1, 2, exercit. 9, ch. 5.

Mishnah; and, although the Jerusalem dialect was probably their every-day language, it would have been more natural to make them write in Hebrew.

Some maintain that he really did make use of this last language, that he did not invent the Zohar, but only falsified it by admixing his own thoughts, and that his imposture was soon discovered.[23] As nothing of the kind has come down to us, this assertion need not occupy us any longer. Whether true or false, it confirms our observations. Besides, we are quite sure that Moses de Leon wrote a Kabbalistic book in Hebrew which bears the title "The Name of God," or, simply, "The Name,"—Sefer ha-Shem (ספר השם).

The work is still in manuscript, and was seen by Moses Cordovero.[24] From the few passages that he quotes, it is evident that it was a very detailed and, frequently, a very subtle commentary on some of the most obscure points of the doctrine taught in the Zohar. The following is an example: "What are the different channels, i.e., the influences, the mutual relations that exist between all the Sefiroth, and which channels conduct the divine light, or primordial substance of things, from one Sefiroh to another?" Is it possible that the same man, who at first had written the Zohar in the Chaldeo-Syrian dialect,—be it to add interest by the difficulty of the language, or to make his thoughts inaccessible to the common people—would then consider it necessary to explain, to further develop in Hebrew, and place within reach of everybody, that which, at the cost of so much labor and trouble, he had hidden in a language almost forgotten even by the scholars themselves? Shall we say, that by such means he was still more certain of putting his readers on the wrong scent? Indeed, it is too much trickery, too much time, patience and effort spent for the miserable aim which he is

[23] Besides the two historians cited above, see Bartalocci, Magna Bibliotheca rabbinica, Vol. 4, p. 82.

[24] Pardes Rimonim (פרדס רמונים), fol. 110a, 1st col. שער השמות and שער הצנורות

accused of having placed for himself; the combinations are too learned and too complicated for a man who has been accused, both of the most stupid contradictions and the grossest anachronism.

Another reason which compels us to consider the Zohar as a work much earlier than the time of Moses de Leon, and foreign to Europe, is that we do not find therein the least vestige of the philosophy of Aristotle, and that we do not meet there, even once, the name of Christianity or of its founder.[25] It is known, though, that Christianity and Aristotle exercised absolute authority in Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. How, then, can we admit that a poor Spanish rabbi would have written in those fanatical days on religious subjects, in a language which could not betray him, without lodging some complaint against Christianity, which the Talmudists and later writers attacked so frequently, and without being subject, like Saadia, Maimonides and all those who followed the same path, to the inevitable influence of the peripatetic philosophy? Were we to read all the commentaries on the Book of Formation which we possess nowadays, were we to glance at all the philosophic and religious monuments of that epoch and of several centuries previous, we shall find everywhere the language of the "Organum" and the influence of the Stagirite.[26]

The absence of this character is a fact of incontestible importance. We ought not to look in the Sefiroth, of which we shall speak at greater length later on, for any veiled imitation of the "Categories"; for while the latter are but of logical value, the Sefiroth contain a metaphysical system of the highest order. If the Kabbalah does have a few features resembling a system of Greek philosophy, it is the Platonic. Yet, it is known that the

[25] Adde quod etiam contra christum in toto libro ne minimum quidem effutiatur, prout in recentioribus Judaeorum scriptis pierumque fieri solet.—(Kabb. denud., Praef., p. 7.)

[26] Synonim for Aristotle from the name of his birthplace Stagira, an ancient town in Macedonia.—Transl.

same can be claimed for every kind of mysticism, and, besides, Plato was little known outside his fatherland.

It is to be noted, finally, that the ideas and expressions which belong essentially, and which are exclusively consecrated to the Kabbalistic system expounded in the Zohar, are found also in writings of a much earlier date than the close of the thirteenth century. Thus, according to a writer whom we had already occasion to mention—Moses Botril, one of the commentators of the Sefer Yetzirah—the doctrine of emanation, as understood by the Kabbalists, was known to Saadia; for he (Moses Botril) cites from him the following words which, he says, are quoted literally from the work entitled "The Philosopher's Stone" which, it is true, is wrongly attributed to him: "Oh! thou man who drawest from the cisterns at the source,[27] guard thyself, when tempted, to reveal something of the belief of the emanation, which is a great mystery in the mouth of all the Kabbalists; and this mystery is hidden in the words of the Law: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord."[28]

Nevertheless, Saadia, in his work on "Beliefs and Opinions" attacks very forcibly the doctrine which is the basis of the system expounded in the Zohar, and it is impossible not to recognize it in the following passage: "I have sometimes met men who can not deny the existence of a Creator, but who think that

[27] I have translated literally the French text, but it does not render as yet the correct meaning of the Hebrew original, although the author had taken notice of Dr. Jellinek's remark to this phrase in the German translation. The correct and literal translation would be: "Oh, thou man who hath (possesses) the pools at the source . . . " While the author failed to translate the word בריכות (Brihoth) in the first edition, he omitted the translation of the word במקור (B'moker) in the second edition. בריכות (Brihoth) is the plural of בריכה (Briho), and means "pool" or "pond," and מקור (Moker) means "source." So also further on in the same sentence the author erronously translates וזהו סוד with "un autre mystère" (another mystery), while it should be rendered with "and this mystery . . . "—Transl.

[28] Here is the Hebrew text: אתה הוא האדם שיש לך הבריכות במקור. לא תאציל שום דבר אל האדם שיבוא ידך בנסיון מאמונת האצילות וזהו סוד נהול בפי כל המקובלים וזהו סוד כמום בתורה לא תנסו את יי Sefer Yetzirah, Mantua ed. fol. 31.

our mind can not conceive that a thing could be made from nothing. Now, as the Creator is the only Being who was in existence at first, they maintain that he drew everything from his own substance. Those men (may God keep you from their opinion!) have still less sense than all those of whom we have spoken."[29] The meaning we give to these words becomes still more evident when we read in the same chapter that the belief to which they allude is especially justified in the book of Job:[30] "Whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? . . . God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof." (Job, XXVII, 20 and 23.)

We find here, in fact, the names consecrated by the Zohar to the first three highest[31] Sefiroth which comprise all the others, and which are: Wisdom, Intelligence, and above them the Place, or the No-Thing (non-ens),[32] so called because it represents the Infinite, without attribute, without form, without any qualification, a state devoid of all reality, and therefore incomprehensible to us.[33] It is in this sense, say the Kabbalists, that all that is was drawn from No-Thing. The same author gives us also a psychological theory identical with that attributed to the school of Simeon ben Yohai;[34] and he tells us[35] that the dogma of pre-existence and of transmigration of the soul, which is distinctly taught in the

[29] ומצאתי אלה האנשים לא נתון להם לכחש בעושה ועי"ן לא קבל שכלם כפי מחשבותם היות דבר לא מדבר ובינון שאין דבר כי אם הבורא האמינו כי ברא הדברים מן עצמו ואלה ירחמך האל יותר ממלים מן הראשונים. Beliefs and Opinions, Part I, ch. 4.

[30] Here too I must contradict the author. These passages from Job are not expounded by the adherents of the doctrine of emanation, but by the Atomists, who are quoted by Saadia *before* the others.—Jellinek.

[31] See my previous remark.—Jellinek

[32] In the Hegelian terminology, the Absolute-Negative which, when conceived in its abstract, is identical with the No-Thing.—Jellinek

[33] Zohar, 2nd part, fol. 42 and 43. This first Sefiroh is sometimes called the Infinite, אין סוף (Ayn Sof), sometimes the Supreme Crown, כתר עליון (Kether Elyon), and sometimes the No-Thing, אין (Ay-yin), or the Place, מקום (Mokom).

[34] Beliefs and Opinions, Part VI, ch. 2.

[35] Ibid., ch. II.

Zohar,[36] was accepted in his days by several men who, nevertheless, called themselves Jews, and who, he adds, confirmed their extravagant opinion by the testimony of the Scriptures. Nor is this all. St. Jerome, in one of his letters,[37] speaks of ten mystical names, decem nomina mystica, by which the sacred books designated the Divinity. Now, these ten names which St. Jerome not only mentions, but of which he gives the full enumeration, are precisely the same which represent in the Zohar the ten Sefiroth or attributes of God.

The following is what we really read in the Book of Mystery (Sifra D'Zeniuta—ספרא דצניעותא), one of the most ancient fragments of the Zohar, and, at the same time, a resume of the highest principles of the Kabbalah: "When man wishes to address a prayer to the Lord, he may invoke either the holy names of God: Eh-yeh, Jehovah, Yah, El, Elohim, Yedoud, Elohei-Zebaot, Shaddai, Adonai, or the ten Sefiroth, namely: the Crown, Wisdom, Intelligence, Beauty, Grace, Justice, etc." All Kabbalists agree on the principle that the ten names of God and the ten Sefiroth are one and the same. For, they say, the spiritual part of the names of God is the very essence of the divine numbers.[38] In several of his writings, St. James speaks also of "certain Hebrew traditions on Genesis" which attribute to Paradise, or, as is always called in Hebrew, Gan Eden (גן עדן), a greater antiquity than that of the world.[39]

Let us note first, that among the Jews there were no other traditions of an analogous title known, than those contained in the mysterious science called by the Talmud the "History of Genesis."

[36] Part II, fol. 99, sec. Mishpatim.

[37] Hieron, ad Marcell., epist. 136, Vol. III, in his collected works.

[38] והשמות והספירות הכל דבר אחד כי רוחניות השמות הם ממש הספירות. Pardes Rimonim, fol. 10, I.

[39] Hieron., last volume of the Paris edition; see also the little work entitled "Questiones hebraeicae in Genesim." The traditions of Genesis are the Hebrew book of Little Genesis, or the Book of Jubilees which, no doubt, states the opinion of the Talmud that among things created before the world was also the Eden.

As to the belief of those traditions, it is in perfect harmony with the Zohar, where the Supreme Wisdom, the Divine word by which creation was begun and accomplished, the principle of all intelligence and of all life, is designated as the true Eden, otherwise called the Higher Eden (Eden E-lo-oh; עדן עלאה).[40]

But a fact more important than all the facts hitherto noted, is the intimate resemblance offered by the Kabbalah, in language as well as in thought, with the sects of Gnosticism, chiefly those brought forth in Syria, and with the religious code of the Nazarene which was discovered a few years ago, and translated from the Syrian into Latin. We shall postpone the proof of this fact to that part of our work where we shall investigate the relationship between the Kabbalistic system and the other religions or philosophical systems. Here we shall only point out that the doctrines of Simon the Magician, Elcsaite, Bardesanes and Valentine, are known to us only by fragments scattered through the works of a few of the Fathers of the Church, as in those of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Now, we can not suppose that those works were familiarly known to a rabbi of the thirteenth century, who, even in the very work with the authorship of which some wish to honor him, proves to be quite a stranger to any literature, and especially to that of Christianity. We are, therefore, forced to admit that Gnosticism borrowed a great deal, if not precisely from the Zohar as we know it today, at least from the traditions and from the theories contained therein.

We shall not separate the hypothesis which we just refuted from the one which presents to us the Kabbalah as an imitation of the mystic philosophy of the Arabs, and dates its birth some time during the reign of the caliphs, at the earliest, near the beginning of the eleventh century, at the epoch when the philosophy of the Mussulmans first showed traces of mysticism.[41] This

[40] Zohar, Idra Zutah. חכמה עלאה סתימאה כלגא דכל ישאר והאי אקרי עדן עלאה.

[41] Avicenna is generally considered the first expositor of mysticism among the Arabs. He was born in 992 and died in 1036.

opinion, long ago expressed as a mere conjecture in the Mémoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions (Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions),[42] has recently been rescusciated by Mr. Tholuck, who lent to it the support of his rich erudition. In a preliminary memoir in which he investigated the influence the Greek philosophy may have exercised over the philosophy of the Mahommedans,[43] the learned orientalist comes to the conclusion that the doctrine of the emanation was known to the Arabs simultaneously with Aristotle's system; for the latter reached them through the commentaries of Themistius, Theon of Smyrna, Aeneus of Gaza and Johann Philoponus, in short, with the ideas of Alexandria, expressed, surely, in a very incomplete form. This germ, once deposited in the breast of Islamism, developed rapidly into a vast system which, like the system of Plotinus, raised enthusiasm above reason, and, after making all beings spring from the divine substance, proposed to man, as the last step of perfection, a reunion with it through ecstasy and annihilation of self.

It is this, half Arabic, half Greek mysticism, that Tholuck would have us admit as the true and only source of the Kabbalah.[44] To that end he begins by attacking the authenticity of the Kabbalistic books, above all, that of the Zohar, which he regards as a compilation dating from the end of the thirteenth century, although he accords greater antiquity to the Kabbalah itself.[45] After having established this point beyond doubt, as he believes, he undertakes to demonstrate the close resemblance of the ideas contained in those books to those which form the substance of Arabian mysticism. Mr. Tholuck has advanced no argument against the authenticity of the Kabbalah which we have not already refuted; we shall stop only at the last and, undoubtedly,

[42] "Remarks on the antiquity and origin of the Kabbalah," by de la Nauze, vol. IX of the memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.

[43] Commentatio de vi quam graeca philosophia in theologiam tum Muhammedanorum, tum Judaeorum, exercuerit. Particula I, Hamb., 1835, 4to.

[44] Particula II, de Ortu Cabbalae, Hamb., 1837.

[45] Work cited, part II.

the most interesting part of his work. But here we are forced to anticipate somewhat and enter into the very foundation of the Kabbalistic system and into some consideration bearing upon its origin. We shall not complain if this will give us some diversion from the rather dry research which occupies us at this moment.

The first thought which presents itself to the mind is, that the similarity between the Hebrew and the Arabic ideas, even if perfectly established, nowise concludes that the first ones are necessarily counterfeits of the latter. Is it not possible that both departed, by different channels, though, from one common source, much older than the Mussulman philosophy, much older even than the Greek philosophy of Alexandria? And Mr. Tholuck must really admit that, as far as the Arabians are concerned, they knew the philosophy of Alexandria not at all from its real sources. The works of Plotinus, of Jamblicus and of Proclus never reached them, and none of these had ever been translated either into Arabic or Syrian; and of the works of Porphyrius, they possessed only a purely logical commentary: the introduction to the treaties of the Categories.[46]

On the other hand, is it probable that at the time of the Mussulman invasion no trace was left of the ideas of ancient Persia and of the philosophy of the Magi, so famous throughout antiquity under the name of the "Wisdom of the Orient;" and that they took no part in the intellectual movement which made the reign of the Abbassides so famous?[47] We know that Avicenna wrote a book on the "Oriental Wisdom." By what right, then, dare some affirm, upon the strength of a few rare citations of a more modern author, that this book was but a collection of Neoplatonic thoughts?[48]

When Mr. Tholuck directs our attention to the following

[46] Ib. supr., Part II, p. 7-11.

[47] Califs of Bagdad, members of the dynasty of the Abbassides, founded by Abbas, an uncle of Mohammet, and which lasted from 750 until 1258, when it was overthrown by the Mongolians.—Transl.

[48] Work cited, part I, p. 11.

passage of Al Gazzali:[a] "Know, that between the physical world and the one of which we just spoke, there exists the same relation as between our shadow and our body,"[49] how is it that he does not remember that the Zerdustians, members of one of the religious sects of ancient Persia, used those same terms and the same comparison to formulate the fundamental principle of their belief?[50]

As to the Jews, the whole world knows that from the time of their captivity until the time of their dispersion they continued their relations with what they called the land of Babylon. We will not dwell upon this point which is to be considered at length later. We will only say that the Zohar positively quotes the Oriental Wisdom: "That wisdom," it says, "known to the children of the East since the first days,"[51] and from which it cites an example in perfect accord with its own doctrines. It is evident that the reference here made has no bearing upon the Arabians whom the Hebrew writers invariably call "the children of Ishmael," or "the children of Arabia." A contemporaneous foreign philosophy, a recent product of the influence of Aristotle and his Alexandrian commentators, could not have been spoken of in such terms; the Zohar would not have dated it from the first ages of the world, nor would it have presented it as a legacy transmitted by Abraham to the children of his concubine, and by those to the nations of the Orient.[52]

But we need not make use even of this argument, for the truth is that Arabic mysticism and the principles taught in the Zohar strike us by their differences rather than by their similarities. While these bear exclusively upon a few general ideas, common to all species of mysticism, the others cast a glow mainly upon the most essential points of the metaphysics of both systems, and leave no room for doubt that they were of different origins. Thus, to bring out the most important of the differences, we draw attention to the following: The Arabian mystics, recognizing in God the unique substance of all things and the immanent cause of the universe, teach that He reveals or manifests Himself under three different aspects: 1st, in the aspect of unity or of absolute being, in the heart of which there rests as yet no distinction; 2nd, the aspect in which the objects of which the universe is composed begin to differentiate themselves in their essence and in intelligible forms, and to show themselves as present before the divine intelligence. The third divine manifestation is the universe itself, it is the true world, God become visible.[53]

The Kabbalistic system is far from showing such simplicity. True, it also presents to us the divine substance as the unique substance, the inexhaustible source from which all life, all light and all existence flow eternally; but instead of three manifestations, three general forms of the Infinite Being, it recognizes at once ten, the ten Sefiroth which divide themselves into three trinities, and then unite in one single trinity and one Supreme form. Considered as a whole, the Sefiroth represent only the first degree, the first sphere, of existence, that which is called the world of Emanation. Below these there are still to be found, each apart and offering an infinite variety—the world of Pure Spirit, or the world of Creation; the world of Spheres or of the intelligences directing them, called the world of Formation, and finally, that lowest degree called the world of Work, or the world of Action.[54]

The Arabian mystics recognize also a collective soul, from

[a] Al-Ghazzali (Ghazzali Abu Hamid Mohammed ibn Mohammed Al.—); Arabian theologian and moralist. 1058-1111.—Transl.

[49] "Jam vero mundi corporalis ad eum mundum de quo modo diximus, rationem talem, qualis umbrae ad corpus hominis, esse scito . . . " Ib. supr., p. 17.

[50] See Thom. Hyde, de Relig. vet. Pers., ch. XXII, p. 296, et seq.

[51] אמר ר' אבא יומא חד אערעינא בחד מחא מאינון דהוו מן בני קדם ואמרו לי מההיא חכמתא דהוו ידעין מיומי קדמאי. 1st part, sect. Vayero, fol. 99b.

[52] Ib. supr., fol. 100 a and b.

[53] Tholuck, work cited, part II, p. 28, 29.

[54] I trust to render welcome service to some reader by giving here the names of the four worlds in the original language. They are: Azilah (אצילה), Bre-ah (בריאה), Yetzirah (יצירה), Assiyah (עשיה).—Jellinek

which all the world animating souls emanate, a generating spirit whom they call the Father of Spirits, the Spirit of Mohammed, the source, model and substance of all the other spirits.[55]

An attempt has been made to find the pattern of the Adam Kadmon, the Celestial Man of the Kabbalists in this thought. But what the Kabbalists designate by that name is not only the principle of intelligence and of spiritual life, but it is also something which they regard as above and as below the spirit; it is the totality of the Sephiroth, or the world of Emanation in its entirety, from the Being in His most abstract and most intangible character, the degree called by them *the point* or the *non-being*, to the constituent forces of nature. Not a trace of the idea of metempsychosis, which holds so important a place in the Hebraic system, can be found in the beliefs of the Arabians. In vain do we also search in their works for those allegories met with in the Zohar; for that constant appeal to tradition, for those bold personifications which multiply by endless genealogies—genealogiis interminatis—as St. Paul says,[56] and for those gigantic and fantastic metaphors which are so well compatible with the spirit of the ancient Orient.

At the end of his work, Tholuck himself, whose frankness equals his science, retreats from the thought which first misled him, and concludes, as we also may conclude, that it is entirely impossible to consider the Kabbalah as derived from the mystic philosophy of the Arabians. However, let us give his own words, which hold authority as coming from the mouth of a man profoundly learned in the philosophy and in the language of the Mussulman people: "What can we conclude from the analogies? Very little, to my mind. For, whatever is alike in the two systems, will also

[55] Ib., p. 30.

[56] It is quite difficult not to refer to the Kabbalah the following passage of the first epistle of St. Paul to Timothy: "Neque intenderint fabulis at genealogiis interminatis, quae quaestiones praestant magis quam aedificationem Dei." (Neither give heed to fable and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.) Epist. ad Timoth. I, 4.

be found in the more ancient doctrines, in the books of the Sabeans and the Persians, and also among the neo-platonians. On the contrary, the extraordinary form under which those ideas appear in the Kabbalah is entirely strange to the Arabian mystics. Besides, in order to make sure that the Kabbalah really derived from the contact with the latter, it would be necessary, first of all, to find the Sefiroth among them. But not the least trace of the Sefiroth can be found among the Arabians; for they knew only one mode under which God revealed Himself. On this point, the Kabbalah comes much nearer to the doctrine of the Sabeans and to Gnosticism."[57] . . . The Arabic origin of the Kabbalah once proved inadmissible, the other theory, which makes of the Zohar a work of the thirteenth century, loses the last support. I shall speak of a certain air of probability of which this theory may still boast. As already evidenced by the parallel which we have established, the Zohar really contains a highly important and widely embracing system. A conception of such a nature is not formed in one day, especially in an age of ignorance and blind faith, and with a class of people groaning under the heavy burden of contempt and persecution. And so, as we can not find any of the antecedents or elements of the system of the Kabbalah in the Middle Ages, we must look for its origin in an earlier antiquity.

We have come now to those who say that Simeon ben Yohai really taught the metaphysical and religious doctrine (which forms the basis of the Zohar) to a small number of disciples and friends, among whom was his son; that these lessons, though transmitted at first by word of mouth as inviolable secrets, were edited little by little; and that these traditions and notes, to which commentaries of more recent time were necessarily added, accumulated and, therefore altered in time, finally reached Europe from

[57] "Jam vero ex analogiis istis quid censes colligi posse? Equidem non multa arbitror. Nam similii etiam et in aliis antiquoribus quidem disciplinis monstrari licet, in scriptis Sabaeis et Persicis, nec non apud neoplatonicus, Contra singularis illa forma quam ideae istae in Cabbala prae se ferunt, ab Arabicis mysticis abest," etc.

Palestine towards the close of the thirteenth century. We hope that this opinion, until now expressed with timidity and as a conjecture, will soon acquire the character and the rights of certainty.

This opinion, above all, is in perfect accord, as we already noted by the author of the chronicle "Chain of Tradition," with the history of all the other religious monuments of the Jewish people. The Mishnah, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds were also made up by joining the traditions of different ages and the lessons of different teachers, held together by a common principle. It agrees no less with a belief which, according to the historian just cited, must be quite old. "I have learned from tradition," says the author, "that this work was so voluminous, that when complete, it would have made up a camel's load."[58] Now, it can not be supposed that one man, had he even spent his whole life in writing on such matters, could have left such deferring proof of his productiveness. Finally, we read in the Supplements of the Zohar, (Tikun ha-Zohar— תקוני הזהר), which are written in the same language, and known just as long as the Zohar itself, that the latter will never be entirely published, or, to translate more faithfully, that it will be disclosed at the end of the days.[59]

If we now examine the book itself for the purpose of searching therein, without prejudice, for some light on its origin, we must soon notice, by the inequality of style[60] and lack of unity, not in the system, it is true, but in the exposition, method, application of general principles and, finally, in the consideration of details, that it is utterly impossible to ascribe it to one person. Not to multiply unimportant examples, and not to insist upon facts of language which no translation can preserve—just as it is impos-

58 וקבלתי על פה שזה החבור כל כך גדול חכמות שאם היה נמצא כלו אחד היה משאת גמל Shalsheleth ha-Kabbalah, fol. 25b.

59 וראיתי בסוף תקון ששי מהזהר שלא יתגלה כל חבור הזהר אלא בסוף ימים. Ib. supr.

60 In that work we find some passages written almost entirely in Aramean; and other passages where only the terminations of that language are used with words belonging entirely to rabbinical Hebrew.

sible to tear certain plants from their native soil without killing them—we shall limit ourselves to indicating rapidly the different principles which separate three fragments already mentioned from the rest of the work, namely, "The Book of Mystery," Sifra d'Zeniuto—ספרא דצניעותא, generally considered as the most ancient; "the Great Assembly," Idra Rabba—אדרא רבא, where Simeon ben Yohai is shown in the midst of all his friends; and, finally, "The Lesser Assembly," Idra Zutah—אדרא זוטא, where Simeon, on his death-bed after having been preceded to the grave by three of his disciples, gives his last instructions to the surviving.

These fragments which, because of the great distance between them, seem to us at first sight lost in this immense collection, form, nevertheless, a perfectly co-ordinated whole in the progress of events as well as in the ideas. We find there, now in allegorical form, now in metaphysical language, a consecutive and pompous description of the divine attributes, of their different manifestations, of the manner in which the world was formed, and of the relations between God and man. Never are there the heights of speculation left to descend to the external and practical life, to recommend the observation of the Law or the ceremonies of religion. Never can we find there a name, a fact, or even an expression which could make us doubt the authenticity of these pages in which originality of form enhances the value of the lofty thoughts.

It is always the teacher who speaks, and who uses no other method but that of authority to convince his listeners. He does not demonstrate, he does not explain, he does not repeat what others have taught him; but he affirms, and every word spoken by him is received as an article of faith. That character is especially noticeable in the "Book of Mystery," which is a substantial, though very obscure, summary of the entire work.[61] It may be

61 With reference to this book, which forms a complete treatise in five chapters, the Zohar gives the following graceful allegory: Let us

said of it also: decebat quasi auctoritatem habens (He taught as though he had authority).

The mode of procedure in the rest of the book is different. Instead of continued exposition of one order of idea, instead of a freely conceived plan persistently followed, in which the sacred texts invoked by the author as testimony follow his own thoughts, we find there the incoherent and disorderly course of a commentary. The exposition of the Holy Scriptures is, nevertheless, a mere pretext, as we have already remarked; but, it is no less true that, without entirely leaving the same circle of ideas, we are often led by the text from one subject to another. This gives rise to the thought, that the notes and the traditions preserved in the school of Simeon ben Yohai were, according to the spirit of the times, adjusted to the principal passages of the Pentateuch instead of being fused into a common system according to a logical order. We are strengthened in this opinion, when we take the trouble to assure ourselves that there is often not the least connection between the Biblical text and the part of the Zohar which serves it as a commentary.

The same incoherence, the same disorder prevail in the facts which, for the rest, are few in number and of uniform character. Here metaphysical theology no longer reigns in absolute

picture to ourselves a man who lives alone in the mountains and who knows nothing of the ways of the city. He sows wheat, and eats nothing but wheat in its natural state. One day that man goes into the city. They give him a loaf of bread of good quality, and he asks: "What is this good for?" They answer him: "It is bread to eat." He takes it and eats it with pleasure. Then he asks again: "What is it made of?" They answer that it is made of wheat. Some time after that they give him a cake kneaded with oil. He takes it, then he asks: "And this, what is it made of?" They answer him—"Of wheat." Somewhat later they set before him royal pastry kneaded with oil and honey. He asks the same question. Then he says: "I am master of all these things. I taste them in their root, since I nourish myself from the wheat of which they are made." Because of this thought he remains a stranger to the delights that men find in eating, and those delights are lost to him. It is the same with the one who halts at the general principles of science; for he is ignorant of all the delights that are drawn from those principles.

sovereignity; but, side by side with the boldest and the most elevated theories, all too often we find the most material details of the external cult, or those puerile questions to which the gemarists, similar therein to the causuists of all other beliefs, consecrated so many years and so many volumes. Here are assembled all the arguments which modern critics have brought forward in favor of the opinion common to them, and which we believe we have just proved to be false. Everything, finally, the form as well as the background in this last portion of the book, bear the traces of a more recent epoch; while the simplicity, the naive and credulous enthusiasm which reign in the first portion, often remind us of the time and language of the Bible.

Not to anticipate, we can cite but one example from there: the story of the death of Simeon ben Yohai as told by Rabbi Abba, the disciple whom he charged with the editing of his teachings. We shall attempt the translation. "The holy light (so Simeon was called by his disciples), the holy light had as yet not finished this last phrase, when his words stopped, and yet I continued to write. I had expected to write a long time yet, when I heard nothing more. I did not lift my head, for the light was too strong to look at. Suddenly I was violently agitated, and I heard a voice crying 'Long days, years of life and of happiness are now before thee.' Then I heard another voice which said: 'He asked for life of thee, and thou hast given him eternal years.' During the entire day the fire did not leave the house, and no one dared come near him because of the fire and the light which surrounded him. All that day I lay stretched upon the ground, and I gave free course to my lamentations. When the fire departed, I saw that the holy light, the saint of saints, had departed from this world. He was stretched out there, lying on his right side, with a smiling face. His son Eleazar arose, took his hands and covered them with kisses; but I would have gladly eaten the dust that his feet had touched. Then all his friends came to weep for him, but none of them could break the silence.

But at last their tears ran. Rabbi Eleazar, his son, fell upon the ground three times, unable to utter but these words: 'My father! My father!' Rabbi Hiah was first to rise on his feet, and said these words: 'Until today the holy light has not ceased to give us light and to watch over us; now we have nothing left to render him but his last honors.' Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba arose to put upon him his death garments; then all his friends met in tumult around him and from all the house exhaled perfume. He was stretched upon his bier, and none but Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba took part in that sad duty. When the bier was carried away, they saw him on high and a brilliant light shone before his face. Then they heard a voice which said: 'Come and assemble to the nuptial feast of Rabbi Simeon!' . . . Such was Rabbi Simeon, son of Yohai, for whom the Lord gave glory to Himself each day. In this world and in the world to come his part is lovely. Of him it was written: 'But thou go thy way toward the end, and thou shalt rest in peace, and arise again for thy lot at the end of the days'."[62]

We do not want to exaggerate the value which these words may add to the observations that precede them; but they give us at least an idea of the character attributed to Simeon by his disciples, and of the religious homage which his name inspired in the entire Kabbalistic school.

A more evident proof in favor of the opinion that we are defending will be doubtless found in the following text which we have nowhere seen cited, although it is to be found in every edition of the Zohar, in the oldest as well as in the most modern. After distinguishing two kinds of doctors, those of the Mishnah, מארי משנה, and those of the Kabbalah, מארי קבלה, it is added: "It is of these latter the prophet Daniel spoke when he said: And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. They are those who occupy themselves with this book which is called the Book of Brightness, which, like the ark of

[62] Zohar, part III, fol. 296b, Mantua edition.

Noah, takes in two of a city and seven of a kingdom; but sometimes there is but one of the same city, and two of the same family. It is in them that the words are fulfilled: Every male shall be cast into the river. Now, the river[63] is none other than the light of this book."[64] These words form a part of the Zohar, and yet it is evident that the Zohar was already in existence at the time when they were written; it was even known under the name it now bears. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that it developed gradually during the course of several centuries, and by the labor of several generations of Kabbalists.

Here is the substance—as the translation would require too much space—of another passage very precious in all respects, and by which we want to show especially that long after the death of Simeon ben Yohai his doctrine was preserved in Palestine where the master lived and taught, and that emissaries were sent from Babylon to collect some of his words. One day when Rabbi Jose and Rabbi Hezekiah were travelling together, the conversation turned upon the verse of Ecclesiastes: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one kind of spirit."[65] The two doctors could not comprehend that king Solomon, the wisest of men, had written those words which, if I may use the original expression, are an open door for those who have no faith.[66] While reasoning thus, they were accosted by a man who, fatigued by a long voyage and a hot sun, asked them for water to drink. They gave him wine,[67] and led him to a spring

[63] Notice should be taken here of the phonetic similarity of these two words: יאורה (Y'oroh)—into the river, and אורה (Oroh)—her light.—Jellinek

[64] אלין אינון דקא משתדלין בזוהר דא דאקרי ספר הזוהר דאיהו כתיבת נח דמחכנשין בה שנים מעיר ושבע ממלכותא ולזמנין אחד מעיר ושנים ממשפחה דבחון יתקים כל הבן היולוד היארה תשליכהו ודא אורה דספרא דא Part III, fol. 153b.

[65] Eccles., III, 19.

[66] Part III, fol. 57b. דהא פתחא לאינון דלאו בני מהימנת אשתכח ביה

[67] The text reads "L'eau" (the water) which is wrong. The first edition reads "vin" (wine) which is the correct translation of the original.—Transl.

of water. As soon as he felt refreshed, the stranger told them that he was one of their co-religionists, and that through the mediation of his son, who devoted his entire time to the study of the Law, he was initiated into this science. The question which occupied them before his arival was then submitted to him.

For the aim we wish to reach here it is useless to tell how the stranger solved the question; we only want to say that he was actively applauded and that they permitted him to part very reluctantly. Somewhat later, the two Kabbalists found means of ascertaining that this man was one of the Friends (this is how the adepts of the doctrine are called in the entire work); that, because of humility he, one of the most renowned of the doctors of his time, gave his son the honor of knowledge admired in him; and that he came to Palestine, accompanied by the Friends, to collect some of the sayings of Simeon ben Yohai and his disciples.[68]

All the other facts recorded in this book are of the same color and take place on the same stage. When we add, that frequent mention is made there of the religious beliefs of the Orient, like Sabeism[69] and even of Islamism; that to the contrary, nothing is found there which can have any reference to the Christian religion, we shall understand how the Zohar, in its present condition, could not have been introduced into our countries until some time near the end of the thirteenth century. Some of the doctrines contained therein, as Saadia has shown, were already known before; but it seems certain that before Moses de Leon, and before the departure of Nahmanides for the Holy Land, there existed no complete manuscript in Europe.

As to the ideas contained in the Zohar, Simeon ben Yohai himself tells us that he was not the first one to introduce them. He repeated to his disciples what the "Friends" taught in the

[68] חברא דבין חברייא הוא ושדרו ליה חבריא דבבל למנדע מלין מר' שמעון בן יוחאי ושאר חברייא Compare Zohar, Part III, fol. 157, 158.

[69] See, in particular, the first part of the Zohar, fol. 99, 100.

ancient books (ומה דאמרנו חברנא בספרי קדמאי). He particularly cites Jeba the Elder and Hamuna the Elder; and at the moment when he is about to reveal the greatest secrets of the Kabbalah, he expresses the hope that the shade of Hamunah will come to listen to him, followed by a procession of seventy of the Just.[70] I am far from pretending that either these personages, or these books of so remote an antiquity, really existed; I only wish to establish the fact that the authors of the Zohar never thought of representing Simeon ben Yohai as the inventor of the Kabbalistic science.

There is another fact which deserves on our part the most serious attention. More than a century after the Zohar was published in Spain, there were still some men who knew, and who transmitted most of the ideas which form the substance of the Zohar, by tradition only. Of such was Moses Botril, who, in 1409, as he himself tells us,[71] expresses himself on the Kabbalah and on the precautions to be taken in teaching it: "The Kabbalah is nothing other than a more pure and a more holy philosophy; only that the language of philosophy is not the same as that of the Kabbalah. . . .[72] It is so named because it proceeds, not by reasoning, but by tradition. And when the master has developed these matters for his disciple, that disciple must not have too much confidence in his wisdom; he is not permitted to speak of this science if not formally authorized first by the master. This right, namely, to speak about the *Merkabah,* will be accorded to him when he has given proof of his intelligence, and if the seed deposited in his breast, has borne fruit. On the contrary, it will be necessary to recommend silence to him, if he is found to be but an extrinsic person, and if he has, as yet, not reached the degree of those who distinguish themselves by their meditations." (See Botril's Commentary, fol. 87b.)

[70] Idra Rabba, ad init.

[71] See his commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah, edition Mantua, fol. 46.

[72] Ib. supr., fol. 31.

Apparently, the author of these lines did not seem to know the Zohar even by its name, as the name is not mentioned a single time in any part of his work. On the other hand, he cites a large number of very ancient writers, nearly all of whom belong to the Orient, like Rabbi Saadia, Rabbi Hai and Rabbi Aaron, head of the Babylonian academy. Sometimes he tells us also of the things he learned orally from the mouth of his master. So it can not be supposed that he drew his Kabbalistic knowledge from the manuscripts published by Nahmanides and Moses de Leon. Still, the Kabbalistic system, of which Simeon ben Yohai may be considered at least the most illustrious representative, was preserved and propagated, after as well as before the thirteenth century, by a multitude of traditions which some were pleased to write down, while others, more faithful to the method of their ancestors, guarded them religiously in their memory.

Only such traditions as took birth from the first century until near the end of the seventh century of the Christian era, are found in the Zohar. In fact, we can not date—I would not say the compilation, but the existence of these traditions, so very similar or closely connected to one another by the spirit animating them—from an epoch less remote; for at that time they already knew of the Merkabah which is nothing more, as we know, than that part of the Kabbalah to which the Zohar is specially consecrated; and Simeon ben Yohai himself tells us that he had predecessors. It is equally impossible for us to consider its birth in an age nearer to us; for we know of no fact which authorizes such a conclusion. The insurmountable difficulties encountered in the opinions differing from ours, thus become positive facts which confirm our opinions, and which should not be counted as the last among the proofs of which we have made use.

There still remain two more objections to be refuted. It has been asked how the principle which is the basis of our present-day Cosmography, or the system of Copernic, so clearly summed up in a passage we have translated above, could have been known

at the remote time from which we date the origin of the principal element of the Kabbalistic system. We answer that, in any case, admitting even that the Zohar is nothing but an imposture of the close of the thirteenth century, this passage was known before the birth of the Prussian astronomer. Again, the ideas contained in that passage were already spread among the ancients; for Aristotle attributes them to the school of Pythagoras. "Nearly all those," he says, "who assume to have studied the sky in its entirety, claim that the earth is at the centre; but the philosophers of the Italian school, otherwise called Pythagoreans, teach the contrary. In their opinion, the centre is occupied by fire, and the earth is only a star, the circular movement of which around that centre produces light and day."[73]

In their attack against philosophy, the first fathers of the church did not regard it as a duty to spare that opinion which is, in fact, irreconcilable with the cosmological system taught in Genesis. "It is," said Lactantius,[74] "an absurdity to believe that there are men who have the feet above their heads, and that there are countries where everything is upside down, where the trees and the plants grow from above down. . . We find the germ of this error among the philosophers who claimed that the earth is round."[75] St. Augustine expresses himself on the same subject in very similar terms. (De Civitat. Dei, lib. 16, ch. 9.)

Finally, even the most ancient authors of the Gemara had knowledge of the antipodes and of the spherical form of the earth; for we read in the Jerusalem Talmud (Aboda Zarah, ch. 3), that

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[73] Τῶν πλείστων ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου λεγόντων ὅσοι τὸν ὅλον οὐρανὸν πεπερασμένον εἶναι φάσιν. Ἐναντίως οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν, καλούμενοι δὲ πυθαγόρειοι λέγουσιν· ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ μέσου πῦρ εἶναι φάσι, τὴν δὲ γῆν ἕν τῶν ἄστρων οὖσαν, κύκλῳ φερομένην περὶ τὸ μέσου νύκτα τε καὶ ἡμέραν ποιεῖν.
De Coelo, Vol. II, ch. 13.

[74] A christian apologist of the fourth century.—Transl.

[75] Ineptum credere esse homines quorum vestigia sint superiora quam capita, aut ibi quae apud nos jacent inversa pendere; fruges et arbores deorsum versus crescere . . . Cujus eroris originem philosophis fuisse quod existimarint rotundum esse mundum.—Lib. 3, ch. 24.

while overrunning the earth to conquer it, Alexander the Great learned that it was round, and it is added that for this reason Alexander is represented with a globe in his hand. But even the fact which was thought to hold an objection against us, serves as proof; for during the entire duration of the Middle Ages, the true system of the world was barely known and the system of Ptolemy[76] reigned undivided.

It is also astonishing to find precisely in that part of the Zohar which is to be considered the most ancient, medical knowledge which seems to betray a familiarity with quite recent civilization. For example, the Idra Rabba, or the portion entitled "The Great Assembly," contains these remarkable lines which may be believed to have been taken from some modern treatise on anatomy: "In the interior of the skull, the brain is divided into three parts, each one of which occupies a distinct place. It is covered, besides, with a very thin veil, and then with another, tougher, veil. By means of thirty-two channels, these three parts of the brain ramify into the entire body along on either side. They thus embrace the body from all sides and spread out in all it parts."[77]

We can not fail to recognize in these words the three principal organs of which the brain and its principal coverings are composed, and the thirty-two pairs of nerves which proceed from them in a symmetrical order to give life and sensation to the entire animal economy. We must note, though, that, compelled to submit to a mass of religious precepts relating to their food, and obliged to observe the different states and different constitutions of the animals for fear of eating of that which the Law declares unclean, the Jews were early stimulated, by the most potent of forces, to

[76] An Alexandrian astronomer of the second century. He founded a system in which he expounded that the earth is round, that it occupies a fixed center, and that the heavens and all stars revolve around it once in twenty-four hours.—Transl.

[77] בגולגלתא ג' חלקין אשתכחו דשרייא מוחא בהו וקרומא דקיק חפייא עלייהו. וקרומא קשישא האי מוחא אתפשט ונפיק לתלתין ותרין שביליו... ואלין ג' מתפשטין בכל גופא לתאי סטרא ולתאי סטרא ובאינון אחיד כל פופא מכל סטרוי וכל גופא אתפשטן ואשתכחן. Part III, fol. 136a.

the study of anatomy and natural history. Thus, the Talmud counts generally the perforation of the covering of the brain, ניקב קרום של מוח, among the affections which may befall the animal, and so forbids the use of its flesh.

But there is a condition upon which opinions are divided. According to some, the prohibition is only valid when both coverings are perforated; according to others, it is sufficient when the perforation is found in the tough covering (dura mater) only.[78] Others, finally, are content with a dissolution of the continuity in the two interior cerebral coverings.[79] In the same treatise the spinal marrow, חוט השדרה,[80] is also spoken of, and the diseases peculiar to it. We wish to add, that since the middle of the second century there were professional physicians among the Hebrews; for it is told in the Talmud (Baba Meziah, 85b) that Judah the Pious, the editor of the Mishnah, suffered for thirteen years from an affection of the eye, and that his physician was Rabbi Samuel, one of the most zealous defenders of the Tradition, a man who, besides medicine, occupied himself with astronomy and mathematics. It was said of him that "the paths of the heavens were as well known to him as the streets of his native city."[81]

Here we close—and, no doubt, it is time to end—these purely bibliographical observations and, what we would call, the external history of the Kabbalah. The books we have had under examina-

[78] There is also the following in the original:[a] "Finally, some are content with a dissolution of the continuity of the two inferior brain coverings," which I omitted because the passage quoted by the author (Tract. Hulin, 45a) speaks only of the superior and inferior brain covering (dura mater and arachnoid—קרמא תתאה and קרמא עיליאה) and only of two differing opinions.—On the other hand, this does not impair the remarks of the author.—Jellinek.

[a] Not omitted in this translation.—Transl.

[79] Babylonian Talmud, tract. Hulin, ch. 3.

[80] Literally: Filum spinae dorsi (the thread of the spine of the back, which I note because in that passage it is spoken not only of the medulla spinalis (the marrow of the spine), but also of the membranous tube.—Jellinek.

[81] נהרין ליה שבעין דשמיא כשביליו דנהרדעי Berahoth, 58b.

tion are not, as enthusiasts have confidently affirmed, of either supernatural origin or of prehistoric antiquity. Neither are they, as a skeptical, superficial critic still assumes, the product of imposture conceived and consummated in sordid interest, the work of a hunger-driven charlatan devoid of all ideas and convictions, speculating in gross credulity. Once more to repeat: These two books are the product of several generations. Whatever may be the value of the doctrines contained in them, they will always be worthy of preservation as a monument to the long and patient effort of intellectual liberty in the heart of a people and a time when religious despotism made the most use of its power. But this is not the only claim to our interest. As we have already said, and as we shall soon be convinced, the system they contain is, in itself, by reason of its origin and of the influence it exercised, a very important factor in the history of human thought

PART TWO

Chapter I

THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THE KABBALISTIC BOOKS. ANALYSIS OF THE SEFER YETZIRAH

Despite the credulity of some and the skepticism of others, the two books which we have recognized as the true monuments of the Kabbalah will alone furnish us the necessary material for the exposition of this doctrine. Only on rare occasions, when compelled by absolute necessity of the obscurity of the text, shall we have the commentaries intervene. Yet, the innumerable fragments of which these books are composed, and which have been borrowed without selection and without insight from different epochs, are far from offering us a perfectly uniform character. Some develop only the mythological system, the most essential elements of which are to be found already in the Book of Job and in the Visions of Isaiah.

With a wealth of detail they acquaint us with the functions of angels as well as of demons, and refer to ideas which have been popular for too long a time to be associated with a science that was considered a terrible and inviolable secret at its very inception. Other fragments, undoubtedly the latest, show such servile proclivity and such narrow-minded pharisaism as to resemble the talmudic traditions which,[1] because of pride and

[1] This judgment on the Talmud by the author is, on the whole, unjust. The Talmud is a work compiled by many authors, and ought not to suffer the guilt of individual authors. Furthermore, the differing elements contained must be separated. Considered in the light of revelation, the Halakah is the necessary consequence of Mosaism; the

ignorance, were mixed with the views of a famous sect whose very name inspired idolatrous respect. Those fragments, finally, which make up the greatest number, teach us, as a whole, the true belief of the ancient Kabbalists. They make up the source which supplied all men who were more or less interested in the philosophy of their time, and who wished in modern times to pass as the disciples and propagators of the ancient Kabbalists. We must emphasize, though, that this distinction applies to the Zohar only. As to the Book of the Formation which we shall analyze first, although not very extensive, and although it does not always lift our mind to very high regions, offers us, nevertheless, a very homogenous composition of rare originality. The encircling clouds of the commentators' imagination will disperse of themselves, if, instead of searching therein, as they did, for the mysteries of an ineffable science, we see there an effort of awakening reason to perceive the plan of the universe and the bonds which connect to one common principle all the elements presented to us collectively.

Neither the Bible, nor any other religious monument has ever explained the world, and the phenomena of which it is the stage, except by leaning on the idea of God, and by setting itself up as the interpreter of the supreme will and thought. Thus we see in the book of Genesis light springing from nothingness at the word of Jehovah. Having drawn the heavens and the earth from chaos, Jehovah makes Himself the judge of His work and finds it worthy of His wisdom; to give light to the earth, He fastens the sun, the moon, and the stars to the firmament. When He takes of the dust and breathes into it the breath of life to let afterwards escape from his hands the last and most beautiful

Haggadah,[a] wherever appearing in the mystic-allegoric-fantastic form, is generally an offspring of orientalism.—Jellinek.

[a] By Halakah is meant the entire legal part of Jewish tradition. Haggadah stands for the non-legal part of Jewish tradition and falls under the heading of folk-lore, history, illustrations, etc., mostly for a moralizing effect.—Transl.

of His creatures, He has already declared His purpose to form Man in His image.

In the work, of which we attempt to render account, an opposite line of procedure is followed; and this difference is very significant when it springs up for the first time in the intellectual history of a people; it is by the spectacle of the world that one is raised to the idea of God; it is by the unity which reigns in the works of creation that the unity as well as the wisdom of the Creator is demonstrated. It is for this reason, as we have said before, that the entire book is, so to speak, but a monologue spoken by the mouth of the patriarch Abraham. It is supposed that the contemplations contained in the book are the same which led the father of the Hebrews from the worship of the stars to the worship of the eternal God. The character just noted is so evident, that it was commented on and very correctly defined by a writer of the twelfth century. "The Sefer Yetzirah," said Judah Halevi,[2] "teaches the unity and omnipotence of God by means of various examples, which are multiform on one side and uniform on the other. They are in harmony with regard to the One, their Director. . . ."[3]

So far everything is within bounds of reason; but instead of looking in the universe for the laws that govern it in order to read in these very laws the divine thought and wisdom, an endeavor is made to establish a gross analogy between the things and these signs of the thought, or the means by which the wisdom is making itself heard and maintained among men. Before we go any further, let us note that mysticism, at whatever time and under whatever form it manifests itself, attaches immesurable

[2] Spanish philosopher and Hebrew poet. c. 1085-1140.—Transl.

[3] Cuzari, IV, 25. Instead of the Hebrew text which few would understand, we cite the excellent Spanish translation from Jacob Abendana.[a] "Ensena la deydad y la unidad por cosas que son varias y multiplicadas por una parte, pero per otra parte, son unidas y concordantes, y su union proscede del uno que los ordena."

[a] I am taking here the English translation by Hartwig Hirschfeld. —Transl.

importance to everything that represents outwardly acts of intelligence, and it is not so long since that a well-known French writer wanted to prove that the art of writing was not a human invention, but was a present given to humanity by revelation.[4]

The question here is of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and of the first ten numbers which, while preserving their proper value, serve also to express the value of all the others. Brought together under a common point of view, these two kinds of signs are called the thirty-two *marvelous paths of Wisdom,* "with which" says the text—"the Eternal, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, the Living God, the King of the Universe, the God full of Mercy and Grace, the God Sublime, Who dwells in Eternity, Whose name is high and holy, founded His Name." (First chap., 1st Mishnah.)

To these thirty-two paths of Wisdom, which are not to be confounded with the subtle distinctions of an entirely different order admitted in their place by the modern Kabbalists,[5] we must add three other forms designated by three terms of very doubtful meaning, but which do resemble closely, by their grammatical genealogy, at least, the Greek terms which designate the subject, the object, and the very act of thought.[6] We believe it has been shown previously that these detached words are foreign to the text; nevertheless, we must note the fact that they have been understood quite differently, in a way repugnant neither to the general character of the book, nor to laws of etymology, by the Spanish writer[7] mentioned above.

He expresses himself on this subject as follows: "The first

[4] M. de Bonald, Recherches Philosoph., ch. III. See also de Maistre, Soirees de Saint-Petersbourg, tome II, p. 112ff.

[5] Introduction to Abraham ben Dior's commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah, Mantua edition.

[6] בספר וספר וספור Sefer Yetzirah, ch. I, first proposition (Mishnah).

[7] Judah ha Levi of Andalusia wrote his religious-philosophical book "Cuzari" in Arabic. This was translated into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon. From the Hebrew translation, Abendana completed in Spanish, Buxtorf, a Latin, and lately D. Cassel and Dr. Yolowicz

of these three terms (S'far),[8] is used to designate the numbers, which alone gives us a means of appreciating the disposition and the proportions necessary for each body in order to attain the purpose for which it was created; for the measure of length, of capacity, and of weight,[9] as well as of motion and of harmony, are all regulated by numbers. The second term (Sippur) signifies the word and the voice; for it is the Divine Word, the voice of the Living God, that produced the beings in all their different forms, whether internal or external. It was to that second term that allusion was made in the words: 'And God said let there be light, and there was light.' The third term (Sefer) signifies the writing. The writing of God is the work of the Creation; the Word of God is His writing; the thought of God is His word. Thus, the thought, the word, and the writing[10] are one

commenced a German translation, of which two numbers appeared until now.[a]—Jellinek

[a] Cassel's German translation is now complete. There is also an English translation from the original Arabic by Dr. Hartwig Hirschfeld.—Transl.

[8] The three words ספר (S'far), ספור (Sippur) and כפר (S'for) signify according to the author of the Cuzzari: Number, Language (Speech, Narration), Writing.—Jellinek

[9] Abendana's translation of the two words of the original text והמשקל והמשורה by "la cantidad y el peso" is incorrect. He uses the same words to translate also השיעור והמלום. To further develop this would lead us too far, as we would have to refer to the Arabic.—Jellinek

[10] It may interest the reader to know the direct translation of this passage, and I give here Dr. Hirschfeld's English translation: "As to S'far it means the calculation and weighing of the created bodies. The calculation which is required for the harmonious and advantageous arrangement of a body is based on a numerical figure; expansion, measure, weight, relation of movements, and musical harmony, all these are based on the number expressed by the word S'far. No building emerges from the hand of the architect unless its image has first existed in his soul. Sippur signifies, the language, or rather the divine language, the voice of the words of the living God. This produced the existence of the form which this language assumed in the words: 'Let there be light,' 'let there be a firmament.' The word was hardly spoken when the thing came into existence. This is also Sefer, by which writing is meant, the writing of God means His creatures, the speech of God is His writing, the will of God is His speech. In the nature of God, therefore, S'far, Sippur, and Sefer are a unity, whilst they are three in human reckoning."—Transl.

and the same in God, while in man they are three."[11] This interpretation has the merit that, while enobling, it also characterizes well this strange system that confounds the idea with the generally known symbols in order to make the idea somewhat visible in the total as well as in the different parts of the universe,

Under the name of Sefiroth, which play such a prominent part elsewhere but which appear here for the first time in the language of the Kabbalah, the ten numbers, or the abstract enumerations are first taken notice of.[12] They are represented as the most general and therefore as the most essential form of all that is, and if I may use the expression, as the categories of the universe. Thus, according to the ideas interpreted by us, we must always meet with the number ten when searching from any viewpoint for the first elements or the invariable principles of the world. "There are ten Sefiroth; ten, and not nine; ten, and not eleven: try to understand them in your wisdom and in your intelligence; exercise constantly on them your researches, your speculations, your knowledge, your thought and imagination, place all things upon their principle, and re-establish the Creator on

[11] Quizo dezir en la palabra Sephar la cantidad y el peso de los cuerpos criados, por quanto la cantidad en modo que sea el cuerpo ordenado y proporcionado, apto para lo que es criado, no es sino por numero; y la medida, y la cantidad, y el peso, y la proporzion de los movimientos, y la orden de la harmonia todo es por numero, que es lo que quiere dezir Sephar. Y Sipur quiere dezir la habla e la voz, pero es habla divina, voz de palabras de Dioz vivo, con laqual es la existencia de la cosa en su forma exterior y enterior, de laqual se habla, come dixo y dixo Dios sea luz, y fue luz. Y Sepher quiere dezir la escritura; y la escritura de Dios son sus criaciones; y la palabra conque el Sephar, y el Sipur, y el Sepher en Dios son una cosa, y en el hombre son tres.—Cuzary, Discors., vol. 4 S 25.

[12] עשר ספירות בלי מה (Esser S'firoth b'lee mah—Ten Sefiroth without what (anything). This expression in itself as well as the developments following it, compel this interpretation and permit no others, like those of "Sphere" which is based on the Greek (Sphaira), or the idea of brightness, conveyed by the word "Sapphir" (ספיר ג The book of Raziel, despite the extravagances contained in it, came near the truth on this point. כל החשבונות בלולות בלי מה לשון שתימה—Raziel, edit. Amsterdam, Vol. 8b.

his base."[13] In other words, the divine action as well as the existence of the world equally shape themselves to the eyes of the intelligence under this abstract form of ten numbers; each one of which represents some infinity, whether that of space, of time, or of some other attribute.

This, at least, is the meaning which we attach to the following proposition: "To the ten Sefiroth there is no end, either in the future or in the past, either in good or in evil, either in height or in depth, either in the East or in the West, either in the South or in the North."[14] It must be noted that the different aspects under which the infinite is considered here, are few—no more, no less; this passage, therefore, teaches us not only the general character of all the Sefiroth, but we see herein to what elements and principles they correspond. And as these different viewpoints, although opposite—two to two, nevertheless belong to one idea, to one infinite, it is added:[15] "The ten Sefiroth are like the ten fingers,[16] five against five, but amidst them is the link of unity." (ch. I, Prop. 3.) The last words give us the explanation as well as the proof of all the preceding.

Without exactly deviating from the relations presented by the external things, this conception of the Sefiroth bears, never-

[13] Sefer Yetzirah. Ch. I, proposition 9. (Should be prop. 4.—Transl.)

[14] Ch. I, proposition 4. (Should be prop. 5.—Transl.)

[15] Unless the author pleases to disregard the order in which the propositions of the Sefer Yetzirah are given in the original text, he can not very well say here "it is added (on ajoute)"; for this, the third proposition, really precedes the previous one, fifth proposition (wrongly given as the 4th).—Transl.

[16] The author's own conception of this passage may have induced him to insert the words "de la main (of the hand)," but they are not to be found in the original text, and are very properly omitted by Dr. Jellinek in his German translation. I can not refrain from quoting the exquisite remark by Dr. Philipp Bloch (Geschichte der Entwickelung der Kabbala und der juedischen Religionsphilosophie—History of the development of the Kabbalah and of the Jewish Religious Philosophy) to this unimpaired translation of this passage. He says: "As it is not spoken here specifically of the fingers of the hand, it refers as well to the fingers (toes) of the feet. Thus is symbolized here the diverging polarity which always converges again in an indifferent point."—Transl.

theless, an eminently abstract and metaphysical character. Were we to subject it to a strict analysis, we would find therein, subordinated to the infinite and to absolute unity, the ideas of time, space, and of a certain unchangeable order without which there is neither good nor evil even in the sphere of the senses. But here is a somewhat different enumeration, which in appearance, at least, assigns a greater share to the material elements. We will confine ourselves to the translation:

"The first of the Sefiroth, One, is the spirit of the living God, blessed be His name, blessed be the name of the One who lives in Eternity! The Spirit, the Voice, and the Word, that is the Holy Ghost.

"Two is the breath proceeding from the spirit,[17] in it are graven and carved the twenty-two letters which form, nevertheless, but one single breath.[18]

"Three is water, which proceeds from the breath or from the air. Into the water He dug darkness and void, mud and clay, and graved it like a (garden) bed,[19] carved it like a wall and covered it in the shape of a roof."

[17] רוח מרוח. The same word (רוח—Ru-ah) has the meaning of air, and spirit; therefore, we might have just as well said "the spirit which proceeds from the spirit." But then it would have to be admitted that the spirit engendered water, an inference which is less probable than the version we have chosen. Moreover, the first number does not present God Himself, but the spirit of God; consequently the second number can not be anything but the expression of that spirit, the breath into which the twenty-two letters in some way finally resolved themselves.

[18] The translation of this proposition is not complete. I shall attempt its translation according to Dr. Bloch: "Two is the breath which comes from the spirit. In it He graved and formed 22 letters and the principle of which are three mothers (basic elements), seven doubles and twelve simples." In another version is added: "In them (are) the four heavenly regions (cardinal points), East and West, North and South, and a breath (wind) is in every one of these."—Transl.

[19] The author disregarded entirely the original text in this phrase, and Dr. Jellinek, in his German translation, tried to save the situation by correcting at least one word of it. The original Hebrew text has: חקקן כמין ערונה which Dr. Bloch very correctly renders with "He grave them in the shape of a (terrace-like, Gesenius) garden bed." The author's rendition of this phrase with "etendue ensuite en forme de tapis—spread out, then, in the shape of a carpet," is explainable only

"Four is fire which comes from the water, and with which He made the throne of His glory, the celestial wheels (Ophanim), the Seraphim and the angelic servitors. With the three together He built His habitation, as it was written: "He made the winds His messengers, and His ministers a flaming fire."[20]

The six following numbers represent the different extremities of the world, that is to say, the four cardinal points (East, West, North and South), as well as height and depth. Those extremities have for emblems the different combinations which may be formed with the first three letters of the word Jehovah.[21, 22]

Thus, apart from the different points distinguishable in space, which in themselves hold nothing real, all the elements of which the world is composed evolved one from the other, becoming more and more material in measure as they receded from the Holy Spirit, their common origin. Is not this what is called the doctrine of emanation? Is not this the doctrine which denies the popular belief that the world was evolved from nothing? The following words may help perhaps to free us from uncertainty: "The end of the ten Sefiroth is tied to their beginning as the flame to the fire-brand, for the Lord is One and there is no second to Him; and what will you count before the One?" (Prop.7.)

To impress upon us that we are dealing here with a great mystery which enjoins discretion even with ourselves, the following words are immediately added: "Close your mouth that you speak

by assuming that he misunderstood the etymology of the word ערונה —Arugoh, which he probably took as a derivation of "ארג—orag," to weave, written with an א "Aleph;" while the real root of the word is "ערג—orag," to ascend, to mount, to rise, and written with an ע—Ain. The Hebrew word for carpet is "מר—Mahd" or "שמיכה —Smehah."—Transl.

[20] This proposition is also not rendered strictly according to the original Hebrew text, and I shall again refer to Dr. Bloch's translation as the truer one. It should read: Three is water (which comes) from the fire. In it He graved and formed the throne of Glory, the Seraphim, Ophanim, Holy Beasts and Ministering Angels, and of these three He formed His dwelling, for it is written: Who maketh angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire. (Psalms, CIV).—Transl.

[21] Ch. I, from prop. 9 to prop. 12.

[22] I H W H (יהוה)—Transl.

not, and your heart that you do not ponder; and if your heart be too hasty, bring it back to its place, for therefore it is said: hasten and return,[23] and it is upon this that a covenant was made." (Ch. I, prop. 8.)[24] I suppose that the last words were meant to allude to some oath used by the Kabbalists to conceal their principles from the masses. The singular comparison contained in the first of the two passages is frequently repeated in the Zohar; we shall find it there enlarged, developed and applied to the souls as well as to God. Let us add here, that at all times and in all spheres of existence, in the consciousness as well as in the external nature, the formation of things by way of emanation has been represented by the radiation of flames or of light.

Another theory, one that made a brilliant career in the world, and which presents itself here with a remarkable character, blends with this theory, provided, we do not make the distinction more apparent than real. It is the theory of the "Word," of the Word of God identified with His spirit and considered not only as the absolute form, but as the generating element, and as the very substance of the universe. In fact it is not the question here of substituting everywhere (for the sake of avoiding anthropomorphism) the divine thought and inspiration for God Himself whenever He intervenes as a human person in the biblical stories, as is done in the Chaldaic translation of Onkelos. The book now under consideration expressly states, in a concise, yet clear language, that the Holy Spirit, or the Divine Spirit, forms with the Voice and the Word one and the same thing; that it successively puts forth from its bosom all the elements of physical nature. Finally, it is not only what is called in the language of Aristotle "the material principle of things," but it is the Word become World. Moreover, we must bear in mind that this part of the Kabbalah deals with the world only, and not with man or humanity.

[23] Referring to Ezekiel I, 14: "And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."—Transl.

[24] I have again deviated from the translation of the author and of Dr. Jellinek in order to adhere to the original Hebrew text.—Transl.

All these considerations, which cover the first ten numbers, hold a very distinct place in the Book of Formation. It is easily seen that they apply to the universe in general, and that they consider more the substance than the form. In the consideration now before us, the different parts of the universe are naturally compared, and the same effort is made to bring them under a common law, as was done before to resolve them into a common principle; and in the end more attention is paid to the form than to the substance. For their foundation they have the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But we must not forget the extraordinary role attributed already in the first part of the work to these outward signs of thought. Considered entirely in relation to the sounds they represent, the twenty-two letters stand, so to speak, on the boundary line between the intellectual and the physical world; for if, on the other hand, they are resolved into one single material element, the breath or air, they are, on the other hand, indispensable signs to all languages, and consequently the only possible or unalterable form of the mind.

Neither the system as a whole, nor the literal meaning, permits us to give a different interpretation to the words quoted above. "The number two (or the second principle of the universe) is the air which comes from the spirit. It is the breath in which are graven and carved the twenty-two letters which, all united, form but one single breath." Thus, by an odd combination which does not lack a certain grandeur, and which is explainable and comprehensible at least, the simplest articulations of the human voice, the signs of the alphabet, hold here a role entirely similar to the one held by the ideas in Plato's philosophy. It is by their presence, by the impression which they leave in things, that we recognize a supreme intelligence in the universe in all its parts; and it is finally through them that the Holy Spirit reveals itself in nature. This is the meaning of the following proposition: "With the twenty-two letters, by giving them a form and a figure, and by mingling and combining them in

different ways, God made the soul of all that is formed, and of all that shall be formed.[25] And on these same letters the Holy One, blessed be He, founded His sublime and holy name,"[26]

Those letters are divided into different classes called the "three mothers," the "seven doubles," and the "twelve simples."[27] It is entirely useless for the aim we have in view to give the reason for those strange names.[28] Moreover, the function of the letters is wholly encroached by the division that we have noted, and by the numbers resulting from the division, or, to speak more clearly, an attempt is made to find, per fas et nefas (whether right or wrong), the numbers three, seven and twelve in the three regions of nature; 1, in the general composition of the world; 2, in the division of the year, or in the distribution of time of which the year is the principal unit; and 3, in the structure of man. Although not stated explicitly, we find here the idea of the macrocosm and of the microcosm, or the belief that man is only the image, and, so to speak, the summary of the universe.

In the general composition of the world the mothers, that is to say, the number three, represent the elements, which are: water, air and fire. Fire is the substance of the heavens; by condensation

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25 עשרים ושתים אותיות חקקו הצבן שקלן וחמירן צרפן יצר בהן נפש כל היצור ונפש כל העתיד לצור. Ch. II prop. 2. [a]

[a] Not fully translated. The literal translation is as follows: (With the) twenty-two letters (which) He carved them, graved them, weighed them and changed them around, He formed in them the soul of all that has been formed and the soul of all that will be formed.—Transl.

26 אלו כ"ב אותיות שבהם יסד הקב"ה שמו מרום וקדוש.

27 אלו כ"ב אותיות יסוד שלוש אמות ושבע כפולות ושתים עשרה פשטות. Ch. I, prop. 8.

28 The simples represent one sound only; the doubles express two sounds, one mild, the other hard. To the first class belong the following letters: הוז חטי לן סעצק; the last class is represented by these two words: בגד כפרת. Finally, in the word אמש are gathered the three mothers, one of which the ש, because it is a sibilant letter, represents fire; the second מ, which is silent, represents water; and, finally, the first letter א, which is slightly aspirate, is the symbol of air.*

* It should also be mentioned that א (Aleph) is the first letter in the word אויר (Ahveer)—air, מ (Mem) is the first letter of the word מים (Ma-yim)—water, and ש (Shin) is the last letter of the word אש (Aysh)—fire. Compare ch. III, prop. 3.—Jellinek

water becomes the substance of the earth; finally, between these two antagonistic principles is air, which separates and reconciles them by dominating them. (Ch. III, prop. 4, b.) The same sign recalls the principal seasons in the division of the year: summer, which responds to fire; winter, which in the East is generally marked by rains or by the predominance of water; and the temperate season which is formed by the union of spring and autumn. The same trinity, finally, is seen in the formation of the human body, in the head, the heart or breast, and the belly or stomach. These are, if I am not mistaken, the functions of the different organs which a modern physician has called: "the tripod of life." (Ch. III, prop. 7.)

The number three seems here, as in all other mystical combinations, to be such an indispensable form that it is taken also as the symbol of the moral man in whom is discernible, according to the original expression, "the scale of merit, the scale of culpability, and the tongue of the law decides between the two."[29]

By the seven doubles are represented the contraries, or at least such things of this world which may serve two opposite ends. There are seven planets in the universe, whose influence is now good, now bad; there are seven days and seven nights in the week; there are seven gates in the human body; the eyes, the ears, the nostrils and the mouth; and, finally, the number seven is also the number of the happy or unhappy events which may effect a man. But this classification is too arbitrary to deserve a place in this analysis. (Ch. IV, prop. 1, 2, 3.)

The twelve simples, of which we yet have to speak, respond to the twelve signs of the zodiac, to the twelve months of the year, to the principal parts of the human body, and to the most important attributes of our nature. These last, which alone have some right to our interest, are sight, hearing, smell, speech, nutrition, generation, action or touch, locomotion, anger, laughter, thought and sleep. (Ch. V, prop. 1, 2.) As will be seen here,

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29 אמש יסודן כף חובה וכף זכות ולשון חוק מכריע בנתיים. Ch. III, prop. 1.

it is the beginning of the spirit of investigation, and although we have often been surprised by its methods or by its results, yet, this in itself is proof of its originality.

Thus, the material form of intelligence, represented by the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, is also the form of all that is; for, beyond man, the universe and time, nothing but the infinite can be conceived. These three things are also called "the faithful witnesses of truth." (Ch. VI, prop. 2.) Despite the varieties observed therein, each one constitutes a system which has its centre and, in some way, its hierarchy; "for," says the text, "Unity prevails over the three, the three over the seven, and the seven over the twelve, but each part of the system is inseparable from all the other parts."[30] The celestial dragon is the centre of the universe, the heart is the centre of man; finally, the revolutions of the zodiac form the basis of the years. The first, it is said, is compared to a king upon his throne; the second to a king among his subjects; the third to a king in war.[31]

We believe that this comparison was meant to indicate the perfect regularity reigning in the universe, and the contrasts which exist in man without destroying his unity. In fact, it is added that the twelve principal organs which form the body of man "are aligned one against another, as in order of battle. Three of them serve love, three produce hatred, three give life, and three summon death.[32] Thus evil confronts good, and from evil comes forth evil only." (Prop. 9.) But immediately the remark is made that one can not be understood without the other.

Finally, above these three systems, above man, above the universe, and above time; above letters as well as above the numbers of the Sefiroth, "is the Lord, the true king Who reigns

30 אחד על גבי שלשה, שלשה על גבי שבעה, שבעה על גבי שנים עשר. Ch. VI. prop. 13.

31 תלי בעולם כמלך על כסאו, גלגל בשנה כמלך במדינה. לב בנפש כמלך במלחמה.—Ch. VI, prop. 7.

32 שנים עשר עומדים במלחמה שלשת אוהבים שלשה שונאים שלשה מחיים שלשה ממיתים. Ch. VI, prop. 11.

over all things from the place of His holiness forever and ever."[33] Following these words, which form the true conclusion of the book, comes the dramatic final event, of which we have spoken before—the conversion of Abraham, the idol worshipper, to the religion of the true God.

The final word of this system is the substitution of absolute unity for every form of dualism; the dualism of Pagan philosophy which would find in matter an eternal substance whose laws are not always in accord with the Divine Will, as well as the dualism of the Bible, which by the idea of creation sees indeed in the Divine Will, and consequently in the Infinite Being, the only cause, the only real origin of the world, but which, at the same time, regards these two things, the universe and God, as two substances, absolutely distinct and separate. In the Sefer Yetzirah, God is really considered as the Infinite Being and therefore indefinable; God, in the full extent of His power and of His existence, is above, but not outside (extra) of the letters and numbers, that is to say, not outside of the principles and of the laws which we distinguish in this world.

Each element has its source in a superior element, and all elements have their common origin in the Word, or in the Holy Spirit. It is in the Word also that we find the invariable signs of thought which repeat themselves in some way in all the spheres of existence, and through which all that *is* becomes an expression of the same design. And that Word itself, the first of the numbers, the most sublime of all the things we can count and define—what else is it but the most sublime and the most absolute of all the manifestations of God, that is, the supreme thought of intelligence? Thus, in the highest sense, God is both the matter and the form of the universe. And not only is He *that* matter and *that* form, but nothing exists, or can exist, outside (extra) of Him. His substance is at the bottom of every thing, and there-

33 אל מלך נאמן מושל בכולם ממעון קדשו ועד ערי עד. After having been applied in its entirety to the ten Sefiroth, this passage appears only in part in the place indicated. The four last words are cut short.

fore all bear His imprint, and all are symbols of His supreme intelligence.

This bold deduction, apparently so audacious and strange to the underlying principles, is the basis of the doctrine set forth in the Zohar. But the way followed there is entirely different from the one outlined here before our eyes. Instead of rising gradually, by the comparison of the particular forms and the subordinate principles of this world, to the supreme principle, to the universal form, and, finally to the absolute unity, it is this result, the absolute unity, which is admitted first of all. It is supposed, it is invoked on all occasions as an uncontested axiom; it is unrolled, as it were, to its full extent, while at the same time, it is shown in a more brilliant and more mysterious light. True, the bond which might exist between all the deductions obtained in that way is broken by the external form of the work, but the synthetic character which permeates it is, nevertheless, pronounced and visible.

We may say, then, that the Book of Brightness begins just where the Book of Formation ends. The conclusion of one serves as the premises of the other. A second difference, deserving more worthy notice, separates these two monuments, and finds its explanation in a general law of the human mind. We shall see, namely, internal forms, invariable conceptions of thought, substituted for the letters and the numbers, in a word, *ideas,* in the widest and in the noblest meaning of the word. The divine word (λόγος), instead of manifesting itself exclusively in nature, will appear to us above all in man and in intelligence; it will be called the "archtype" or "celestial" man: Adam Kadmon, אדם עלאי, אדם קדמון.[34]

In certain fragments whose high antiquity can not be contested, we see, without prejudice to Absolute Unity, thought itself taken for universal substance, and the regular development of that

[34] אדם עלאי (Adam Eelo-o), literally: High man, therefore: Ideal man, Celestial man. אדם קדמון (Adam Kadmon), literally: Previous man, therefore: Archetype man.—Transl.

power set in place of the somewhat gross theory of emanation. Far be it from us to indulge the insensate thought of finding among the ancient Hebrews the philosophical doctrine which reigns almost exclusively in Germany today; but we do not fear to maintain, and we hope to demonstrate, that the principle of that doctrine and even the expressions appropriated exclusively by the school of Hegel, are found in the forgotten traditions we are now endeavoring to bring to light.

This transformation that we point out in the Kabbalah, this passing from symbol to ideas, is reproduced in all great philosophical and religious systems, and in all great conceptions of the human intellect. Do we not see so in rationalism the different forms of the language, in which Aristotle's logic was almost entirely composed, turn, in Kant's logic, to the constitutive and invariable forms of thought? In idealism, did not Pythagoras and the system of numbers precede the sublime theory of Plato? And in another sphere, were not all men represented as issuing from the same blood? Was not their fraternity found in the flesh before it was found in the identity of their duties and their rights, or in the unity of their nature and their task? This is not the place to dwell any longer upon a general fact; but we hope to have made clear at least the relations existing between the Sefer Yetzirah and the more extensive and more important work,[35] the substance of which we shall soon give.

[35] The Amsterdam edition of the Zohar consists of three great volumes in octavo, each one of which contains nearly six hundred pages in rabbinical characters, very finely and very closely printed.

Chapter II

ANALYSIS OF THE ZOHAR
ALLEGORICAL METHOD OF THE KABBALISTS

As the authors who contributed to the formation of the Zohar give us their ideas in the humblest and the least logical shape, in the form of a simple commentary on the Five Books of Moses, we may, without failing in respect or fidelity to them, pursue the plan that seems most suitable to us. And, first of all, it is important to know how they understand the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, how they succeeded in using them as a support at the moment when they deviate most from them. For, as we have said before, such is their method of interpretation; and, generally speaking, there is no other basis to symbolic mysticism.

Let us give here their own judgment on this point: Woe to the man who sees nothing but simple stories and ordinary words in the law! For were this so, we could even nowadays frame a law which would deserve higher praise. Were it our desire to find nothing but simple words, we should have nothing to do but to turn to the legislators of the earth, among whom more grandeur is frequently found.[1] It would be sufficient to imitate them, and to make a law according to their words and to their example. But it is not so; every word of the law holds an exalted meaning and a sublime mystery.

"The recitals of the law are the vestment of the law. Woe

[1] אי לאהוא מלי דעלמא אפילו אינון קפסירי דעלמא אית בינייהו מילין עלאין יתיר אי הכי ניזיל אבתרייהו ונעביד מנייהו אורייתא. (As the text was too long to be quoted in its entirety, a selection has been made.)

to him who takes that vestment for the law itself! David had this in mind when he said: Open Thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Psalms 119, 18), i.e., what is hidden under the cloak of this law."

"There are foolish people who, when they see a man covered with fine clothes, look no further than the garment, and yet it is the body that lends value to the clothes;[2] and still more precious is the soul. The law also has its body. There are commandments that may be called the body of the law, and the ordinary recitals which are mingled with them are the clothes which cover the body. The simple-minded take heed of nothing but the vestments or the recitals of the law; they know nothing else, and do not see what is hidden under this garment. The well-informed think not of the vestment, but of the body that the vestment covers. Finally, the wise, servants of the Supreme King, they who dwell upon the heights of Sinai, think of the soul only, which is the foundation of all the rest, and which is the law itself, and in time to come they will be prepared to contemplate the spirit of that spirit which breathes in the law."[3]

Thus, by the sincere or insincere supposition of a mysterious meaning, unknown to the profane, the Kabbalists first placed themselves above the historic facts and the positive precepts which compose the Scriptures. This was their only means of assuring

[2] In this edition the author deviates slightly from the original text and follows the interpretation of Dr. Jellinek. In the first edition the translation reads: "There are foolish people, who, when they see a man covered with fine clothes look no further than the garment, *and* take the garment for the body." Dr. Jellinek makes the following interesting remark to this passage: "The author translated here faithfully the text, just as I rendered literally the French text. Yet, I believe that the text of the Zohar is corrupted here; for the example given is inconsistent in itself, as every thoughtful reader will easily see. I would therefore change the חשיבו דההוא לבושא of the text, where חשיבו is used as a verb, into the noun חשיבות, and have the sentence refer not to the foolish people, but make it exclamatory of the Zohar itself. This conjecture is supported by the following חשיבות דגופא נשמתא."—Transl.

[3] Zohar, part III, fol. 152a, sec. בהעלותך (B'haleth-ho).

themselves of full liberty without openly breaking with religious authority; and, possibly, they felt the need of doing something to assuage their consciences. We find the same spirit in a form still more remarkable in the following lines: "If the law consisted of nothing but ordinary words and recitals, like the words of Esau, of Hagar, of Laban, of Balaam's ass, and of Balaam himself, why should it have been called the law of truth, the perfect law, the faithful testimony of God? Why should the wise man[4] deem it more precious than gold and pearls? But it is not so. Every word hides a very high meaning; every recital contains more than events it seems to contain. And that higher and more holy law is the true law."[5]

It is of some interest to find similar views and similar expressions in the works of a father of the church. "Were we obliged," says Origen, "to hold to the letter of the law, and to understand what is written in the law as the Jews and the people understand it, I should blush to tell aloud that it is God who gave us such laws; I should find, then, more grandeur, and more reason in the laws of man, as for instance, in the laws of Athens, of Rome, or of Lacedemonia. . . ."[6]

"What sensible man, pray," says the same author, "could be made to believe that the first, the second and the third days of the creation, where morning and evening is still mentioned, could exist without sun, moon and stars, when on the first day there was not even a sky? Where will we find a mind so limited as to believe that God, like a ploughman, engaged in planting trees in

[4] Refers to David and to Psalms, XIX, 11. "They are those which are to be desired more than gold, and much fine gold . . . " The author mistook the word פז (Poz);—fine gold, for פנינים (P'ninim)—pearls.—Transl.

[5] אלא ודאי אוריתא קדישא עלאה איהי אוריתא דקשוט תורת ה' תמימה. —Part III, Fol. 149b.

[6] Si absideamus litterae et secundum hoc vel quod Judaeis, vel quod vulgo videtur, accipiamus quae in lege scripta sunt, erubesco dicere et confiteri quia tales leges dederit Deus; videbunter enim magis elegantes et rationabiles hominum leges, verbi gratia, vel Romanorum, vel Atheniensium, vel Lacedaemoniorum."—Homil. 7, in Levit.

the garden of Eden, situated toward the East; that one of the trees was the tree of life, and that another tree could give the knowledge of good and evil? I think that no one could hesitate to regard these things as parables under which are hidden mysteries."[7]

Finally, he also admits the differentiation between an historical, a legislative or moral meaning, and a mystical meaning; but instead of using the clothes that cover us as a simile, he compares the first to the body, the second to the soul, and the last to the spirit.[8] In order to establish, at least, certain apparent relations between the sacred word and these arbitrary interpretations, the ancient Kabbalists sometimes resorted to artificial means very rarely met with in the Zohar, but which have taken up considerable space and authority with the modern Kabbalists.[9] As these means are, by their very nature, unworthy of all interest, as they never serve as basis to any important idea, and as they have been discussed by a great many, we pass them in silence that we may more quickly come to the essential subject of our researches, to the doctrine which is the fruit of that feigned independence, and which forms the unity and basis of these pretended commentaries.

[7] Cuinam quaeso sensum habenti convenienter videbitur dictum quod dies prima, et secunda et tertia, in quibus et vespera nominatur et mane, fuerint sine sole, et sine luna, et sine stellis: prima autem dies sine coelo? Quis vero ita idiotes invenitur ut putet, velut hominem quemdam agricolam, Deum plantasse arbores in Paradiso, in Eden, contra orientem, et arborem vitae plantasse in eo, ita ut manducans quis ex ea arbore vitam percipiat? et rursus ex alia manducans arbore, boni et mali scientiam capiat? etc., περὶ ἀρχῶν, liv. IV, ch. II, Huet, Origeniana, p. 167.

[8] "Triplicem in Scripturis divinis intelligentiae modum, historicum, moralem, et mysticum: unde et corpus inesse et animam ac spiritum intelleximus."—Hamil. 5, in Levit.

[9] Those names are three in number: one, גימטריא (Gematria), consists in setting one word in place of another word which has the same numerical value; the other, נוטריקין (Notarikon), makes each letter of a word the initial of another word. Finally, by virtue of the last, תמורה (Temurah), the value of the letters is changed: for instance, the last letter takes the place of the first, and reciprocally. See Reuchlin's De Arte cabalistica, Wolf's second vol. of the Bibliotheca Hebr.; Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, etc., etc.

We shall first try to present the nature and attributes of God according to the most ancient fragments of the Zohar. We shall then set forth the idea which they have given us—I do not say of the creation, but of the formation of beings in general, or of the relations of God with the universe. Finally, we shall consider man; we shall tell how he is conceived under his chief aspects, and how his origin, his nature and his destinies are described. We consider this way of proceeding not only the simplest and the easiest, but we believe that the dominant character of the system imposes it upon us.

Chapter III

CONTINUATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE ZOHAR

THE KABBALISTS' CONCEPTION OF THE NATURE OF GOD

The Kabbalists speak of God in two ways which in no wise impair the unity of their thought. When they attempt to define God, when they distinguish His attributes, and wish to give us a precise idea of His nature, they speak in the language of metaphysics, with all the lucidity permissible in matters of such nature and by the idiom in which they are expressed. But sometimes they represent the divinity as a being which can not be comprehended at all, a being that lives always above all the forms with which our imagination may clothe it. In the latter case all their expressions are poetical and figurative, and then they combat, as it were, imagination with the weapons of imagination; then all their efforts tend to destroy anthropomorphism by giving it such gigantic proportions, that the frightened mind can find no term of comparison, and is compelled to rest in the idea of the Infinite.

The Book of the Mystery is written entirely in this style; but as the allegories it employs are all too often puzzling, we shall rather cite a passage of the Idra Rabba[1] in confirmation of what

[1] These two words signify the "Great Assembly," because the fragment bearing this title comprises the discourses held by Simeon ben Yohai amidst all his disciples assembled to the number of ten. At a later time when death had reduced them to the number of seven, they formed the "Little Assembly" (אדרא זוטא—Idra Zutah) to which ben Yohai spoke before he died.

we have said. "Simeon ben Yohai had just assembled his disciples. He told them that the time had come to work for the Lord, that is to say, to make known the real meaning of the law; that his days were numbered, that the laborers were few and the voice of the creditor, the voice of the Lord, became more and more urgent.[2] He made them swear that they would not profane the mysteries he was about to confide to them.[3] They repaired to a field and sat down in the shadows of the trees. Simeon was about to interrupt the silence by his speech, when a voice was heard and their knees knocked one against another[4] with fear. What was that voice? It was the voice of the celestial assembly which assembled to listen. Rabbi Simeon exclaimed joyfully: Lord, I have heard Thy voice, (Habakkuk, III, 1) but I shall not add like that prophet did—'I fear,' for this is not the time of fear, it is the time of love, as it is written: Thou shalt love the Eternal Lord, thy God." (Zohar, pt. III, fol. 128a.)

After this introduction, which lacks neither pomp nor interest, follows a long, entirely allegorical, description of the divine greatness. Here are some outlines: "He is the Ancient of the Ancients, the Mystery of the Mysteries, the Unknown of the Unknown. He has a form peculiar to Him, since He appears to us preferably as the Aged, as the Ancient of Ancients, as the Unknown among the Unknown. But under the form that we

[2] In the text: יומין זעירין ומארי' דהובא דחיק ברווא מארי כל יומא ומהצדי חקלא זעירין אינון. Compare R. Tarfon's saying in Pirke Abot (Chapters of the Fathers) היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה והפועלים עצלים ובעל הבית דוחק "The day is short, the work aplenty, the laborers are lazy and the master urges."—Jellinek.

[3] The passage: פתח ואמר (ר' שמעון בן יוחאי) ארור האיש אשר יעשה פסל ומסכה מעשי ידי חרש וישם בסתר וענו כל העם ואמרו אמן. "(R. Simeon ben Yohai) opened (the discourse) and said: Cursed be the man who maketh a graven or molten image, the abomination of the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place; and all the people shall answer, and say, Amen (Deut. XXVII, 15)," points out very clearly that the description of God was not to be taken in a material way.—Jellinek.

[4] According to Daniel V, 6. וארכובתן דא לדא נקשן—and his knees knocked one against the other.—Jellinek.

know Him, He still remains unknown to us. His vestment is white, and His appearance is that of a brilliant visage."[5]

"He is seated on a throne of fiery sparks which He subjects to His will. The white light emitted by His head illumines four hundred thousand worlds. This white light becomes the inheritance of the just in the world to come.[6] Each day sees thirteen myriads of worlds come to light from His skull, which receive from Him their subsistence, and the weight of which He alone supports. From His skull springs a dew which fills His head, and which will awaken the dead to a new life. For therefore it was written (Isaiah, XXVI, 19): For a dew of light is Thy dew. It is this dew which is the nourishment of the greatest saints. It is the manna which is prepared for the just in the life to come. It falls in the fields of the sacred fruits.[7] The aspect of that dew is white as the diamond whose color contains all colors. . . . The length of that face, from the summit of the skull, is three hundred and seventy thousand myriad worlds, and it is called the long face, for such is the name of the Ancient of the Ancients."[8]

But we should fail in the truth were we to give the impression that the rest be judged by this example. Oddness, affectation and habit, which in the Orient so often abuse allegory even to subtlety, hold a larger place in it than nobility and grandeur. That head, dazzling with light, used to represent the eternal hearth of existence and of science, becomes, so to speak, the subejct of an anatomical study; neither the forehead, nor the face, nor the

[5] I can not find any other meaning in the two words: בוציגא דאנפוי

[6] The French text has: "Quatre cent mille mondes né de cette blanche lumière."—; Four hundred thousand worlds begotten by this white light. This translation of the original text is incorrect, and is based upon a misconception of the hap-hazard punctuation of the Zohar. The author has read together ולעלמא דאתי with the following רי מאה עלמין , which is really the beginning of a new sentence, and is an introduction to the explanatory phrase ד"הה—Transl.

[7] The adepts of the Kabbalah are so called.

[8] This "long" or "great face" is nothing else, as we shall soon see, but the divine substance, the first Sefiroh.

eyes, nor the brain, nor the hair, nor the beard, nothing is forgotten; everything gives an opportunity of enunciating numbers and propositions which point out the Infinite.[9] This evidently is what provoked the reproach of anthropomorphism and even of materialism which some modern writers have directed against the Kabbalists. But neither that accusation nor the form which called it forth are worthy of further consideration. We shall rather make an attempt to translate some of the fragments in which the same subject is treated in a manner more interesting to philosophy and to human intelligence.

The first one we shall cite forms a complete total of great extent, and by that fact alone it recommends itself to our attention. Under pretence of making known the true meaning of the words of Isaiah (Ch. XL, 25): "To whom then will ye liken me that I shall be equal to? saith the Holy One," it explains the genesis of the ten Sefiroth, or chief attributes of God, and the nature of God Himself while yet concealing Himself in His own substance. "Before having created any form in the world, before He produced any image, He was alone, without form, without resembling anything, and who could conceive Him as He was then, before the creation, since He was formless? It is therefore forbidden to represent Him by any image, by any form whatever, even by His holy name, even by a letter or by a point. That is the meaning of the words (Deut. IV, 15): 'For ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you.' That is to say, you saw nothing that you can represent under any form or by any image. But after having produced the form of the Heavenly Man, אדם עלאה, (Adam E-lo-oh) He used it as a chariot, מרכבה Merkabah, to descend; He wished to be called by that form which is the holy name of Jehovah; He wished to be known by His attributes, by each attribute separately, and let Himself be called the God of Mercy, the God of Justice,

[9] Zohar, part III, fol. 129a and b. The description of the beard and of the hair alone takes up a considerable place in the Idra Rabba.

the All Powerful God, the God of Hosts, and the One Who Is. His intention was to make known His qualities, and how His justice and His mercy embrace the world as well as the work of man. Had He not shed His light over all creatures, how could we have known Him? How would it be true to say that the world is full of His glory? (Isaiah VI, 2.) Woe to the man who dares compare Him even to one of His own attributes! Much less is He to be likened to man, born of earth and destined to death. He must be conceived as above all creatures and above all attributes.

"When all those things have been taken away, there is neither attribute, nor image, nor figure; that which remains is like a sea, for the waters of the sea are in themselves limitless and without form; but when they spread over the earth they produce an image, דמיון (Dimyon), and we can make the following calculation: The source of the waters of the sea and the jet springing from it to spread over the ground, make two. Then an immense basin forms, as a basin is formed when a pit of vast depth is dug; that basin is occupied by the waters which have sprung from the source, and that is the sea itself, which should be counted as the third. And this vast depth divides itself into seven canals which resemble seven long vessels. The source, the jet, the sea and the seven canals together make the number ten. And if the master who constructed those vessels breaks them, the waters return to their source, and only the fragments of the vessels, dry, without water, remain. Thus, the cause of the causes produced the ten Sefiroth. The Crown is the source from which an unending light springs forth, and therefore the name 'Infinite' אין סוף (Ayn Sof), to designate the Supreme Cause for in that state it has neither form nor countenance; therefore, there is no means of comprehending it, and no way of knowing it; and it is in this sense that it is said: 'Meditate not upon the thing that is too far above thee, and investigate not what is covered from

thee.'[10] Then a vessel comes into existence, as restricted in dimensions as a point—as the letter י (Yod)—in which, nevertheless, the divine light penetrates. This is the source of wisdom, it is wisdom, by virtue of which the supreme cause takes the name of the all-wise God. After which it constructs a great vessel like the sea, called the intelligence, whence the name of God the 'Intelligent.' We must know, however, that God is good and wise by virtue of Himself; for wisdom does not deserve its name because of itself, but because of Him Who is wise, and Who produces wisdom from the light emanated from Him. Neither is intelligence conceivable by itself, but through Him Who is the Intelligent One, and Who replenishes it from His own substance. He need only to withdraw to let it dry out entirely. In this sense we should also understand the following words (Job XIV, 11): 'The waters run off from the sea and the river faileth and drieth up.'

"Finally, the sea is divided into seven branches, and from these result the seven precious vessels called Mercy or Grandeur, Justice or Strength, Beauty, Triumph, Glory, Kingdom and the Foundation or Basis.[11] For that reason He is called the Great or the Merciful, the Strong, the Magnificent, the God of Victory, the Creator to whom belongs all glory, and the foundation of all things. This last attribute sustains all the others, as well as all the worlds. Last of all, He is also the king of the universe; for all things are in His power. He can diminish the number of the vessels, and He can increase the light which breaks forth from them, or the contrary if He deems preferable."[12] All that the Kabbalists have thought of the nature of God is summed up

[10] Ben Sira; Babyl. Talmud, tract. Haggiga 15. Bereshith Rabba, 8.

[11] Ordinarily "Foundation" (יסוד—Y'sod) is taken as the one before the last and "Kingdom" (מלכות—Malchus) as the last Sefiroh.[a] —Jellinek.

[a] And it is so given in the original text of the Zohar. The author is also mistaken in translating the last Sefiroh מלכות (Malchus) with "royauté" (royalty). He probably meant to render it by "royaumé" (kingdom).—Transl.

[12] Zohar, part II, fol. 42b, 43a, sec. בא אל פרעה.

nearly in this text. But even in the minds most familiar with metaphysical systems and questions, this text must leave some confusion. On the one hand it should be followed by quite wide developments; on the other hand, it would be well to present each one of the principles confined therein under a more substantial and more precise form. In order to attain this double aim without compromising historical truth, and without fear of substituting our own thoughts for those whose spokesman we wish to be, we shall reduce the foregoing passage to a small number of fundamental propositions, each one of which will be elucidated, and at the same time justified by other extracts from the Zohar.

1. God is, before all else, the Infinite Being; He can therefore not be considered as the totality of the beings, nor as the sum of His own attributes. But without these attributes and without the effects which result from them, that is to say, without a definite form, it is never possible either to comprehend or to know Him. This principle is quite clearly expressed when it is said that "before the creation God was without form, resembling nothing; and that in this state no intelligence could conceive Him." But as we do not wish to confine ourselves to this one testimony, we hope that it will not be difficult to recognize the same thought in the following words:

"Before God manifested Himself, when all things were still hidden in Him, He was the least known among all the unknown. In that state He had no name other than the name that expresses interrogation. He began by forming an imperceptible point; that was His own thought. He then began to construct with this thought a mysterious and holy form; finally He covered it with a rich and radiant garment; we mean the universe whose name necessarily enters into the name of God."[13] We read also in

[13] Zohar, part I, fol. 1 and 2; part II, fol. 105a. In this text there is a play upon words that can not be rendered faithfully. It is proposed to explain the following verse: "Lift up your eyes toward the heavens and see who has created these." (Isaiah, XL, 6). Now, by joining the two Hebrew words מי (Me—Who) and אלה (Ayleh—these), we get

the Idra Zutah (the lesser assembly), whose importance we have noted more than once: "The Ancient of Ancients is at the same time the Unknown of the Unknown; He separates Himself from all, and He is not separated; for all unites with Him, as He again unites with all; there is nothing that is not in Him. He has a form, and it may be said He has no form. By taking a form He gave existence to all that is;[14] first, He caused His form to send out ten lights[15] which shine by virtue of the form they borrowed of Him, diffusing a dazzling effulgence to all sides, just as a beam sends out its luminous rays to all sides. The Ancient of Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown is a high beacon which is recognized only by the rays that glare our eyes with such brilliancy and abundance. This light is called His holy name."[16]

2. The ten Sefiroth, by which the Infinite Being first manifested Himself, are nothing but attributes which, by themselves, have no substantial reality. In each of those attributes the divine substance is present in its entirety, and, taken all together, they constitute the first, the most complete and highest of all the divine manifestations. It is called the "archetypal or celestial man" אדם קדמון, אדם עלאה.[17] This is the figure which dominates the mysterious chariot of Ezekiel, and of which the terrestrial man, as we shall soon see, is but a faint copy. "The form of man," says Simeon ben Yohai to his disciples, "contains all that is in heaven above and upon earth below, the superior as well as the inferior beings; it is for that reason that the Ancient

the name of God אלהים (Elohim). The author of the verse wished to designate the universe, and therefore it has been concluded that the universe and God are inseparable, since both have one and the same name.

14 In the Zohar really follows ולא אתחזו בגין דלא שביח (He took no form because of the unordinary).—Jellinek

15 The original text before me says: תשעה נהורין—nine lights.—Transl.

16 לא שביח אלא אינון נהורין דמתפשטין ואינון אקרון שמא קדישא. Part III, fol. 288a, Idra Zutah.

17 אדם קדמון—Adam Kadmon, literally: First or original man; אדם עלאה—Adam E-lo-oh, literally: High man.—Transl.

of the Ancients has chosen it for His own.[18] No form, no world could subsist before the human form, for it contains all things, and all that is, subsists only by virtue of it: without it there would be no world, for thus it is written (Prov. III, 19): 'The Lord has through wisdom founded the earth.'

But it is necessary to distinguish the higher man (Adam d'leeloh) אדם דלעילא from the lower man אדם דלתתא (Adam d'letatoh), for one could not exist without the other. On that form of man rests the perfection of faith in all things, and it is that form that is spoken of when it is said that they saw above the chariot like the form of a man; and it is of that form that Daniel spoke in the following words (Daniel VII, 13): 'I saw in the nightly vision and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and he was brought near before Him.' "[19] Thus, what is called the Celestial Man, or the first divine manifestation, is nothing else than the absolute form of all that exists; the source of all the other forms, or rather of all ideas, the supreme thought, otherwise called also the λόγος or the Word. We do not pretend to express here a simple conjecture but an historical fact, the accuracy of which will be the more appreciated the more extensive the knowledge of the system will become. However, before proceeding, we may cite yet these words: "The form of the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!) is an unique form which embraces all forms. It is the supreme and mysterious wisdom which contains all the rest."[20]

3. The ten Sefiroth, if we may believe the authors of the Zohar, are already indicated in the Old Testament by as many

18 דיוקנא דאדם הוי דיוקנא דעלאין ותתאין דאתכלילו ביה ובגין דהאי דיוקנא כליל עלאין ותתאין אתקין עתיקא קדישא תקוניי בהאי דיוקנא ותקונא. —Part III, Idra Rabba, fol. 141b.

19 לאפקא אדם דלעילא ואיתימא אדם דלתתא בלחודוי לאו משום דלא קאים דא בלא דא ואלמלא האי תקונא דאדם לא קאים עלמא דכתיב ה' בחכמה יסד ארץ . . . —Ibid, fol. 144a.

20 תקונא דעתיקא קדישא אתתקן בתקונא חד כלילא דכל תקונין והיא חכמא עלאה סתימאה כלילא דכל שאר.—Part III, Idra Zutah, fol. 288a.

special names consecrated to God, the same ten mystical names, as we have already remarked, spoken of by St. Jerome in his letter to Marcella.[21] An attempt has been made to find them also in the Mishnah, since it says there that God created the world with ten words, (בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם)[22] or by as many orders issued from His sovereign word.[23] Although all are equally necessary, yet the attributes and the distinctions expressed by them do not give us the same sublime conception of the divine nature, but represent it to us under different aspects which are called in the language of the Kabbalists "faces," (אנפין—Anfin, פרצופין—Partzufin).[24]

Simeon ben Yohai and his disciples make frequent use of that metaphorical expression, but they do not abuse it as their modern successors have done. We shall linger upon this point which is, unquestionably, the most important point of the entire Kabbalistic science; and before determining the particular character of each one of the Sefiroth, we shall cast a glance at the general question of their essence; and set forth in a few words the different opinions to which they gave rise among the adepts of the doctrine of the Kabbalah.

All Kabbalists have raised these two questions: first, why are there Sefiroth? then, what are the Sefiroth considered as a whole, whether in relation to themselves, or in relation to God? As to the first question, the texts of the Zohar are too positive to give room to the least doubt. There are Sefiroth as there are names of God, since the two things are confounded in the mind, and since the Sefiroth are but the ideas and the things expressed by the names. Now, if God could not be named, or if all the

[21] Zohar, Part III, fol. 11b.

[22] But the sense of the Mishnah is no other than that the root (Omar—to speak) with reference to God in the story of the creation is met with ten times. Compare Maimonides' commentary on this Mishnah. —Jellinek.

[23] Pirke Aboth, Sec. 5, Mishnah 1.

[24] פרצופין (Partzufin) is identical with אנפין (Anfin) in its meaning; only that the one is of Greek origin (πρώσοτιος), while the other is a real Aramean word.—Jellinek

names given to Him did not designate a real thing, not only would we not know Him, but He would not exist even for Himself; for without intelligence He could not comprehend Himself, neither could He be wise without wisdom, nor could He act without power.[25]

The second question, though, has not been solved by all in the same manner. Some, standing on the principle that God is immutable, see in the Sefiroth nothing but instruments of the divine power, creatures of a superior nature, but differing entirely from the first Being. These are they who would reconcile the language of the Kabbalah with the letter of the law.[26] Others, carrying to its last consequences the old principle that nothing can come from nothing, fully identify the ten Sefiroth with the divine substance. That which the Zohar calls Ayn-Sof, i.e., the Infinite Himself, is in their opinion, the totality of the Sefiroth, no more, no less, and each one of the Sefiroth is but a different point of view of the same, thus understood, Infinite.[27]

Between these two extremes enters a system much more profound and more in accord with the spirit of the original Kabbalistic monuments, a system which neither considers the Sefiroth as instruments, as creatures, and, consequently, as beings distinct from God, nor is it willing to identify them with God. Here is a summary of the ideas upon which it rests: God is present in the Sefiroth, otherwise He could not reveal Himself through them; but He does not dwell in them in His eternity; He is more than what is found in the sublime forms of thought and of existence. In fact, the Sefiroth can never comprise the Ayn-Sof which is the very source of every form, and which, in

[25] Note that Intelligence, Wisdom and Power are names of three Sefiroth.—Transl.

[26] At the head of their party stands the author of the book entitled: "The Motives of the Commandments" (טעמי מצות), Menahem Recante who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century.*

* Should read the thirteenth century, as he died in 1290.—Jellinek

[27] This opinion is represented by the author of מגן דוד (Mogan David—The Shield of David).

this capacity, has no form; or, to use the ordinary expression, while each one of the Sefiroth has a well known name, the Infinite alone has not and can not have any name. God remains, therefore, the Ineffable, the Incomprehensible, the Infinite Being, high above all the worlds that reveal to us His presence, even the world of Emanation.

By this reasoning they believe to escape the reproach of disregarding the divine immutability. For the ten Sefiroth may be compared to ten vessels of different forms, or to glasses of different colors. Whatever vessel we wish to measure with the absolute essence of things it remains always the same; and the divine light, like the light of the sun, does not change its nature with the medium through which it passes. Let us add that these vessels and these mediums have in themselves no positive reality; they have no existence of their own; they simply represent the limits within which the supreme essence of things has confined itself, the different degrees of obscurity with which the divine light desired to veil its infinite brightness, so it may be viewed. Whence the desire to recognize in the Sefiroth two elements, or rather, two different aspects: one, purely external and negative, representing the body, the so-called vessel (כלי —Kalee); the other internal, positive, which represents the spirit and the light.

Thus they could speak of broken vessels[28] which let the divine light escape. This point of view adopted by Isaac Luria,[29] as well as by Moses Cordovera,[30] and presented with much logic and precision by the latter, is the one, to say it again, which we

[28] שברי כלים (Shivra Kaylim—Broken Vessels). It is said that the light of the last three upper Sefiroth gushed forth with such fullness into the first Sefiroth of the seven lower ones and so on into the others, that they broke.—Jellinek

[29] See Issac Luria, Sefer Drushim (ספר דרושים), ad init.—a work translated by Knorr von Rosenroth and made part of the Kabbalah Unveiled.

[30] See Pardes Rimonim (The Garden of Pomgranites), fol. 21-24. Besides the lucidity which we must credit with Cordovera, he also deserves praise for reporting correctly, and profoundly discussing the opinions of his predecessors and of his adversaries.

regard as the most exact historically, and we shall rest thenceforth upon it with entire confidence as the basis of all the metaphysical part of the Kabbalah. Having established this general principle on the authority of the texts and of the most valued commentaries, we must indicate now the particular role of every Sefiroh and the different manners of the grouping of all the Sefiroth by trinities and by persons.

The first of the highest of all the divine manifestations, in a word, the first Sefiroh, is the Crown כתר (Kether), so named by the very reason of the place assigned to it above all the others. "It is," says the text, "the principle of all principles, the mysterious wisdom, the highest of all crowns with which all diadems and crowns are adorned."[31] It is not the confused totality, formless, nameless; that mysterious unknown that preceded all things, even the attributes; that אין סף (Ayn Sof). It represents the Infinite as distinguished from the finite; its name in Holy Writ signifies I Am, אהיה (Ay-Yeh), because it is the absolute being; the being considered from a point of view where analysis cannot penetrate, where qualifications are not possible, but where they are all united in the indivisible point.

On that ground the first Sefiroh is also called the "primitive point," or simply the "point, נקודה ראשונה (N'kudoh R'shonoh), נקודה פשוטה (N'kudoh P'shutoh). "When the Unknown of the Unknown wished to manifest Himself, He first produced one point;"[32] as long as this luminous point did not depart from His bosom, the Infinite was as yet completely unknown, and shed no light at all.[33] It is that which the later Kabbalists have explained as an absolute concentration of God in His own substance, צמצום (Tsimtsum). It is this concentration which has brought forth space, the primitive air אויר קדמון (Ahveer Kadmon), which is

[31] בתרא עלאה לעילא דמתעטרין ביה כל עטרין וכתרין.—Zohar, part II, fol. 288b.

[32] בשעתא דסתימא דכל סתימין בעא לאתגלייא עבד ברישא נקודה חדא.—Zohar, part I, fol. 2a.

[33] לא אתידע כלל עד דמנו דחיקו דבקיעותיה נהיר נקודא חדא.—Zohar, part I, fol. 15a.

not a true void, but a certain degree of light inferior to the creation. But for the very reason that God retired within Himself, He is distinct from all that is finite,[34] limited and determined, and for the very reason that it can not be told yet what He is, He is designated by a word which signifies: Naught, No-Thing, Non-Being, אין (Ayn).

"They name Him thus," says the Idra Zutah, "because we do not know, and because it can not be known what was in that principle (beginning); because it is unattainable for our limitations, yes, even for wisdom."[35, 36] We must remark that we find again the same idea, even the same expression, in one of the greatest and most famous systems of metaphysics of which our epoch can boast to posterity. "Everything begins," says Hegel, *"by the pure state of being,* a wholly indeterminate, simple and immediate thought, for the true beginning can be nothing else. . . . But that pure being is only the purest abstraction; it is an absolute negative term which may be called the *non-existent*[37] if conceived in an immediate manner."

Finally, to return to our Kabbalists, the mere idea of being, or of the Absolute, considered from the point of view which we take, constituted a complete form, or to use the usual term, a head, a face; they call it the white head רישא חוורא—Reeshoh Havroh, because all colors, that is to say, all ideas, all determined modes are blended in that form, or the "Ancient" (עתיקא — Ahteekah), because it is the first of the Sefiroth. But, in the last case, we must take care not to confound it with the "Ancient

[34] We can not help thinking here of Spinoza's axiom in the fiftieth epistle: Determinatio negatio est.—Jellinek

[35] לא ידע ולא אתידע מה דהוי ברישא דא דלא אתדבק בחכמתא ולא במיבלתנו ובגין כך אקרי אין. —Zohar, part III, fol. 288b.

[36] I must again follow here Dr. Jellinek's translation as nearer to the original text.—Transl.

[37] Das reine Sein macht den Anfang, weil es sowohl reiner Gedanke, als das unbestimmte einfache Unmittelbare ist, der erste Anfang aber nichts Vermitteltes und weiter Bestimmtes sein kann. Dieses reine Sein ist nun die reine Abstraction, damit das Absolut-Negative, welches, gleichfalls unmittelbar genommen, das Nichts ist.
(Encyclopaedie der philosophischen Wissenschaften, par. 86, u. 87.)

of Ancients (Ahteekah D'ahteekin— עתיקא דעתקין), that is to say, with the Ayn-Sof Himself, before whom the most dazzling light is but a shadow. But it is most generally designated with the singular name of "long face" אריך אנפין (Ahrich Anfin), undoubtedly because it contains all the other qualifications and all the intellectual and moral attributes of which, by the same reasoning, the "small face" is formed זעיר אנפין (Z'ere Anfin).[38]

"The first," says the text, "is the Ancient, seen face to face. It is the supreme head, the source of all light, the principle of all wisdom, and can be defined only by unity."[39]

From the bosom of this absolute Unity, distinct from the various forms and from all relative unity, go forth, as parallels, two principles, opposite in appearance but inseparable in reality; one, male or active, which is called "Wisdom," חכמה (Chachmah), the other passive, or female, is designated by a word which it is customary to translate by "Intelligence" בינה (Beenah). "All that exists," says the text, "all that has been formed by the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!), can exist only by a male and a female."[40] We shall not insist upon this general form which we shall meet frequently as we proceed; we believe, though, that in this instance it applies to the subject and to the object of intelligence which was not possible to express more clearly in an eminently poetical language.

Wisdom is also named the "father"; for it is said, Wisdom engenders all things. By means of thirty-two marvellous ways by which it is diffused through the universe, it imposes a form and measure on all that is.[41] Intelligence is the "mother," as is written: Thou shalt call intelligence by the name of mother

[38] אצילות הכתר נקרא אריך אנפין והוא העולם הראשון והעולם השני הוא זעיר אנפין והוא כולל כל ח' ספירות שהם מחכמה עד היסוד. —Pardes Rimonim, by Moses Cordovera, Ch. III fol. 8.

[39] וכך אסתכלו אנפוי באנפין דעתיקא קדישא כלא ארך אפיים אקרי. —Zohar, part III, fol. 292b, 289b.

[40] בשעתא דעתיקא קדישא בעא לאתקנא כלא אתקין בעין דכר ונוקבא כלא אתקיים בדכר ונוקבא.—Ib., part III, fol. 290a.

[41] חכמה אב לאמהו האי אב נפיק מעתיקא קדישא דכתיב והחכמה מאין תמצא... מניה אחפשטין תלתין ותרין שבילין.—Ib. supr.

(Prov. II, 3).[42] Without destroying the antithesis established as the general condition of existence, they, nevertheless, cause often the female or passive principle to spring forth from the male principle.[43] From their mysterious and eternal union comes forth a son, who according to the original expression, takes at one and the same time the features of his father and of his mother, bearing witness to both of them. This son of Wisdom and Intelligence, called also, because of double inheritance, the "first-born" is Knowledge or Science, דעת (Da-ath).

These three persons contain and unite all that was, is and will be; but they are, in their turn, reunited in the white head, in the Ancient of Ancients, for *all* is He, and *He* is all and in all.[44] At times he is represented with three heads which form but one head, and at times he is compared to the brain which, without losing its unity, is divided into three parts, and by means of thirty-two pairs of nerves spreads into the entire body, as Divinity spreads into the universe by means of the thirty-two ways of wisdom. "The Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!) exists with three heads which form but one head only, and that head is the most exalted among the most exalted things. And because the Ancient (Whose name be blessed!) is represented by the number three (ובנין דעתיקא קדישא אתרשם בתלת), all the other lights (the other Sefiroth) which receive light from Him, are also comprised in the number three."[45]

In the following passage the terms of that trinity are somewhat different; we see there the Ayn-Sof himself, but, on the other hand, we do not find there "Intelligence," no doubt because it is but a reflex, a certain expansion or dimension of the Logos which is

42 חכמה אם בינה אם דכתיב כי אם לבינה תקרא.—Ib. supr.

43 והאי חכמה אתפשט ואפיק מניה בינה ואשתכח דכר ונוקבא הוא. —Ib. supr.

44 והאי אב ואם ובן אקרין חכמה בינה ודעת בגין דהא בן נטל סימנין דאבוי ואמיה דהוי סהדותא דתרווייהו והא אקרי בוכרא בנין דנטל חולקין... ואינון סתימין במוזלא קדישא עתיקא ; דכל עתיקין ביה סתימין ביה כליליין כלא הוא כלא הוי כלא יהא.—Zohar, part III, fol. 291a and b.

45 Idra Zutah, book III, fol. 288b.

called here "Wisdom." "There are three heads sculptured one in the other, and one above the other. One head is the secret, hidden wisdom which is never unveiled. The mysterious wisdom is the supreme principle of all other wisdom. Above that first head is the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!), the most mysterious of all the mysteries. Finally, comes the head which dominates all the other heads, a head which is not a head. No one knows nor can know what that head contains, for it joins neither science nor our understanding. Because of that, the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!) is called the No-Thing (אין —Eye-in)"[46] Thus, unity in being, and trinity in intellectual manifestations or in thought—this is the exact summing up of what we have just said.

Sometimes the terms, or, if we wish, the persons of this trinity, are represented as three successive and absolutely necessary phases in existence as well as in thought, or to use an expression accepted in Germany, as a logical process showing at the same time the generation of the world. Whatever astonishment that fact may excite, it will not be doubted when the following lines have been read: "Come and see that thought is the principle of all that is; as such it is at first ignored and confined within itself. When thought begins to diffuse, it arrives at the degree where it becomes spirit;[47] arrived at that point, it takes the name of intelligence, and is not, as before, confined within itself. The spirit or mind itself develops from the very bosom of the mysteries by which it

46 As I have digressed here from both the original French text and the German translation in my endeavor to keep to the text of the Zohar, I deem it my duty to give the text as it is printed in the Zohar, part III, fol. 288a and b.
תלת רישין אתגלפן דא לגו מן דא: ודא לעילא מן דא רישא חדא תכמתא סתימאה דאתכסייא ולאו מתפתחה וחמתא דא סתימאה רישא לכל רישיה דשאר חכמות. רישא עלאה עתיקא קדישא סתימא דכל סתימין. רישא דכל רישא רישא דלאו רישא ולא ידע ולא אתידע מה דהוי ברישא דא דלא אתדבק בחכמתא ולא בסובלתנו... ובגין כך עתיקא קדישא אקרי אין.—Transl.

47 In the Zohar—אתר לאתר דרוהא שריא, which is translated more correctly with "where the spirits rest"; otherwise the entire passage is unintelligible.—Jellinek

is surrounded, and a voice goes forth which is the union of all the heavenly choirs; a voice that speaks distinctly and in articulate words; for it comes from the spirit. But in reflecting upon all these degrees, you will find that the thought, the intelligence, this voice and this word are one and the same thing; that the thought is the beginning of all that is, and that there can be no interruption in it. True thought is bound to Naught (אין —Eye-in), and is never parted from it. That is the meaning of the words: Jehovah is One and His name is One."[48]

Here is another passage where the same idea is easily recognized under a more original and, as it seems to us, a more ancient form: "The name which signifies I Am אהיה (A-yeh), shows the union of all that is, the degree where all the ways of wisdom are as yet hidden and united at one place, and can as yet not be distinguished one from another. But when a line of demarkation is established, when it is intended to designate the mother bearing in her bosom all things and about to bring them forth in order to reveal the supreme name, then, speaking of Himself, God says: I Who Am, אשר אהיה (Asher A-yeh).[49] Finally, when all has been well formed and has departed from the maternal bosom, when everything is in its place, and when it is intended to designate the particular as well as the existence, God calls Himself Jehovah, or, I Am that I Am, אהיה אשר אהיה (A-yeh asher A-yeh). These are the mysteries of the holy name revealed to Moses, and of which no other man shared the knowledge with him."[50]

The system of the Kabbalah does not, therefore, rest solely on the principle of emanation or upon the unity of substance.

48 Part I, fol. 246b, Sect. ויחי. As this passage is too long to be quoted entire, we shall cite here the last words only. והוא היא מחשבה ראשיתא דכלא ולא הוי פרודא אלא מלא חד בקשורא חד דאיהי מחשבה ממש אתקשר באין דלא אתפרש לעלמין ודא הוא יי" אחד ושמו אחד.

49 The word אשר (Asher) is a sign of determination.

50 אהיה דא כללא דכלא... לבתר אפיק ההוא נהרא דאיהו אימא עלאה ואתעברת אמר אשר אהיה... בתר דנפיק כלא ואתתקן כל חד וחד באתריה אמר יהוה. אחרי מות—Part III, fol. 55b, sect.

As we see, the Kabbalists went further. They taught a doctrine very similar to the doctrine which the metaphysicians of Germany now regard as the greatest glory of our time. They, the Kabbalists, believed in the absolute identity of thought and of existence; and consequently, the world, as we shall see later, could be to them nothing else than the expression of ideas, or of absolute forms of intelligence; in short, they give us a glimpse into the union of Plato and Spinoza. To clear this important fact of all doubt, and to show at the same time that the most learned of the modern Kabbalists have remained true to the traditions of their predecessors, we will add to the texts we have translated from the Zohar a very remarkable passage from the commentaries of Cordovera:

"The three first Sefiroth, to wit: the Crown, Wisdom and Intelligence, should be regarded as one and the same thing. The first represents knowledge or science, the second represents the knower, and the third represents the known. To explain this identity we must know that the knowledge of the Creator is not like the knowledge of the created, for with the latter knowledge is distinct from the subject of knowledge, and bears upon objects which, in their turn, are distinct from the subject. This is designated by the following three terms: the thought, that which thinks, and the thing thought of. The Creator, on the other hand, is in Himself the knowledge, the knower and the known. In fact, His manner of knowing does not consist in applying His thought to things outside of Him, for it is by understanding and knowing Himself that He knows and perceives all that is. Nothing exists that is not one with Him and that He does not find in His own substance. He is the type (—typus) of all being, and all things exist in Him under their purest and most accomplished forms; so that the perfection of the creatures is inherent in this very existence by which they were united to the source of their being,[51] and in measure as they recede from that source,

51 שליחותם במציאות הנבחר ההוא המתיחד בממציאם.

they fall away from that perfect and sublime state. It is thus that all sorts of existence in this world have their form in the Sefiroth, and the Sefiroth have their form in the source from which they emanate."[52]

The seven attributes which we still have to speak of, and which are called by the modern Kabbalists the Sefiroth of the Construction (ספירות הבנין—Sefiroth Habinyon), undoubtedly because they are of more immediate service for the edification of the world, develop, like the preceding attributes, in the form of trinities, in each one of which two extremes are united by a middle term.[53] From the bosom of divine thought, which alone attained its fullest manifestation, proceed first two opposite principles, one active or male, the other female or passive.

In "grace" or "mercy," חסד (Hessed) we find the principle of the first, the second is represented by "judgment, דין (Din)."[54] But it is easily seen from the part held by the two principles in the whole of the system, that this grace and this judgment are not to be taken literally; we treat here of what we could call the expansion and the contraction of the will. In fact, it is from the first one that the male souls spring, and from the second spring the female souls. These two attributes are called also the "two arms of God"; one gives life, the other gives death. Were they separated the world could not subsist; it is even impossible for them to act separately, for according to the original expression, there is no judgment without mercy;[55] they also combine in a

52 Pardes Rimonim, fol. 55a.

53 Is it not entirely according to the Hegelian method?—Jellinek

54 "Judgment" as translated by Jellinek is more correct and has been followed here. "Justice," as used by the author, would be (Tsedek). According to Gesenius "Din" has the meaning of "to judge (and thus to reign)." I would say that "Din" represents justice untempered by mercy.—Transl.

55 אתקשרן דינא ורחמי ובגיני כך לא סלקא דא בלא דא ולית דינא דלא תוי ביה רחמי.—Zohar, part III, fol. 143b.

common centre "Beauty"[56] whose gross symbol is the breast or the heart.[57]

It is remarkable that the beautiful is considered here as the expression and as the result of all moral qualities, or as the sum of all that is good. But the three following attributes are purely dynamic, that is to say, they represent the Deity as the Cause, as the universal force, as the generative principle of all beings. The first two, which represent in this new sphere, the male and the female principle, are called, conformably to a text of the Holy Scriptures, "Triumph" נצח (Netsach), and "Glory," הוד (Hode). It would be difficult to find the meaning of the two words were they not followed by this definition: "By the words 'Triumph' and 'Glory' we understand extension,[58] multiplication and force; for all the forces that spring up in the universe start from their bosom, and for this reason these two Sefiroth are called the hosts of the Eternal."[59]

They united in a common principle, ordinarily represented by the organs of generation which can not denote anything but the generative element, or the source, the root of all that is. For this reason it is called the "foundation" or basis, יסוד (Y'sod). "All things," reads the text, "will re-enter the basis from which they issued forth. All the marrow, all the sap, all the power is gathered in that place. All existing forces issue from it by the organ of generation." These three attributes also form but one single face, one single aspect of the divine nature, represented in the Bible by the "God of Hosts."[60] As to the last of the Sefiroth,

56 בבלגא חדא אתעבדין בהאי תפארת הא תפארת כליל ברחמי ופליג בדינא.—Part III, fol. 269a.

57 And yet the heart is taken as the symbol of understanding.[a]—Jellinek

[a] Based on Isaiah VI, 10; XXXII, 4; Daniel V, 12; Proverbs II, 2.—Transl.

58 משחא (Mesh-cha) really means the measure.—Jellinek

59 וכל משחא ורבות והילא בהו אתכנש דכל חיילין דנפקין מנהון נפקין ובגין כן אקרון צבאות ואינין נצח והוד.—Zohar, part III, fol. 296a.

60 אמא דדבורא סיומא דכל גופא ואקרי יסוד... יי צבאות אקרי יסוד.—Ib. supr.

or "Kingdom, מלכות (Malkuth)," all Kabbalists agree that it does not express any new attribute; but simply the harmony which exists between all the other attributes and their absolute rule over the world.

Thus the ten Sefiroth which, in their entirety, form the Heavenly or Ideal Man, called by the modern Kabbalists the "world of emanation," עולם אצילות (Olam Atzilus), is divided into three classes, each one of which shows us the deity in a different aspect, but always in the form of an indivisible trinity. The first three Sefiroth are purely intellectual or metaphysical. They express the absolute identity of existence and thought, and form, what modern Kabbalists have called, the "intelligible world," עולם מושכל (Olam Muskol). The three Sefiroth following have a moral character; on the one hand they make us conceive God as the identity of kindness and wisdom, on the other hand they show us that the source of beauty and magnificence is in kindness or rather in the supreme good. They have therefore been named the "virtues," מדות (Midoth), or the "world of feeling," עולם מורגש (Olam Murgosh), in the loftiest meaning of the word. Finally, we learn by the last of these attributes that the universal providence, the supreme architect, is also the absolute force, the all-powerful cause, and that this cause is at the same time the generating element of all that is. These last Sefiroth constitute the "natural world," or nature in its essence and in its principle, natura naturans, עולם המוטבע (Olam Hamutbah).[61]

How and in what terms these different aspects are brought back to unity, and consequently to a supreme trinity, the following passage will show: "In order to acquire the knowledge of a holy unity, we must examine the flame which rises from a fire-place or from a lighted lamp; we see then, at first, two kinds of light, a glistening white one and a black or blue one; the white light is above and rises in a straight line, the black or blue light is

[61] See Pardes Rimonim, fol. 66b, 1st col.

beneath, and appears to be the seat of the first; yet the two lights are so closely united that they form one single flame only. But the seat formed by the blue or black light is, in its turn, attached to the wick which is still under it. The white light never changes, it always remains white; but several shades are distinguished in the lower light. The lower light takes, moreover, two opposite directions; above it is attached to the white light, and below it is attached to the burning matter, but this matter continually consumes itself, and constantly rises towards the upper light. It is thus that all that is joins again to the one unity, וכלא אתקשר ביחודה אחד."[62] To dispel all doubt as to the meaning of this allegory, we may add that is it found, almost literally reproduced, in another part[63] of the Zohar, to explain the nature of the human soul which also forms a trinity, a feeble image of the supreme trinity.

This last species of trinity which explicitly comprises all the others, and which sums up the entire theory of the Sefiroth, plays also the most important part in the Zohar. Like the preceding trinities, it is represented by three terms only, each one of which has already been represented as the highest manifestation of one of the lower trinities. Among the metaphysical attributes it is the "Crown;" among the moral attributes it is "Beauty;" among the inferior attributes it is "Kingdom." But what is meant by the "Crown" in the allegorical language of the Kabbalists? It is the substance, the one and absolute being. What is "Beauty?" It is, as the Idra Zuta expressly says, "the highest expression of moral life and of moral perfection." As an emanation from intelligence and mercy, it is often compared to the orient, to the sun whose light is reflected equally by all earthly objects, and without which all would return to darkness; in a word it is the ideal.

Finally, what is "Kingdom?" It is the permanent and immi-

[62] Zohar, part I, fol. 51a, sect. בראשית (Breshith).
[63] Part II, sect. פקודי (Pekudah).—Jellinek

nent action of all the Sefiroth combined, the actual presence of God in the creation. This idea is fully expressed by the word Shekinah (שכינה), one of the surnames of the "Kingdom." The true terms of this new trinity are, accordingly, the absolute, the ideal and the immanent face; or also, the substance, the thought and the life; that is, the uniting of the thought with the object. They constitute what is called "the middle column" עמודא דאמצעיתא (Amudah D'amtzissoh), because in all the figures customarily used to represent the Sefiroth they are placed in the centre, one above another, in the form of a vertical line or column. As may be expected of what we already know, these three terms also become so many "faces" or symbolical manifestations. The "Crown" does not change its name, it is always the "long face," the "Ancient of days," "the Ancient Whose name be sanctified" עתיקא קדישא (Ateekah K'deeshah). "Beauty" is the "holy king," or simply the "King" מלכא (Malko), מלכא קדישא (Malko K'deeshah), and the "Shekinah," the divine presence in things, is the "Matrona," or "Queen" מטרוניתא (Matrooneitha).

When the one is compared to the sun, the other is compared to the moon; because the moon borrows all the light by which it shines from a higher place, from a degree immediately above her. In other words, real existence is only a reflection or image of ideal beauty. The "Matrona" is also called "Eve," "for," says the text, "Eve is the mother of all things, and everything that exists here below, nurses from her breast and is blessed through her."[64] The "King" and the "Queen," commonly called also the "two faces" דו פרצופין (Doo Partsufin),[65] form together a pair whose task is to pour forth constantly upon the world new grace, and through their union to continue the work of the creation, or, what is more, to perpetuate the work of the creation.

[64] כל אינון דלתתא מנה ינקין ובה מתברכין והיא אתקרי אם לכלהו.—Idra Zutah, ad fin.

[65] Zohar, part III, fol. 10b, sect. ויקרא (Vah-yikrah).

But the mutual love which impels them to this work, bursts forth in two ways, and produces consequently fruits of two kinds.

Sometimes it comes from above, going from the husband to the wife, and from there to the entire universe; that is to say, existence and life, starting from the depths of the intelligible world, tend to multiply more and more in the objects of nature. Sometimes, on the contrary, it comes from below, going from the wife to the husband, from the real world to the ideal world, from earth to heaven, and brings back to the bosom of God the beings capable of demanding their return.

The Zohar itself offers us an example of these two modes of generation in the circular course run by the holy souls. The soul, considered in its purest essence, has its root in intelligence, I mean the Supreme intelligence where the forms of the beings begin to differentiate themselves one from another, and which is really the universal soul. From there it passes, if it is to be a male soul, by the principle of grace or expansion; if it is to be a female soul, it impregnates itself with the principle of judgment or concentration. Finally, it is brought forth into the world where we live by the union of the King and the Queen, "who," as the text reads, "are to the generation of the soul, what man and woman are to the physical generation—the generation of the body."[66] By this road the soul descends to earth.

Now, here is the way the soul returns to the bosom of God: When adorned with all the virtues, it has fulfilled its mission and is mature for heaven, it rises of its own impulse, by the love it inspires as well as by the love it experiences, and with it rises also the last degree of emanation or real existence, which is thus brought in harmony with the ideal form. The King and the Queen unite anew, impelled by another cause and for another purpose than the first one.[67] "In this manner," says the Zohar,

[66] נשמתא קדישא מזווגא דמלכא ומטרוניתא נפקת כמה גופא דלתתא מרכר נוקבא.—Zohar, part III, fol. 7.

[67] To avoid the piling up of citations, I refer to Cordovera's Pardes Rimonim, pgs. 60-64, where all the citations are collected.

"life is drawn simultaneously from above and from below. The source is renewed and the sea, always refilled, distributes its waters to every place."[68]

The union may take place accidentally while the soul is still chained to the body. But there we touch upon ecstasy, mystic rapture and the dogma of reversibility, of which we have decided to speak elsewhere.

We believe, however, that our exposition of the Sefiroth would be incomplete without the mention of the figures which have been used to depict them to the eye. There are three principal figures, of which two at least are sanctioned by the Zohar. One shows the Sefiroth in the form of ten concentric circles, or rather of nine circles traced around a point which is their common centre. The other represents the Sefiroth as the human body. The "crown" is the head; "wisdom" the brain; "intelligence" the heart; the trunk and the breast, in short, the middle column, is the symbol of "beauty"; the arms are the symbols of "grace" and "judgment"; the lower parts of the body express the remaining attributes.

It is upon these wholly arbitrary tales, carried to their last exaggeration in the "Tikkunim" (the supplements to the Zohar), that the practical Kabbalah and the claim to combat bodily ills with the different names of God[69] are mostly founded. Besides, this is not the first time that ideas have been gradually smothered even by the grossest symbols, and thoughts replaced by forms at the decadence of a doctrine. Finally, the last manner of representing the ten Sefiroth is to divide them into three groups. To the right, on a vertical line, we see represented the attributes which may be called expansive; namely: the Logos or Wisdom, Mercy and Strength;[70] to the left we find placed in the same

68 נרין אתיסף חיים מעילא ומתתא ובירא אתמליא וימא אשתלים וכרין יהב לכלא.—Zohar, part I, fol. 60-70.

69 We must remember that the names of God correspond also to the Sefiroth.—Jellinek

70 In order to make the figure usually called also אילן (Eelon—

manner, on a parallel line, those which designate resistance or concentration: Intelligence, i.e., the consciousness of the Logos, Judgment and so-called resistance. In the centre finally are the substantial attributes which we have included in the supreme trinity. At the top, above the common level, we read the name of the crown, and at the base we read the name of kingdom.[71]

The Zohar often alludes to this figure, which it compares to a tree of which the Ayn-Sof is its life and sap, and which was later called the "Kabbalistic tree." At each step we are reminded there of the "column of mercy" (עמודא דחסד—Amoodah D'hessed, סטרא ימינא—Sitra Y'meenah—the "right column"), of the "column of judgment" (עמודא דדינא—Amoodah D'dinah, סטרא דשמלא—Sitra D'smolah—"the left column") and of the "centre column" (עמודא דאמציעתא—Amoodah D'amtsee-othoh). This does not prevent this same diagram from representing to us, in another plan, by horizontal lines, the three secondary trinities of which we have previously spoken. Besides these diagrams, modern Kabbalists have conceived also "canals" (צנורות —Tsnooroth) which indicate in a material form all possible relations and combinations between the Sefiroth. Moses Cordovera tells of an author who could make six hundred thousand of such combinations. These subtleties may interest to a certain degree the science of calculus, but we search there in vain for a metaphysical idea.

A strange idea, in a still stranger form, mingles in the Zohar with the doctrine of the Sefiroth which we have just explained. It is the idea of a fall and a rehabilitation, even in the sphere of

tree) plain to the reader, and in order to point out some inconsistencies in the rendition of the names of which the author is guilty, I refer to the diagram.[a]—Jellinek.

[a] The diagram here shown is not copied from Dr. Jellinek's book, but is taken from Cordovera's "Pardes Rimonim." I have chosen this diagram because it also makes clear the interrelations of the Sefiroth.—Transl.

71 See Pardes Rimonim, fol. 34-39, (שער מרר עמידתן) for all these figures.

the divine attributes; of a creation that failed because God did not descend with it to dwell in it; because He has yet not assumed that intermediary form between Himself and the creature of which man here below is the most perfect expression. These, apparently different conceptions, have been united into a single thought which is found, now more developed, now less developed, in the Book of Mystery in the two Idras and in some fragments of less importance. It is presented in the following strange manner: in the Book of Genesis[72] mention is made of seven kings of Edom who preceded the kings of Israel, and enumerating them it mentions their successive deaths to show the order in which they succeeded one another. The authors of the Zohar took hold of this text, which in itself is foreign to such an order of ideas, to fasten to it their belief in a kind of revolution in the invisible world of the divine emanation. By the "kings of Israel" they understand the two forms of absolute existence which are personified in the "King" and the "Queen," who, by dividing absolute existence for the sake of our feeble intelligence, represent the true essence of being. The "Kings of Edom" or, as they are also called, the "ancient kings," are worlds which could neither subsist nor be realized before those forms were established which serve as intermediaries between the creation and the divine essence as considered in its entire purity.

However, we believe that the better way of expounding without impairing this obscure portion of the system, would be to cite some fragments that refer to it and which explain themselves reciprocally. "Before the Ancient of Ancients, the most hidden among the hidden, had prepared the forms of the kings and the first diadems, there was neither limitation nor end. He, therefore, took to sculpturing and tracing these forms in His own substance. He stretched before Him a veil, and in that veil He sculptured the kings, and traced their limits and their forms; but they could not subsist. Therefore it is written: these are the kings that reigned in

[72] Genesis, ch. XXXVI, 31-40.

the land of Edom before a king reigned over the children of Israel. Here are dealt with the primitive kings and primitive Israel.[73] All the kings thus formed had their names, but they could not subsist until He (the Ancient) descended to them and veiled Himself for them."[74]

There can be no doubt that these lines refer to a creation which anteceded ours, and to worlds that preceded ours. The Zohar itself tells us so in the most positive terms further on,[75] and this is also the unanimous belief of all the modern Kabbalists. But why did the ancient worlds disappear? Because God did not dwell in their midst regularly and constantly, or, as the text reads, because God had not come down to them; because He had as yet not shown Himself in a form that permitted Him to be present in the creation, and to perpetuate it by this very union. The worlds which He then produced by a spontaneous emanation from His own substance, are compared to sparks which escape in disorder from a common hearth and which die out in proportion to their distance from it. "Ancient worlds there were which had been destroyed, formless worlds which have been called "sparks" (זיקין עולם ניצוצין) ; for thus it is when striking the iron the blacksmith causes sparks to burst forth on all sides. These sparks are the ancient worlds, and these worlds were destroyed and could not exist because the Ancient (Whose name be sanctified!) has as yet not assumed His form, and the workman was not as yet at his work."[76]

Now then, what is that form without which neither duration nor organization in the finite beings is possible, which, properly speaking, represents the artisan in the divine works, and by

[73] The word "primitive" קדמון—; Kadmon in the Zohar is always a synonym of ideal, celestial and intelligible.

[74] Idra Rabba, part III, 148a, Amsterdam Ed.

[75] עד לא ברא הקב"ה האי עלמא הוה באתרי עלמין וחריב לון. —Zohar, part III, fol. 61a.

[76] Idra Zutah, part III of the Zohar, fol. 292, Amsterdam ed. עלמין קדמאי בלא תקונא אתעבידו וההיא דלא הוה בתיקונא אקרי זיקין ניצוצין וכו".

which, finally, God communicates, and in some sort reproduces Himself outside of Himself? It is the human form conceived in its highest generality, which comprises the moral and intellectual attributes of our nature as well as the conditions of its development and perpetuation, in a word, sexual differentiation, which the Zohar admits for the soul as well as for the body. This conception of sexual differentiation, or rather, the division and reproduction of the human form, is to them the symbol of universal life, of a regular and infinite development of existence, of a regular and continuous creation not alone through duration, but also through successive realization of all the possible forms of existence.

We have met before with the root of this idea; but here is something more. The gradual expansion of life, existence, and of divine thought did not begin immediately below the substance; it was preceded by that tumultous disorderly and, if I may say, inorganic emanation of which we have just spoken. "Why were the old worlds destroyed? Because man was not yet formed. The form of man contains all things, and all things can be maintained by it. As this form did not exist yet, the worlds that preceded it could neither subsist nor maintain themselves. They fell in ruins, until the form of man was established. They were then reborn with it, but under other names."[77]

We do not wish to prove by new passages the sexual distinction either in the ideal man or in the divine attributes; we only wish to note here that this distinction, which is repeated under so many different forms in the Zohar, is also given the characteristic name of the balance (מתקלא—Maskaloh). "Before the balance was established," says the Book of Mystery, "they (the King and the Queen, the ideal world and the real world) did not see one another face to face, the first kings died because they could find no subsistence, and the earth was ruined . . . the balance is suspended in a place that is not (the primitive naught); they who

[77] Idra Rabba, ib. 135a, b.

were to be weighed do not exist as yet. It is an entirely inward balance that has no other support but itself, and it is invisible. This balance carries and will carry everything that is not, that is and will be."[78]

The previous citation taught us that the kings of Edom, the ancient worlds, did not entirely disappear. For in the Kabbalistic system nothing comes into existence and nothing perishes in an absolute manner. They only lost their place, which was the actual universe; and when God stepped out of Himself to show Himself again in the form of Man, they were resuscitated, came to life again, in some sort, to enter under other names into the general system of the creation. "When it is said 'the kings of Edom are dead,' it is not meant that they really died, or that they were totally destroyed; for every sinking down from a previous degree is called death."[79] They really did sink quite low, or rather they rose but little above the nihility; for they were placed on the last step of the universe. They represent the purely passive existence, or, to use the expression of the Zohar, judgment without mercy, a place where all is sterness and judgment (באתר דדינו מתאחדין תמן),[80] or where all is feminine without any masculine principle (אתר דנקבא), that is, a place where everything is resistance and inertia as in matter.

For that reason also they were called the Kings of Edom, because Edom was the opposite of Israel who represents mercy, life, spiritual and active existence. Taking most of these expressions literally, we may say with the modern Kabbalists, that the ancient worlds became a place of chastisement for crime, and that from their ruins came forth those malevolent beings who serve as instruments for divine justice. The idea would remain unchanged thereby, for, as we may convince ourselves further on, the punishment of guilty souls consists, according to the Zohar,

[78] ספרא דצניעותא, ch. ad init.
[79] Idra Rabba, part III of Zohar, fol. 135b.
[80] Idra Rabba, ib., fol. 142a—Idra Zutah, ad finem.

where metempsychosis plays such a great part, precisely in a rebirth into the lowest degree of the creation, and in submitting more and more to the bondage of matter.

As to the demons, who are always called by the significant name of the "shells" (קליפות —Klippoth),[81] they are nothing more than matter itself, and the passions that depend on it. Thus, every form of existence, from matter to eternal wisdom, is a manifestation, or rather, an emanation of the Infinite Being. That all things may have reality and continuance, it is not sufficient for them to come from God; it is also necessary that God be in their midst at all times, that He live, expand and reappear eternally and infinitely in their own appearance; for should He choose to leave them to themselves, they would vanish like a shadow. Better still! this shadow is a part of the chain of divine manifestations; it is the shadow which is the matter, it is the shadow that marks the boundary where life and spirit disappear from our sight. It is the end, as ideal man is the beginning. Upon this principle, then, the Kabbalistic cosmology and psychology are founded.

[81] The root of the word קליפות "Klippoth" is קלף (Kolauf or Kalof)—to pare, unshell, peel. I have therefore chosen "shells" as the most appropriate. The author's rendition of this word by "envelopes"—wrapper, cover, envelope, casing—does not seem to me to be correct etymologically, at least. Dr. Jellinek translates it by "Schalen," and gives the Latin word "cortices" as explanatory.—Transl.

Chapter IV

CONTINUATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE ZOHAR

THE KABBALISTS' VIEW OF THE WORLD

What we know of the opinion of the Kabbalists concerning the divine nature, exempts us from dwelling upon their method of conception concerning the creation and the origin of the world; for, at bottom, these two things are huddled in their minds. If God unites in Him in their infinite totality, thought as well as existence, it is quite certain that nothing can exist and nothing can be conceived outside (extra) of Him. All, then, that we know, whether through reason or through experience, is a development or a particular aspect of the Absolute; a substance, eternal, inert and distinct from God is a chimera, and the creation, as ordinarily conceived, is an impossibility.

The last deduction is clearly admitted in the following words: "The indivisible point (the absolute) that had no limits and that could not be conceived because of its intensity and purity, spread outward and formed a tent which served as a cover to this indivisible point. This tent, although of a light less pure than the indivisible point, was still too brilliant to be looked at; it spread, in its turn, outward, and this expansion was its garment. Thus, everything comes into existence by an ever-descending motion; thus, finally, it was that the universe took shape וכלא איהו תקונא דעלמא."[1] We remember also that the Absolute

[1] מנקודה קדמאה ולהלאה אתפשט דא ברא ואתלבש דא בדא עד דאשתכח דא לבושא לדא... וכל דא לתקונא דעלמא—Zohar, part I, fol. 20a.

Being and the visible nature have but one name, the meaning of which is "God." Another passage teaches us that the voice which departs from the spirit, and which is identical with it in the supreme thought, is really water, air and fire; the north, the south, the east, the west and all the forces of nature.[2] But all these elements and all these forces are united into one single thing—the voice which comes from the spirit. Matter, finally, considered from the most general point of view, is the lowest part of the mysterious lamp just described.

With such a viewpoint, the Kabbalists claim to remain true to the popular belief that by the power of the divine word alone the world came forth from nothing. But we know already that the last word "nothing" had quite another meaning for them. This point in their doctrine is very clearly shown by one of the commentators of the Sefer Yetzirah. "When it is mantained that all things were called forth from nothingness, it is not meant nothingness in its proper sense, for something can never come from nothing. But what is meant here is the no-thing that can not be conceived either through its cause or through its essence; in short, it is the Cause of Causes. It is what we call the primitive no-thing, אין קדמון—Ayn Kadmon, because it antecedes the universe; and by this we mean not alone material objects, but also the wisdom on which the world was founded. If we now inquire for the essence of wisdom and how it stays in the no-thing or in the Supreme Crown, no one will be able to answer this question, for in the no-thing there is no distinction and no manner of existence. Nor do we understand any better how wisdom is united with life."[3] All Kabbalists, ancient and modern, thus explain the dogma of the creation. But, consistent with themselves, they also admit the second part of the adage: ex nihilo nihil.[4] They believe just as little in absolute annihilation, as in a creation commonly understood. "Nothing," says the Zohar, "is lost in the world, not even the vapor that comes from our mouths; like everything else it has its place and its destination, and the Holy One, blessed be He, makes it co-operative with His works, Nothing falls into a void, not even the words and voice of man, for all things have their place and their destination."[5]

These words were spoken by an unknown old man, in the presence of several disciples of Yohai, and the latter must have recognized in them one of the most important articles of their faith, for they hastened to interrupt by the following words: "Oh, what have you done, old man? Would it not have been better to keep silent? For now, there you are, carried away on an immense sea without sail or mast! Do you want to rise? You can not do it. And if you would descend, there is a bottomless abyss to meet you."[6] They cited to him the example of their master who, being at all times reserved in his expressions, never ventured upon the sea without providing for a safe return; in other words, he hid his thoughts under the veil of allegory.

However, later on the same principle is stated quite frankly: "All things of which this world consists, the spirit as well as the body, will return to the principle and to the root from which they came.[7] He is the beginning and the end of all the degrees of the creation; all these degrees are marked with His seal, and He can be designated by unity only. He is *one* despite the innumerable forms that clothe Him."[8]

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[2] האי רוחא אתפשט ואפיק קלא כליל מאשא ומיא ורוחא דאינון צפון ודרום ומזרח והאי קלא כללא דכל שאר חיליו.—Zohar, part I, fol. 246b, sect. ויהי (Va-Y'chi).

[3] Commentary of Abraham Dior, ראב"ד, on the Sefer Yetzirah. Rittangel ed., p. 65.

[4] Ex nihilo nihil fit—from nothing nothing is made.—Transl.

[5] Zohar, part II, fol. 100b, sect. משפטים (Mishpatim).

[6] Zohar, ibid.

[7] כל מלין דעלמא אתדרו כלהו לעקרא ויסודא ושרשא דנפקו מניה נופא לסטריה ונפשא לסטרא.—Part II, fol. 218b.

[8] רישא וסופא לכל דרגין רשימו דאתרשים ביה דרגין כלהו ולא אקרי אלא אחד לאחזאה דאע"ג דאית ביה דיוקנין סגיאין לאו איהו אלא אחד.—Part I, fol. 21a.

If God is at once the cause and the substance, or, as Spinoza would express himself, the "immanent cause of the universe," it necessarily follows that the latter is the masterpiece of supreme perfection, wisdom and goodness. To convey this idea the Kabbalists made use of a very original expression which several of the modern mystics, Boehm and Saint Martin among them, frequently used in their works. They called Nature a "blessing," and they considered as a very significant fact that the letter by which Moses began the story of the creation בראשית (Breshith),[9] is also the first letter in the word blessing, ברכה (Brakah).[10] Nothing is absolutely bad, nothing is accursed forever, not even the archangel of evil or the "venomous beast" חוייא בישא (Havya Besha), as he is sometimes called, is accursed definitely. There will come a time when he will recover his name and his angelic nature.[11]

Besides, here on earth, wisdom is no less visible than goodness, since the universe was created by the divine word, and because the universe in itself is nothing else but this word. Now, in the mystical language of the Zohar it means, as we have already been taught, that the articular expression of the divine thought is the

9 The letter ב (Beth) of the Hebrew alphabet.—Transl.

10 בגין דבית איהו סימן ברכה אשתכלל בבית עלמא וביה אתברי. Part I, fol. 205b, sect. ויגש (Va-yigash). See also Otiot de-Rabbi Akiba.[a]

a Otiot de Rabbi Akiba, also called Midrash Otiot de Rabbi Akiba, or Haggadah de Rabbi Akiba, is the title of a Midrash on the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, claimed to have come down from the great master (Tanna) Akiba ben Joseph, of the second century.—Transl.

11 The mystic name is סמאל (Sama-ayl). In the days to come the first half סם (Sam), which signifies poison, will be omitted; the second portion איל (Ayl) is the name common to all the angels. The same idea is expressed also in another form. Having demonstrated by a Kabbalistic process (גימטריא—Gematreeya) that the name of God comprises all the sides of the universe, with the exception of the North which is reserved as a place of expiation for the wicked, they add that at the end of the days, the north will, like all the other sides, enter the ineffable name. Hell will disappear; there will be neither chastisement nor trials, nor culprits. Life will be an eternal feast, a Sabbath without end. Cordovero, Pardes Ribonim, fol. 10b, and in Targum Jonathan ben Uziel to Genesis III, 15, it is said to the contrary that the serpent alone will remain unrecovered.

ensemble of all the individual beings that exist in the bud in the eternal forms of supreme wisdom.

But none of the passages already cited, or those we may cite in support of the principle in question, is of greater interest than the following: "The Holy One, blessed be He, had already created and destroyed several worlds before He decided upon the creation of the world we live in; and when that last work was about to be accomplished, all the creatures of the universe and everything that was to be in the world—in whatever period they were to exist—were present before God in their real form before they became a part of the universe. In this sense the following words of Ecclesiastes are to be taken: 'Whatever was in times past shall be in the future also, and all that is to be has been already.'[12, 13] The entire lower world was made in the likeness of the higher world. All that exists in the higher world appears like an image in this lower world; yet all this is but One."[14]

From this exalted and grand belief which we meet more or less diffused through all the great systems of metaphysics, the Kabbalists have drawn an inference which brings them over entirely to mysticism. They imagined that everything which strikes our senses has a symbolic meaning; that the phenomena and the most material form can teach us what passes either in the divine thought or in the human intelligence. According to

12 עד לא ברא הקב"ה האי עלמא הוי בארי עלמין וחריב לון.... וכל מה דאשתכח בהאי עלמא הא הוי קמיה ואתתקן קמיה כל איגון דארי עלמא דאשתכחו בכל דרא ודרא עד לא ייתון לעלמא הא הון קיימי קמיה בדיוקניהון. part III, fol. 61, a, b.

13 Incorrectly quoted and passed unnoticed by Dr. Jellinek. The Hebrew text (Eccl. III, 15) reads: מה שהיה כבר הוא, ואשר להיות כבר היה... Leeser's translation according to Rashi's and Ramban's interpretation is as follows: "That which hath been hath long since appeared, and what is to be has already been. . ." The Zohar also interprets in this sense; for after quoting this passage it continues: מה שהיה כבר הויינו —What was already has already been. Of interest is the free translation of Moses Mendelson; it reads: "As destined as the past has been, so destined is the future, as though it had already been." A clear statement of the theory of pre-destination.—Transl.

14 ועשה העולם הזה בנגד העולם של מעלה וכל מה שיש למעלה כדוגמתו למטה והכל אחד.—Zohar, part II, fol. 20a.

them all that emanates from the mind must manifest itself and become visible outside of it.[15] From this conception comes also the belief in a celestial alphabet and in physiognomics. They speak of the celestial alphabet in the following manner: "Throughout the entire extent of the heavens whose circumference surrounds the world, there are figures and signs by means of which we may discover the most profound secrets and mysteries. These figures are formed by the constellations and the stars which are observed and investigated by the wise.[16] He who is obliged to travel in the morning shall rise at daybreak and look attentively toward the East. He will see something like letters graven on the heavens, and placed one above the other. Those brilliant forms are the letters with which God created the heaven and the earth; they form His mysterious and holy name."[17]

Such ideas, if not taken in a very lofty sense, may seem unworthy of a place in a serious work, but we would miss the only aim we have placed before us, and we would be false to historic truth, were we to show the most brilliant and best-founded thoughts of the system contained in the Zohar, and were we to eliminate carefully all that may offend our intellectual habits. We have seen more than once that similar reveries were caused by the same principle and that such reveries were not always the work of the weakest minds. Plato and Pythagoras came close to them; and on the other hand, all the great representatives of mysticism, all those who saw in external nature a living allegory only, adopted the theory of numbers and ideas, each one according to his intellectual capacity.

That the Kabbalists admitted also physiognomy, the name of which was already known in the time of Socrates, is also a consequence of their general system of metaphysics, or, if we may

15 מל מה דאיהו מסטרא דרוחא בלט בקר ואתחזי —Zohar, part II, fol. 74a; part II, fol. 20a.

16 Part II, 74a, sect. ויתרו —Vayithro.

17 מהאי רקיע דלעילא דמסכך על כלא אתרשימו ביה רשימין דאתקבעין ביה מלין ורזין סתימין דכתיבי ומזלי... לעיינא בהו תכיסי לבא ולאסתכלא בהו. —Part II, fol. 76a.

make use of modern philosophical language, it was by virtue of an a priori judgment. "According to the teachings of the Masters of esoteric science, מארי דחכמתא פנימאה, physiognomy does not consist in outwardly manifested features, but in features mysteriously traced in the depth of our inner self. The external features vary according to the form imprinted on the inner face of the spirit. The spirit alone produces all the physiognomies known to the sages, and it is through the spirit that the physiognomies have a meaning. When souls and spirits come out of Eden (as Supreme Wisdom is often called) they all have definite forms which are later on reflected in the face." (Zohar, part II, fol. 73b.)

A large number of detailed observations, some of which are still credited generally at the present time, follow these general considerations. For instance: a broad, convex forehead is the sign of a profound and active mind and of a choice intelligence; a broad but flat forehead denotes insanity and stupidity; a flat forehead terminating in a point and compressed at the sides, is an unfailing indication of a very limited mind, often combined with unbounded vanity. (Ib. supr., fol. 73-75a.)[18] All human faces may be traced, finally, to four primary types, to which they either draw near or from which they recede according to the rank held by the souls in their intellectual and moral order. Those types are the four figures which occupy the mysterious chariot of Ezekiel, that is to say the figures of man, of the lion, of the ox and of the eagle.[19]

It seems to us that the demonology adopted by the Kabbalists is but a reflected personification of the different degrees of life and intelligence which they perceived throughout nature.[20] The belief in demons and in angels had long since taken root in the

18 The interpretation of the forehead is found really before the general considerations, on page 71b.—Jellinek

19 ציורא דאימא פני אדש פני אריה פני שור פני נשר.—Part II, fol. 73b, ff.

20 Compare L. Dukes. History of the Neo-Hebrew religious poetry, pgs. 107-110.—Jellinek

mind of the people, like a jesting mythology, as it were, alongside the severe dogma of the divine unity. Why then should they not just as well have made use of it to veil their ideas on the relations of God to the world, as they made use of the dogma of the creation to teach the contrary, or as they made use of the words of the text of the Scriptures to place themselves above the divine word and religious authority?

We have not found any text entirely free from doubt in support of this opinion, but here are some reasons which make this opinion very probable, at least. First of all in the three principal fragments of the Zohar, in the two Idras and in the Book of Mystery, there is never any mention made, in any form, of this celestial or infernal hierarchy which seems to have been only a memento of the Babylonian captivity. Then, when angels are spoken of in the other parts of the Zohar, they are represented as much inferior beings than man, as forces of unchanging blind impulses. We shall offer an example of it in the following words: "God vivified every part of the firmament with a particular spirit; immediately all the celestial hosts were formed and found themselves before Him. This is the meaning of what is said (Psalms, XXXIII, 6): 'With the breath of His mouth He created all their hosts . . .' The holy spirits who are the messengers of the Lord, descend from one degree only; but in the souls of the just there are two degrees united in one. For that reason the souls of the just rise higher, and for that same reason their rank is higher."[21]

[21] כל רוחין קדישין דעבדין שלחותא כלהו אתיין מאתר חד נשמתהון דצדקייא מתרי כלולין בחד ובגין כך סלקין יתיר ודרגיהון יתיר —Zohar, part III, fol. 68a, b.[a]

[a] As the author quotes only the last part of the original text, I shall give the first part, and also venture some correction in the translation which may give a better understanding of the text. The first part reads: כשעתא דנשב קודשא בריך הוא הויליז אתעבידו וקיימי חדא הוא דכתיב (תהלים ל"ג) וברוח פיו כל צבאם....

My correction refers to the last half of the quotation. The author omits the word דלעילא after כל רוחין קדישין, and the word דרגין after מתרי, also the letter ד in the word דנשמתהון. He translates the word

Even the talmudists, despite their adherence to the letter, subscribe to the same principle:[22] "The just," they say, "are greater than the angels."[23] We shall understand even better what was meant by the spirits which animate all the celestial bodies and all the elements of the earth, if we pay attention to the names and the functions attributed to them. First of all we must remove the purely poetical personifications, the character of which is closely set forth; and of such are all the angels that bear the name representing a moral quality or a metaphysical abstraction; as, for instance, the good and the bad desire (יצר טוב —Yotzar Tov, יצר הרע—Yotzar ha-Rah) which are always represented to us as real personages, the angel of purity (Tahariel), the angel of mercy (Rahmiel), the angel of justice (Tzadkiel), the angel of deliverance (Pada-el) and the famous Raziel, the angel of secrets who watches with a jealous eye over the mysteries of the Kabbalistic wisdom.[24] Moreover, it is a principle recognized by all the Kabbalists, and connected with the general system of beings, that the angelic hierarchy begins only in the third world, the World of Formation, עולם יצירה (Olam Yetzirah), the place occupied by the planets and celestial bodies.

Now, as previously said, the chief of the invisible militia is the angel Metatron, so called because his place is immediately below the throne of God (כורסייא—Kursa-yah), and who alone constitutes the World of Creation, or the world of pure spirits, עולם בריאה (Olam B'ree-oh). His task is to maintain unity, harmony, and the movement of the spheres; this is exactly the task of that blind and infinite force which, at times, has been

מאתר wrongly with "degree," while the meaning of אתר is "place." So corrected, the translation of this part would read: "All the higher, holy spirits, who perform the errands, issue from one place, the souls of the just (issue) from two degrees which unite into one, and therefore rise higher and their degrees are higher."—Transl.

[22] Compare Ibn Ezra to Genesis I, 1. Yalkut to Joel, par. 524.—Jellinek

[23] נדולים צדיקים יותר ממלאכי השרות—Babyl. Talmud, Sanhedrin, ch. XI, and Hulin, ch. VI.

[24] Zohar, part I, fol. 40, 41. Ib., fol. 55a. Ib., fol. 146a.

substituted for God under the name of "Nature." The myriads of subordinates under Metatron's command have been divided into ten categories, undoubtedly in honor of the ten Sefiroth. These subaltern angels are to the different divisions of nature, to every sphere and to every element in particular, what their chief is to the entire universe. Thus, one presides over the movements of the earth, another over the movements of the moon, and so on over all other celestial bodies.[25] One is called the angel of fire (Nuriel), another is called the angel of light (Uriel), a third presides over the distribution of the seasons, a fourth over vegetation. In short, all the productions, all the forces and all the phenomena of nature are represented in the same manner.

The purpose of this allegory becomes quite evident when the infernal spirits are under consideration. We have already called attention to the general name given to all the forces of this order. The demons, according to the Kabbalists, are the grossest and most imperfect forms, the "shells" of existence; in short, everything that denotes absence of life, of intelligence and of order. Like the angels, they form ten Sefiroth, ten degrees where darkness and impurity thicken more and more, as in the circles of the Florentine poet. [26, 27]

The first, or rather the first two degrees, are nothing else but the state in which Genesis represents to us the earth before the work of the six days; that is to say, absence of all visible form and of all organization.[28] The third is the seat of darkness, the same darkness which in the beginning covered the face

25 They even go so far as to give them the names of the heavenly bodies themselves. One is called Venus (נגה—Nogah), another, Mars (מאדים—Mo-ahdim), another is called the substance of the heavens (עצם השמים—Etzem ha-shomayim).—Zohar, part I, fol. 42ff.

26 Tikunim, Tikun 15, fol. 36.

27 Referring to the great Italian poet Dante and his immortal "Inferno."—Transl.

28 תהו ובהו (Tohu Ubohu) which the Septuagint translates by the two words ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος.

of the abyss.[29] Then follow what are called the seven tabernacles, (שבע היכלות—Shebah Hekoles), or so-called hell, which shows us in a systematic outline all the disorders of the moral world and all the torments consequent to them. There we see every passion of the human heart, every vice and every weakness personified in a demon who becomes the tormentor of those who have been led astray by these faults. Here—lust and seduction (פתות) there—anger and violence (אף וחמה), further on gross impurity, the demon of solitary debauches, elsewhere—crime (חובה), envy (איבה) idolatry and pride.

The seven infernal tabernacles are divided and subdivided ad infinitum; for every kind of perversity there is something like a special kingdom and thus the abyss unfolds itself gradually in all its depth and immensity.[30] The supreme chief of that world of darkness who bears the Scriptural name of "Satan," is called in the Kabbalah "Samael" (סמאל), that is to say the angel of poison or of death; and the Zohar states positively that the angel of death, evil desire, satan and the serpent which seduced our first mother, are one and the same thing.[31] Samael is also given a wife who is the personification of vice and sensuality, for she calls herself the chief prostitute or the mistress of debauches אשת זנונים.[32] But ordinarily they are united into one single symbol called simply the beast (חיוא).

If we wish to reduce this demonology and angelology to the simplest and most general form, we find that the Kabbalists recognized in each object of nature, and consequently in all nature, two very distinct elements; one, an inner incorruptible which reveals itself to the intelligence exclusively, and which is the

29 תלת קליפין כגדלי בצלים דא על דא. והארץ היתה תהו — דא קליפא קדמאה. ובהו דא קליפא תכינא. וחושך קליפה תליתאה.—Ib. supr.

30 For all the details see Zohar, part II, fol. 255-259, sect. פקודי and the commentary or rather the Hebrew translation of that passage in Pardes Rimonim. שער ההיכלות

31 והנחש דא יצר הרע דא מלאך המות דא שטן וכלא חד. —Part I, fol. 35b.

32 It is supposed that the wife of Samael is Lilith (a power of the night), which is often spoken of in the Talmud.

spirit, the life or the form. The other, a purely external and material element that has been made the symbol of forfeiture, of curse and of death. They may have said, as a modern philosopher, and a descendant of their race said: Omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata tamen sunt. (All, no matter how different a grade, is still animated.—Spinoza, Ethics.)

Chapter V

CONTINUATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE ZOHAR

VIEW OF THE KABBALISTS ON THE HUMAN SOUL

It is mainly because of the high rank given to man by the Kabbalists, that the latter recommend themselves to our interest, and the study of their system becomes of great importance to the history of philosophy as well as to that of religion. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" is said in Genesis (III, 19); and this curse is followed neither by any definite[1] promise of a better future, nor by any mention of the soul which is to return to God when the body mingles with the earth. According to the author of the Pentateuch, the model of wisdom in Israel, the author of Ecclesiastes, has bequeathed the following strange comparison to posterity:[2] "For that which befalleth the sons of man, befalleth the beasts; even the same thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other." (Ecl. II, 19.)

The Talmud expresses itself at times very poetically on the compensation that awaits the just. It represents them sitting in the celestial Eden with crowned heads and enjoying the divine

[1] I have emphasized this word because it must be admitted that the doctrine of immortality is not indicated anywhere in the Pentateuch with any *definite* words. Besides, immortality belongs to the characteristic essence of the other side—the religion.—Jellinek.

[2] But Ecclesiastes is a product of the semi-liberal and not of the Jewish spirit.—Jellinek

glory.[3] But it endeavors rather to humble than enoble human nature in general. "Whence come you? From a fetid drop. Whither go you? To a place of dust, of defilement and of worms. And before whom are you some day to vindicate yourself and give account of your actions? Before the King of all Kings, before the Holy One Whose name be praised!"[4] Such are the words we read in a collection of sayings attributed to the oldest and most honored leaders of the Talmudical school.[5]

In quite a different language the Zohar tells us of our origin, of our future destiny and of our relations to the Divine Being. "Man," it says, "is both the summary and the highest expression of creation; for this reason he was not created until the sixth day. As soon as man appeared, everything was completed, the higher world as well as the lower world; for all is summed up in man, he unites all form."[6] But he is not only the image of the world, of the universality of beings including the absolute; he is also, and above all, the image of God as considered in the totality of these infinite attributes. Man is the divine presence on earth, שכינתא תתאה (Sekinta Tahtoah); it is the Celestial Adam who, departing from the highest primitive darkness, created the Terrestrial Adam.[7]

Here follows at first a representation of man under the first of these two aspects, that is—man as the Microcosm. "Do not

[3] צדיקין יושבין ועטרותיהן בראשיהן ונהנין מזיו השכינה—Babyl. Talmud, Berahot, 17a.

[4] מאין באת מטפה סרוחה ולאן אתה הולך למקום עפר רמה ותולעת ולפני מי עתיד לתן דין וחשבון לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה. —Pirke Aboth, ch. III, 1.

[5] Again a bolstered-up judgment on the Talmud! The passage quoted here by the author is not from the Talmud, but was said by an individual, Akabya ben Mahalalel. In what connection did he say it? "Three things you shall hold before you, and you will not be tempted to sin: Whence come you? etc.;" a thought that is bound to be expressed by any one who has as yet not overcome the religious point of view, whether Jew or Gentile.—Jellinek

[6] כיון דנברא אדם אתתקן כלא כל מה דלעילא ותתא ומלא אתכליל באדם איהו שלימותא דכלא.—Zohar, part III, fol. 48a.

[7] אדם דלעילא בתר דאתגליא מלתא טנו סתימו עלאה קדמאה ברא אדם לתתא. —Part II. fol. 70b.

think that man is but flesh, skin, bones and veins; far from it! That which really constitutes man, is his soul; and the things we call skin, flesh, bones and veins are for us but a garment, a cloak, but they do not constitute man. When man departs (this earth), he divests himself of all the cloaks that cover him. Yet, the different parts of the body conform to the secrets of the supreme wisdom. The skin represents the firmament which extends everywhere and which covers everything, like a cloak. The flesh reminds us of the evil side of the universe (that is, as we have said above, the purely external and sensual element). The bones and the veins represent the celestial chariot, the forces that exist within חיילין דקיימו לנו, the servants of God. However, all this is but a cloak; for the deep mystery of Celestial Man is within. All is as mysterious below as it is above. Therefore it is written: And God created Man in His image. The mystery of terrestrial man is according to the mystery of the Celestial Adam. Yet, as we see in the all-covering firmament stars and planets which form different figures that contain hidden things and profound mysteries, so there are on the skin that covers our body certain figures and lines which are the planets and stars of our body. All these signs have a hidden meaning and attract the attention of the wise who can read the face of man." (Zohar, Part II, 76a.) Man makes even the most ferocious animal tremble by the sole power of his external form and by the intelligence and grandeur that reflects in his features.[8] The angel sent to Daniel to protect him from the rage of the lions, is, according to the Zohar, nothing but the very face of the prophet, or the power exerted by the look of a pure man. It is added, though, that this power vanishes as soon as the person sinks through sin and through neglect of his duties.[9] We shall

[8] כל אינון ברייז דעלמא זקפין רישא ומסתכלין בדיוקנא עלאה דבר נש כדין ויושב. כלהו דחלין וזעין מקמיה.—Part I, fol. 191a, Sect.

[9] וכד בר נש לא אזיל כארחוי דאוריתא האי דיוקנא קדישא אתחלף ליה. —Ib. supr.

not linger upon this point which we have noted, and which belongs entirely to the theory of nature.

When we consider the human being, per se, that is to say, from the point of view of the soul, and compared to God before He became visible in the world, it reminds us entirely, by its unity, by its substantial identity and by its three-fold nature, of the supreme trinity. For the human being consists of the following elements: (1) of a spirit, נשמה (N'shamah), which represents the highest degree of his existence; (2) of a soul רוח (Roo-ah), which is the seat of good and evil, of the good and evil desires, in short, of all the moral attributes; (3) of a coarser spirit, נפש (Nefesh), which is in immediate relation with the body and the direct cause of what the text calls the "lower movements," that is, the actions and instincts of the animal life.

To understand how these three principles, or rather these three degrees of human existence united in one being, despite the distance that separates them, we give here again the comparison which we have made use of on the subject of the divine attributes, and the germ of which is to be found in the Book of Formation. There are a great many passages which bear witness to these three souls; but we prefer to choose the following because of its lucidity: "In these three, the spirit, the soul and the life of the senses, we find a true picture of what is going on above; for all these three make up but one being, where all is joined in unity. The life of the senses has no light of its own; for this reason it is closely connected to the body which it supplies with the necessary enjoyments as well as food. We may apply here the following words of the sage: 'She gives provision to her household, and a task to her maidens.' (Prov. XXI, 15.) The house is the body that is nourished, and the maidens are the members of the body who obey. Above the life of the senses is the soul, which subdues it, rules it and supplies it with as much light as it needs. The animal principle is therefore the seat of the soul. Finally, above the soul is the spirit, by which it is ruled in turn, and

which illumines it with the light of life. The soul is illumined by this light, and is entirely dependent upon the spirit. After death, the soul finds no rest, and the gates of Eden are closed to her until the spirit had risen to its source, to the Ancient of the Ancients, to replenish everlastingly from Him; for the spirit always ascends to its source."[10]

Each of these three souls, as is easily foreseen, has its source in a different degree of the divine existence. The supreme wisdom, also called the "Celestial Eden," is the only source of the spirit. The soul, according to all the commentators on the Zohar, springs from the attribute which unites in itself "Judgment" and "Mercy," that is to say, from "Beauty." And lastly, the animal principle, which never rises above this world, has no other basis but the attributes of strength contained in the "Kingdom."

Besides these three elements the Zohar recognizes also another element of quite an extraordinary nature the origin of which will reveal itself in the course of this work. It is the external form of man conceived as a separate existence preceding the body, in short, the idea of the body, but with the individual traits which distinguish every one of us. This idea descends from heaven, and becomes visible at the moment of conception. "At the moment of earthly union,[11] the Holy One, praised be His name, sends down a human-like form which bears the imprint of the divine seal. This form is present at the act of which we spoke, and if we were permitted to see what goes on at the time, we would notice above its head an image resembling a human face, and this image is the model according to which we are procreated. Procreation can not take place until this form has been sent by the Lord, until it descends and hovers over our head, for it is written: 'And God created man in His image.' It is this image which receives

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[10] Part II, fol. 142a, Sect. תרומה (T'roomah).

[11] I wish to note here that "union" may be taken in the allegorical sense, and refer to the "king" and "queen," (see page 168); but may also be taken in the sense of concubitus.—Jellinek

us first when we come into this world; it develops with us while we grow, and accompanies us when we leave the earth. Its origin is in heaven (והאי צלם איהו מלעילא). When the souls are about to leave their celestial abode, each soul appears before the Supreme King clothed in a sublime form wherein the traits are engraved that are to mark it in this world. The image then emanates from this sublime form; it is the third from the soul, precedes us to earth and awaits our arrival from the moment of the conception; it is always present at the conjugal union."[12] The modern Kabbalists call this image the "individual principle" (יחידה —Y'hidoh).

Some, finally, have introduced into the Kabbalistic psychology a fifth principle, called the "vital spirit" (רוח חיוני — Roo-ah He-yuni), or simply חיה (He-yoh). The seat of this principle is in the heart, and it presides over the combination and the organization of the material elements. It is just as different from the principle of animal life (Nefesh) and the life of the senses, as the "vegetative" and "nutritive soul" (τὸ θρεπτικὸν) differs from the "sensitive soul" (τὸ αἰσθητικὸν) in the philosophy of Aristotle and of the scholastics. This opinion is based upon an allegorical passage in the Zohar, where it is said that every night during our sleep our soul ascends to heaven to render account there of the day's work, and that during that time the body is animated only by a breath of life which has its seat in the heart.[13]

But, to tell the truth, these last two elements do not count in our spiritual existence, which is entirely included in the intimate union of the soul and the spirit. The temporary union of these two higher principles with the sense principle, that is to say, life itself which chains them to earth, is not considered a misfortune. Unlike Origenes and the gnostic schools, life is not looked upon as a downfall or as an exile, but as a means for

[12] Zohar, part III, fol. 104a, b, Sect. אמור (Emor).

[13] ולא אשתאר ביה בהדיה נופא בר חד רשימו דקטמטו דהיותא דליבא. —Zohar, part I Sect. לך לך (Lech L'chah).

education and as a beneficial trial. According to the Kabbalists, it is necessary for the soul, an inherent necessity of its finite nature, to play a part in the universe, to contemplate the spectacle offered by creation, in order to attain self-consciousness and consciousness of its origin; and to return, but without absolutely uniting, to that inexhaustible source of light and life which is called the Divine Thought.

Moreover, the spirit cannot descend without raising at the same time the two lower principles, yes, even matter which is placed still lower. Human life, when completed, is therefore a kind of reconciliation between the two extreme expressions of existence considered in its entirety; between the ideal and the real, between form and matter, or, as expressed in the original, between the king and the queen. Here we have these two deductions recognizably expressed in a more poetical form: "The souls of the just are above all the high powers and high servants. And were you to ask why they descend to this world from such a lofty position, and why they wander from their source, I shall answer by the following example: To a king was born a son who was sent to the country to be fed and raised until he should be sufficiently grown and instructed in the habits of his father's palace. When the father was informed that the education of his son was completed, what does he do in his love for him? He sends for the queen, his son's mother, to celebrate his return; he takes him into his palace and rejoices with him all day.

"The Holy One (blessed be His name!) also has a son from the queen; this son is the higher and holy soul. He sends him to the country, i.e., into this world, in order to grow up and be initiated in the usages observed in the royal palace. When the king is informed that His son has reached mature age and that the time has come to take him into His palace, what does He do for the love of him? In honor of His son, he invites the queen, and takes His son into His palace. The soul really never leaves the earth except in company with the queen who is to conduct

it into the palace of the king where it is to live forever. And yet the inhabitants of the country are accustomed to weep when the King's son separates from them.

"But, if there be a clear-sighted man among them, he tells them: Why do you cry? Is he not the son of the king? Is he not right in leaving you that he may go to live in the palace of his father? Thus did Moses, who knew the truth, say to the weeping inhabitants of the country (i.e., the people). You are the sons of Jehovah, your God, you shall not cut yourself for the dead.[14] If all the just knew this, they would welcome the day they are to quit this world. And is it not the height of glory when the queen (the Shekinah or the Divine Presence) descends among them, when they are admitted to the palace of the king, and when they enjoy His delight forever?"[15]

In these relations between God, nature and the human soul we find again the same form of trinity which we met so often before, and which the Kabbalists seem to have given a logical importance of greater extent than the exclusive circle of religious ideas is able to hold.

But human nature is the image of God not alone from this point of view; in all degrees of its existence it includes also the two generative principles, the trinity of which, formed by means of a middle term proceeding from their union, is but the result and most complete expression. The Celestial Adam being the result of a male and a female principle, it was necessary that the same apply also to the terrestrial man; and this distinction applies not only to the body, but also, and above all, to the soul when considered in its purest element.

"Every form," says the Zohar, "in which the male and female principle is not found, is not a higher or complete form. The Holy One, blessed be He, does not establish His abode where these two principles are not perfectly united; the blessing descends

[14] Deuter. XIV, 1.

[15] Zohar, part I, fol. 245a, Sect. ויהי. This entire passage has been translated into Latin by Joseph Voysin.

only where this union exists, as the following words teach us: 'He blessed them and called *their* name (Adam) on the day when they were created, (Genesis V, 2); for the name Adam (Man) can be given only to a man and a woman who are united into one being."[16]

Just as the soul was in the beginning entirely within the supreme intelligence, so were the two halves of the human being, each one of which, however, comprises all the elements of our spiritual nature, united before they came into this world, whither they were sent to learn self-recognition and to unite themselves anew in the bosom of God. This thought is nowhere expressed as clearly as in the following fragment: "Every soul and every spirit, before coming into this world, is composed of a male and a female united into one being. In descending to earth, these two halves separate and go to animate different bodies. At the time of marriage, the Holy One, blessed be He, Who knows all the souls and all the spirits, unites them as before, and they become again one single body and one single soul. . . . But this union conforms to the acts of man and to the ways which he travelled. If he is pure and acts godly, he will enjoy a union which resembles completely the one that preceded his birth."[17] The author of these lines may have heard of the androgyne of Plato; for the name of this imaginary being is well known in the ancient traditions of the Hebrews.[18] But how far inferior to the Kabbalists did the Greek philosopher remain on this point! We may be permitted to remark that the question under

[16] כל דיוקנא דלא אשתכח ביה דכר ונוקבא לאו איהו דיוקנא עלאה כדקא חזי... אפילו אדם לא אקרי אלא דכר ונוקבא בחדא. —Part 1, fol. 55b, Sect. בראשית (Breshith).

[17] כל אינון רוחין ונשמתין כלהו כלילן זכר ונוקבא דמתחברין בחדא ובשעתא דנחתין מתפרשין דא מן דא ואתית להו בבני נשא. וכד מטא עידן זווגא דלהוון קב"ה דידע אינון רוחין ונשמתין מחבר לון כקדמיתא וכד מתחברן אתעבידו חד גופא חד נשמתא וכו'.—Part I, fol. 91b.

[18] Under the name Androgynos (אנדרוגינוס), from the Greek ἀνδρόγυνος, referring to man as well as to animal. The commentator Yitzhaki makes even use of this expression in a grammatical connection for a form which is generis masculi and feminini.—Jellinek

consideration here, and even the principle by which it is solved are not unworthy of a great metaphysical system. For if man and woman are two equal beings by their spiritual nature and by the absolute laws of morality, they are far from being alike in the natural direction of their faculties, and we have reason to agree with the Zohar that sexual distinction exists for the body as well as for the soul.

The belief just expounded is inseparable from the dogma of pre-existence, and the latter, already included in the theory of ideas, is still closer connected to the one which mingles existence and thought. Side by side with the principle from which it sprang, this dogma is also acknowledged with all possible perspicuity. We need but continue the modest role of translator. "When the Holy One, praised be He, was about to create the world, the universe was already present in His thought. He then formed also the souls which were eventually to belong to man; these souls presented themselves to Him in exactly the same form which they were to take later in the human body. God examined them one by one, and found several which were to corrupt their ways (morals) in this world. When the time came each of the souls was summoned before God, Who said: Go to that part of the earth and animate such and such a body. The soul replied: O, Master of the universe, I am happy in this world and do not want to leave it for another where I shall be subjected and exposed to all kinds of contamination. The Holy One, blessed be He, then said: From the day you were created you had no other destination but the world to which I send you. Seeing that it must obey, the soul sorrowfully took the earthly path and descended among us."[19]

Along with this idea we find the doctrine of reminiscence expressed in a very simple manner in the following passage: "Just

[19] בזמנא דבעי הקב"ה למברי עלמא סליק בדעותה קמיה וצייר כל נשמתין דאינון זמינין למיהב בבני נשא וכו' — Part II, fol. 96b, Sect. משפטים (Mishpatim).

as all things of this world were present in their proper form in the thought of God before the creation, so were all human souls, before coming into this world, in the presence of God in heaven in the form which they have here below; and all that they learn here, they already knew before they came here."[20] It is perhaps regrettable that such an important principle has not been developed further, and that it does not take up more space in the totality of the system. But we are forced to admit that it is expressed in quite a categorical manner.

We must take care, however, not to confound this doctrine of pre-existence with the doctrine of moral predestination. Human liberty is not entirely impossible with the latter; with the first, human liberty is a mystery which neither Pagan dualism and the Biblical dogma of creation, nor the belief in the absolute unity are able to reveal. This mystery is formally acknowledged by the Zohar: "If the Lord," said Simeon ben Yohai to his disciples, "if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not put into us the good and the evil desire which the Scriptures call 'light' and 'darkness,' there would be neither merit nor guilt for the created man (man proper)." "Then, why is it so?", demanded the disciples. "Were it not better if there were neither reward nor punishment?" "No!" answered the master, "it is well that man is created as he is, and all that the Holy One, praised be He, created, was necessary. The law was made for the sake of man; but the law is a cloak for the Shekinah. Without man and without the law, the divine presence (Shekinah) would be like a pauper who has no cloak to cover himself with."[21]

In other words, the moral nature of man, the idea of good and evil, which can not be conceived without liberty, is one of the forms under which we are forced to picture the absolute

[20] וכל מה דאוקמין בהאי עלמא כלא ידעי דלא ייתון לעלמא. —Part III, fol. 61b, Sect. אחרי מות (Ahre Moth).

[21] אי לא דהוה הכי דברא הקב"ה יצרא טבא ובישא דאינון אוף וחשך לא היה זכות וחובה לאדם דבריאה... מן הדין הוה ליה למברייה כך בגין דאוריתא בניניה אתבריאת וכו'.—Part I, fol. 93a, b.

being. True, we have been told previously that God knew the souls, before their coming to this world, which were to desert Him later on; but freedom does not suffer thereby. On the contrary, it only commences then, and even the spirits which have been liberated from the bondage of matter can, according to the following words of the Zohar, abuse liberty. "All those who do evil in this world have begun already in heaven their estrangement from the Holy One, praised be He; they threw themselves into the entrance of the abyss and anticipated the time of their coming to earth. Thus were the souls before they came among us."[22]

It is precisely for the purpose of reconciling liberty with the destination of the soul, and of giving man the means of expiating his faults without banishing him forever from the bosom of God, that the Kabbalists adopted and ennobled the Pythagorean dogma of metempsychosis. Like all individual beings, it is necessary that the souls return also to the absolute substance from which they departed. But to attain that purpose they must develop all perfections, the indestructible germ of which is hidden in them, and through many trials they must attain self-consciousness and consciousness of their origin. If they did not fulfil these conditions in a previous life, they begin a second, and after this a third life, passing always into new conditions where the acquisition of the lacking virtues depends entirely upon themselves. We may stop this exile whenever we wish, but nothing prevents us from continuing it forever.

"All souls," says the text, "are subject to the trials of transmigration, עאלין בגלגולא, and man does not know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He. He does not know that he is called to judgment entering this world as well as after leaving it. He does not know the many transformations and the many secret trials he has to pass through; the number of souls and

22 כל אינון דלא משתכחין זכאין בהאי עלמא אפילו תמן מתרחקין מקמיה קב"ה ואעלון בנוקבא דתהומא רבא ודחקין שעתא ונתין לעלמא... כך היו עד לא ייתון לעלמא.—Part III, fol. 61b. Sect. אחרי מות (Ahre Moth).

spirits which enter this world and do not return to the palace of the Heavenly King. Man does not know that the souls undergo revolutions similar to those of a stone thrown from a sling. The time has finally come when these secrets must be divulged."[23]

To these words, so fully in accord with the metaphysics of the Zohar, details are added which reveal at times the most poetic imagination which offers no interest for the history of philosophy and adds nothing to the system we are endeavoring to understand, although not unworthy of Dante's genius and of being incorporated in his immortal work. We only wish to note that, according to St. Jerome, the transmigration of the soul was taught for a long time among the early Christians as an esoteric and traditional doctrine which was to be divulged to a small number of the elect only: abscondite quasi in foveis viperarum versari, et quasi haereditario malo sercere in paucis.[24] Origen considered the doctrine as the only possible explanation of such Biblical accounts as the prenatal scuffle between Esau and Jacob, of Jeremiah's appointment while still in his mother's womb, and a host of others which would accuse the heavens of iniquity were they not justified by the good or evil actions of a pre-existing life. To remove all doubt as to the origin and the true character of this belief, the Alexandrian priest takes care to add that it is not the metempsychosis of Plato which is at issue here, but quite a different and much loftier theory.[25]

To help us regain heaven, modern Kabbalists have conceived another remedy, besides so-called metemphsychosis, which is offered to our weakness by divine grace. They are of the opinion that since the souls lack the power to fulfil separately all the precepts of the law God unites them into one life, so that, like the blind

23 כל נשמתין עאלין בגלגולא ולא ידעון בני נשא ארחו דקב"ה. Part II, fol. 99b, Sect. משפטים (Mishpatim).

24 Hieronymus, Epistol. ad Demetriadem. See also Hutt. Origeniana.

25 Περὶ ἀρχῶν liv. I, ch. VII. Οὐ κατὰ Πλάτωνος μετενωμάτωσιν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἄλλην ὑψηλοτέραν θεωρίαν,—Adv. Celsum, liv. III.

and the lame, they may complete each other. Sometimes it is only one soul which is in need of additional virtue; it therefore looks for it in another, better favored and stronger soul. The latter then becomes like a mother to the first one, carrying it in its bosom and nourishing it from its own substance, like a woman nourishing the fruit of her womb. Whence the name "gestation," or "impregnation" (עיבור—Ibur), the philosophical meaning of which, if there be one, is hard to guess.[26] But we shall lay aside these vagaries or unimportant allegories, if you please, and adhere to the text of the Zohar.

We know that the return of the soul to the bosom of God is the end of, as well as the compensation for, all the ordeals of which we have spoken. However, the authors of the Zohar did not stop there. The union which causes such inexpressible joy to the creator as well as to the created is to them a natural fact, the principle of which rests in the very constitution of the soul; in short, they endeavored to explain that doctrine by a psychological system which we find, without exception, at the bottom of all the theories fathered by mysticism. Having separated from human nature the blind force which presides over animal life, which never leaves the earth,[27] and consequently plays no part in the destinies of the soul, the Zohar distinguishes also two kinds of sentiments and two kinds of cognitions. "Awe"[28] and "love" make up the first two; "direct light" and "reflected light," or

[26] This form of transmigration occupied in particular the mind of Isaac Luria, as attested by his devoted pupil Ha-Yim Vital, in his "Aytz Ha-Yim," Treatise on Metempsychosis (ספר גלגולים), ch. I. Moses Cordovero, more reserved and adhering closer to the Zohar, speaks very little of it.

[27] נפש אשתכחת גו קברא ומתנגלגלת בהאי עלמא—Zohar, part I, fol. 83b, sect. לך לך; part II, fol. 141b, sect. תרומה.

[28] I am taking here the word "awe" not in the destructive sense of "dread" or "fear," but in the constructive sense of a "feeling inspired by something sublime, not necessarily partaking of the nature of fear or dread" (Century Dictionary). The Hebrew word יראה—Yerah, comes from the root —Yoreh, which means "to revere," "to venerate." I therefore do not agree with Dr. Jellinek's translation of the author's "crainte" with "Furcht" (fear, dread). Such rendition seems to me against the spirit of the Zohar; and I believe my opinion is supported

the "inner face" (אנפין פנימאין) and the "outer face" (אנפין אחוריין) are the expressions ordinarily used to designate the two last ones.

"The inner face," says the text, "receives its light from the supreme light (שרגא—Sargah), which shines forever and the secret of which can never be divulged. It is an inner face because it comes from a hidden source; but it is also a superior face because it comes from on high. The outer face is but the reflection of that light which emanates directly from above."[29] When God told Moses that he might see only His back and not His front, He alluded to these two kinds of cognition[30] which are represented in the early paradise by the tree of life and the tree

by the following from the Zohar (Part I, fol. 88b): "There are three sides (aspects) to awe. In two of these the essence of awe is not found and only one contains the essence of awe. There are some, who fear God, that their children may live and not die; or because he fears bodily or financial punishment, and because of this he fears Him constantly. Such awe, which is (but) fear for God, does not equal to the essence (of awe). There are some who fear God because they fear the punishment of the world to come and of hell. These two (modes of awe) are neither the essence nor the source of awe. Awe that makes up the essence (real awe) is the (kind of) awe that one should have for his master because he is the teacher and manager, the essence and basis of all the worlds."
יראה אתפרש לתלת סטרין תרין מנייהו לית בהו עסרא כדקא יאות ואחד עזירא דירא. אית בר נש דדחיל מקב"ה בגין דייחון בנוהי ולא אימותון או דחיל מעונשא דגופיה או דממוניה. ועל דא דחיל ליה תדיר. אשתכח יראה דאיהו לקב"ה לא שוי לעקרא. אית בר נש דדחיל מן קב"ה בגין דדחיל מעונשא דההוא עלמא ועונשא דגיהנם. תרין אלין לאו עיקרא דיראה אינון ושרשא דיליה. יראה"ה דאיהי עקרא. למדחל ב"נ למאריה בגין דאיהו רב ושליט עקרא ושרשא דכל עלמין...—Transl.

[29] Part II, fol. 203b. This dual cognition is very often called the "luminous mirror" (אספקלריא נהרא—Aspaklaryeh N'haroh), and the "non-luminous mirror" (אספקלריא דלא נהרא—Aspaklaryah d'lo N'haroh). They are at times also met with under these names in the Talmud.

[30] It is worthy of note that the Talmud (Yebamoth, fol. 49a), when speaking of Moses, uses also the expressions "luminous mirror" and "non-luminous mirror" אספקלריא המאורה, אספקלריא שאינה מאורה; yet, contrary to the Zohar, the Talmud says of Moses that he saw the Deity in the luminous mirror (באספקלריא המאורה). Noteworthy is also the custom with the orthodox Jews to look at the fingernails and fingertips when blessing the candle at the end of Sabbath (מוצאי שבת) a custom based upon the passage of the Zohar quoted by the author. Compare Orah Hay-im, sect. 298, par. 1, the note of R. Moses Isserles.—Jellinek

of knowledge of good and evil. It is, in short, what we would call nowadays "Intuition" and "Reflection."

Love and awe, considered from the religious standpoint, are defined in a very remarkable manner in the following passage: "Through Awe we come to Love. One who obeys God out of love, has undoubtedly attained the highest degree, and because of his sanctity, belongs already to the future life. Do not think, though, that service to God through awe is no service at all. Such service has also its merits, although the union between the soul and God is not so lofty. There is only one degree more elevated than that of awe, and that is love. Love contains the mystery of the unity of God. It is love that links the higher and lower degrees to one another; it is love that lifts everything to that degree where all must become one. This is also the secret of the words: Hear O Israel, the Eternal our God is *One* God."[31]

We understand offhand that the spirit, when it has reached the highest degree of perfection, knows neither reflection nor awe. Its blissful existence, which is all intuition and love, has lost its individual character; without interest, without activity and without returning to itself, it can not separate itself from the divine existence. In the following passage that kind of existence is represented from the viewpoint of intelligence: "Come and see: when the souls have arrived at the place which is called the "treasure of life," they enjoy that brilliant light, אספקלריא דנהרא, whose source is in the highest heaven, and the splendor of the light is so great that the souls would not be able to bear it were they not clothed with a cloak of light. It is only because of this cloak that they can look into that dazzling hearth which illumines the seat of life. Moses himself could approach to look at it only after discarding his earthly cloak."[32]

[31] אהבה שריא לבתר יראה... מאן דפלח מנו אהבה אתדבק באתר עלאה לעילא ואתדבק בקדושה דעלמא דאתי Part II, fol. 216a, sect. ויקהל (Va-yakhol).

[32] ת"ח כד סלקין נשמתין לאתר ברורא דחיי תמן מתחזן בזהרא דאספקלריא דנהרא.—Part I, fol. 66a, sect. נח (Noah).

If we wish to know how the soul unites with God through love, we must listen to the words of an old man who has been entrusted by the Zohar with the most important part after Simeon ben Yohai. "In one of the most mysterious and most exalted parts of heaven there is a palace of love (היכל אהבה—Hekel Ah-vah). The most profound mysteries are there; there are all souls well-beloved by the Celestial King, the Holy One, praised be He, together with the holy spirits with whom He unites by kisses of love (נשיקין דרחימו—N'shikin D'hreemoo)."[33] It is by virtue of this idea that the death of the righteous is called the "kiss of God."[34] "This kiss," says distinctly the text, "is the union of the soul with the substance from which it springs."[35]

The same principle will explain to us why all the interpreters of mysticism venerate so highly the tender, but often profane, expressions met with in the Song of Songs. "My beloved one belongs to me, and I belong to my beloved one," said Simeon ben Yohai before dying,[36] and it is especially noteworthy that this quotation closes also Gerson's treatise on mystic theology.[37] Notwithstanding the surprise that may be caused by placing the justly celebrated name just mentioned and the great name of Fenelon alongside the names which figure in the Zohar, we shall have no trouble to show that it is impossible to find in the "Considerations on Mystic Theology" and in the "Explanations of the Maxims of the Saints," anything but this theory of love and contemplation, of which we have endeavored to show the most salient features.

[33] בגו טנרא תקיפא רקיעא טמירא אית היכלא חדא דאקרי היכל אהבה —Part II, 97a, sect. משפטים (Mishpatim).

[34] This picture, although not the idea, is represented by the Talmud, which says that Moses died by a kiss from God.—Jellinek

[35] והיא הנשיקה דהיא דביקותא דנפש בעיקרא.—Part I, fol. 168a, sect. וישלח (Va-yishlah).

[36] Part II, Idra Rabba, ad finem.*

* This reference must be incorrect, as the Idra Rabba is to be found in Part III, Section נשא, where the quoted passage is looked for in vain, and it is the Idra Zutah which tells of the death of Simeon ben Yohai.—Jellinek

[37] Considerationes de Theologia Mystica, pt. II, ad fin.

Let us present the last deductions which no one admitted with such frankness as the Kabbalists. There is one degree among the seven degrees of existence (which are also called the seven tabernacles, שבע היכלות),[38] which is called the "all saint," where all the souls unite with the supreme soul and mutually complete themselves. There, all return to unity and perfection. Everything unites into a single thought which spreads over and completely fills the universe. But the foundation of this thought, the light that is hidden within, can never be grasped or known; we may grasp only the thought that emanates from it. In this state, finally, the created can not be differentiated from the creator; the same thought illumines them, the same will animates them; the soul as well as God commands the universe, and God executes what the soul commands.[39]

To close this analysis we must show in a few words the opinion the Kabbalists have of a traditional dogma which, while of secondary consideration in their system, is of the greatest importance in the history of religions. The Zohar mentions more than once the fall and the curses which the disobedience of our first parents brought down upon human nature. It teaches us that, in yielding to the serpent, Adam called down death upon himself, upon his posterity and upon entire nature.[40] Before his sin Adam was more powerful and more beautiful than the angels. If he had a body at all, it was not of that vile matter of which our bodies are made; he shared none of our needs and none of our sensual desires. He was enlightened by a higher wisdom which the divine messengers of the highest rank were condemned to envy.[41]

[38] We have spoken above of the tabernacles of death, of degradation and of hell; here it refers to tabernacles of life.

[39] האי קרש הקדשים כד מתחברין כלהו רוחי דא ברא ואשתלימו דא עם רא. מאן דזכי לאתרכקא במאריה כהאי גוונא ירית עלמין כלהו איהו גזיר והקב"ה עביד—Part I, fol. 48a, b, sect. Breshith (בראשית).

[40] בשעתא דעקים האי חיויא לאדם אסתאב עלמא ואתלטייא ארעא בגינית תולדות. Part I, fol. 145b, sect. וגרים מיתא לכל עלמא.

[41] כיון דחטא אתחשך ואועיר נרמיה ואטריך לגופא אחרא. —Part III, fol. 83b, sect. קדושים (Kdoshim).

We can not say, however, that this dogma is the same as the dogma of "original sin." In fact, if we consider only the posterity of Adam, we do not deal here with a crime which no human virtue is able to expunge, but with a hereditary misfortune, with a terrible punishment which extends into the future as well as into the present. "The pure man," says the text, "is in himself the real sacrifice which may serve as an expiation; the righteous is therefore the sacrifice and expiation of the universe." בר נש דאיהו זכאה איהו קרבנא ממש לכפרה ועל דא צדיקיא כפרה אינון דעלמא וקרבנא אינון דעלמא. Part I, fol. 65a, sect. נח (Noah).

They even go so far as to represent the angel of death as the greatest benefactor in the universe; "for," they say, "the Law was given to us as a protection against him; on his account the righteous will inherit those sublime treasures which are reserved for them in the life to come."[42] However, this old belief in the fall of man, which is so positively taught in Genesis, is ably set forth in the Kabbalah as a natural fact, just as the creation of the soul has been explained previously. "Before Adam sinned he obeyed only the wisdom whose light shines from above; he had as yet not separated himself from the tree of life. But when he yielded to the desire of knowing the things here below and to descend to them, he was tempted by them, he became acquainted with evil and forgot the good; he separated himself from the tree of life. Before they committed this sin, they heard the voice from on high, they were in possession of higher wisdom and retained their sublime and luminous nature. But after their sin, they did not understand even the voice from below."[43]

We fail to see how the opinion just expressed can be opposed when we are taught that Adam and Eve, before they were beguiled by the subtleness of the serpent, were exempt not only from the need of a body, but did not even have a body, that is to say, they

[42] Part II, fol. 163a, b, sect. וירא (Va-yeeroh).

[43] Part I, fol. 52a, b, sect. בראשית (Breshith).

were not of the earth? Both were pure intelligences, happy spirits like those dwelling in the abode of the elect. This explains the Scriptural text where they are represented as nude during their state of innocence, and when we are told by the writer of sacred history that God clothed them in coats of skin, he meant to say that God provided them with bodies and the faculty of sensation, so they might be able to inhabit this world to which they were drawn by an imprudent desire, or by the desire to know good and evil. We give here one of the numerous passages where this idea, adopted also by Philo and by Origen, is expressed in a very clear manner: "When our forefather Adam inhabited the Garden of Eden, he was clothed, as all are in heaven, with a cloak of the higher light. When he was driven from the Garden of Eden and was compelled to submit to the needs of this world, what happened then? God, the Scriptures tell us, made for Adam and his wife coats of skin and clothed them; for before this they had coats of light, of that higher light used in Eden. . . . The good actions accomplished by man on earth draw upon him a part of that higher light which shines in heaven. It is this light which serves him as garment when he is to enter into another world and appear before the Holy One, Whose name be praised. Thanks to this garment he is able to taste the bliss of the elect, and to look into the luminous mirror.[44] That it may be perfect in all respects, the soul has a different garment for each of the two worlds it is to inhabit, one for the earthly world, and one for the higher world."[45]

On the other hand we know already that death, which is but sin itself, is not an universal curse, but solely a voluntary evil; it does not exist for the righteous who unites with God by a love-kiss; it strikes only the wicked who leaves all his hope behind in this world. The dogma of original sin seems to have been

[44] That is to say, as has been explained above, to know Truth face to face through intuition.

[45] אדם הראשון כד הוה בגנתא דערן הוה מתלבש בלבושא וכו׳—Zohar, part II, fol. 229b, sect. פקודי (P'koodah).

adopted rather by the modern Kabbalists, principally by Isaac Luria, who believed that all souls were born with Adam, and that they all formed one and the same soul; he, therefore, regarded them all equally guilty of the first act of disobedience. But, while showing them thus degraded since the beginning of the creation, he accords them, at the same time, the faculty of elevating themselves through their own efforts by fulfilling all the commandments of God. Therefore, the obligation to bring the souls out of this state, and to fulfil, as far as possible, the precept of the low: "Be fruitful and multiply." Therefore also, the necessity of metempsychosis, for one life period does not suffice for this work of rehabilitation.[46] Even under another form, it is always the ennobling of our earthly existence and the satisfaction of life that is offered the soul as the only means of obtaining that perfection the need and the germ of which it carries in itself.

It is not part of our plan to pass judgment upon the vast system we have explained. Besides, we could not do it without profaning the strongest conceptions of the philosophy and the religious dogmas, the mystery of which is justly respected. We intend to play only the modest part of an interpreter; yet, we are convinced, at least, that, notwithstanding the obscurity of the language and the incoherence of the form; notwithstanding those puerile reveries which interrupt at every step the course of serious thought, historical truth has not much to complain of us. Were we to measure now, in a most summary manner, the space we have travelled, we shall find that the Kabbalah, as presented to us by the Sefer Yetzirah and the Zohar, is composed of the following elements:

1. *By taking all the facts and all the words of the Scripture as symbols, it teaches man to have confidence in himself; it puts reason in the place of authority, and calls into existence a philosophy in the very bosom and under the protection of religion.*

2. *For the belief in a creative God, apart from nature, and*

[46] See Aytz Hay-yim, Treatise on Metempsychosis, liv. I, ch. 1.

Who, notwithstanding His omnipotence, had to spend an eternity in inactivity, it substitutes the idea of an universal substance, infinite in reality, always active, always thinking, the immanent cause of the universe, but not confined by it; to whom, finally "to create" means nothing else but to think, exist and develop itself.

3. *Instead of a purely material world, apart from God, sprung from nothingness and destined to return there, the Kabbalah recognizes innumerable forms under which the divine substance develops and manifests itself according to invariable laws of the idea. All exists at first, united in the supreme intelligence before realizing itself in a sentient form. Therefore, two worlds, one an intelligible or higher, the other an inferior or material.*

4. *Of all the forms, man is the most exalted, the most complete, and the only one permitted to represent God. Man is the bond and the transition between God and the world, he reflects both in his double nature. Like everything else of a finite nature, man is also at first included in the absolute substance with which he must unite again some day when he will be prepared by the developments to which he is susceptible. But we must differentiate the absolute form of man, the universal form of man from the particular man which is, more or less, a faint reproduction of the other. The first one, commonly called the celestial man, is entirely inseparable from the divine nature; it is its first manifestation.*

Some of these elements serve as a basis of systems which may be looked upon as contemporaneous with the Kabbalah. Others have already been known at a much earlier time. For the history of human intelligence, though, it is of very great interest to find out whether the esoteric doctrine of the Hebrews is really original, or whether it is but a disguised copy. This question, and the one dealing with the influence exerted by the Kabbalistic ideas, will be treated in the third and last part of this work.

PART THREE

Chapter I

SYSTEMS WHICH OFFER SOME RESEMBLANCE TO THE KABBALAH

RELATION OF THE KABBALAH TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO

The systems which, because of their nature, or because of the age which has given rise to them, seem likely to have served as basis and pattern for the esoteric doctrine of the Hebrews, are partly philosophical and partly religious. To the first belong the systems of Plato, of his unfaithful Alexandrian disciples, and Philo, whom we can not possibly confound with the latter. Of the religious systems we can mention at present Christianity only, and that in a general way. Right here, though, I wish to state frankly that none of these grand theories of God and Nature can explain to us the origin of the traditions with which we have previously become acquainted. It is this important point we wish to establish first.

No one will deny that there is a great analogy between the Platonic philosophy and certain metaphysical and cosmological principles taught in the Zohar and in the Book of Formation. On both sides we see the Divine Intelligence or the Word shaping the universe according to types contained within Himself before things were brought forth. On both sides we see numbers play the role of intermediaries between the ideas, between the supreme idea and the objects which are the incomplete manifestation in the world of this idea. On both sides, finally, we find the

dogmas of the pre-existence of the souls, of reminiscence and of metempsychosis. These various resemblances are so striking that the Kabbalists themselves—I refer to the modern Kabbalists—recognized them, and in order to explain them, they thought it best to make Plato a disciple of Jeremiah,[1] just as others made Aristotle a disciple of Simon the Just.[2]

But will any one dare to conclude from such superficial relations that the works of the Athenian philosopher inspired the first authors of the Kabbalah? and what is more astonishing, that this science, of strange origin and the child of a heathen mind, was held in such a high regard and considered such a deep mystery by the Mishnah? Strange to say, those who hold to this opinion are just the very critics who look upon the Zohar as a mere invention at the close of the thirteenth century, and let it therefore come into existence at a time when Plato was not known; for no one will claim that the scattered citations in the works of Aristotle, and the caustic criticism accompanying them, can give a conception of the Platonic doctrine.

In no case can the actual affiliation of the Kabbalah with the Platonic philosophy be admitted, a view we shall now endeavor to submit to our scrutiny. I shall not rely upon external reasons which will be more opportune later on. I shall only remark here that the resemblances first noticed in the two doctrines are soon wiped out by their differences. Plato acknowledged (in abstracto) two principles: spirit (causa intelligens) and matter—the intelligent cause and the inert substance; although from what he says, it is hard to have as clear an idea of the second as of the

[1] Compare my review on Lindo's English translation of the "Conciliator" by Manasseh ben Israel in Fuerst's "Orient" of 1848, col. 348.—Jellinek

[2] Compare Aree-Nohem (The Roaring Lion) by Leon de Modena, ch. XV, p. 44 (edited by Dr. Julius Fuerst, Leipzig, 1840). Others maintain that Aristotle, while in Palestine with Alexander the Great, saw the works of Solomon, and that these furnished him the principal elements for his philosophy. See שביולי אמונה (Paths of Faith), by R. Meir Aldoli. (Should be Aldabi.—Jellinek.)

first. The Kabbalists, on the contrary, encouraged by the incomprehensible dogma of a creation ex nihilo (from nothing), admitted as basis of their system the absolute unity; a God Who is, at once, the cause, the substance and the form of all that is, as well as of all that can be.

Like every one else, they too acknowledge the struggle of good and evil, of spirit and matter, of power and resistance; but they subordinate this struggle to the absolute principle and ascribe it to the difference which necessarily exists in the generation of things between finite and the infinite, between all individual existence and its limitation, between the furthest points of the scale of beings. This basic dogma, which the Zohar sometimes interprets by deep philosophical expressions, appears already in the Sefer Yetzirah, under quite a phantastic and coarse form, it is true, but at the same time, clear enough to permit the belief in its originality, or to reject, at least, the intervention of the Greek philosopher. When we compare the theory of ideas and the theory of the Sefiroth with each other, and these two with the lower forms that flow from them, we shall find them separated by the same distance, and we can not help understanding it otherwise, noticing as we do, dualism on one side and absolute unity on the other.

By creating an abyss between the intelligent principle and inert matter, Plato can see in the ideas nothing but forms of the intelligence, I mean of that supreme intelligence of which our intelligence is but a conditional and limited part. These forms are everlasting and incorruptible like the principle to which they belong; for these forms are themselves the idea and the intelligence, there can consequently be no intelligent principle without them. In this sense they represent also the essence of things, since the latter can not exist without form or without the imprint of the divine idea. But they (the forms) can not represent all that exists in the inert principle, neither can they represent the principle itself; and yet, since the principle exists, and since it

exists, like the first, in all eternity, it is necessary that it have also its own essence, its distinctive and invariable attributes, although it is subject to all changes.

We reject the argument that Plato meant to point out matter as a mere negation, that is to say, the boundary which circumscribes each particular existence. This role he assigns (in Phoebus, p. 334, trans. of Victor Cousin) expressly to the *numbers,* the principle of every boundary and of every proportion. But along with the numbers and the productive and intelligent Cause, he admits also that which he calls the "Infinite," which is more or less susceptible to that from which the things are produced, in short—matter—or, to be more exact, substance separated from causality. There are therefore existences, and this is the point we are driving at, or rather forms of existence—unchangeable modes of being—which find themselves necessarily excluded from the number of ideas. This is not the case with the Sefiroth of the Kabbalah, among which we see matter itself (יסוד—Y'sod) figure. The Sefiroth represent both the forms of existence and those of the idea, the attributes of the inert substance, that is to say, of the passivity or the resistance as well as the forms of the intelligent causality, since they consider them perfectly identical.

The Sefiroth are therefore divided into two great classes, which are designated by the metaphysical language of the Zohar as the "Fathers" and the "Mothers," and these two, apparently opposite, principles, coming from one inexhaustible source—the Infinite (Ayn Sof)—unite again into one common attribute which is called the "Son," whence they separate under a new form to unite anew. Therefore the trinitarian system of the Kabbalists, which no one can possibly confound with the Platonic trinity.

Having made reservations for our further discussions, it must be admitted that in consideration of such different foundations, the Kabbalistic system, even if brought forth under the influence of the Greek philosophy, may still claim originality. For absolute originality is exceedingly rare, and perhaps never to be found in

metaphysics; and it is known that Plato himself does not owe everything to his own genius. All great conceptions of the human mind on the supreme cause, on the first existence and on the generation of things, have shown themselves under a more or less coarse veil before assuming a character really worthy of reason and science. Thus, a tradition which is not derogatory to the independence and to the fertility of the philosophical spirit, may become admissible.

And yet, notwithstanding this protecting principle, we maintain that the Kabbalists had no connection whatever, at least directly, with Plato. Indeed, if we picture these people having drawn from the source of the most independent philosophy, and having been nourished by this jesting and pitiless dialectic which puts everything to question and which destroys as often as it builds up; if we imagine also that, even by a superficial reading of the "Dialogues," they were initiated into all the elegance of the most refined civilization, are we then able to understand the irrational, the rude and unbridled imagination in the most important passages of the Zohar? Can we explain that extraordinary description of the "White Head," those gigantic metaphors mingled with puerile details, that supposition of a secret revelation older than that of Sinai, and, finally, those incredible efforts, aided by the most arbitrary means, to find their doctrine in the Holy Scriptures?[3]

In these different characters I recognize, indeed, a philosophy which, springing from the bosom of an eminently religious people, dares not admit its own audacity, and which, for its own satisfaction, tries to cover itself with the cloak of authority. But I can not reconcile these characters with the perfectly free choice of a strange and independent philosophy which openly avers that

[3] This last argument is a weak one; for it has been at all times the task of the Jewish religious philosophers to carry into the Bible the given contents of a philosophy. It has been done so from the time of Saadia to the time of Hirsch. As to the arbitrary means, it is part of the nature of mysticism to look for and find symbols to replace its ideas. Indeed, Neoplatonism came forth from Platonism.—Jellinek

it holds its authority, power and enlightenment from reason only. Moreover, the Jews never denied their foreign teachers, nor did they refuse to pay respect to other nations for the knowledge they sometimes borrowed from them.[4] Thus we are told by the Talmud that the Assyrians furnished them with the names of the months, of the angels and with the characters of the letters which they use to this day for the writing of their holy books.[5] Later on, when the Greek language began to spread among them, the most venerable teachers of the Mishnah spoke with admiration of it,[6] and permitted even its use at religious ceremonies in place of the scriptural text.[7] During the Middle Ages, when the Jews were initiated by the Arabs into the philosophy of Aristotle, they did not hesitate to give the same honor to this philosopher as to their own, except, as we said before, that they made him a disciple of their oldest teachers, and ascribed a book to him in which they picture the head of the Lyceum acknowledging upon his deathbed the God and the Law of Israel.[8]

Finally, in a very remarkable passage previously quoted by us, we are informed by the Zohar itself that the books of the Orient come very close to the Divine Law and to some views taught by the School of Simeon ben Yohai.[9] It is added only that this ancient wisdom was taught by the patriarch Abraham to the

[4] We must take into consideration that the Talmudists were very scrupulous about mentioning the name of the originator of an opinion. Compare especially Abboth, ch. 6, the saying: כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם (One who mentions anything in the name of the one who said it (at first), brings redemption into the world).—Jellinek

[5] Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh-Hashanah שמות המלאכים והחדשים עלו עמהם מבבל (The names of the angels and of the months came with them from Babylon). At another place (Tract. Sanhedrin ,ch. XXI) it says, in speaking of Ezra, that the characters of the letters were changed by him, נשתנה הכתב על ידו and that these characters are still called אשורי (Assyrian).

[6] The Talmudist applied the Biblical passage יפת אלהים ליפת (May God enlarge the boundary of Japhet), Genesis IX, 27, to the Greek language.—Jellinek

[7] Babylonian Talmud, Tractat Megillah, ch. I, Tract. Sota, ad fin.

[8] This book is called ספר התפוח, Book of the Apple.

[9] Zohar, part I, fol. 99, 100. Sect. וירא.

children begotten from his concubine, and by whom, according to the Bible, the Orient was populated. What then would have prevented the authors of the Kabbalah from dedicating also a souvenir to Plato? Could they not just as easily as their modern followers have him schooled by some prophet of the true God? According to Eusebius[10] this is exactly what Aristobulus[11] did when, after interpreting the Bible in accordance with the philosophy of Plato, he did not hesitate to accuse the latter of having taken his knowledge from the books of Moses. The same strategy is used by Philo against the head of the Portico.[12, 13]

We are, therefore, entitled to the opinion that the origin of the Kabbalistic system is *not* to be looked for in the so-called Platonism. Let us see if we can find it with the philosophers of Alexandria.

[10] Eusebius of Caesarea, considered the father of Church history, (264-340).—Transl.

[11] Aristobulus of Paneas, Jewish Alexandrian philosopher of the second or third century B. C.—Transl.

[12] Quod omnis probus liber, p. 873, Ed. Mangey.

[13] Refers to the philosopher Zeno (360-270 B. C.), founder of the school of Stoics, so called because the disciples were taught on a "stoa" or porch.—Transl.

Chapter II

RELATION OF THE KABBALAH TO THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL

The metaphysical and religious doctrine which we have gathered from the Zohar has undoubtedly a more intimate resemblance to the so-called Neoplatonic philosophy than to pure Platonism. But before pointing out what is common to both, are we justified in the conclusion that the first of these two systems is necessarily a copy of the other? One word would suffice for the solution of this question were we content with a superficial criticism; for we would have no trouble to establish—and we did establish in the first part of this book—that the secret doctrine of the Hebrews existed long before Ammonius Saccas,[1] Plotinus[2] and Porphyrius[3] changed the aspect of philosophy. But compelled by weighty reasons, we would rather admit that it took the Kabbalah several centuries to develop and establish itself in its definite state. The supposition that the Kabbalah borrowed a great deal from the Pagan school of Alexandria remained since then in full force, and merits therefore our serious consideration; especially so when we bear in mind that after the revolution brought about in the Orient by the Macedonian armies many Jews adopted the language and the civilization of their conquerors.

1 Ammonius Saccas (sack-carrier). Greek philosopher and founder of the Neoplatonic school, (243 C. E.)—Transl.

2 Greek philosopher, founder of the Neoplatonic system of philosophy, (c. 205-270 C. E.).—Transl.

3 Greek philosopher of the Neoplatonic school, (233-305).—Transl.

We must start from the already proven fact (See Part One)—a fact that will show itself still clearer as we go along—that the Kabbalah came to us from Palestine, as attested by its close connection with the rabbinical institutions. For the Jews of Alexandria spoke Greek, and in no case would they have made use of the popular and corrupt idiom of the Holy Land. Now, what relations do we meet with between these countries and the civilizations they represent, from the time the Neoplatonic school made its appearance until the middle of the fourth century, a period during which Judea witnessed the dying of its last schools, of its last patriarchs, and of the last sparks of its intellectual and religious life?[4] Had the Pagan philosophy penetrated the Holy Land during this lapse of time, it would naturally imply the intervention of the Alexandrian Jews, to whom during a course of several centuries the principal monuments of the Greek civilization were as familiar as the holy books, a fact borne out by the Septuagint and the example of Aristobulus.

But the Alexandrian Jews had so little communication with their Palestinian brethren that they completely ignored the rabbinical institutions which played such a great role with the latter, and which, for more than two centuries before the common era, were already deeply rooted in them.[5] When the works of Philo, the book of Wisdom, and the last book of the Maccabees, both of which flowed from an Alexandrian pen, are scrutinized carefully, we find no mention there of any of the names which stand in Judea for the most sacred authority, as that of the high priest Simon the Just, the last representative of the Great Synagogue,[6] and those of the tannaim who succeeded him in

4 See Yost, History of the Jews, vol. IV, Book XIV, ch. VIII; and in the General History of the People of Israel, by the same author, vol. II, ch. V.

5 We adopt the chronology of Yost, just because it is so strict, that is to say, it diminishes as much as possible the antiquity attributed by the Jewish historians to their religious traditions.

6 שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה. Abot, 1, 2. (Simon the Just was of the remnant of the Great Synagogue).—Jellinek

veneration by the people. We never find there even an allusion to the famous disputes of Hillel and Shammai,[7] nor to the different customs which were collected later in the Mishnah, and which attained legal power. In his work "Life of Moses,"[8] Philo does mention an oral tradition which has been preserved by the Elders of Israel, and which was usually studied with the text of the Scriptures. But this tradition, even if not accidentally invented to interweave at pleasure fables in the life of the Hebrew prophets, has nothing in common with the traditions which form the basis of the rabbinical cult. It reminds us of the Midrashim, or those popular, unauthoritative legends which abound in Judaism at every epoch of its history.

The Palestinian Jews, again, were no better informed of what happened with their scattered brethren in Egypt. They knew only from hearsay the pretended version of the Septuagint which dates from a much earlier epoch than the one holding our attention at present. They eagerly accepted the fable of Aristeas[9] which harmonized so well with their national self-love and with their inclination to the marvelous.[10] Not a word is found in

[7] These two great leaders in the Mishnah flourished from 78 to 44 B. C. They therefore lived before Philo.

[8] De vita Mosis, liv. I, init.; liv. II, p. 81, ed. Mangey. These are the words of Philo. Μαθὼν αὐτὰ καὶ ἐκ βίβλων τῶν ἱερῶν ... καὶ παρὰ τινῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους πρεσβυτέρων. Τὰ γὰρ λεγόμενα τοῖς ἀναγινωσκομένοις ἀεὶ συνύφαιον.

[9] The author probably means the "Letter of Aristeas" where the story of the Septuagint is told.—Transl.

[10] Tractat Megillah, fol. 9. This passage clearly shows not only that the authors of the Talmud did not know the Septuagint (there were supposed to be seventy-two translators), but that, on account of their ignorance of the Greek language and literature, they could not possibly have known it. Indeed, in enumerating the changes made in the text of the Pentateuch by the seventy-two Elders who were especially inspired by the Holy Spirit for that purpose, they point out ten places, some of which never existed, some of which not the least trace had been found, and the most of which are either ridiculous or impossible. Thus, to cite only two examples, they contend that it was necessary to change the first three words of Genesis; that instead of Bereshith Bara Elohim (in the beginning God created), we read Elohim Bara Bereshith (God created in the beginning); for, they said, had the original arrangement been retained, king Ptolemy would have believed that there existed a higher principle than God, and that this principle was Bereshith.

But I fail to see how such a misapprehension can possibly occur in a Greek translation, whether the two words ἐν ἀρχῇ be placed at the beginning or at the end. And who would take these two words as the name of the divinity? As to the Hebrew word Bereshith, why should it at all be preserved in any translation? In the passage in Leviticus (XI, 6), where Moses forbids the use of the hare, they introduce (always in the name of the Seventy) a still more ridiculous variant. They say that the Hebrew name of the forbidden animal (ארנבת—Arnebeth) was the same as that of Ptolemy's wife, and that the king be not shocked by linking his wife's name with an impure thought, the following paraphrase was used: that which is nimble of foot (צעירת הרגלים). They possibly meant to designate here the family of the Lagidia (hares). But, in any case, it is impossible to endure any longer this ignorance of history and of Greek literature. What concerns the paraphrase spoken of above, this is entirely imaginary.

[11] A Jewish ascetic sect that originated in Egypt during the first century.—Transl.

[12] Asarya de Rosi, a critic of the sixteenth century (not fifteenth, as given by the author.—Jellinek) vainly maintains that the Baythusims, so often mentioned in the Talmud, can be no other than the Essenes. The proof he offers is too shallow to deserve the least consideration.* He thinks that the name Baythusim, ביתוסים, is a corruption of the word which expresses in Hebrew the sect of the Essenes, בית אוסים (Beth Uhsim). Yet, relying upon such a basis, a modern learned critic accepted the identity of these two religious sects. See Gefroerer, Critical History of Primitive Christianity, Part II, p. 346, 347.

* That the Talmud knows and thinks of the Essenes has been proven by Rapaport, the father of modern Jewish criticism, in his biography of the religious poet (Paytan—פיטן) Kaliri, Note. 20.[a] They are mentioned in the Talmud (Berakoth 9b) under the name of קהלה קדישא דבירושלים "holy congregation of Jerusalem" and ותיקין (ἡσυχοί) "moral pious." Compare also "Orient," year 1840, col. 604. Year 1842, col. 440.—Jellinek

[a] Of the same opinion is Dr. Lippe, an erudite and deep talmudic scholar, who says in the introduction to his "Das Evangelium Matthaei vor dem Forum der Bibel und des Talmud" (The Gospel according to Matthew before the Tribunal of Bible and Talmud, translated by me): It (the sect of the Essenes) is met with in the Talmud under different names, depending upon the various peculiarities and occupations in which its members appeared among the people. They are called "Morning Baptizers" (Haemerobaptists—טובלי שחר), because of their

the Mishnah and in the two Gemaras which would be applicable either to the philosopher Aristobulus, to Philo, or to the author of the apocryphal books mentioned before. Still more surprising is the fact that the Talmud never mentions either the Therapeutae,[11] or even the Essenes,[12, 13] although the latter were already well

established in the Holy Land during the life of the historian Josephus. Such silence can be explained only by the origin of these two sects and by the language they employed for the transmission of their doctrines. Both were brought forth in Egypt, and probably kept up the use of the Greek language, even upon the soil of their religious fatherland. The silence of the Talmud, especially with regard to the Essenes, would otherwise be still more unexplainable; for, according to Josephus, these sects were known already during the reign of Jonatas Maccabeus, one hundred and fifty years before the Christian era.[14]

Can we possibly believe that the Jews of Palestine knew much more of what was going on in the Pagan schools, equally distant, while they were so ignorant of matters pertaining to their own brethren some of whom they could justly have been proud of? We have already said that they held the Greek language in high esteem; but were they sufficiently familiar with it to enable them to follow the philosophic trend of their time? We are perfectly justified in doubting this. For, above all, we find neither trace nor mention in either Talmud[15] or Zohar of any monument

custom of bathing in the Jordan every morning; the Chaste (צנועים) "Men of Pure Thought" (נקיי הדעת); "The Silent Ones" (חשאים); "The Healers" (אסיים).—Transl.

[13] Hirsh Hayes thoroughly disposed of this proposition of de Rossi in Fuerst's "Orient" 1840, col. 603.—Jellinek

[14] Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XII, ch. 9. Josephus does not state that the Essenes were established in Palestine at that time.

[15] This is disputable on many points. Besides the great number of Greek words adopted by the Talmud, I want also to point out that the Mishnah knew already of Homer. In Tract Yodahyim we read: ספרי המירום אינה מטמאין את הידים "The books of Homer do not defile the hands."

Again, in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tract, Sanhedrin, fol. 28a; ר' עקיבע אומר אף הקורא בספרים החיצונים כגון ספרי בן סירא וספרי בן לענא, אבל בספרי המירום וכל הספרים שנכתבו מיכן ואילך הקורא בהן כקורא באיגרת "Rabbi Akiba says: Even those who read the irreligious books of Ben Laon (forfeit the future life); but he who reads the books of Homer and other similar books, is considered as though reading a letter." That המירום is identical with Homer is admitted by R. Benjamin Musafia. Compare the talmudical dictionary Aruch under מרום, and Musafia's commentary of it. See also אור אסתר by S. and M. Bondi (Bessau, 1812), under המירום.—Jellinek

of the Greek civilization. How, then, is it possible to understand a language when the works it produced are not known? Then again, we learn from Josephus himself,[16] who was born in Palestine, and who spent most of his life there, that this famous historian required help for the writing, or rather, for the translating of his works into Greek. At another place in his works[17] he expresses himself still more explicitly on this subject, applying in general to his compatriots what he says of himself; he then adds that the study of languages is looked upon in his country as a profane occupation, worthy rather of slaves than of free people; and that, finally, only those are held there in great esteem and called savants who are very highly proficient in the knowledge of the religious laws of the Holy Scriptures.

And yet Josephus belonged to one of the most distinguished families. Of royal blood and of priestly rank, no one was more fit to be initiated in all the knowledge of the land, in the religious knowledge as well as in that which prepares one of noble birth for a political life. In devoting himself to the profane studies, the author of the "Jewish Antiquities" and of the "Jewish War" was not subject to the same scruples as his compatriots who remained true to their country and to their belief.[18]

Admitting even that the Greek language was much more cultivated in Palestine than we are justified in thinking, we are still far from drawing any conclusion therefrom upon the influence of the Alexandrian philosophy; for the Talmud makes a clear distinction between the Greek language and, what it calls the Greek science,[19] חכמת יונית לחוד לשון יונית לחוד (Greek science for itself, Greek language for itself); as much as the first was

[16] Josephus against Appion, I, 9.
Χρησάμενος τισὶ πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς, οὕτως ἐποιήσαμεν τῶν πράξεων τὴν παράδωσιν.

[17] Jewish Antiquities, lib. XX, IX, at the end of the book.

[18] Josephus' character is appreciated in a very interesting thesis defended recently (1843) in the Faculty of Sciences at Paris by Philarete Chasles: "On the Historical Authority of Flavius Josephus."

[19] Tract. Sotah fol. 49b at end.

respected and honored, so much was the latter execrated. The Mishnah which, as a collection of legal decisions, expresses itself very concisely, confines itself to prohibiting the bringing up of children in Greek learning; it adds, however, that this interdiction was carried out during the war with Titus.[20] The Gemara, though, is more explicit, and sets that interdiction at an earlier date. "The following," it says, "has been taught us by our masters: During the war which raged between the Hasmonian princes, Hyrcanus laid siege to Jerusalem, and Aristobulus was the besieged.[21, 22] A chest full of coins was lowered every day along the outer wall, and in exchange thereof the animals required for sacrifices were sent up.[23] Now, in the camp of the besieger there was an old man who was at home in the Greek learning. He said: As long as your enemies are having the means to hold divine service, they will not fall into your hands. When on the following day the chest full of coin was lowered as usual, a pig was sent up instead of the sacrificial animal. When half way up the rampart, the unclean animal dug its nails into the wall and the land of Israel trembled four hundred parasangs (Persian miles) around. At that time the following curse was pronounced:

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[20] Ib. supr. בסולמום של טימום נזרו שלא ילמד אדם את בנו חכמת יוונית. (In the army of Titus it was forbidden to teach children Greek science).

[21] Attention to this discrepancy between the Gemara and the Mishnah is directed also in the Tosafoth (Appendices to the Talmud), Baba Kamah, fol. 82. It is the result of the vague historical knowledge of the Gemarists. Compare also my succeeding note.—Jellinek

[22] In the Talmud it really reads: היה הורקנוס מבפנים ואריסטובולום מבחוץ "Hyrcanus was within (therefore, the besieged) and Aristobulus without (the besieger)"; but the Talmud, not always exact in matters of historical data, refers here to the first fraternal struggle (60 B. C.) which does not correspond with the alleged passage in Josephus. Following Josephus, therefore, I retained the translation of the author; although the event, according to the Talmud, would date back still further.—Jellinek

[23] The author's translation "une caise remplie d'argent" does not correspond exactly with the text:[a] היו משלשלין להם בקופה דינרין—Jellinek

[a] The mistake is a trifling one. Should read "basket of money." קופה means basket and not case.—Transl.

Cursed be he who raises pigs; cursed be he who imparts Greek learning to his children."[24]

Barring the fabulous and ridiculous account of the earthquake, this account is valuable for the critic. The gist is apparently true, for it is also found in Josephus. (Jewish Antiquities, Vol. XIV, ch. 3.) According to him Hyrcanus' men promised to give to the besieged sacrificial animals at one drachma per head, but when the money was delivered they refused to send the animals. This was considered by the Jews as doubly odious; for, according to Josephus, it violated not only the sworn trust in man, but it struck in some way God Himself. When we add to it the very probable new circumstance that the priests saw coming into the holy place an animal so utterly disgusting to them instead of the impatiently expected sacrifice, we can see the measure of blasphemy and perjury overflowing. Now then, who was responsible for such a crime? Where are we to look for the first impulse? Surely with those who neglected the Law of God for the wisdom of other nations. Whether or not this accusation be well founded, is of little importance; whether the anathema, justified or caused by that accusation, was pronounced during the Hasmonean war or during the war of Titus, is of still less importance to us. What does interest us, though, and what seems to us also beyond doubt, is the fact that Greek learning was looked upon in Palestine as a source of impiety, and constituted in itself a double sacrilege, no matter what degree it attained there. No sympathy, no alliance, therefore, could take place between those who were suspected of it and the founders and keepers of rabbinical orthodoxy.

In the name of Rabbi Judah, who heard from an older teacher Samuel, the Talmud really gives us the following words of Simon, the son of Gamaliel, who played such a beautiful part in the Acts of the Apostles: There were a thousand children in the home of my father; five hundred studied the Law, and five hundred

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[24] Ib. supr. This Gemara follows immediately the Mishnah quoted in the previous note.

were instructed in Greek learning. Today only myself here and the son of my father's[25] brother in Asia[26] remain. To this objection the Gemara responds with: An exception is made with the family of Gamaliel because it was close to the royal court.[27] Let us note, besides, that the entire passage is far from offering the same character as the previous one; we do not deal here with a general tradition,[28] but with a simple hearsay of an individual witness who is already far removed from the source.[29] Gamaliel's character, as pictured by tradition, is best distinguished from that of the other teachers of the Law by his very attachment to the orthodox wing of Judaism and by the general respect he inspired (νομοδιδάσκαλος τίμιος παντὶ τῷ λαῷ).[30]

It will be seen that such sentiments are not easily compatible with the accusation of impiety made against the Hellenists.[31] What is more, this patriarch of the synagogue, quite aged already at the time of the apostles, had been dead a long time when the school of Alexandria was founded. Finally, since the house of Gamaliel was an exception, the fact, whatever it may be, should have disappeared with the cause, and we really do not find later the least trace of it. Offsetting this obscure and uncertain text,

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25 In the first edition the author had "Le fils de mon frère," which Dr. Jellinek noted as incorrect. In the last edition the author took note of Dr. Jellinek's correction, but still failed to give the correct translation of the text. He says "Le fils du frère de mon frère," which certainly has no meaning. Possibly the printer's devil slipped in here, and instead of the last "frère" it should read here "père." I followed Jellinek's translation which is the correct one. I only wish to add here that the last word in this quotation, the word "באסיא" means "of Asia," or perhaps "Essa," the name of a place. (See Dr. Kohut's Aruch).—Transl.

26 אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל משום רשב"ג אלף ילדים היו בבית אבא חמש מאות למדו תורה וחמש מאות למדו יוונית ולא נשתייר מהם אלא אני כאן ובן אחי אבא באסיא.

27 Ib. Supr. שאני של בית ר"ג שהיו קרובים למלכות.

28 By "general tradition" is meant the "תנו רבנן" "our Rabbis have taught."—Transl.

29 This testimony is not to be distrusted. Granted that the number is exaggerated; the fact, as corroborated by the exact names given, still remains true.—Jellinek

30 This is the very expression used by the Gospel, Acts, V. 34-39.

31 Yost, History of the Jews. Vol. III, p. 170ff.

we find another text which is in perfect accord with the strict terms of the Mishnah. "Ben Domah asked his uncle Rabbi Ismael: Having studied all of the Law may I also study Greek science? The teacher cited the following verse to him: The book of the Law shall not quit thy mouth; and thou shalt ponder over it day and night. Now then, he added, find an hour which is neither day nor night, and I shall permit you to devote it to the study of Greek science."[32]

The hypothesis that the Alexandrian philosophy found disciples among the teachers of Judea is totally overthrown by the passages previously quoted (and we do not know of any other) which justify our opinion that they did not even know the word "philosophy."[33]

Indeed, how can that old man who advised Hyrcanus to use against the enemy the exigencies of the cult—his own cult—be considered a philosopher! Such a policy would be worthy rather of a Machiavelli! How can philosophy be counted among the attainments necessary for the admission to the court of Herod! When we consult the oldest and most celebrated commentator, R. Solomon bar Isaac,[34] (Rashi—רש"י),[35] our opinion is confirmed. "By Greek science," he says, "the Talmud understands a scholastic language spoken by the courtiers and not understood

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32 צא וברוק שעה שאינה לא יום ולא לילה ולמוד בה חכמת יוונית. —Tract. Menachoth, fol. 99b.

33 The word "philosopher" (פילוסופוס φιλόσοφος) is met with several times in Tractat Sabbath, fol. 116a, Aboda Zora, fol. 54b. In the last place a conversation between a philosopher and Gamaliel II is even quoted. Still, it does not interfere with the investigation of the author; on the contrary, these passages prove that to them philosophy was a source of impiety.—Jellinek

34 The most famous commentator of Bible and Talmud. Born at Troyes, France, in 1049, died 1105.—Transl.

35 In this and similar cases, Rashi is not an important authority; for he did not understand Greek. Generally speaking, Rashi may be made better use of for the Halakah of the Talmud. To Aboda Zora, 54b, for example, Rashi comments the word פילוסופין with חכמי האומות "Pagan savants," and the Tosafoth only say (Sabbath, fol. 116a) that they had heard from a Jew who came from Greece that the Greek meaning of the word פילוסלפוס is "Friend of Wisdom."—Jellinek

by the people in general."[36] This explanation, although very sensible, is perhaps a little narrow; but, to be sure, the doubtful expression to which it refers can not designate[37] anything but a certain general culture, or rather, a certain intellectual liberty brought about by the influence of Greek literature.

While the religious traditions of the Jews show such hatred towards any wisdom coming from the Greeks, it is evident from the following passage with what enthusiasm, with what adoration

36 לשון חכמה שמדברים בני פלטין ואין שאר העם מכירין בו. Rashi, commentary to the words חכמת יוונית in the quoted passage. Maimonides, in his commentary to the Mishnah, expresses himself on the same subject as follows: "By the Greek science we understand the signs—found in all languages—which digress from the right path, as the allegories[a] and riddles." הרמזים שהם בלשונות שנוטים מדרך היישרה כמו הרמזים והחידות. "No doubt," he adds, "the Greeks had a similar language, although no trace of it is left with us." This opinion is utterly ridiculous, and does not deserve further consideration. We maintain the same of Gefroerer's opinion (critical History of Primitive Christianity, Vol. II, p. 352). Depending upon Maimonides' words, the German critic believes that, according to the Talmudists, the Greek learning was only a symbolic interpretation of the Scriptures by the Alexandrian Jews, and he comes to the conclusion that the mystic ideas of Palestine were borrowed from Egypt. But where can we find the least connection between these ideas and the advice given to Hyrcanus, or the customs prevailing at the court of Herod?

[a] Dr. Jellinek objects to the author's rendition of רמזים with "enigmas," as well as to Gefroerer's translation by «ἀλληγορίαι» (allegories). He thinks that the fundamental meaning of the word is "Andeutungen" (hints, allusions, suggestions). According to the Aruch of Kohut, the word רמז means "to wink" (with the eye), or "to nod," and he gives many examples in support of his opinion. It amounts, after all, to the same thing. An allegory is nothing else but "a description of one thing under the image of another, spoken so as to imply something else." (Twentieth Century Dictionary), or to hint or wink at something.—Transl.

37 To find out the real meaning of the words חכמת יוונית we must go back to the development of this expressoin. Just as the Greek word «σοφία» (Sophia) was originally used to express dexterity in corporeal art (Homer, II, 15, 42). and later to express political wisdom, so is the Hebrew word חכמה (Hakmah) used in the latter sense. The Jews express by חכמה what the Greeks express by σοφία. Now, then, as politics and political wisdom are part of σοφία, the Jews, therefore, understand by חכמת יוונית—politics, and for this reason also the special designation יוונית. This conception of חכמת יוונית will cast much light on the quoted passage of the Talmud. Compare also further on about the conception of חכמה—Jellinek

and with what superstitious fear they speak of the Kabbalah: "Our teacher[38] Yohanan Ben Zakkai[39] once took to the road, mounted on an ass and accompanied by Rabbi Eleazar Ben Arak. The latter asked Ben Zakkai to teach him a chapter of the Merkaba. Did I not tell you, answered our teacher, that it is forbidden to expound the Merkaba even to one person unless he be wise and can deduce wisdom of his own accord?[40] Then

38 We thus translate the word רבן (Rabban) not because it is a higher title than that of רבי (Rabbi), but because it is probably an abbreviation of the word רבנו (rabbenu) which literally means "our teacher;" "rabbi" means "my teacher." The first of these titles belongs to the Tannaim, and expresses more general authority than the second.*

* More distinctly expressed, רבי is the title peculiar to the Tannaim; רב (Rab) belongs to the Amariam. Besides, it is not settled whether the "ן" (final Nun) in רבן (Rabban) is the abbreviated plural ending; for *an* (like the *an* in Arabic) is the connecting syllable of many nouns in Aramaic. The title רבן was given to Gamaliel I, II, III, and to Hananyah, the son of Gamaliel. This would lead to believe that the title רבן included also the idea of popular esteem.—Jellinek

39 I can not desist from giving here some footnotes found in the German translation of the first edition; they seem to me of some importance. This paragraph ends somewhat differently there. The author mentions Yohanan ben Zakkai as living before Gamaliel, the contemporary of the apostles. He makes the following footnote: "Yohanan ben Zakkai was the immediate disciple of Hillel the Elder, whose grandson was Gamaliel; Yohanan, therefore, must have been older (Tract. Sukah, fol. 28. Yost, History of the Israelites, Vol. III, 114 and 170). To this Dr. Jellinek remarks the following: "In the seventh volume of כרם חמד —Lovely Vineyard—(Prague, 1843, S. Landau) there are very pointed remarks made by Dr. Michael Sachs on the character of Yohanan ben Zakkai. Especially noteworthy is the fifteenth Mishnah of the ninth chapter of the Tractate Sota to which he refers. There it reads: משמת ר' יוחנן בן זכאי בטל זיו החכמה. 'When Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai died, the splendor of wisdom vanished.' The point at issue here is the correct meaning of the word חכמה (Wisdom). But Dr. Sachs himself veils the interpretation of this word in mystery, and the reader is at a loss to know what he is to understand by it. Although this scholar is loath to identify it with the Kabbalah, he nevertheless admits that it has some connection with the Merkaba. I am, indeed, far from supporting the opinion that this חכמה (Hakmah—Wisdom) is the Kabbalah as presented to us by the Zohar; yet, it seems to me that it belongs at least into that class, and that it testifies to the great age of the Kabbalistic ideas."—Transl.

40 In the text: ולא במרכבה ביחיד אלא אם כן היה חכם ומבין מדעתו These words prove best the old age of the first Mishnah of the section in Haggiga. It is well known that the editor of the Mishnah collected the sayings of other teachers. Accordingly, these words, found in the

permit me at least, replied Eleazar, to repeat in your presence what you taught me of this science. Very well, speak, replied again our teacher; and thus saying he alighted from the ass, covered his head and sat upon a stone in the shade of an olive tree. . . . Eleazar, son of Arak, had hardly begun to speak of the Merkaba, when a fire descended from heaven and enveloped all the trees of the field, which seemed to sing hymns, and from the fire there was heard the voice of an angel who expressed his joy at listening to these secrets. . . . "[41] Later on, when two other teachers attempted to imitate the example of Eleazar, they were struck by miracles of no less astonishing a character. Dark clouds suddenly covered the sky, a rainbow-like meteor dazzled on the horizon, and the angels were seen hastening to listen, like a curious crowd gathering to witness a wedding march.[42] Is it still possible to think, after reading these lines, that the Kabbalah is but a ray pilfered from the sun of Alexandrian Philosophy?

quoted Mishnah, belong to Yohanan ben Zakkai, the disciple of Hillel (Sukah, fol. 28). Compare further on about Yohanan ben Zakkai.—Jellinek

[41] Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Haggiga, fol. 14b.

[42] Babyl. Talmud, Tract. Haggiga, fol. 14b. These two passages form but one passage which does not end at the place we stopped. We must add the account of the dream narrated by R. Yohanan when he was told of the miracles performed by his disciples: "You and I were on the Mount Sinai when from on high in heaven there came a voice that said: Come up here, come up here! Spacious banquet halls and beautiful sofas are reserved for you. You, your disciples, and the disciples of your disciples are destined for the third class."* Do not the last four words hint to the four worlds of the Kabbalists? This conjecture gains in certainty when we consider that above the third degree is the world of B'ree-ah of the divine attributes only.

* Rashi comments on the expression כת שלישית (third class) with: ג' כתות היושבות לפני השכינא "three classes that dwell before the Shekinah." This explanation is also subscribed to by the Jerusalem Talmud which adds: אתיא כמ"ד שובע שמחות את פניך ישבע כתות של צדיקים לעתיד לבוא. —"this is taken in the sense of one who concludes from the following words of the Psalms: In Thy presence is fulness of joy (Psalms, XVI, 2) —that there are seven classes of righteous ones in the world to come (by substituting the word שובע—to fill, to sate, the word שבע—seven)." This has, therefore, nothing in common with the worlds of the Kabbalists. Besides, all these tales are united into one story in the Jerusalem Talmud, which would also point to the legendary and uncertain character of this story.—Jellinek.

However, we can not help acknowledging that there exist certain resemblances between the Kabbalah and the Neoplatonism of Alexandria which are impossible to account for except by a common origin; and this origin, perhaps, we shall have to look for elsewhere than in Judea and Greece. We need not point out here that the school of Ammonius, like the school of Simeon ben Yohai, also shrouded itself in mystery, and also resolved never to divulge the secrets of its doctrines (Porphyrius, Life of Plotinus); that through the medium of their last disciples, at least, they too passed themselves for the inheritors of an ancient and mysterious tradition which emanated, necessarily, from a divine source;[43] that they knew and applied in the same manner allegorical interpretations;[44] and, finally, that they put the pretentious enlightenment of enthusiasm and faith above reason.[45] These then are the claims common to all kinds of mysticism. We shall not dwell upon them and delay thereby our getting sooner to the following, more important points.

1. God is to Plotinus and his disciples, as well as to the adepts of the Kabbalah, the immanent cause of the substantial origin of things. Everything comes from Him, and everything returns to Him. He is the beginning and the end of all that is.[46] He is, as Porphyrius says, everywhere and nowhere. He

[43] According to Proclus the philosophy of Plato existed at all times in the minds of exceptional men. As a mystery it was transmitted from generation to generation to Plato who communicated it to his disciples. Ἁπάσαν μὲν τοῦ Πλάτωνος φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκλάμψαι νομίζω κατὰ τὴν κρειττόνων ἀγαθοειδῆ βούλησιν . . . τῆς τε ἄλλης ἁπάσης ὑμᾶς μετόχους κατέστησε τοῦ Πλάτωνος φιλοσοφίας καὶ κοινωνοὺς ἐν ἀπορρήτοις παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ πρεσβυτέρων μετείληφε.

[44] There are three ways of speaking of God, says Proclus: the mystic or divine, ἐνθεαστικῶς; the dialectic, διαλεκτικῶς; and the symbolical, συμβολικῶς. Ib. supr. Ch. IV. This distinction reminds of the "three cloaks of the Law" accepted by the Zohar.

[45] This preference is fully expressed in all the works of Plotinus and of Proclus; but we cite principally the "Platonic theology" of the latter, Book I, ch. XXV, where faith is defined in a very remarkable manner.

[46] Proclus in the Theol. Plat., 1, 3; II, 4; Element. Theol. 27-34, and in the Commentary on Plato.

is everywhere, because all beings are in Him and through Him; He is nowhere, for He is neither in any particular existence, nor in the sum of all existences.[47] He is so far from being the union of all individual existences, that he is even, says Plotinus, above existence, in which he sees but one of His manifestations. If He is superior to existence, He is equally superior to intelligence which, emanating necessarily from Him, can not reach Him. Then again, although He is generally called the Unity (τὸ ἕν), or the First, it would be more appropriate to give Him no name at all, for there is no name that can express His essence; He is the Ineffable, the Unknown (ἄρρητος, ἄγνωστος).[48] This is exactly the status of the Ayn Sof which is always called by the Zohar the Unknown of the Unknown, the Mystery of Mysteries, and which is placed by it far above the Sefiroth, even above those which represent existence in the highest degree of abstraction.

2. According to the Alexandrian Platonics, God can be conceived only in the form of a trinity. There is first a general trinity that is composed of the following three expressions which have been borrowed from the language of Plato: the Unity or the Good (τὸ ἕν, τὸ ἀγαθόν), the Intelligence and the Soul of the world (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντός, τῶν ὅλων) or the Demiurge.[49] But each of these three expressions gives birth to a particular trinity. The Good or the Unity, in its relations to the beings, is at the same time the principle of all love, or the object of universal desire (ἐφερτόν), the fulness of power and possession (ἱκανόν), and, finally, the highest perfection (τέλειον). As the possessor of the fulness of power, God tends to manifest Himself outwardly, to become the creating cause; as the object of love and desire, He attracts to Him all that is, and becomes

[47] Πάντα τὰ ὄντα καὶ μὴ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐν Θεῷ, καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς ... τὰ ὄντα τὰ πάντα γέννηται δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἐκεῖνος, ἕτερα δὲ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὸς οὐδαμοῦ. Sentent. ad intelligib., ch. XXXII.

[48] Proclus, in the Theol. of Plato, liv. II, ch. VI; II, 4.

[49] Plat. Ennead., II, liv. IX, 1; Ennead., liv. V, 3, etc. Proclus, Theol. Plato, I, 23.

the final cause; and as the type of highest perfection, He changes these arrangements into an efficient virtue, the beginning and end of all existence.[50] This first trinity is called the goodness itself (τριὰς ἀγαθοειδής) Next follows the intelligible trinity (τριὰς νοητὴ) or divine wisdom, in whose bosom rest and unite, in its most perfect identity, existence, truth and intelligible truth, that is to say, the thinking object, the object thought of and the thought itself.[51,52] Finally, the soul of the world, or the Demiurge, may also be considered a trinity—the demiurgic trinity (τριὰς δημιουργική). It includes the universal substance or the universal power which acts in all nature, the motion or generation of beings, and their return to the bosom of the substance that produced them.[53]

These three aspects of nature may be replaced by three others which represent in a symbolic manner as many Olympic deities: Jupiter is the universal Demiurge of the souls and bodies,[54] Neptune reigns over the souls and Pluto over the bodies. These three particular trinities, which blend and lose themselves in some way in a general trinity, do not differ much from the classification of the divine attributes as represented in the Zohar. For we must not forget that all the Sefiroth are divided into three categories which, in their totality, also form a general and indivisible trinity. The first three bear a purely intellectual character, those following bear a moral character, and the last relate to God as beheld in nature.

3. In the same manner the generation of beings, or the

[50] Proclus, in the quoted work, liv. I, ch. XXIII.

[51] Plotinus, Ennead., VI, liv. VIII, 16; Enn., IV, liv. III, 17, et passim. Proclus, Theol, I, 25. Δῆλον οὖν ὅτι τριαδικόν ἐστι τὸ τῆς Σοφίας γένος. Πλῆρες μὲν οὖν τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, γεννητικὸν δὲ τῆς νοερᾶς ἀληθείας.

[52] The νοῦς in its trinity may also be represented as οὐσιωδῶς, ζωτικῶς and νοηρῶς. —Jellinek

[53] Proclus, Theol. secund. Plato, liv. VI, ch. VII, VIII et sequ.

[54] Τῆς δημιουργικῆς τριάδος ἔλαχε τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην τάξιν Ζεύς. Ὁ Ποσειδῶν συμπληροῖ τὰ μέσα τῆς δημιουργικῆς, καὶ μάλιστα τὸν ψυχικὸν διάκοσμον κυβερνᾶ. l. c., liv. VI, ch. XXII et seq.

manifestation of God's attributes, is shown by the two systems we are comparing. As we have said before, the doctrine of Plotinus and Proclus teaches that the intelligence is the very essence of the being, and that the being and the intelligence are absolutely identical in the bosom of unity. It therefore follows that all existences of which the world is composed, and all the aspects under which we may consider them, are but the development of the absolute thought, or a kind of a creative dialectic which produces simultaneously light, reality and life.[55] For nothing ever separates itself absolutely from the principle or from the highest unity which is always immutable and self-resembling. It includes all the beings and all the forces which we distinguish in the world.

In the lower degrees, finally, the multiplicity and number extends infinitely;[56] but the intelligible essence of things gradually weakens at the same time, until it sinks to a mere negation. In this state it becomes matter, which is called by Porphyrius[57] "the absence of all existence" (ἔλλειψις παντὸς τοῦ ὄντος), or true No-Thing (ἀληθινὸν μὴ ὄν —Non-Ens), and more poetically represented by Plotinus as the image of shadows which limit our knowledge, and which are given an intelligible form by our soul's reflection therein.[58] Let us recall two remarkable passages in the Zohar where thought, united at first with the being in perfect identity, successively produces all creatures and all divine attributes by continually causing its self-consciousness to change and become more distinct. The elements themselves—I mean the material

[55] Ἅπασα μονὰς ὑποστήσει πλῆθος μὲν ὡς ἑαυτῆς δεύτερον γεννῶσα καὶ μεριζόμενον τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ κρυφίως προϋπαρχούσας δυνάμεις. l. c., liv. III, ch. I.
Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν νοητῶν πάντα πρόεισι τὰ ὄντα, κατ' αἰτίαν ἐκεῖ πάντα προϋπάρχει. Liv. V, ch. XXX.

[56] Ἦσαν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μονάδι δυνάμεις, ἀλλὰ νοητῶς καὶ ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ πρόσοδοι καὶ ἀπογενήσεις, ἀλλὰ νοητῶς καὶ νοερῶς· ἐν δὲ τρίτῃ πανδήμος ὁ ἀριθμὸς ὅλον ἑανιὸν ἐκφήνας. l. c., liv. IV, ch. XXIX.

[57] Sentent. ad intelligib., Roman edition, ch. XXII.

[58] Plotinus, Enn. IV, liv. III, ch. IX.—Enn., liv. VIII, ch. VII.—Enn. II, liv. III, ch. IV.

elements and the different conditions which we observe in space—are among the things which it eternally produces from its own bosom. (See Part II, near end.) All the metaphors, therefore, which represent the supreme principle of things as a source of light which emanates, inexhaustibly and eternally, rays of light that reveal its presence in all conditions of infinity, are not always to be taken literally, whether met with in the Hebrew or in the Alexandrian doctrine. Light, says Proclus expressly, (Theol. Secund. Plato, liv. II, ch. 4) is here nothing else but the intelligence or the participation of divine intelligence (οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶ τὸ φῶς ἢ μετοιοία τῆς Θείας ὑπάρξεως). The inexhaustible source from which it flows unceasingly, is the absolute unity which unites in its bosom the being and the thought.[59] It would be useless to repeat here, for the sake of the Neoplatonic school, all we have said in the analysis of the Zohar about the human soul and its union with God through faith and love. All mystic systems necessarily agree on this point; for it may be regarded as the basis, the very foundation of mysticism. We shall now choose this hasty parallel by asking whether it is really possible to explain such deep and continuous resemblances in a train of thought, which is hardly accessible to most intelligences, by the identity of human faculties, or by the general laws of thought? On the other hand, we believe to have sufficiently demonstrated that the teachers of Palestine could not have drawn from the Greek civilization, a civilization so accursed and so anathematized by them, a science of greater importance even than the study of the Law. With due respect to the critic, we can not even admit that the Greek philosophers could have made profitable use of the Jewish tradition. For, while Numenius and Longinus speak of Moses; while the author of the "Egyptian Mysteries,"[60]

[59] Καὶ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ὁ νοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ πρῶτος ὑφέσταναι λέγεται καὶ περὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἔχειν, καὶ πληροῦσθαι τοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας φωτὸς ἐκεῖθεν προϊόντος... καὶ ὁ νοῦς ἄρα Θεὸς διὰ τὸ φῶς τὸ νοερὸν καὶ τὸ νοετὸν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοῦ πρεσβύτερον. l. c., liv. II, ch. IV.

[60] De Mysteriis Egypt., sect. II, ch. XI.

whoever he may have been, admits angels and archangels into his theological system, it is probably because of the version of the Septuagint, or because of the relations that exist between these three philosophers and the Hellenistic Jews of Egypt. It would be absurd to draw the conclusion that they were initiated in the formidable mysteries of the Merkaba.

We are, therefore, to inquire yet whether there exists an older doctrine from which, unknown to each other, both the Kabbalistic system as well as the so-called Alexandrian Platonism, sprang. There is no need of leaving the capital of the Ptolemies for this purpose; for right in the bosom of the Jewish nation we find a man who may be judged in different ways, it is true, but who always enjoys splendid fame.[61] A man, who is generally looked upon by the historians of philosophy as the true founder of the Alexandrian school, while by some critics and by most of the modern historians of Judaism he is considered the inventor of Hebrew Mysticism. This man is—Philo. It is, then, his system, as far as there may be one, that we shall now make the object of our investigation, and endeavor to discover in his opinions and in his numerous writings the first traces of the Kabbalah. I say "Kabbalah" only, for the relations of Philo to the Pagan philosophical schools which have been founded after him, will become apparent of themselves. Besides, no matter how worthy of interest the origin of this philosophy may be in the present work, it need but be of secondary consideration.

[61] I find it quite natural for the author to disregard the hypercriticism of Kirschbaum who, in his book on Jewish Alexandrianism, regards all the works of Philo as spurious.—Jellinek

Chapter III

RELATION OF THE KABBALAH TO THE DOCTRINE OF PHILO

Without repeating what has been said before of the relative isolation of the Jews of Palestine and those of Egypt, we may add that Philo's name is never mentioned by the Jewish writers of the Middle Ages. Neither Saadia[1] nor Maimonides,[2] neither their later disciples nor the modern Kabbalists, have dedicated any monument to him, and even now he is barely known among those of his coreligionists who are strangers to the Greek literature.[3] We shall not linger, though, upon these external facts, the importance of which we do not wish to exaggerate. As we have hinted before, we shall look for the solution of our problem in our philosopher's own opinions, which have been made clear by the labors of modern criticism.[4]

[1] Saadia ben Joseph. Head of the academy of Sura; born 892, died 942.—Transl.

[2] Moses ben Maimon (Rambam). Talmudist, astronomer, physician and philosopher. Born 1135, died 1204.—Transl.

[3] Joseph Flesch of Moravia has lately undertaken the translation of Philo's works into Hebrew; the translation of de Vita Mosis, (חיי משה), de Decalogo as well as the treatise on the Essenes and the Therapeutae in the manuscript: quod omnis probus liber, have been printed. The death of the translator has cut short the undertaking.—Jellinek

[4] Gefroerer, Critical History of Primitive Christianity. Daehne, Historic Exposition of the Religious School of the Alexandrian Jews, Halle, 1834. Grossman, Questiones Philonae, Leipzig, 1829. Creuzer, in the "Theological Studies and Criticism," year 1832, first issue.*

* The following may be added: Scheffer, Questiones Philonianae, Marburg, 1829. Meier, Judaica, seu veter. scriptor. profanorum de rebus judaicis fragmenta, Jena, 1832.—Jellinek

There is nothing in the writings of Philo that can possibly be called a system. Incongruous opinions in disorderly juxtaposition—I refer to the symbolic interpretation of the Holy Scriptures—serve a most arbitrary method. All the elements of this chaos which are held together by one common bond—the innate desire of the author to demonstrate in the Hebrew writings the presence of the highest and purest in the wisdom of other nations—may be divided into two big classes. The elements of one class have been borrowed from the philosophic systems of Greece, systems which are not irreconcilable with the fundamental principles of any moral or religious teaching, like that of Pythagoras, Aristotle and Zeno;[5] but above all that of Plato, whose language and ideas make up the first sketch, so to speak, in all the writings of the Hebrew philosopher. The elements of the other class visibly betray, by the contempt they instill for reason and science, by the impatience with which they precipitate in some manner the human soul into the bosom of the infinite, their foreign origin, and can come only from the Orient. This dualism of the Philonic ideas is of the greatest importance, not only for the problem we are to solve, but for the history of philosophy in general; and we shall first of all endeavor to determine it definitely, at least, on the points most salient and most worthy of our interest.

When speaking of the creation and of the first principles of beings, of God and of His relations to the universe, Philo has evidently two doctrines in mind, doctrines that can never be brought in accord by any effort of logic. One doctrine is simply the dualism of Plato as taught in Timaeus; the other reminds us at once of Plotinus and the Kabbalah. We shall take up the first doctrine which, singularly, is placed in the mouth of Moses: "The legislator of the Hebrews," says our author in his Treatise

[5] Compare Creuzer's article, Theological Studies and Criticism, 1832, first issue, p. 18ff. Ritter, article Philo. vol. IV of Tissot's translation.

on the Creation,[6] "recognized two equally necessary principles, one active and the other passive. The first is the highest and absolute Intelligence which is above virtue, above knowledge, above the good and the beautiful itself; the second is the inert and inanimate matter which became perfect by receiving motion, form and life from Intelligence."

To avoid taking the last principle as a pure abstraction, Philo takes care to repeat in another work[7] the famous maxim of Pagan antiquity, that there is neither absolute beginning nor absolute annihilation, but that the same elements pass from one form to another. These elements are earth, water, air and fire. We are taught that, in order to make the world a work fully accomplished and worthy of the supreme architect, God left no particle outside of the world.[8] But before giving form to matter and existence to this sensual universe, God visualized in His thought the intelligible universe or the prototypes, the incorruptible ideas of things.[9] Divine kindness, which is the only cause of the formation of the world,[10] explains also why the world should not perish. God can not, without discontinuing His goodness, wish to replace order and general harmony by chaos; and to imagine a better world which is some day to replace ours, is to accuse God of having failed in His goodness towards

[6] De mundi opificio, I, 4. We have already quoted this passage in the introduction.

[7] De incorrupt. mund. Ὥσπερ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος οὐδὲν γίνεται, οὐδ' εἰς τὸ μὴ ὂν φθείρεται. Ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ οὐδαμὴ ὄντος ἀμήχανον ἐστὶ γενέσθαι τί, κ. τ.λ.

[8] Τελειότατον γὰρ ἦρμοττε τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἔργων τῷ μεγίστῳ δημιουργῷ διαπλάσασθαι. Τελειότατον δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἦν εἰ μὴ τελείοις συνεπληροῦτο μέρεσιν, ὥστε ἐκ γῆς ἁπάσης καὶ παντὸς ὕδατος καὶ ἀέρος καὶ πυρός, μηδενὸς ἔξω καταληφθέντος, συνέστη ὅδε ὁ κόσμος. (De plantat Noe, II, init.)

[9] Προλαβὼν γὰρ ὁ Θεός, ὅτι μίμημα καλὸν οὐκ ἄν ποτε γένοιτο καλοῦ δίχα παραδείγματος, κ. τ. λ. (De mundi opific.)

[10] Εἰ γάρ τις ἐθελήσειε τὴν αἰτίαν, ἧς ἕνεκα τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἐδημιουργεῖτο, διερευνᾶσθαι, δοκεῖ μοι μὴ διαμαρτεῖν τοῦ σκοποῦ, φάμενος, καὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων εἰπέ τις. Following this are even the expressions of Timaeus. Ib. supra.

the present order of things.[11] According to this system the generation of beings, or the application of the power which formed the universe, must have necessarily commenced, but it can not continue to act endlessly; for God can not destroy the already formed world by producing another; matter can not return to general chaos. Moreover, God is not the immanent cause of the beings, neither is He the creative cause in the modern theological sense. He is only the Supreme Architect, the Demiurge, and this is really the term Philo makes use of when he is under the influence of the Greek philosophy.[12] Finally, God is not only above, but completely apart from the creation (ὁ ἐπιβεβηκὼς τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἔξω τοῦ δημιουργηθέντος ὤν) (De Posteritate Caini); for, possessing infinite knowledge and felicity, He can have no relation to a formless and unclean substance as matter is.[13]

Let us now try to harmonize these principles with the following doctrines: God never rests in His works, but it is His nature always to produce, just as it is the nature of fire to burn, and that of snow to diffuse cold.[14] Rest, as applied to God, does not mean inactivity; for the active cause of the universe can never cease to produce the most beautiful works. But we say that God rests, because His endless activity works spontaneously (μετὰ πολλῆς εὐμαρείας), without pain and without fatigue.[15] It is also absurd to take literally the words of the Scriptures which tell us that the world was created in six days. Far from lasting but six days, creation did not even commence in *time*.

[11] Quod mund. sit incorrupt., 949, 950.

[12] Τελειότατον γὰρ ἥρμοττε τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἔργων τῷ μεγίστῳ δημιουργῷ διαπλάσασθαι. (De planat. Noe, init.)

[13] De Sacrificantibus, ed. Mangey, vol. II, p. 261.

[14] Παύεται οὐδέποτε ποιῶν ὁ Θεός, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἴδιον τὸ καίειν πυρὸς καὶ χιόνος τὸ ψύχειν, οὕτω καὶ Θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν. Legis Alleg., I, ed. Mangey, vol. I, p. 44.

[15] Ἀναπαύλαν δὲ οὐ τὴν ἀπραξίαν καλῶ, ἐπειδὰν φύσει δραστήριον τὸ τῶν ὅλων αἴτιον οὐδέποτε ἴσχον τοῦ ποιεῖν τὰ κάλλιστα, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἄνευ κακοπαθείαν μετὰ πολλῆς εὐμαρείας ἀπονοτάτην ἐνέργειαν. De Cherubin, p. 123.

For, according to Plato, time itself was created with other things, and is but a fleeting image of eternity.[16] Divine action, as was said before, does not only give form to inert matter, and causes the departure of all the elements necessary for the formation of the world from disorder and darkness, but it becomes really creative and absolute; it is limited neither in space nor in time.

"In giving rise to things," says Philo expressly, "God did not only make them visible, but He produced what did not exist before. He is not only the architect (the Demiurge) of the universe, He is also its creator."[17] He is the principle of all action in each particular being, as well as in the totality of things, for to Him alone belongs activity; passivity is in the nature of all things engendered.[18] It is probably because of this that everything is filled with and penetrated by His presence; and it is also because of this that He does not permit anything to stay void of and abandoned by Him.[19] But as there is nothing that can embrace the Infinite, He is, therefore, nowhere and everywhere at the same time, an antithesis which we heard already from the mouth of Porphyrius, and which was understood in the same sense as it was later understood by the disciples of Plotinus. God is nowhere because, place and space were created with the bodies, and we can not therefore say that the creator is confined in the creature. He is everywhere because He penetrates simultanously, by His various potencies (τὰς δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ), earth and water,

[16] Εἴωθες πάνυ τὸ οἴεσθαι ἓξ ἡμέραις, ἢ καθόλου χρόνῳ κόσμον γεγόνεμαι. Leg. Alleg. Ib. supr. Οὐτὸς οὖν (ὁ κόσμος) ὁ νεώτερος υἱὸς ὁ αἰσθητός, κινηθείς, τὴν χρόνου φύσιν ἀναλάμψαι καὶ ἀνασχεῖν ἐποίησεν. Quod Deus sit immutabilis. Δημιουργὸς δὲ καὶ χρόνου Θεός.

[17] Ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα γενήσας, οὐ μόνον εἰς τοῦμφανὲς ἤγαγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅ πρότερον οὐκ ἦν ἐποίησεν, οὐ δημιουργὸς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κτίστης αὐτὸς ὤν. De Somniis, p. 577.

[18] Θεὸς καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀρχὴ τοῦ δρᾶν ἐστί. Ἴδιον μὲν Θεοῦ τὸ ποιεῖν, ὅ οὐ Θέμις ἐπιγράψασθαι γεννητῷ, ἴδιον δυ γεννητοῦ τὸ πάσχειν.
Legis, Alleg., I; De Cherubin, vol. I, p. 153, ed. Mangey.

[19] Πάντα γὰρ πεπλήρωκεν ὁ Θεός, καὶ διὰ πάντων διελήλυθεν, καὶ κενὸν οὐδέν, οὐδὲ ἔρημον ἀπολέλοιπεν ἑαυτοῦ. Genes., III, 8.

air and heaven.[20] He fills the least particle of the universe, uniting each other by invisible bonds.[21]

But this is not enough. God Himself is the place of the universe (ὁ τῶν ὅλων τόπος), for He embraces all things, He is the shelter of the universe and His own seat, the place wherein He confines Himself and where He contains Himself.[22] When Malebranche (French philos. 1638-1715.—Trans.), who saw in God the place of spirits only, appears to us so close to Spinoza, what are we to think of one who represents the Supreme Being as the place of all the existences, of the spirits as well as of the bodies? But we must also ask what becomes of this idea of the passive principle of the universe? How are we to conceive as a real and necessary being that matter which has neither form nor activity in itself, which must have existed, and which, together with space, was transported into the bosom of God? And Philo is really driven by an irresistible inclination to pronounce the great words: *God is All* (εἷς καὶ τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸς ἐστιν). (Legis. Alleg., I, 1.)

But how did the Supreme Being cause to spring forth from this intelligible place, which is His own substance, an actual space containing this material and sensual world? How did He, Who is all activity and all intelligence, produce passive and inactive beings? The mementos of Greek philosophy are here entirely stifled by the language and the ideas of the Orient. God is the purest light, the prototype and source of all light. He sheds around Him innumerable rays of light, all intelligibles, which no

20 We should expect to see mentioned here "Fire" as the fourth element. But as Philo considered the heavens as the purest fire, "heaven" is put instead. See de Linguar. confus., p. 342: ὁ αἰθὴρ (ὁ οὐρανὸς was called before) ἱερὸν πῦρ φλὸξ ἐστιν κ. τ. λ. —Compare Daehne, Historical Representation of the Jewish-Alexandrian Religious Philosophy, part I, p. 190.—Jellinek

21 De linguarum Confusione, ed. Mangey, vol. I, p. 425.

22 Αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς καλεῖται τόπος, τῷ περιέχειν μὲν τὰ ὅλα, περιέχεσθαι δὲ πρὸ μηδενὸς ἁπλῶς, καὶ τῷ καταφυγεῖν τῶν συμπάντων αὐτῷ εἶναι, καὶ ἐπειδήπερ αὐτὸς ἐστὶ χώρα ἑαυτοῦ, κεχωρηκὼς ἑαυτὸς καὶ ἐμφερόμενος μένοῳ ἑαυτῷ. De Somniis, lib. I.

creature can behold;[23] but His image is reflected in His thought (in His logos), and it is by this image alone that we can comprehend Him.[24] Here we see already a first manifestation, or, as is generally said, a first emanation of divine nature. For, when the Platonic reminiscence of Philo make way to other influences, the divine word becomes with him a real being, a person or a hypostasis, as it was later said in the Alexandrian school. Of such nature is the archangel who commands all celestial armies.[25]

But our philosopher does not stop at this point. From this first logos, ordinarily called "the most ancient" (ὁ πρεσβύτατος), the firstborn of God, which represents in the absolute sphere the "Thought" (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος), there emanates another which represents the "Word" (λόγος προφορικός), that is to say, the creative power, the manifestation of which is the world. When we read in Genesis that a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, it means that the generic goodness is an emanation of the Divine Wisdom which is the Word of God.[26] The author of this universe should be called both the architect as well as the father of His work. Supreme Wisdom we shall call the mother. It is with Supreme Wisdom that God united in a mysterious manner to make the generation of things operative. Impregnated with the divine germ, Supreme Wisdom gave birth, in pain and at the appointed time, the only well-beloved son whom we call the world. It is for this reason that a sacred writer presents to us Wisdom as speaking of itself in the following manner: "Of all the works of God I was the first to be formed; time was not yet when I already existed. For everything that is

23 Αὐτὸς δὲ ὢν ἀρχέτυπος αὐγή, μυρίας ἀκτῖνας ἐκβάλλει, ὧν οὐδεμία ἐστὶν αἰσθητή, νοηταὶ δὲ καὶ ἅπασαι. Παρ' ὁ καὶ μόνον ὁ νοητὸς Θεὸς αὐταῖς χρῆται, τῶν δὲ γενέσεως μεμοιραμένων οὐδείς. De Cherubin., vol. I, p. 156. ed. Mang.

24 Καθάπερ τὴν ἀνθήλιον αὐγὴν ὡς ἥλιον, οἱ μὴ δυνάμενοι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν ὁρῶσι, οὕτως καὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰκόνα, τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ λόγον, ὡς αὐτὸν κατανοῦσιν. De Somniis.

25 Ὁ πρωτόγονος λόγος, ὁ ἄγγελος πρεσβύτατος, ἀρχάγγελος. De Confusione linguarum, p. 341.

26 Ποταμὸς φήσιν (Μώσης) ἐκπορεύεται ἐξ Ἐδὲμ τοῦ ποτίζειν

engendered must naturally be younger than the mother and the nurse of the universe."[27]

There is a passage in Timaeus where we meet with nearly the same language, but with the vast difference that the mother and nurse of all things is a principle entirely apart from God; it is the inert and formless matter.[28] The quoted passages remind us more of the ideas and the usual expressions of the Zohar. There, too, God is called the eternal light; there, too, the generation of things is metaphorically explained by the gradual darkening of the rays emanating from the divine center, and by the union of God with Himself in His diverse attributes. Springing from the bosom of God to give life to the universe, Supreme Wisdom is also represented by the river which went forth from the earthly paradise. The two logi, finally, remind us of the Kabbalistic principle that the world is nothing but the word of God; that His word or His voice is His thought become visible, and that His thought, finally, is Himself. Another picture, often drawn in the principal work of the Kabbalah, shows us the universe as a cloak or garment of God. Now then, we have here the same in the following words of Philo: "The Supreme Being is surrounded by a dazzling light which envelops Him like a rich cloak, and the most ancient word covers itself with the world as with a garment."[29]

Two ways of speaking of God result also from this twofold theory on the nature and birth of things in general when

τὸν παράδεισον. Ποταμὸς ἡ γενικὴ ἐστὶν ἀγαθότης. αὐτὴ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίας, ἡ δὲ ἐστιν ὁ Θεοῦ λόγος. Leg. Alleg., I. I.

[27] Τὸν γοῦν τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἐργασάμενον δημιουργὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ πατέρα εἶναι τοῦ γεγονότος εὐθὺς ἐν δίκῃ φήσομεν· μητέρα δὲ τὴν τοῦ πεποιηκότος ἐπιστήμην ἢ συνῶν ὁ Θεός, κ. τ. λ. De Temulentid.

[28] Καὶ δὴ καὶ προσεικάσαι πρέπει τὸ μὲν δεχόμενον μητρί, τὸ δ' ὅδεν πατρί, τὴν δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων φύσιν ἐκγόνῳ. Timaeus, ed. Stallbaum, p. 212.

[29] Λέγω δὲ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν φωτὶ αὐγοειδεῖ περιλάμπεται, ὡς ἀξιόχρεως ἐνδύσασθαι τὰ ἱμάτια νομισθῆναι· ἐνδύεται δὲ ὁ μὲν πρεσβύτατος τοῦ ὄντος λόγος ὡς ἐσθῆτα τὸν κόσμον. De Praefugis.

He is considered for Himself, in His proper essence and independent of the creation. Sometime He is the supreme reason of things, the active and efficient cause of the universe (ὁ νοῦς, τὸ δραστήριον αἴτιον), the most general idea (τὸ γενικώτατον), (Legis. Alleg., II) the intelligible nature (νοητὴ φύσις). To Him alone belongs liberty, knowledge, joy, peace and happiness, in short—perfection.[30] Sometime He is represented higher even than perfection and all possible attributes. Nothing can give us an idea of Him; neither virtue nor knowledge, neither beauty nor goodness,[31] not even unity. For what we call unity is but an image of the first cause (μονὰς μὲν ἐστιν εἰκὼν αἰτίου πρώτου),[32, 33] All we know of Him is that He exists; to us He is the ineffable and nameless being.[34]

We easily recognize in the first case the influence of Plato, of the metaphysics of Aristotle, and even of the physiology of the stoics; in the second case there is an entirely different order of ideas. Here, the Neoplatonic unity and the Ayn Sof of the Kabbalah, the "Mystery of Mysteries," the "Unknown of the Unknown" which dominates both, the Sefiroth and the world, are clearly visible. This applies also necessarily to all that Philo, because of his religious belief or because of his philosophic views, presents to us as an intermediary between the things created and the purest essence of God; we refer to the angels, the Word, and in general to what Philo designates under the somewhat vague name of "Divine Powers (δυνάμεις τοῦ Θεοῦ)." When the

[30] Ὁ Θεὸς ἡ μόνη ἐλευθέρα φύσις De Somniis, II.—Μόνος ὁ Θεὸς ἀψευδῶς ἑορτάζει, καὶ γὰρ μόνος γήθει, καὶ μόνος εὐφραίνεται, καὶ μόνῳ τὴν ἀμιγῆ πολέμου συμβέβηκεν εἰρήνην ἄγειν, κ. τ. λ. De Cherub., vol. I, p. 154, ed. Mangey.

[31] De Mundi opific., loc. laud. Κρείττων ἡ ἐπιστήμη, κρείττων ἡ ἀρετή, κ. λ. λ.

[32] De Specialibus legibus, 1. II, vol. II, p. 329, ed. Mangey.

[33] I can not see why the author insists upon "Supreme Being (Souverain Etre)" instead of "First Cause" as translated by Dr. Jellinek whose translation is the correct one.—Transl.

[34] Ὁ δᾶρα οὐδὲ τῷ νῷ καταληπτὸς ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι μόνον, ὕπαρξις γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ καταλαμβάνομεν αὐτοῦ . . . ψιλὴ ἄνευ χαρακτῆρος ἡ ὕπαρξις, ἀκατανόμαστος καὶ ἄρρητος. Quod mundus sit immutabilis.

Greek dualism is taken seriously, when the intelligent principle acts directly upon matter, and God is conceived as the Demiurge of the world, then the Word or the Logos is the divine idea, the seat of all ideas after which all things have been patterned. The forces and the messengers of God, that is, the angels of every degree of the celestial hierarchy, are the ideas themselves.

This viewpoint is expressed already in the following short fragments: "If we are to speak prosaically, then the intelligible world is nothing but the thought of God while He prepared Himself to create the world, just as an architect who has the ideal city in his mind before constructing the real city according to this plan. Now, just as this ideal city occupies no space, and is but a picture in the mind of the architect, so can the intelligible world be nowhere but in the divine thought where the plan for the material universe was conceived. There is no other place capable of receiving and embracing even a single one of these unadulterated forces, much less all the forces of the supreme intelligence."[35] "These are the forces which have formed the immaterial and intelligible world, the prototype of the visible and the corporeal world."[36] In another place[37] we are told that the divine forces and the ideas are one and the same; that their task is to give the appropriate form to each object. In the same manner, nearly, the angels are referred to. They represent different particular forms of the everlasting reason or of virtue, and inhabit the divine space, that is to say, the intelligible world.[38]

[35] Εἰ δέ τις ἐθελήσειε γυμνοτέροις χρήσασθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, οὐδὲν ἄν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμος ἢ Θεοῦ λόγος ἤδη κοσμοποιοῦντος οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ πόλις, ἕτερόν τι ἐστὶν ἢ ὁ τοῦ ἀρχιτέκτονος λογισμὸς ἤδη τὴν αἰσθητὴν πόλιν τῇ νοητῇ κτίζειν διανοουμένου. De Mund. opific., vol. I, p. 4, ed. Mangey.

[36] Διὰ τούτων τῶν δυνάμεων ὁ ἀσώματος καὶ νοητὸς ἐπάγη κόσμος, τὸ τοῦ φαινομένου τούτου ἀρχέτυπον, ἰδέαις ἀοράτοις συσταθείς, ὥσπερ οὗτος σώμασιν ὁρατοῖς. De Linguarum confusione.

[37] Ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις δυνάμεσιν, ὧν ἔτυμον ὄνομα αἱ ἰδέαι, καταχρήσατο πρὸς τὸ γένος ἕκαστον ἁρμόττουσαν λαβεῖν μορφήν. De Sacrificantibus. vol. II, p. 261, ed. Mangey.

[38] Εἰδέναι δὲ νῦν προσήκει, ὅτι ὁ Θεῖος τόπος καὶ ἡ ἱερὰ χώρα πλήρης ἀσωμάτων λόγων.—De Somniis, I, 21. Λόγοι οὓς καλεῖν ἔθος ἄγγελοι.

The power upon which they depend directly, or the archangel, is, as we already know, the logos itself. But this nature of things and these roles are entirely changed when, according to the conception of the author, God appears as the immanent cause and the true place of all beings. In this case we are not dealing any longer with the simple imprint of different forms upon matter that does not exist of its own essence; but, without losing anything of their intelligible value, all ideas become, in addition, substantial realities, active forces subordinated one to another, and yet bound in one substance, in one force, in one single intelligence.

Wisdom or the Word thus becomes the first of all the heavenly forces, a distinct power, but not separated from the absolute being,[39] the spring that waters and vivifies the earth, the cupbearer of the Most High who pours out the nectar of the souls, and Who is itself this nectar;[40] the firstborn of God and the mother of all the beings (υἱὸς πρωτόγονος),[41] It is also called the divine man (ἄνθρωπος Θεοῦ), for the image in which the earthly man was created on the sixth day, and which the Holy Scriptures call the image of God, is nothing but the everlasting Word.[42] It is the high priest of the universe (ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ κόσμου), that is to say, the conciliator between the finite and the infinite. It may be regarded as a second God without impairing the belief in one God.[43] The Scriptures have it in mind when titles and a

δσοι γὰρ Θεοῦ λόγοι, τοσαῦτα ἀρετῆς ἔθην τε καὶ εἴδη. De Posteritatae Caini.

[39] Ἡ σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν, ἣν ἄκραν καὶ πρωτίστην ἔτεμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ δυνάμεων. —Leg. Alleg., II.

[40] Χάτεισι δὲ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ πηγῆς, τῆς σοφίας, ποταμοῦ τρόπον, ὁ Θεῖος λόγος... πλήρη τῆς σοφίας νάματος τὸν Θεῖον λόγον... οἰνοχόος τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ συμποσίαρχος, οὐ διαφέρων τοῦ πώματος. —De Somniis, II.

[41] Δύο γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἱερὰ Θεοῦ, ἓν μὲν ὅδε ὁ κόσμος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ πρωτόγονος αὐτοῦ Θεῖος λόγος. —De Somniis, I, col. I, p. 653, ed. Mangey.

[42] Καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὄνομα Θεοῦ καὶ κατ' εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος, κ. τ. λ.—De Confusione linguarum, vol. I, p. 407, ed. cit.

[43] Οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῶν τῶν ἀτελῶν ἂν εἴη Θεός, κ. τ. λ.—Leg. Alleg., III, vol. I, p. 128, ed. cit.

name are sometimes bestowed upon God; for the first rank belongs to the ineffable being.[44] Philo's assertion that the Word reveals itself sometimes to a man in a material form fully convinces us that these expressions refer to a real personification. It is the Word that the patriarch Jacob saw in a dream, and it is the Word again that spoke to Moses in the burning bush. (Ib. supra.)

We have already seen how this Supreme Word engenders another which springs from its bosom by way of emanation, like a river gushing from its source. This second word is the goodness, the creative virtue (δύναμις ποιητική), a hypostatized Platonic idea. Below the goodness is the royal power (ἡ βασιλικὴ) which governs with justice all created beings.[45] These three forces, the two last ones of which, when confined in their action to man only, are called "Mercy" and "Judgment" (ἡ ἵλεως καὶ ἡ νομοθετική), revealed themselves once upon the earth under the disguise of the three angels who visited Abraham.[46] They make up the invisible good and the harmony of this world, just as they are, on the other hand, the glory, the presence of God, whence they descend by a gradual darkening of the infinite splendor; for each one of them is both shadow and light; shadow of that which is above, light and life of all that is below their own sphere.[47]

Their essence, finally, is just as impossible to comprehend as that of the primitive being, although their action is present everywhere and their forms manifest themselves in the forms of the universe. It is just what God Himself had taught Moses when the latter implored Him, says Philo, to show him at least, His glory (τὴν Δόξαν αὐτοῦ), that is to say, the forces that surround His inaccessible throne (δορυφορούσας δυνάμεις), after asking

[44] De Somniis, I, vol. I, p. 656, ed. Mangey.

[45] De Profugis, vol. I, p. 560, ed Mangey. Αἱ δ' ἄλλαι πέντε ὡς ἂν ἄποι κίαι, δυνάμεις εἰσὶ τοῦ λέγοντος, ὧν ἄρχει ἡ ποιητική, κ. τ. λ.

[46] De Vita Abraham (vol. II, p. 17, ed. Mangey.)

[47] Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνος, ἣν σκίαν νυνὶ κέκληκεν, οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν ἄλλων γίνεται παράδειγμα . . . σκία Θεοῦ δὲ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐστίν. —Leg. Alleg., III.

Him in vain to see Him face to face.[48] The angels which we just saw described as ideas representing different kinds of virtue, are not only personified after the manner of poets and biblical writers, but they are also looked upon as souls floating in ether and sometimes uniting with souls inhabiting human bodies.[49] They form real and animated substances which impart life to all elements and to all parts of nature. Proof of it is the following passage which we shall translate: "The beings designated by the philosophers of other nations as demons, are called by Moses angels. These are the souls that float in the air, and no one must deny their existence; for the universe must be animated in all its parts, and each element must be inhabited by living beings. The earth is thus stocked with animals, the sea and rivers with the inhabitants of water, the fire with the salamander—supposed to be quite common in Macedonia—the heavens by the stars. In fact, if the stars were not pure and divine souls, they would not be endowed with circular motion which properly belongs to the spirit only. It follows, therefore, that the air must also be peopled by living beings, although our eyes can not see them."[50]

Philo's syncretism shows itself most plainly, and the twofold direction to which he commits himself, notwithstanding his lively predilection for Oriental ideas, is most easily seen, when he comes to speak of man. Thus, unlike Plato, he is not content with seeing the pale imprint of the eternal ideas in material things; but he even maintains that without the help of the senses we can never rise to higher cognition, that without the spectacle of the material world we can not even suspect the existence of an immaterial and invisible world.[51] He then declares the influence

[48] Μήτ' οὖν ἐμέ, μήτε τίνα τῶν ἐμῶν δυνάμεων κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐλπίσῃς ποτὲ δυνήσεσθαι καταλαβεῖν.—De Monarchi, I, vol. II, p. 218,

[49] De plantatione. De Monarchia, II. This union of the soul with another has been recognized by the Kabbalists under the name of "pregnancy (עיבור)."

[50] De Gigantibus vol. I, p. 253, ed. Mangey.

[51] Τὸν ἐκ τῶν ἰδεῶν συσταθέντα καὶ νοητὸν κόσμον οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἄλλως καταλαβεῖν ὅτε μὴ ἐκ τῆς τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ καὶ ἀρομένου τούτου μεταναβάσεως, κ. τ.λ. —De Somniis, I.

of the senses to be absolutely harmful, and commands man to sever all connections with them and to take refuge within himself. He creates an abyss between the rational, intelligent soul, which alone is privileged to constitute man, and the sentient soul from which our organs borrow life as well as the knowledge appropriate to them. This soul resides, as Moses said, in the blood,[52] while the other is an emanation, an inseparable reflection of divine nature (ἀπόσπασμα οὐ διαιρετόν, ἀπαύγασμα Θείας φύσεως).[53]

This exaggerated viewpoint does not prevent him from retaining the Platonic opinion which recognizes in the human soul three elements: the thought, the will and the passions.[54] In innumerable places he insists upon the necessity of preparing for wisdom by what he calls "encyclical sciences" (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, ἐγκύκλια μαθήματα), that is to say, by oratory and those sciences which produce that outward culture so dear to the Greeks. Our mind, he says, must be fed with this mundane knowledge before it can aspire to higher science, just as our body must be fed with milk before it can bear more substantial food.[55] Any one neglecting to acquire these must succumb in this world as Abel succumbed to the blows of his fratricidal brother.

In another place he teaches entirely to the contrary: The word and the outward appearance is to be scorned, just as the body and the senses are to be scorned, that we may live in the intelligence and in the contemplation of the naked truth only. God's command to Abraham to leave his country, his family and the house of his father, means that man must break away from his body, his senses and the word. For the body is but part of the earth where we are forced to live; the senses are the servants

[52] Αἷμα οὐσία ψυχῆς ἐστί, οὐχὶ τῆς νοερᾶς καὶ λογικῆς, ἀλλὰ τῆς αἰσθητικῆς, καθ' ἣν ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς ἀλόγοις κοινὸν τὸ ζῆν συμβέβηκεν. De Concupiscentia, vol. II, p. 356, ed. Mangey.

[53] Quod deterior potiori insidiari soleat, vol. I, p. 208, ed cit.

[54] Ἔστιν ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ τριμερής, καὶ ἔχει μέρος τὸ μὲν λογικόν, κ. τ. λ.—Leg. Alleg., I. De Confusione linguarum. De Concupiscentia, vol. II, p. 350, ed. cit.

[55] De Congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratia.

and the brothers of the thought; and the word, finally, is but the cover and, in some measure, the dwelling place of the intelligence which is our real father. (De Somniis, L, 1.)

The same thought is symbolically reproduced in a more expressive manner by Hagar and Ishmael. This rebellious servant and her son, who were so ignominiously driven from the house of their master, represent the encyclical knowledge and the sophism it begets. It is hardly necessary to add that any one aspiring to a higher level of the spiritual world must imitate the Hebrew patriarch.[56] But does the soul, when fully retired in the intelligence, find there, at least, self-satisfaction and the means of arriving through its own efforts to truth and wisdom? Had Philo answered this question in the affirmative, he would not have gone beyond the doctrine of Plato. For in Plato's estimation only he is truly wise who entirely renounces body and senses, and labors hard all his life to learn how to die. (Phedon, ad init.) But our Alexandrian philosopher oversteps this boundary; for, besides the knowledge borrowed from reason, besides the enlightenment given by philosophy, he is also in need of enlightenment and of higher knowledge, emanating directly from God, and given to intelligence as a favor, a mysterious gift.

When we read in the Scriptures, he says, that God spoke to man, we are not to believe that a material voice verberated the air, but that the human soul had been illumined by the purest light. In this manner only can the divine word address itself to man. Again, when the Law was promulgated on the Mount Sinai, it is not said that a voice was heard, but, according to the text, a voice was seen by all the people assembled. "You have seen," says Jehovah, "that I spoke to you from heaven above."[57] Since a miracle is explained it can not refer here to rational knowledge or to a mere contemplation of ideas but to a revelation

[56] De Cherub. De Congressu quaerendae erudit. gratia.

[57] Τοὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγους οἱ χρησμοὶ φωτὸς τρόπον ὁρωμένους μενύουσι, λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἑώρα τὴν φωνήν, οὐκ ἤκουσεν κ. τ. λ. De Migrat. Abraham.

mystically understood. We shall give the same meaning to another passage where the possibility of grasping God Himself through direct manifestation (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ αὐτὸν καταλαμβάνειν) is admitted, instead of rising to Him by the contemplation of His works. In this state, adds our author, we understand at a glance the essence of God, His word and the universe.[58] He recognizes Faith (πίστις), which he calls "the queen of virtues" (ἡ τῶν ἀρετῶν βασιλίς), as the most perfect of all goodness, the cement that unites us with divine nature.[59] It is Faith that is represented in the story of Judah and Tamar; for as he united himself with her without lifting the veil that covered her face, so does Faith unite us with God.

Philo shows the same hesitation when speaking of human liberty as when explaining the nature and origin of our knowledge. At times the Stoic doctrine that man is free triumphs; the laws of necessity which govern without exception all other creatures, do not exist for man. This free choice, then, which is his privilege, imposes upon him at the same time the responsibility for his actions; only thus is man alone among all other beings capable of virtue, and hereby alone are we justified in saying that God, in His desire to manifest Himself in the universe through the idea of goodness, found no more dignified a temple than the human soul.[60] But it is easily seen that this theory, so true and wise, contradicts certain general principles previously expounded; as the unity of substance, the formation of beings by way of emanation, and even the Platonic dualism.

Our philosopher has also no scruples in deserting this theory for opposite views, and it is readily noted that he finds himself there more at ease, and that he unfolds there much better the

[58] ... Ἀλλ' ὑπερκύφας τὸ γενητόν, ἔμφασιν ἐναργῆ τοῦ ἀγενήτου λαμβάνει, ὡς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ αὐτὸν καταλαμβάνειν καὶ τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ, ὅπερ ἦν τὸν λόγον καὶ τόνδε τὸν κόσμον. Leg. Alleg., vol. II.

[59] De Migratione Abraham. Quis rerum divinarum haeres.

[60] De Nobilitate, vol. II, p. 437, ed. cit. Νεῶν ἀξιοπρεπέστερον ἐπὶ γῆς οὐχ' εὗρε λογισμοῦ κρείττων· ὁ γὰρ νοῦς ἀγαλματοφορεῖ τὸ ἀγαθόν

wealth of his half-oriental style and the resources of his natural genius. He takes there from man his free choice as well as his moral responsibility. The evil we attribute to ourselves as the one generally reigning in this world, is the inevitable fruit of matter,[61] or the work of inferior forces which took part with the divine logos in the formation of man. The good, on the contrary, belongs to God alone. It is really because it does not suit the Supreme Being to participate in evil, that He called for subordinate workers to co-operate with Him in the creation of Adam, but all the good in our actions and in our thoughts must be attributed to Him alone.[62]

According to this principle it is boastful and impious to consider oneself the author of any work; it means to compare oneself with God Who alone deposited in our soul the germ of good, and Who alone is qualified to impregnate it.[63] This quality, without which we would be swallowed up by evil and blended with nothingness or matter, is called by Philo by its true name, it is the "Grace (ἡ χάρις)." "Grace," he says, "is the heavenly virgin who serves as mediatress between God and the soul; between God who holds forth, and the soul which receives. The entire written law is but a symbol of Grace."[64]

Along with this quite mysterious influence, Philo admits another influence which endangers no less the moral responsibility, and consequently, the free choice. It is the reversibility of good. The righteous is the expiatory victim of the wicked, and it is for the sake of the righteous that God lavishes upon the

[61] De Opific. mund. Quis rerum divinarum heares. De Nominum mutatione. De Vita Mos., III.

[62] De Mund. opific. op. 16, Paris ed. 1640. De Profugis, same ed., p. 460.

[63] Leg. Alleg., I. De profugis. De Cherub. Gefroerer, work cited, vol. I, p. 401.

[64] Ὥστε σύμβολον εἶναι διαθήκην χάριτος· ἣν μέσην ἔθηκεν ὁ Θεὸς ἑαυτοῦ τε ὀρέγοντος καὶ ἀνθρώπου λαμβάνοντος. Ὑπερβολὴ δὲ εὐεργεσίας τοῦτό ἐστι, μὴ εἶναι Θεοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς μέσον, ὅτι μὴ τὴν παρθένον χάριτα.—De Nominum mutatione, p. 1052, quoted ed.

wicked His inexhaustible treasures.[65] This dogma, equally adopted by the Kabbalists and applied by them to the entire universe, is fundamentally a development of Grace. Grace alone brings about the merit of the righteous; why, then, can it not also come by the same channel to the wicked? As to that other obstacle to human liberty—the original sin—it would not be impossible to find its definition in some isolated words of our author.[66] But in such an important subject we must expect more explicit and more definite proofs. We can positively state that Philo considered life itself as a state of forfeiture and of compulsion; consequently, the more man enters life, or the further he penetrates through will or through intelligence the realm of nature, the more he must have believed that man wanders from God, that he becomes perverted and degraded. This principle is almost the only foundation of Philo's morality, which we shall survey rapidly.

While we meet here with some contradictions now and then, yet the Greek influence extends to the language only; the background is entirely oriental and mystic. For example, when Philo tells us, as Antisthenes and Zeno do, that we must live according to nature (ζῆν ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει), he understands by human nature not only the entire domination of spirit over body, of reason over senses, but also the observation of all the revealed laws, undoubtedly, as interpreted and understood by him.[67] When he admits, like Plato and the Stoic school, what was later called the "four cardinal virtues," he represents them, at the same time, as inferior and purely human virtues; above these he shows us, as their common source, the goodness or love, a purely religious virtue which concerns itself with God alone, Whose

65 Ὁ σπουδαῖος τοῦ φαύλου λύτρον.— De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini p. 152, Paris ed.

66 We quote mainly the following passage: Παντὶ γεννητῷ καὶ ἂν σπουδαῖον ᾖ, παρ' οἷσον ἔλθεν εἰς γένεσιν· συμφυὲς τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐστί.—De Vita Mos., III, vol. II, p. 157, ed. Mangey.

67 In the following words of the Scriptures: "Abraham followed the ways of the Lord," the maxim taught by the most famous philosophers is contained, namely, that we live according to nature.—De Migratione Abraham.

image and purest emanation it is. It springs directly from the Eden, that is to say, from Divine Wisdom, where alone joy, pleasure and delight in God is found.[68] It is probably in this sense, and following the example of Socrates, that he identifies virtue with wisdom.[69]

We must, finally, take care not to attribute to him Aristotle's thoughts when, following the expressions of that philosopher, he says that virtue may come from three sources—from knowledge, nature and exercise.[70] True science and wisdom, according to Philo, is not the one which results from a natural development of our intelligence, but the one given to us by the grace of God. According to the Greek philosopher it is nature itself that drives us towards the good; according to Philo, there are in man two entirely contrary natures which combat each other, and one of which must necessarily succumb; thenceforth both are in a state of violence and restraint which does not permit them to remain at rest. Whence his third expedient to attain moral perfection: asceticism in its highest degree as a substitute for the legitimate control of the will and reason over our desires. In fact, it is not only the question here of lessening evil and of confining it to more or less restricted limits, but it must be pursued as long as the least trace of it is visible; it must be destroyed, if possible, root and branch. For the evil we suffer from in this world is entirely in our passions which Philo considers absolutely foreign to the nature of the soul.[71] The passions, to use his language, have their origin in the flesh. The flesh, therefore, must be humiliated and mortified; it must be combatted under all forms

68 After stating that the four virtues have their source in beauty, our author adds: Λαμβάνει μὲν οὖν τὰς ἀρχὰς ἡ γενικὴ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐδέμ, τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίας, ἣ χαίρει καὶ γάνυται καὶτρυφᾷ ἐπὶ μόνῳ τῷ ὄντι αὐτῆς Θεῷ.—Leg. Alleg., I.

69 Κτησάμενος δὲ ἐπιστήμην, τῶν ἀρετῶν βεβαιοτάτην συνεκτᾶτο καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἁπάσας. De Nobilitate, ed. Mangey, vol. II, p. 442.

70 De Migrat. Abrah. De Somniis, I et passim.

71 Quis rerum divinarum haeres sit.

and in all instances;[72] we must lift ourselves from this state of forfeiture which is called life; we must regain liberty in the very bosom of that prison which we call body by absolute indifference to all perishable possessions.[73]

As this state of misery is the purpose and result of marriage, the latter is considered by Philo, without being openly condemned, as a humiliating necessity from which the select souls, at least, ought to liberate themselves.[74] These, approximately, are the principal characteristics of the ascetic life, more so conceived and shown to us by Philo, than he has seen it realized by the sect of the Therapeutics. But the ascetic life is only a means; its aim, that is to say, the aim of morality itself, the highest degree of perfection, of happiness and of existence, is the union of the soul with God through total forgetfulness of itself, through enthusiasm and through love.

Here are some passages which we may believe to have been borrowed from some mystic of modern times: "O, my soul! If you desire to inherit heavenly gifts, it is not only necessary, as our first patriarch did, to leave the land you inhabit, that is to say, your body; the family you were born in, that is to say, the senses; and the house of your father, or the word; you must also avoid yourself that you may be outside of you, like those corybants who are intoxicated with divine enthusiasm. For the inheritance of heavenly blessing is only there where the soul, full of enthusiasm, does not live any more in itself, but plunges with delight into divine love and, attracted, ascends towards its father. (Quis rerum Divinarum haeres sit.) Once delivered from all passion, the soul pours itself out like a pure libation before the Lord. For to pour one's soul before God, to break the chains we find in the vain cares of this perishable life, means to step out

72 Οὐ μετριοπάθειαν ἀλλὰ συνόλως ἀπάθειαν ἀγαπῶν.— Legis Allego., III.

73 Τὸ σῶμα εἱρκτή, δεσμοτήριον.—De Migrat. Abrah. Quis rerum divinarum haeres sit, et passim.

74 Quod deter. potiori insidiari seleat.—De Monarchia.

of one's self to reach the limits of the universe, and to enjoy the heavenly sight of Him Who always was." (De Ebrietate.) The contemplative life—although it may not be the only one for man to choose—is placed by such principles far above all social virtues whose principle is love and whose aim is the well-being of man.[75] Even the cult—I mean the outward cult—can not bring us to the aim we are to look for.

Philo is really very embarrased on this point. "Just as we must," he says, "take care of the body, since it is the dwelling place of the soul, just so must we observe the written laws; for the truer we will be to them, the better will we understand things they symbolize. In addition to this we must avoid the blame and the accusations of the masses."[76] This last reason resembles very much the postscript of some letters. This alone expresses the thought of our philosopher and establishes a closer relation between him and the Kabbalists. It also justifies the opinion the Talmudists had of their brethren who were initiated in Greek learning.

Of what has been said until now we obtain two extremely important deductions with reference to the origin of the Kabbalah. The first deduction is that this traditional doctrine was not taken from the writings of Philo. Indeed, since all Greek systems—and we may even say the entire Greek cililization—have left so many traces, intimately blended with elements of another nature, in the writings of Philo, why do we not find the same condition in the oldest writings of the Kabbalistic science? We say it again, that we can never find, either in the Zohar or in the Book of Formation, the least trace of that splendid civilization which has been transplanted by the Ptolemies to Egyptian soil. Without mentioning the previously indicated external difficulties which we

75 De Migrat. Abrah., ed. Mang., 1, I, p. 395, 413. Leg. Alleg., same ed. vol. I, p. 50. De Vita Contemplativa.

76 Ὥσπερ οὖν σώματος ἐπειδὰν ψυχῆς ἐστὶν οἶκος προνοητέον, οὕτω καὶ τῶν ρητῶν νόμων ἐπιμελητέον. . .πρὸς ὃ καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν μέμψεις καὶ κατηγορίας ἀποδιδράσκειν. —De Migrat. Abrah.

uphold here in their full force, is it possible that Simeon ben Yohai and his friends, or whoever the authors of the Zohar may have been, could differentiate in Philo's writings, if these were their only guide, between that which has been borrowed from the different Greek philosophers, whose names are seldom mentioned by their Alexandrian disciples, and that which belongs to another doctrine which is based upon the idea of one and immanent principle which is the substance and form of all beings? Such a supposition is unworthy of discussion.

Besides, what we designated as the oriental part of Philo's syncretism is far from corresponding in all important points with the mysticism taught by the Palestinian sages. Thus, according to Philo, there are only five divine forces or attributes, while the Kabbalists admit ten Sefiroth. Although enthusiastically expounding the doctrine, Philo nevertheless preserves always a certain dualism, the (absolute) Being and the forces, or the substance and the attributes which, according to him, are separated by an impassable abyss. The Kabbalists look upon the Sefiroth as diverse boundaries within which the absolute principle of things circumscribes itself, or as "vessels," to use their own mode of expression. The divine substance, they add, need only withdraw, and these vessels would break and waste. Let us also remember that they expressly taught the identity of existence with thought. Philo, who is unconsciously dominated by the idea (of Plato and Anaxogoras) that matter is a principle distinct from God and everlasting as He, is naturally led to consider life a forfeiture and the body a prison.

This also accounts for his contempt of marriage, which he regards merely as a gratification of the flesh. The Kabbalists, on the other hand, although agreeing with the Scriptures that in the first days of the creation, when he was not ruled by sensual passions, man was happier than now, still look upon life in general as a necessary trial, as a means through which finite beings like we may elevate themselves to God, and unite with Him in

boundless love. Marriage to them is not only the symbol, but the beginning, the first condition of this mysterious union; they carry marriage into the soul and into heaven. It is the fusion of two human souls by mutual completion. The interpretative system, finally, which Philo applies to the Holy Scriptures, although basically identical with that of the Kabbalists, could not, however, have served as a pattern to the latter.

Philo was surely not entirely ignorant of the language of his fathers; but we can easily prove that he had only the Septuagint version before him, the version that was used also by all the Alexandrian Jews. His mystic interpretations are based mainly upon the expressions of this translation and upon a purely Greek etymology.[77] Now, then, what is to become of those ingenious procedures used in the Zohar, whose force is entirely destroyed if not applied to the sacred language?[78] Nevertheless we admit that this difference in form would not be of such very great importance to us, if Philo and the Kabbalists were always to agree upon the choice of the texts, the Scriptural passages upon which they base their philosophical system; or, indeed, if disregarding the language, the same symbols would call forth the same ideas. But this is never so. Thus we do not find, either in the Zohar or in the Book of Formation, the least trace of those rich and ingenious allegories which we consider the sole property of the Alexandrian philosopher. No mention is made in these

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77 Here are a few examples; In the words addressed to the serpent whose head is to be crushed by woman, αὐτὸς σοῦ τηρήσει κεφαλήν, he finds with good reason a grammatical error; but this error is not to be found in the Hebrew text. *(Leg. Alleg., III) From the Greek word φείδεσθαι he derives the word Pishon, the name of the four rivers coming from the earthly paradise. The word Havilah is composed of εὖ and of ἴλως. It is of importance to him whether the name of God, Θεός, is or is not preceded by the definite article ὁ, etc. See Gefroerer, loc. cit., vol. I, p. 50.

78 How, for instance, can the abstract substance be called the "No-Thing" (אין—Eye-in) without the Hebrew text והחכמה מאין תמצא and wisdom where shall it be found? (Job, 28, 12). What is to become of the names of the first three Sefiroth? How could we possibly deduct the unity of God and of the world from the translation of the three words מי ברא אלה —who created these?

works of the personification of the senses in woman, of Eve, our first mother; of voluptuousness in the serpent which advised evil; of egotism in Cain, which man brought forth by uniting with Eve, that is to say, with the senses, after listening to the advice of the serpent; of the mental type in Abel, which entirely despises the body and succumbs through ignorance of mundane things; of the divine science in Abraham; of mundane science in Haggar; of virtue in Sarah; of the primitive nature of regenerated man in Isaac; of ascetic virtue in Jacob, and of faith in Tamar. All these reasons, we believe, justify our saying that Philo's writings exerted no influence whatever upon the Kabbalah.

We come now to the second deduction which may be drawn from these writings, and from the character of their writer. We have seen how indiscriminately and with what disregard for sound logic Philo pillaged, so to speak, the entire Greek philosophy. What reason have we, then, to credit him with better inventiveness, more sagacity and greater depth in that part of his opinions which reminds us, at least, of the dominant principles of the Kabbalistic system? Are we not justified in thinking that he found also this part all ready made in certain preserved traditions of his co-religionists, and that he only trimmed it with the brilliant colors of his imagination? In this case these traditions were quite old; for Egypt must have received them from the Holy Land before the memory of Jerusalem and of the language of their fathers was entirely extinguished among the Alexandrian Jews.

But, fortunately, we need not rely upon conjectures. There are facts which prove conclusively that some of the ideas we now speak of were known more than a century before the Christian era. We are assured by Philo himself, as we have said before, that he had drawn from an oral tradition which was preserved by the elders of his people,[79] attributing to the sect of the Therapeutists the mystic books of a very remote antiquity (De Vita contemplativa) and the use of allegorical interpretations applied

[79] De Vita Mosis, I; ed. Mangey., liv. II, p. 81.

without exception and without reserve to all parts of the Holy Scriptures. "The entire law," he says, "is to them like a living being in which the body is represented by the letter and the soul by a very deep meaning. Through the words, as through a mirror, the rational soul perceives in the latter the most hidden and the most extraordinary wonders."[80] Let us keep in mind that the same comparison is used in the Zohar, with the difference that beneath the body is put the cloak of the law by which the material deeds of the Bible are designated, and that above the soul is placed a more saintly soul, that is to say, the Divine Word, source of all inspiration and of all truth. But we have still older and more reliable witnesses than Philo.

We shall begin with the most important of all, the famous version of the Septuagint. The Talmud already had a vague knowledge[81] of the numerous inaccuracies met with in this famous translation, yet it venerated it very highly. Modern criticism has conclusively proven that the translation was made in behalf of a system extremely hostile[82] to biblical anthropomorphism; and there we will find the germ of Philo's mysticism.[83] Thus, when the sacred text expressly states[84] that Moses, his brother and the seventy elders saw the God of Israel sitting upon a throne of sapphire, the Greek translation says that it is not God they have seen, but the place He dwells in.[85] When another prophet, Isaiah, sees God sitting upon His throne and the folds of His robe filling

80 Ἅπασα γὰρ ἡ νομοθεσία δοκεῖ ἀνδράσι τούτοις ἐοικέναι ζώῳ· καὶ σῶμα μὲν ἔχειν τὰς ῥητὰς διατάξεις, ψυχὴν δὲ τὸν ἐναποκείμενον τοῖς λέξεσιν ἀόρατον νοῦν, ἐν ᾧ ἦρξατο ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ διαφερόντως τὰ οἰκεῖα θεωρεῖν, ὥσπερ διὰ κατόπτρου τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἐξαίσια κάλλη νοημάτων ἐμφερόμενα κατιδοῦσα.
—De Vita contemplativa, vol. II, p. 475, ed. Mangey.

81 Babyl. Talm., tract. Megillah, 9a, b.

82 The strict avoidance of anthropomorphism and anthropathy is easily explained by the hypothesis that the Greek translation was made from an Aramaic original.—Jellinek

83 For the necessary documents consult Gefroerer, Primitive Christianity, vol. II, p. 4-18, and Dahne, Historical Exposition of the Religious Philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews, vol. II, p. 1-72.

84 Exodus, ch. XXIV, 9, 10.

85 Καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὐ εἱστήκει ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.

the temple, (Isaiah, VI, 1) the Septuagint replaces this too material picture by the "glory of God," the Shekinah of the Hebrews.[86] Jehovah really does not speak to Moses face to face, but in a vision; and it is probable that in the mind of the translator this vision was only an intellectual one.[87]

Until here we see only the destruction of anthropomorphism and the desire to disengage the idea of God from the, sometimes, sublime images which put Him beyond our intelligence. But here are matters more worthy of our interest. Instead of "Lord Zebaot," the God of Hosts, Whom the Bible represents as another Mars exciting the fury of war and Himself marching into battle,[88] we find in the Greek translation not the Supreme God, but the forces of which Philo speaks so much in his writings, and the Lord, the God of the forces (κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων). When comparison is made to the "dew born from the bosom of Aurora,"[89] the anonymous translator substitutes for it that mysterious being which God brought forth from His bosom before the morning star,[90] that is to say, the Logos, the divine light which preceded the world and the stars. When speaking of Adam and Eve, the Septuagint is careful to adhere strictly to the text that God created them male and female.[91] But this twofold character, these two halves of humanity, are united in one and the same being, which is evidently the prototype man, the Adam Kadmon.[92]

In this curious monument we can also find unquestionable traces of the theory of numbers and of ideas. For example:

86 Καὶ πλήρες ὁ οἶκος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

87 Στόμα κατὰ στόμα λαλήσω αὐτῷ ἐν εἴδει. Numbers, ch. XII, 8.

88 ה' כגבור יצא כאיש מלחמות יעיר קנאה. (The Lord will go forth as a mighty man, He will stir up jealousy like a man of war)—Isaiah, XLII, 13.

89 מרחם משחר לך טל ילדתך. (From the womb of the dawn, thine is the dew of thy youth).—Psalms, CX, 3.

90 Ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησα δέ.

91 זכר ונקבה ברא אתם. (Male and female created He them).—Gen., I, 27.

92 Ἄρσεν καὶ Θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν.

God is not the creator of heaven and earth in the ordinary sense of the word; He simply made them visible from the invisible state in which they were previously.[93] "Who created all these?" asks the Hebrew prophet; "Who made them visible?"[94] says the Alexandrian interpreter. When the same prophet represents the master of the universe commanding the stars like a numerous army,[95] our interpreter makes him say that God produced the world according to numbers.[96] While an allusion to the doctrines of Plato and Pythagoras is easily found in these diverse passages, we must not forget that the theory of numbers is also taught, although grossly, in the Sefer Yetzirah, and that the theory of ideas is absolutely inseparable from the metaphysics of the Zohar.

We want to add here that an application of the Pythagorean principle is found in the first of these two monuments which is literally reproduced in the writings of Philo, and for which we shall look in vain in the works of any other Greek writing philosopher. It is because of the influence of the number seven that we possess seven principal organs—the five senses, the organ of speech and the generative organs; and it is for the same reason that there are seven gates of the soul, to wit: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one mouth.[97] We find also in the Septuagint another Kabbalistic tradition which was later appropriated to Gnosticism. When the text tells us that "the Most High marked the borders of the nations according to the number of children of Israel," we read in the Alexandrian translation that "the nations were divided according to the number of the angels of

93 Οὗτος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ καταδείξας τὴν γῆν καὶ ποιήσας αὐτὴν αὐτὸς διώρισεν αὐτήν. —Isaiah, ch. XLV, 18. The three following words must be added to this passage: , which have long since been noticed in the second verse of Genesis.

94 מי ברא אלה—Isaiah, XL, 26,

95 המוציא במספר צבאם Ib. supr. See Tracy's translation.

96 Ὁ ἐκφέρων κατ' ἀριθμὸν τὸν κόσμον αὐτοῦ.

97 Τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς δίχα τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ μήρος ἑπταχῆ σχίζεται, πρὸς πέντε αἰσθήσεις καὶ τὸ φωνητήριον ὄργανον καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὸ γόνιμον, κ. τ. λ. —De Mundi opific., p. 27, Paris ed.

the Lord."[98] This, apparently odd and arbitrary interpretation,[99] becomes very intelligible when compared with a passage in the Zohar where we are told that there are seventy nations on earth,[100] that each of these nations is placed under the power of an angel whom it recognizes as its God, and who, so to speak, is the personification of its own spirit. The children of Israel alone are privileged to have over them no one but the true God Who had chosen them as His people.[101] We find the same tradition with another sacred writer who is just as old as the Septuagint version.[102]

No doubt that the Greek philosophy which flourished in the capital of the Ptolomeans exercised a great influence upon this famous translation; but we find ideas there which have evidently been drawn from another source, and which could not even have been brought forth upon Egyptian soil. For were it otherwise, that is, if all the elements pointed out by us, as the allegoric

98 יצב גבולות עמים למספר בני ישראל Deuter. XXXII, 8.—ἔστησεν ὅρια ἐθνῶν κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων Θεοῦ.

99 I omit here Dr. Jellinek's footnote wherein he puts the opinion of the author above that of Dr. Frankel (Preliminary Studies to the Septuagint). We are not concerned here with the criticism of Frankel's opinion. What is of importance, though, is Frankel's remark that the words בני אלהים are sometimes translated in the Septuagint by οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ (the angels of God), and sometimes by υἱοὶ Θεοῦ (sons of God). To this Dr. Jellinek makes the following remark: Noteworthy is the following saying of Simeon ben Yohai: ויראו בני אלהים ר' שמעון בר' יוחאי קרא להון בני דיינא, ר' שמעון בן יוחאי הוי מקלל לכל מאן דקרי ולהון בני אלהיו. "R. Simeon ben Yohai translated the words 'and the angels of Elohim saw' (Genesis VI, 2) with 'the sons of the judges,' and he cursed those who called them (Aramaic) בני אלהייא. אלהייא in Aramaic has the only meaning of "gods," while אלהים in Hebrew means also "judges." This passage shows on the one hand how much R. Simeon ben Yohai was opposed to the conception of "sons of God;" on the other hand, the υἱοὶ Θεοῦ (sons of God) was known also among the Palestinian Jews.—Transl.

100 The Talmud is also acquainted with the tradition that there are seventy nations and seventy languages. Compare Shekalim, fol. 13.—Jellinek

101 התניים יהנדולים אלין אינון שבעין ממנן רברבן על שבעין עמין ובגין כך אתבריאו כלהו למהוי שליטין על ערעא וגומ' —Zohar part I fol. 46b.

102 Ἑκάστῳ ἔθνει κατέστησεν ἡγούμενον, καὶ μερὶς κύριον Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν.—Jes. Sirach ch. XVII, 17.

interpretations of the religious elements, the personification of the Word and its identity with the absolute place, were the result of the general trend of thought of that period, in the land of which we spoke, how is it that during a lapse of two centuries, from the time of the last authors of the Septuagint version until Philo, not the least mention of that trend is made in the history of Greek philosophy?[103] But we have another, nearly contemporaneous monument, wherein we find the same spirit in a more definite form, and the Hebrew origin of which can not be contested. It is the book of Jesus, son of Sirach, commonly called Ecclesiasticus.

This religious author is known to us at present only through a Greek translation which came from the pen of his grandson. In a sort of preface we are told by the latter that he came to Egypt (probably after leaving Judea) in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Evergetes II. If we take therefore the original writer to have lived fifty years earlier, we find him two centuries before the Christian era. Without placing implicit faith in the testimony of the translator, who assures us that his grandfather drew only from Hebrew sources, we want to point out that Jesus, the son of Sirach, is often eulogized by the Talmud under the name of Joshuah ben Sirach ben Eliezer.[104] The original text still existed at the time of St. Jerome, and until the beginning of the fourth century Jews as well as Gentiles counted it among their sacred writings. Now then, we find in the writings of this ancient author not only the traditions of which we just spoke, but also the doctrine of the Logos or of Divine Wisdom nearly in the same form as it is taught by Philo and by the Kabbalists.

Wisdom is, first of all, the same power as the Word, or the "Memra" of the Chaldean translators. It is *the* Word; it went

103 The translator of Jesus ben Sirach, who lived about one hundred and fifty years before Jesus Christ, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Evergetes II, speaks of the Septuagint version as a work long since completed and known.

104 See Zunz, The Religious Sermons of the Jews, ch. VII.

forth from the mouth of the Most High (ἐγὼ ἀπὸ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον);[105] it can not be taken as a simple abstraction, as a purely logical being, for it manifests itself in the midst of its people, in the assembly of the Most High, and praises its soul (ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ αὐτῆς καυχήσεται . . . αἰνέσει ψυχὴν αὐτῆς). (Ch. XXIV, 1.) This heavenly assembly is probably composed of forces subordinate to it; for the Talmud and Zohar make frequent use of a very similar expression to convey the same thought.[106] Wisdom, thus introduced upon the scene, presents itself as the firstborn of God; for it existed already at the very beginning, when time was not yet, and it will not cease to exist in the course of ages.[107] Wisdom has always been with God; (Ch. I, 1.) it is through Wisdom that the world was created; Wisdom alone formed the celestial spheres and descended to the depths of the abyss. Its empire extends over the waves of the ocean, over all regions of the earth, and over all the peoples and all the nations that inhabit it. (Ch. XXIV, 566.) Having been ordered by God to look for a dwelling place here below, its choice fell upon Zion.[108]

When we consider that, according to our author, every other nation is subject to the influence of an angel or a subordinate power, we ought to look upon the choice of Zion as the dwelling place for Wisdom as a simple metaphor. On the contrary, that choice shows, as the quoted tradition expressly says, that the spirit of God, or the Logos, acted directly without an intermediary, upon the prophets of Israel.[109] If Wisdom were not something substantial, if it were not in some way the instrument and the servant of God, how could it be conceived sitting upon a throne within a column of clouds, the same column, probably, that marched before the Hebrew people in the desert?[110] The spirit

[105] Ch. XXIV; de Sacy's translation, same ch., v. 7.
[106] ישיבה של מעלה (Higher Assembly).
[107] Ch. XXIV, v. 9; Sacy, v. 4. Πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἔκτισέ με.
[108] Ch. XXIV v. 7ff.; Sacy, v. 11.
[109] Ch. XVII, v. 15. Μερὶς κυρίου Ἰσραήλ ἐστιν.
[110] Ὁ Θρόνος μου ἐν στύλῳ νεφέλης.

of this book, as well as that of the Septuagint version and the Chaldaic paraphrases of Onkelos, consists, on the whole, in placing between the Sovereign Being (ὁ ὕψιστος) and this perishable world a mediating power which is, at the same time, eternal and the first work of God; which acts and speaks for Him, and which is itself His word and His creative power.[111] The abyss between the finite and the infinite is thus filled; heaven and earth are not divorced any longer; God manifests Himself through His word, and His word through the universe. But the Divine Word has no need of being recognized first in the visible things; it sometimes comes directly to man in the form of a holy inspiration, or through the gift of prophecy and revelation.

It was thus that the nation was raised above all other nations, and a man, the lawgiver of the Hebrews, above all other men. I want to add here that there is no conflict in this, so important, result between theology and criticism. For when we inquire into the most orthodox translations, as that of Sacy, about the work that interests us at present, we shall find many allusions to the doctrine of the Word.[112] We may say the same of the "Book of Wisdom," where the following passage has long since been found:[113] "Wisdom is more active than the most active thing . . . It is the breath, that is to say, an emanation of God's power and a very pure effusion of the brightness of the Almighty. It is the reflection of the everlasting light, the spotless mirror of the majesty of God and the image of His goodness. Although only one, it can accomplish everything, and resting immutably in itself, it renews all things. It enters at different times into holy souls and makes them prophets and friends of God." (Ch. VII, 24-27.)

But it seems to us that the general character of this work comes nearer to the Platonic philosophy than to the mysticism of

[111] I follow here Jellinek who has "schoepferische Macht (creative power);" the original has "vertue creative (creative virtue.)"—Transl.
[112] See especially the 1st and 24th chapter.
[113] The author gives the translation from de Sacy; while Jellinek gives it from the Greek text. I follow the latter.—Transl.

Philo. And as neither the age nor the true origin of this work is known,[114] we are compelled to wait until a critic, more learned than ours, will have settled these questions.[115] However, the facts we have collected demonstrate fully that the Kabbalah is neither a child of the Greek civilization of Alexandria, nor of pure Platonism. In fact, were we to treat only of the principle which serves as basis to every Kabbalistic system, namely, the personification of the Word and of the Divine Wisdom considered as the immanent cause of the beings, we can find it at an epoch when the particular Alexandrian spirit was still in the process of being born. And where do we find it? In a traditional translation, so to speak, of the Scriptures, and in another monument of a purely Hebrew origin. When details and secondary ideas are considered, as for example the different applications of the allegorical method, or the deductions that may be drawn from the metaphysical principle of which we have spoken, the great difference between the writings of Philo and those of the Hebrew Kabbalists are easily seen.

[114] See dom Calmet's "Dissertation on the author of the Book of Wisdom, in his litteral commentary to the Old Testament," and Daehme, l. c. liv. II, p. 152ff.

[115] We believe, however, that the author was familiar with the Hebrew sources; for we find with him apocryphical legends which are otherwise met in the Midrashim of Palestine. Of such nature is the legend of the manna which had the taste of any dish desired;* also the legend of Joseph, who, it was believed, became king of Egypt, and that during the three days of darkness the Egyptians were unable to keep up any artificial light.—Wisdom, ch. XVI, 20-23. See dom Calmet's "Preface to the Book of Wisdom."

* This legend is also found in the Babylonian Talmud. Tract. Yoma, fol. 75. כל זמן שישראל אוכלין אותו (את המן) מוצאין בו כמה טעמים "As long as Israel ate the manna, they found in it any taste desired."—Jellinek

Chapter IV

RELATION OF THE KABBALAH TO CHRISTIANITY

Since the Kabbalah is indebted neither to philosophy nor to Greece, nor to the capital of the Ptolomeans, it necessarily must have its cradle in Asia. Judaism must have brought it forth through its own efforts; or it must have sprung from some other religion born in the Orient, and so near to Judaism as to exert an unquestionable influence upon it. Is it possible that Christianity is that religion?

Notwithstanding the extreme interest aroused at first by this question, the solution of which is to be found in what has been previously said, we can not pause to consider it for any length of time. It is evident to us that all the great metaphysical and religious principles underlying the Kabbalah antedate the Christian dogmas. It is not, however, within the scope of our work to compare these.

But no matter what meaning we may ascribe to these principles, their form alone explains to us a fact which, we believe, is of very great social and religious interest. A great many Kabbalists converted themselves to Christianity; we mention among others, Paul Ricci, Conrad Otton,[1] Rittangel, editor of the Sefer Yetzirah. In more recent times, towards the end of the eighteenth century, we see another Kabbalist, the Polish Jew Jacob Frank, pass into the bosom of Catholicism with several

[1] Author of "Gali Razia" (Unveiled Secrets). Nurenberg, 1605. The aim of this work, which is composed entirely of Hebrew quotations translated into Latin and German, is to prove the Christian dogma by different passages from the Talmud and Zohar.

thousand of his adherents, after founding the sect of the Zoharites.[2] The rabbis have long since noticed this danger, and many among them have openly shown their hostility to the study of the Kabbalah;[3] while others protect it even today as the holy ark, as the entrance to the Holy of Holies, to keep the profane from it. Leon de Modena, who wrote a book against the authenticity of the Zohar,[4] doubts very much the salvation of those who gave to the press the principal Kabbalistic works.[5] Christians, like Knorr of Rosenroth, Reuchlin and Rittangel after his conversion, on the other hand, saw therein the most potent means of lowering the barrier that separates synagogue and church. In the hope of bringing about some day this fervently desired result, they collected in their works all the passages of the Zohar and of the New Testament which present some similarity to one another.

We are far from any religious polemics, and instead of following these footsteps and thus becoming their echo, we shall rather investigate whether there is anything in common between the Kabbalah and the most ancient organs of gnosticism. We shall thus be able to ascertain whether the principles, whose influence and origin we endeavor to know, were not spread outside of Judea; whether they did not exert their influence also upon other people who were entire strangers to the Greek civilization; and whether, accordingly, we are not justified in regarding the Kabbalah as a precious remnant of a religious philosophy of the Orient which, transplanted to Alexandria, mingled with the doctrines of Plato, and under the usurped name of Dionysius the Areopagite[6] was able to penetrate even into the mysticism of the Middle Ages.

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2 Peter Beer, History of Jewish Religious Sects, vol. II.

3 See Ari Noham of Leon de Modena, pgs. 7, 79 and 80.

4 Ari Noham (the Roaring Lion), published by Julius Fuerst, Leipzig, 1840.

5 Ib. supr., p. 7. ולא ידעתי אם ימחול ה' לאשר הדפיסם אותם הספרים
I do not know whether God will forgive those who published these books.

6 One of St. Paul's converts at Athens.—Transl.

Without departing from Palestine, we first meet at Samaria, in the days of the apostles, and probably in an advanced age, a very singular person—Simon the Magician (Magus). Who was this man who enjoyed such incontestable power (Acts. VIII, 10.) and such boundless admiration among his fellow citizens?[7] He may have had a base view of the motive which prompts us to divide the highest gifts with others, but he surely was not an impostor, for he looked up to the apostles and endeavored to obtain from them for money the power to impart the holy spirit (Acts, VIII, 18, 19). I go still further and maintain that his authority would have been in vain were it not supported by a well known and long accredited idea in the minds of the people. We find this idea very clearly expressed in the supernatural role attributed to Simon. The entire people, say the Acts, from the highest to the lowest, considered him the personification of the great power of God: Hic est virtus Dei quae vocatur magna (This man is the great power of God). (Ibid, 10.)

Now St. Jerome tells us that our Samaritan prophet understood by it nothing else but the Word of God (Sermo Dei).[8] In this quality he must have necessarily united in him all the other attributes; for according to the religious metaphysics of the Hebrews the Word or Wisdom includes implicitly the lower Sefiroth. St. Jerome also gives us as authentic the following words which Simon[9] applied to himself: "I am the divine word, I possess the real beauty, I am the comforter, I am the

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7 It is the prevailing opinion that Simon came from Githoi, a small Samaritan town. The historian Josephus is the only one who mentions a Jew, originally from Cyprus, who pretended to be a magician.—Antiquities, Book XX ch. VII.

8 St. Jerome Commentar. in Matthaei ch. XXIV, in vol. VII of his work according to the Venetian edition.

9 On Simon Magus and his wife Helen compare Irenaeus I, 23: "Simon—Helenam quandam—secum circumducebat, disens, hanc esse primam mentis ejus conceptionem, matrem omnium, per quam initio mente concepit, angelos facere et archangelos. . . . Transmigrantem autem de corpore in corpus, ex eo et semper contumeliam sustinentem in novissimis etiam in fornice prostitisse."—Jellinek

Almighty, I am all that is in God."[10] Every one of these expressions corresponds to one of the Sefiroth of the Kabbalah, the influence of which we find again in the following fact reported by another church-father:[11] "Simon, the Magician, who considered himself the visible manifestation of the Word, wanted to personify also its correlating female principle, its spouse—the Divine Thought—in a woman of bad repute."

This strange conception, which finds no support either in the Platonic philosophy or in the Alexandrian school—if the latter existed already at that time—agrees wonderfully, although at the same time disfiguring it, with the Kabbalistic system where Wisdom, that is the Word, represented as the male principle, has, like all other principles of the same order, its half, its spouse which in this case is the Sefiroh that bears the name of "Intelligence" (בינה —Beenah),[12] and which has been taken by several gnostics for the Holy Spirit, being always represented by them in the form of a woman. Among these gnostics is the Jew Elxai who has many traits resembling the prophet of Samaria. His name even—which he surely chose himself—suggests the role he had taken upon himself.[13] This heresiarch not only

[10] "Ego sum sermo Dei, ego sum speciosus, ego paracletus, ego omnipotens, ego omnia Dei."—Ib. supr.

[11] Clement., Recognitiones, liv. II. Iren., liv. 4, ch. XX.

[12] See second part of this work following note 42.

[13] אל כסי, perhaps also חיל כסי,* the mysterious power.—Epiphanius, 19th heresy.

* Instead of refuting this unfortunate construction of the name Elxai, we shall quote the following words of Delitsch ("Orient," 1841, col. 297-298): "Many conjectures, some conflicting apparently with the custom of Jewish nomenclature, some with the Greek phonetic rules in the transscription of Hebrew names, have been put forward about the name Elxai, on the orthography of which the ancients differed wonderfully (see variants of Coteler, Monum. I, p. 775), Little note has been taken of Rhenferd's conjecture (De fictis Judaeorum haeresib., p. 98) which doubts the personality of Elxai and which explains the name as merely that of some sect by אלכאשין or אלכסאי (the deniers); but the first is un-Arabic and the second is un-Hebraic. Besides, the construction which, according to Epiph. (Haeres. XIX, 2), the sect itself puts upon the name, forbids accepting the Ελ (Hλ) in the beginning of the word as an Arabic form of the article. The followers of Elxai pretend that his name means vim abstrusam (hidden power), and the Judeo-Christian Epiphanius adds: 'because Ελ means power and ξαι means hidden.' There is no doubt that this construction is only a Midrash of the same name, as is often met with in old Jewish writings. It was not at all intended to prove the grammatical root, but to support mnemonically or even to establish ostensibly any accepted passage (like the one here of the high personality of Elxai). We must, therefore, inquire first into the proper Hebrew form of the name and then attempt to prove the possibility of putting a double meaning upon it. For, the transcription חיל קסא (Goerik, K. G. I, p. 143), which has no other meaning than: 'strength which has covered,' is, in any case, miscarried. The heresy of the Elxaites shaped itself in the trans-Jordanic region. There, in Galilee (Hier. ad Nahum I, 1), εἰς Βηγαβὰρ ἐκ φυλῆς Συμεὼν (Epiph. de Vitis Proph. 18), was a small hamlet Elcesi ('Ελκεσεί), well known to the Jews at the time of St. Jerome, to whom the ruins of old houses were pointed out by his companion. Possibly the prophet Nahum was born here, and also the spurious prophet Elxai ('Ελκεσαῖος, 'Ελκεσαΐς). The surname האלקשי added to Nahum, which is rendered in the Greek translation by 'Ελκεσαῖος, is identical with that of Elxai, which can be better established phonetically and historically if space would permit. All the Greek variants go back to אלקשאי or אלקשאה. The Greek letter H used in writing the name enjoins thinking of the Hebrew אל, just as the ξ and χ ('Ελχασαῖος with Methodius) point to the emphatic 'Qoph' of the Hebrew alphabet. It is to this name that the followers of Elxai attached their symbolic interpretation, and they could well afford to do it, because the modus operandi of the original operation perhaps did not escape from the language consciousness (according to the Masoretic commentary of Minchat Sha the spelling is found in two words האל-קשי). They translated אל-קשי (power of difficulty i.e., a power difficult to understand. secret power), or, what is not strange, with the Galileans (who, according to the Gemara Erubin pronounced the guttural ק like ח), אל כסוי (covered, hidden power)."—Jellinek

[14] Ib. supr.

[15] אותיות דר' עקיבה (Otiot d'Rabbi Akiba). Here is a translation of a passage from this book: "The body of the divine presence (גופו של שכינה —Goofo shel Shekinah) has an extension of 236 times 10,000 parasangs (Persian road measure), to wit: 118 times 10,000 from the loins down, and just as much from the loins up. But these parasangs are different than ours. Each divine parasang has 1,000 times 1,000 cubits (אמות); each divine cubit has four zereth (spans) and one palm; each zereth

conceives the Holy Spirit as a female principle, as just remarked, but he looks upon Christ as a divine power only which clothes itself at times in a material form and whose colossal proportions he describes in minute details.[14]

We remember having found in the Zohar a similar description of the "White Head," and that another work, very famous among the Kabbalists, the pseudonymous "Alphabet of Rabbi Akkiba,"[15]

speaks of God in nearly the same terms. Along with this manner of conceiving the Word, the Holy Spirit, and in general the divine pairs of which the Pleroma[16] is composed, we find also in the monuments left by the Syrian Bardasanes the principle of the Kabbalistic cosmogony. The unknown father who lives in the centre of the light has a son; this is Christ, or the heavenly man. Christ again, by uniting with his companion, his spouse, which is the Holy Ghost (τὸ πνεῦμα), produces successively the four elements, air and water, fire and earth. These elements and the external world in general are thus here, as in the Sefer Yetzirah, a simple emanation or the voice of the spirit. (Ephrem, hymn 55, p. 755.)

But we need not persist in painfully gathering some scattered memories in the Acts of the Apostles or in the Hymns of St. Ephrem. There is a monument of great value from which we may draw quite liberally. We refer to the Codex Nazareus,[17] that bible of purely oriental gnosticism. We know that St. Jerome and St. Epipahnius date back the sect of the Nazarenes to the time of the birth of Christ.[18] Now then, the similarity of a great many of their dogmas with the most essential elements of the Kabbalistic system is so great, that when reading them in the work just mentioned, we believe we have found some stray fragments of the Zohar. Thus, God is always called the king and the master of the light; He is Himself the purest splendor and the infinite and eternal light. He is also beauty, life, justice

represents the length between the two opposite extremities of the universe."—Letter ה, p. 151, Krakau ed., 1579.

16 In Gnosticism it signifies the spiritual divine nature with all the eons emanating from it.—Transl.

17 Codex Nazareus, 3 vol. in 4to, 1815. Pub. and trans. by Matthew Norberg.

18 This opinion, accepted by most of the theologians, is to be preferred to that of Mosheim. To better refute Toland's objections to the unity of the Christian faith, Mosheim places the origin of the sect of the Nazarenes in the fourth century. See Mosheim, Indiciae antiquae christianorum disciplinae, I, 5.

and mercy.[19] All forms that we perceive in this world emanate from Him; He is the creator and the architect, but no one knows His own wisdom and His own essence.[20] All creatures ask one another for His name, and they are compelled to answer that He has no name. As the king of the light, the infinite light, He has no name that can be invoked, nor is He of a nature that can be known; we can reach Him only through a pure heart, an upright spirit and a faith full of love.[21] The steps by which the Nazarene doctrine descends from the highest being to the furthest limits of the creation are the same used in a passage of the Zohar which has been quoted several times in this work: "All genii, kings and creatures praise vyingly, with prayers and hymns, the supreme king of light who emanates five rays of marvelous brilliancy. The first is the light that illumines all the beings; the second is the mild breath that animates them; the third is the melodious voice that expresses their cheerfulness; the fourth is the word which instructs them and elevates them to bear witness to their faith; the fifth is the type of all forms under which they develop, like fruit which nourishes by the action of the sun."[22]

We can not fail to recognize in these lines—to the translation of which we confined ourselves—the different degrees of exis-

19 "Rex summjs lucis, splendor purus, lux magna. Non est mensura, numerus et terminus ejus splendori, luci est majestati. Totus est splendor, totus lux, totus pulchritudo, totus vita, totus justitia, totus misericordia," etc.—Cod. Naz. vol. I, p. 5.

20 "Creator omnium formarum, pulchrarumque artifex, retinens vero suae sapientiae, suique obtegens, nec sui manifestus.—Ib., p. 7.

21 "Creaturae omnes tui nominis nesciae. Dicunt reges lucis, se invicem interrogantes: nomenne sit magnae luci? iidimque respondent: nomine caret. Quia autem nomine caret, nec fuerit qui illius nomen invocet, noscendaeque illius naturae insistat, beati pacifici qui te agnoverunt corde puro, mentionem tui fecerunt mente justa, fidem tibi integro affectu habuerunt." Cod. Naz., vol. I, p. 11.

22 "Omnes genii, reges et creaturae, precationi et hymno insistentes, celebrant regem summum lucis, a quo exeunt quinque radii magnifici et insignes: primus, lux quae illis orta: secundus, flatus suavis qui eis adspirat: tertius, dulcedo vocis qua excellant: quartus, verbum oris quod erigit et ad confessionem pietatis instituit: quintus, species formae cujusque, qua adolescunt, sicut sole fructus."—Ib. supr., p. 9.

tence which the Kabbalists represent by the thought, breath or spirit, voice and word. Here are other pictures, just as familiar, which express the same idea: Before any creature existed at all, life was hidden within itself, eternal and incomprehensible, without light and without form (ferhi). From its bosom developed the luminous atmosphere (aver zeevo—אויר זיוא) which is also called the "Word," the "Garment" (L'vushah—לבושא, M'malelo—ממללא), or the symbolical river that represents wisdom. From this river flow the living waters, or the great waters which, to the Nazarenes as well as to the Kabbalists, typify the third manifestation of God, the Intelligence or the Spirit. This again produces a second life which, however, is far removed from the first one.[23] This second life is called "Yushamin" (יש מון—Yesh Moon, or יש מין—Min, the place of the forms, of the ideas); "in its bosom the idea of the creation was first conceived, and it is the loftiest and purest type of the creation."

The second life gave birth to a third which is called the "excellent father" (abatur, אב יתר—Av Yathar),[24] the "unknown old one" and "the ancient of the world" (senem sui obtegentem et grandaevum mundi). (Ib., vol. II, p. 88.) When the excellent Father looked into the abyss, the darkness of the black waters, he left his image there, which under the name of "Fetahil" became the Demiurge or the architect of the universe.[25] From then on begins an interminable series of Eons, an infernal and a celestial hierarchy which does not interest us any more. It is enough for us to know that these three lives, these three degrees in the Pleroma hold the same rank as the three Kabbalistic faces,

[23] "Antequam creaturae omnes existere, Ferho dominus existit per quem Jordanus existit. Jordanus dominus vicissime existit aqua viva, quae aqua maxima et laeta. Ex aqua vero viva, nos vita existimus."—Ib., vol. I, p. 145.

[24] Perhaps the "Avatar" of Hindoo mythology.—Transl.

[25] "Surrexit Abatur et, porta aperta, in aquam nigram prospexit. Fictus autem extemplo filius, sui imago, in aqua ista nigra, et Fetahil conformatus fuit."—Ib., vol. I, p. 308.

whose very names (Parsufo—פרצופה) are often met with in the mouth of these sectarians;[26] and we may place so much the more confidence in this interpretation, as we find also among them the ten Sefiroth divided, as in the Zohar, in three superior and seven inferior attributes.[27]

What concerns the singular accident which brought forth the Demiurge, and as to the more and more imperfect generation of the subordinated genii, these are mythologic expressions of the principle that darkness and evil are but the gradual weakening of the divine light (caligo ubi extiterat etiam extitisse decrementum et detrimentum), which is also very clearly formulated in the Nazarene code. (Ib., vol. I, p. 145.) Hence the name "body" or "matter" (giv—גיו or guf—גוף) is given to the prince of darkness. (Ib., III, Onomasticon.) This name does not differ from the one carried by the same principle in the Kabbalistic system (קליפות—Klipoth, shells, matter).

The Nazarenes also recognized two Adams, one a celesstial, and the other earthly, the father of humanity. Because of his body, the latter is the work of the subordinated genii, the stellar spirits; but the soul is the emanation of the divine life.[28] This soul, which was to return to its father in the heavenly regions, was detained in this world because it was seduced by evil powers. The message, then, entrusted by the Kabbalists to the angel Raziel is given for execution by our heretics to Gabriel, who plays quite an important role in their belief. It was the angel Gabriel who brought to our first parents, in order to raise them from their fall and to open to them the way to the bosom of their father, the true law, the word of life mysteriously spread by tradition until the advent of John the Baptist, the true prophet according to the Nazarenes, who promulgated it aloud on the shores of the

[26] Ib., vol. III, p. 126. Onomasticon.

[27] "Ad portam domus vitae thronos domino splendoris apte positus. Et ibidem tria habitacula. Parique modo septem vitae procreatae fuerunt, quae a Jukabar Zivac (יו כבר, the great splendor) eaque clarae sua specie et splendore superne veniente lucentes."—Ib., vol. III, p. 61.

[28] Ib., vol. I, p. 190-200. Ib., p. 121 and 123.

Jordan. (Vol. II, p. 25-26-117.) We could cite other traditions which could be taken to have been borrowed from the Midrashim and the Zohar;[29] but we are content with having pointed out that which has the best claim for the attention of the philosopher.

Were we now to meet with the same principles in Egyptian Gnosticism, in the doctrine of Basilides and Valentin, it would be unjust to attribute them to the Greek philosophy, or even to Alexandrian Neoplatonism. And, in fact, it would be very easy for us to demonstrate in what we have still left from the two celebrated heresiarchs just mentioned the most characteristic elements of the Kabbalah, as the unity of substance,[30] the formation of things, first by concentration, then by gradual expansion of the divine light,[31] the theory of pairs and of the four worlds,[32] the two Adams, the three souls,[33] and even the symbolic language of the numbers and the letters of the alphabet.[34] But we have nothing to gain from demonstrating this similarity; for we believe we have reached the aim we have set for ourselves in the last part of our work. After having previously established that the metaphysical ideas which make up the foundation of the Kabbalah were not borrowed from Greek philosophy; that, instead of being born either in a Pagan school or in the Jewish school of Alexandria, they were brought thither from Palestine, we

[29] We shall cite among others how the Nazarenes explain the formation of the foetus and the part attributed by them to both parents.—Vol. II, p. 41, of the Codex Nazareus.

[30] "Continere omnia petrem omnium et extra pleroma esse nihil, et id quod extra et id quod intra secundum agnitionem et ignorantiam." Iren., II, 4.

[31] At the head of things is the "Bythos" or Ineffable, from whose bosom spring in pairs all the Eons that constitute the Pleroma. But all these emanations would lose themselves in the limitless infinite, if there were not a vessel (ὅρος) which gives them solidity and consistency.—Iren., ib. supr. Neander, Genetic History of Gnosticism, article Valentin.

[32] Matter is the lowest world. Immediately above it are the Demiurge and the human soul (Olam Yetzirah). One step higher we meet the spiritual things, πνευματικοὶ (Olam Bree-ah), and finally the Pleroma (Atziluth).—Ib. supr.

[33] See Neander, work cited, p. 219.

[34] Neander, p. 176, Doctrine of Marcus.

have finally proven that its cradle is not as yet to be found in Palestine, or at least, in the so-called Judea.

For in spite of impenetrable mystery with which the teachers of the synagogue surround them, we find them in a less abstract and not so pure form, it is true, in the infidel capital of the Samarians and with the heretics of Syria. It matters little that here they were taught to the people as the foundation of the religion, and assumed thereby the character of mythological personification,[35] while there, having become the property of the elite intelligences, they made up rather an extensive and profound metaphysical system. The basis of these ideas remains the same; their interrelation, whether in the formulas with which they are clothed, or in the more or less phantastical traditions that accompany them, remain unchanged. We still have to investigate, therefore, from what part and from what religion of the Orient they may have come to penetrate directly into Judaism, and from there into the different systems we have mentioned. It is this last step we still have to make in order to fully accomplish our task.

[35] Plotinus with his usual profoundness had already noticed that Gnosticism generally compares the intelligible things to sensual and material nature: Naturam intelligibilem in similitudinem deducunt sensibilis deteriorisque naturae.—Enneade, liv. IX, ch. 6.

Chapter V

RELATION OF THE KABBALAH TO THE RELIGION OF THE CHALDEANS AND PERSIANS

Were we to find within the present circumscribed limits of our investigation a people, distinguished by its civilization as well as by its political power, which exercised an immediate and lasting influence upon the Hebrews, we could evidently find within the bosom of such a people the solution of the problem we have raised. We find these conditions complied with, even beyond the unreasonable demands of the critic, in the Chaldeans and Persians who were united into one nation by the arms of Cyrus and by the religion of Zoroaster. And, indeed, can we think of a more appropriate event in the life of a people that could change its moral constitution and modify its ideas and customs as the memorable exile that has been called the Babylonian captivity? Is it possible that the seventy years sojourn of the Israelites, priests and laymen, teachers and common people, in the land of their conquerors, exerted no influence on either side? We have already cited a talmudical passage wherein the elders of the synagogue openly acknowledge that their ancestors brought with them from the land of their exile the names of the angels, the names of the months and even the letters of the alphabet.

It is impossible to suppose that the names of the months were not accompanied by certain astronomical knowledge,[1] probably

[1] I should also have said "astrological;" for the influence of the stars played at that time quite an important role in the religious ideas of the Jewish people. The Talmud distinguishes auspicious and inauspicious days; and even to-day the Jews wish one another a lucky influence of the stars (מזל טוב—Mazol Tov) at any important event in their life when they wish to show mutual interest.*

* Although this fact is correct, yet it does not prove what the author has in mind. For, just as little as the German thinks of the astrological origin of the word "Unstern," or the French of "desastre," or the Italian of "disastro," so little does the Jew think of the influence of the stars when wishing מזל טוב. מזל (Mazol) in the Jewish idiom has a meaning identical with "luck."[a]—Jellinek

[a] The author probably meant the מזלות כוכבים (Mazoleth K'chovim) —astral fates—; by which the Jews designate the Zodiacal signs.—Transl.

of such a nature as we have met in the Sefer Yetzirah, and that the names of the angels were separated from the entire celestial and infernal hierarchy adopted by the Magi. It has also long since been noted that Satan appears for the first time in the sacred writings in the story of the Chaldean Job.[2] This rich and learned mythology, which has been adopted by the Talmud and spread in the Mishnah, constitutes also the poetical part and, if I may use the expression, the outer cover of the Zohar. But we do not wish to insist upon this long known fact. Disregarding the Chaldeans, who left no visible or reliable trace, and who, besides, were morally and materially conquered by the Persians before the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, we shall prove the presence, if not of the most general principles, but of nearly all the elements of the Kabbalah in the Zend Avesta and the religious commentaries depending upon it.

We wish to remark, incidentally, that this vast and admirable monument which has been known to us for more than a century, at this epoch, when we so eagerly follow up all sources, did not yet render all the service to historic philosophy—the true science of the human mind—which the latter justly expects of it. We do not pretend to fill the gap; but we hope to show the transmission of ideas between Persia and Judea, as we have already done in part, with reference to Judea and Alexandria.

We must first point out that all chronologists, whether Jewish

[2] Compare Zunz, "Religious Sermons of the Jews," p. 158.—Jellinek

or Christian,[3] agree that the first deliverance of the Israelites who remained captives in Chaldea since Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra, I, 1) took place during the first years of the reign of Cyrus over Babylon, 536 to 530 before the Christian era. The divergence of opinion confines itself to this very limited period. If we are to believe the calculations of Anquetil-Dupperon,[4] Zoroaster had already commenced his religious mission in 549, that is at least fourteen years before the first return of the captive Hebrews to their fatherland. Zoroaster was then forty years old; the most brilliant epoch of his life had begun, and continued until 539. During these ten years Zoroaster converted to his law the entire court and kingdom of king Gustasp, believed to have been Hystaspis, father of Darius. During these ten years the reputation of the new prophet dismayed even the brahmins of India, and when one of these came to the court of Gustasp for the purpose of overpowering the one he called impostor, he and all that were with him were compelled to yield to the irresistible power of their adversary. From 539 to 524, finally, Zoroaster openly taught his religion in the capital of the Babylonian empire, which he converted entirely by connecting wisely his own teachings with the already existing traditions.[5]

Is it reasonable to suppose that the Israelites, who witnessed such a revolution, and returned to their fatherland at a time when that revolution spread its most vivid brilliancy and, consequently, must have left the strongest impression upon their minds —is it possible, I say, that they took with them no trace of it, not even in their most secret opinions and ideas? Must not

[3] Scaliger, Emendatio tempor., p. 576. Alph. Desvignoles, Chronology, vol. II, p. 582. Bossuet, General History, vol. II. Seder Olam Raba, ch. XXIX, p. 86. David Ganz, liv. I., year 3392, and liv. II, 3390. Zunz, the twenty-four books of the Holy Scriptures, chronological table reproduced in Vol. XVIII of Cahn's Bible. To convince ourselves of the harmony between the Jewish and the. Christian chronologists we need only note that the Jews fixed the advent of Christ on the conventional date of 3760 after the creation.

[4] Zend Avesta, vol. II, Life of Zoroaster.

[5] Zend Avesta, vol. II, Life of Zoroaster.

the great question of the origin of evil, which until then remained untouched by Judaism, and which is, so to speak, the centre and starting point of the religion of the Persians, must it not have acted powerfully upon the imagination of these people of the Orient, who were accustomed to explain everything by divine intervention and to ascend in similar problems to the source of things? It can not be argued that because they were crushed under the weight of their misfortune they remained strangers to all that happened around them in the land of their exile. The Scriptures themselves point to them with some satisfaction as being instructed in all the sciences and, consequently, in all the ideas of their conquerors, and admitted with the latter to the highest dignities of the empire.

This is just the character of Daniel, Zerubabel and Nehemia,[6] the two latter playing such an active part in the deliverance of their brethren. But this is not all. Besides forty thousand people who returned to Jerusalem under Zerubabel, a second emigration, headed by Ezra, took place under the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, about seventy years after the first emigration. During this interval the religious reform of Zoroaster had time to spread to all parts of the Babylonian empire, and to take deep root in the minds of the people. From the return to their land until the conquest by Alexander the Great the Jews always remained the subjects of the Persian kings. And even after this event, until their total dispersion, they seemed to have looked upon the Euphrates, the banks of which they once bathed with their tears, as their second fatherland when their eyes and minds turned to Jerusalem. The Babylonian Synagogue arose under the civil and religious influence of the "Heads of Captivity" (ריש גלותה—Raysh G'lutho), and it co-operated with the one in Palestine for the definite organization of Rabbinic Judaism.[7]

[6] Daniel, I, 1, Ezra, I, 2; II, 1. Josephus, Antiquities, Book XI, ch. IV, V.

[7] Yost, General History of the Israelites, Book X, ch. XI and XII,—Same author, History of the Israelites since the Maccabees, vol. XIV, the entire XIVth book.

Wherever they found an asylum, at Sura, at Pompadita and at Nehardea, they founded religious schools which flourished no less than those of the metropolis. Among the teachers who sprang from their midst we mention Hillel the Babylonian, who died about forty years before the advent of Christ, and who was the teacher of that Yohanan ben Zakai who played such a great role in the Kabbalistic stories previously quoted. These same schools produced also the Babylonian Talmud, the final and most complete expression of Judaism. From the enumeration of these facts alone we may conclude that no nation exerted upon the Jews such deep influence as the Persians; that no moral power could have penetrated so deeply into their spirit as the religious system of Zoroaster with its long train of traditions and commentaries.

But all doubt vanishes when we pass from the purely external relations to a comparison of the ideas which represent in the two nations the most exalted results and the very foundations of their respective civilizations. However, to avoid the suspicion that we have founded beforehand the origin of the Kabbalah upon isolated and purely incidental resemblances, we shall point out in a few words and by some examples the influence of the Persian religion upon Judaism in general, before demonstrating all the elements of the Kabbalistic system in the Zend Avesta. Far from being a digression, this part of our research will contribute no little to the strengthening of our opinion, and I hasten to add that I do not at all intend to speak of the fundamental dogmas of the Old Testament. For, since Zoroaster himself continually refers to traditions much older than he, it is not necessary, yes, it is even not permissible from the standpoint of impartial criticism, to regard the following as having been borrowed from his doctrine: the six days of the creation, so easily recognized in the six Gahanbars;[8] the earthly paradise and the

[8] The word Gahanbars denotes the six creative epochs as well as the six festivals established as reminders for the faithful (M. Burnouf, Commentary to the Yacna, p. 309). In the first epoch Ormuzd created the heavens; during the second he made the waters; in the third, the earth; in the fourth, the vegetations; in the fifth, the animals; and, finally, in the sixth, man was born. (Auquetil-Duperron, Zend Avesta, vol. I, part 2, p. 84; Kleuker, vol. II, No. XXVIII.) This system of creation was taught already before Zoroaster by another Median or Chaldean prophet, called Djemshid.—Auquetil-Duperron, Life of Zoroaster, p. 67; Kleuker, vol. III, p. 59.

ruse of the demon who, in the shape of a serpent, kindled the revolt in the soul of our first parents;[9] the terrible punishment and the increasing forfeiture of the latter who, after having lived like angels, were obliged to cover themselves with the skins of animals, to wrest the metals from the bowels of the earth and to invent all the arts by which we subsist;[10] finally, the last judgment with its accompanying terrors, with the resurrection in spirit and flesh.[11] All these beliefs are found, it is true, in

[9] Ormuzd himself tells his servant Zoroaster that he, Ormuzd, has given (or created) a place of delight and of abundance, called Eeriene Veedjo. This place, more beautiful than the entire world, resembled the Behesht (the celestial paradise). Ahriman then created in the river that watered this place the Great Adder, mother of winter (Zend Avesta Vendidad, vol. II, p. 264). At another place Ahriman himself descends from heaven to earth in the shape of an adder. It is also Ahriman who seduces the first man, Meshiah, and the first woman, Meshiane. "He crept over their thoughts, he overthrew their minds, and said to them: It was Ahriman who gave the water, the earth, the trees and the animals. Thus Ahriman fooled them at the very beginning, and until the end this cruel one endeavored to seduce them."—Zend Avesta, vol. III, p. 351 and 378.

[10] "Devi, whose speech is all lie (Ahriman), becoming still bolder, came a second time and brought them (to the first couple) fruit of which they ate, and thus only the advantage of all the advantages was left to them." (Ib., supr.). Our first parents, seduced for the third time, then drank milk. At the fourth time, they went hunting, ate the meat of the animals and made for themselves garments from the skins, just as the Lord made coats from leaves for Adam and Eve. They then discovered iron, made an axe, felled trees and made tents for themselves; they finally united carnally and their children inherited their misery. (Ib. supr.)

[11] On the day of resurrection the soul will appear first; it will know its body and all men will recognize one another. They will be divided into two classes, the righteous and the darwands (the wicked). The righteous will go to the Gotatman (the paradise); the darwants will again be precipitated into the Duzakh (the inferno). For three days the first ones will taste, bodily and spiritually, the joys of paradise; the others will in the same manner suffer the tortures of hell. The dead will then be purified, and there will be no more wicked ones: "All men will be united into the same work. At that time Ormuzd will have

just as explicit a form in the Bundehesh[12] and in the Zend Avesta as in Genesis;[13] but we repeat again that we are fully convinced that the source is to be looked for at a much earlier age. We can not say the same of Rabbinical Judaism, which is much more modern than the religion of Zoroaster. The traces of Parseeism are here, as we shall soon ascertain, very visible, and we shall soon see what light can be thrown upon the origin of the Kabbalah when we keep in mind that the oldest teachers of this mysterious science are also counted among the doctors of the Mishnah and among the most venerated elders of the Synagogue.

When side by side with the wisest maxims on the application of life, when alongside the most consoling thoughts on mercy and divine justice, we find also in Judaism traces of the darkest superstition, we must look for the cause of these, especially in the terror instilled by its demonology. The power the latter ascribes to the evil spirits (שדים—Shaydim, רוחות—Ruheth) is so great that at every moment of his life man may think himself surrounded by invisible enemies who are set upon the loss of his body as well as of his soul. Man is not yet born, and they await him already at the cradle to contend with him for God and the tenderness of a mother. Hardly may he see the light of this world, when they assail his head with a thousand perils, and his thoughts with a thousand impure visions. In short, woe to him if he does not resist forever! For, before life has yet completely left the body, they come to take possession of their prey.

Now then, in all ideas of such a nature there is a perfect similarity between the Jewish traditions and the Zend Avesta. According to this latter monument the demons or the devils,

completed all creations and will do nothing more. The resurrected dead will enjoy the same rest. This could be called the seventh epoch of the creation, or the Sabbath of the Parsees.—Zend Avesta, vol. II, p. 414.

[12] According to the Zend Avesta, the Bundehesh is the oldest religious book of the Parsees.—Zend Avesta, vol. III, p. 337.

[13] All, except the last two. Although resurrection has been put down by Maimonides as one of the "Thirteen Articles of Faith."—Transl.

those children of Ahriman and darkness, are just as numerous as the creatures of Ormuzd. There are more than a thousand species who present themselves under all kinds of forms, and who wander over the earth to spread disease and sickness among man.[14] "Where," asks Zoroaster of Ormuzd, "is the place of the male, where the place of the female devis; where roam the devis in mobs from fifty, from a hundred, from a thousand, from ten thousand, and, finally, from all sides? . . .[15] Destroy the devis that enfeeble man and those that produce sickness, those that carry off the human heart as the wind sweeps away the clouds." (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 113.)

This is the way the Talmud expresses itself on the same subject: "Abba Benjamin said: 'No creature could withstand the evil creatures (מזיקין—Mazikin), had the eye the faculty of seeing them.' Abbaye adds: "They are more numerous than we, and surround us as a ditch surrounds a field." "Every one of us," says Rab Hunna,[16] "has a thousand of them to the left and ten thousand to the right side. When we feel ourselves pressed in a crowd, it is because of their presence; when our knees give way under our body, they alone are the cause; when we feel as though our extremities had been broken, it is to them again that we must attribute this suffering."[17] "The devis," says the Zend Avesta, "unite with one another and reproduce themselves as man does." (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 336.) But they reproduce themselves also through our own impurities, through the disgraceful acts of self-abuse, and even through the involuntary licentiousness provoked by a voluptuous thought during sleep. According to the

[14] Zend Avesta, vol. II, p. 235; vol. III, p. 158.

[15] Vendidad Sade, vol. II, of the Zend Avesta, p. 325.

[16] This scholar was generally influenced by many Persian views. Compare Sanhedrin, fol. 07.—Jellinek

[17] Tract. Berakoth, fol 6a. Another doctor even accuses the demons of wearing out the clothes of the rabbis by rubbing against them,* חני מאני דרבנן דבלו מחופיה דידהו.—Ib.

* דידהו is the possessive pronoun, talmudic for דידהון. The author who translates with "par le frottement de leur mains" found the noun יד "hand" in דידהו.—Jellinek.

Talmud the demons resemble the angels in three things, and in three other things they resemble man. Like the angels they read the future, have wings and fly in a moment from one end of the world to the other; but they eat, drink, reproduce and die as man does.[18] Furthermore, they all originated from the lascivious dreams that troubled the nights of our first father during the years passed in solitude,[19] and the same cause even today produces the same effect in his descendents.[20] Certain formulated prayers, therefore, were adopted by Jews and Parsees, whose power is to avert such calamity.[21] The same phantoms, the same terrors, finally, besiege these as well as the others at their last moment.

Man scarcely dies, say the Zend books, when he is taken possession of and questioned by the demons. (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 164.) The Daroudj (the demon) Nesosh comes in the form of a fly, places himself upon the head and beats him mercilessly. (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 316.) The soul, separated from the body, arrives then at the bridge Tchinevad, which separates our world from the invisible world; there it is judged by two angels, one of whom is Mithra, of colossal proportions, with ten thousand eyes, and holding a club in his hand.[22] The rabbis, retaining

[18] This passage was translated into Latin by Buxtorf in his "Lexicon Talmudicus," p. 2339.*

* It is found in Tractat Haggigah, fol. 16a. I have already corrected the original French text where the author omits the words "and die." For corroboration I quote literally from the Talmud: ששה דברים נאמרו בשדים. שלשה כמלאכי השרת ושלשה כבני אדם. שלשה כמלאכי השרת, יש להם כנפים כמלאכי השרת, וטסין מסוף העולם ועד סופו כמלאכי השרת, ויודעין את שעתיד להיות כמלאכי השרת; ושלשה כבני אדם, אוכלים ושותים כבני אדם, ומתים כבני אדם.

The phrase תנו רבנן (our rabbis taught) and the expression נאמרו (it was said) may testify to the old age of this translation.—Jellinek

[19] Ib. supr.*

* Compare also Tract. Erubin, fol. 18b. כל אותן שנים שהיה אדם הראשון בנדוי הוליד רוחין ושדין ולילין—Jellinek

[20] See in the קיצור שני לוחות הברית, (p. 108a of the Amsterdam ed.) quite a curious extract from Rabbi Menahem, the Babylonian.

[21] Zend Avesta, vol. II, p. 408. Kitzur, in the edition quoted in the previous note, p. 92b, 45a.

[22] Zend Avesta, vol. II, p. 114, 151. Ib., vol. III, p. 205, 206, 211-222.

the same basic idea, picture it still more frightfully. "When man," they say, "who is about to leave this world, opens his eyes, he notices in his house an extraordinary light, and standing before him he sees the angel of the Lord clothed in light, his body studded with eyes and his hand holding a flaming sword. At the sight of this the dying man is seized with fright which permeates his body and spirit. His soul flees gradually to all the extremities, as one desiring to change his place. But when he comes to know that it is impossible for him to escape, he looks into the face of the one standing before him and delivers himself entirely into his power. If the dying man is a righteous one, the divine presence (Shekinah) appears to him and the soul soon disappears beyond the body."[23]

This first test is followed by another, which is called the torture or the ordeal of the grave (חיבוט הקבר—; Hibut Hakover).[24] "As soon as the dead is put in his grave, the soul unites again with him, and opening his eyes, he sees two[25] angels who come to judge him. Each holds in his hand two fiery rods (others say fiery chains), and the soul and the body are judged at the same time for the evil they have done together. Woe to the man when he is found guilty, for no one will defend him! At the first blow all his limbs are dislocated; at the second, all his bones are broken. But his body is soon reconstructed and the punishment begins anew."[26]

We must value these traditions the more, since they have been taken nearly literally from the Zohar, from where they

[23] Zohar, part III, sect. p. 126b, Amsterdam ed. While taking the foundation of this scene from the Zohar we have added a few details from the Kitzur, p. 20, 21.

[24] According to the Kabbalists there are seven ordeals: 1, the separation of body and soul; 2, the recapitulation of the deeds of our life; 3, the time of burial; 4, the ordeal or judgment of the grave; 5, the time when the dead, still animated by the vital spirit נפש—Nefesh), feels the biting of the worms; 6, the punishment of hell; 7 the metempsychosis.—Zohar, ib. supr.

[25] According to the Zohar text there are three angels. תלתא גוי דינא ממנן על דינא דקברא וחלת שרביטא דאשא בידייהו.—Jellinek

[26] The same passage of the Zohar and of the Kitzur.

passed into the purely rabbinical writings and into the popular collections. We can add to these beliefs a host of religious customs and practices, equally commanded by the Talmud and the Zend Avesta. Thus the Parsee, when leaving his bed in the morning, must not make four steps before having put on the holy girdle which is called the Kosti,[27] under the pretext that during the night he had been contaminated by contact with the demons, and he must not touch any part of his body before having washed his hands and face three times..[28] We shall find the same duties, based upon the same reasons, with the followers of the rabbinical law;[29] with the difference that the Kosti is replaced by a garment of another shape. The disciples of Zoroaster and the followers of the Talmud consider themselves duty bound to greet the moon at its first quarter with prayers[30] and thanksgivings.[31] The practice of keeping from the dead or from the newborn the demons who try to take possession of them, are nearly the same with both.[32]

27 Zend Avesta, vol. II, p. 409, Vendidad Sade.

28 Thomas Hyde, Religio veterum Persarum, p. 465, 477.

29 Orach Haim, directions for the washing of the hands (הלכות נטילת ידים), p. 54. The same is recommended by the Kabbalists. According to the latter, the higher soul leaves us during sleep, and we thus remain only with the vital soul which is incapable of defending the body against impure spirits and deadly emanations.—Zohar, part I, sect. וישב. See also the Talmud, Tract. Sabbath, ch. VIII.

30 This grouping of the Talmudists with the followers of the Zoroastrian doctrine is incorrect. The Parsee praises the moon as an "Umshaspand that has light in it," while the Jew praises God Who "renewed the moon." To the Parsee the moon is in itself an object worthy of devotion; the Jew, on the other hand, says: "Praised be He Who formed thee, praised be He Who made thee, praised be He Who owns thee, praised be He Who created thee." It is true that we must refer the origin of the benediction of the moon (ברכות לבנה) to Parseeism, but only in so far as the Rabbis were compelled to consider the influence of Parseeism upon the people.—Jellinek

31 Zend Avesta, vol. III, p. 313. This custom is still extant to-day under the name of "Sanctification of the moon" (קידוש לבנה).

32 As soon as a Parsee woman has been delivered of a child, a burning lamp or a fire is maintained in her room for three days and three nights.—Zend Av., vol. III, p. 565. Th. Hyde, l. c. p. 445. The Jews observe the same custom at the death of a person. The ceremony of keeping away the demon Lillith from the newborn is still more complicated. But the reason for and the description of it are given in the book of Raziel.

The Parsee as well as the Jew carry their devotion, if I may say so, even to profanation. There are prayers and religious duties for every moment, for every action, for every situation of the physical and moral life.[33] Although we do not lack material for further expansion on this subject,[34] we think it time to finish this parallel. But even the fantastic and eccentric facts which we have collected lend greater certainty to the conclusion which we draw from them. For it is surely not in such beliefs and in such actions that we can invoke the general laws of the human mind. We believe, though, we have demonstrated that the religion, that is to say the civilization of ancient Persia, left numerous traces in all parts of Judaism; in its celestial mythology as represented by the angels; in its infernal mythology, and, finally, in the practice of the outward cult. Are we now to believe that its philosophy, that is, the Kabbalah, alone escaped this influence? Is such an opinion probable, when we know that the Kabbalistic tradition developed in the same manner, in the same time, and, like the oral law of the Talmudic tradition, it rests upon the same names? Far be it from us to content

33 In the litany collection called "Yeshts Sades" we find prescribed prayers which the Parsee must say when cutting his nails, before and after attending to the call of nature, and before attending to conjugal duty.—Zend Av., vol. III, p. 117 120, 121, 123, 124. Similar prayers for the same circumstances are prescribed for the Jews. See Joseph Karo, Schulchan Aruch, p. 2, הנהגות בית הכסא, and Kitzur, p. 32 ענייני זיווג

34 I want to emphasize a few points where the influence of Parseeism upon Judaism appears very plainly. Three steps backward are to be taken after finishing the "eighteen benedictions" (שמונה עשרה) Compare Tract. Yoma 53b; Orach Hayim, CXXIII, par. 1. This custom is often mentioned in the Zend Avesta. The Parsee does not speak during a meal (Kleuker, Zend Av., III, 235); this was also the custom among the Talmudists. Compare Tract. Taanit, fol. 5b: אמר ר' יוחנן אין מסיחין בסעודה. R. Yohanan said: "Speaking during a meal is not customary." Compare also Orach Hayim, CLXX, part Q. But we must hold on here to the viewpoint I established in my foregoing note. Because of the long sojourn in the Babylonian empire and because of the constant intercourse with it, the Jews adopted the Persian superstition and disbelief. The superstitition rooted deep in the people, while the strange source whence it came was forgotten and vanished from memory. The talmudical teachers, therefore, could do no better than instigate religious feeling and reverence to God by utilizing, with some modifications, the popular superstition.—Jellinek

ourselves with a simple conjecture, no matter how well founded, on a subject of such a grave nature. We shall take up one by one all the essential elements of the Kabbalah, and show their perfect resemblance with the metaphysical principles of the religion of Zoroaster. This method of procedure, although not very learned, must appear at least as most impartial.

1. The part played in the Kabbalah by the Ayn Sof, the infinite without name and without form, is given by the theology of the Magi to eternal time (Zervane Akerene), and, according to others, to limitless space.[35] We want to note right here that the term "space" or "absolute place" (מקום—Mokaum) has become with the Hebrews the very name of the divinity. Furthermore, this first principle, this only and supreme source of all existence, is only an abstract God, without direct action upon the beings, without active relation to the world, and consequently, without any appreciable form to us; for good as well as evil, light as well as darkness are still huddled together in His bosom.[36] According to the sect of the Zervanites, whose opinion has been conserved by a Persian historian,[37] the principle we just mentioned, Zervan himself, would be, like the crown of the Kabbalists, but the first emanation of the infinite light.

2. The "Memra" of the Chaldean translators is easily recognized in the following words by which Ormuzd himself defines the "Honover" or the creative word: "The pure, the holy, the speedy Honover, I tell it to you, O wise Zoroaster! was before the heavens, before the waters, before the earth, before the herds, before the trees, before the fire, the son of

[35] Auquetil-Duperron, in the "Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions," vol. XXXVII, p. 584.

[36] Vol. II of the Zend Av., Vendidad. Ib., vol. III, Bundehesh. Ormuzd and Ahriman are called in this book a single people of limitless time.

[37] Sharistani, ap. Thomas Hyde, de Veter. Pers, relig., p. 297. "Altera magorum secta sunt Zervanitae qui asserunt lucem produxisse personas ex luce, quae omnes erant spirituales, luminosae, dominales. Sed quod harum maxima persona, cui nomen Zervan, dubitavit de re aliqua, ex ista dubitatione emersit Satanas."

Ormuzd, before the pure man, before the devis, before all the existing worlds, before all the good things." But the very same word Ormuzd created the world, and by it he acts and exists. (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 138.) But the word existed not only before the world; although "given by God,"—as the Zend books say—[38] it is eternal as He is. It takes the part of mediator between limitless time and the existences that flow from its bosom. It embraces the source and model of all perfection, and has the power to realize them in all beings.[39] What establishes, finally, its resemblance with the Kabbalistic "Word," is that it has a body and a spirit, that is to say, that it is the Spirit and the Word at the same time. It is the Spirit, because it is no less than the soul of Ormuzd, as he himself expressly said; (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 415) it is the Word or the body, that is to say the spirit become visible, because it is at the same time the law and the universe. (Zend Av., vol. III, p. 325, 595.)

3. In Ormuzd we find something that resembles fully what the Zohar calls "person" or "face" (פרצוף—Partsuf). He, Ormuzd, is in fact the highest personification of the creative word, of that "excellent word" of which his soul is made. It is in him also rather than in the highest principle, in the eternal time, that we are to look for the union of all the attributes ordinarily ascribed to God, and which make up His manifestation, or, in the language of the Orient, the most brilliant and purest light. "In the beginning," say the sacred books of the Parsees, "Ormuzd, elevated above everything, was with the supreme wisdom, with the purity and in the light of the world. This luminous throne (מרכבה—Merkaba), this place inhabited by Ormuzd, is the one called the primitive light." (Zend Av., vol. III, p. 343.) Like the celestial man of the Kabbalists, he combines in him the

[38] Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, vol. XXXVII, p. 620.

[39] Ib. supr. Here are the words of the author: "The Honover combines, according to Zoroaster, the source and the model of all the perfection of the beings, the power to produce, and it manifests itself only by a kind of prolation of infinite time and of Ormuzd."

true knowledge, the highest intelligence, the greatness, the goodness, the beauty, the energy or the strength, the purity or the splendor; it is he, finally, who had created, or formed at least, and who nourishes all beings.[40] These qualities in themselves and their resemblance to the Sefiroth can not, of course, lead us to any conclusion; but we can not help noticing that they are all united in Ormuzd, whose role, in relation to infinity and to unlimited time, is the same as that of the Adam Kadmon in relation to the Ayn Sof. Indeed, if we are to believe an already quoted historian, there existed among the Persians a very numerous sect in whose estimation Ormuzd was the divine will manifested in a highly resplendent human form.[41] It is also true that the Zend books say nothing of how Ormuzd brought forth the world, in what manner he himself and his enemy sprang from the bosom of the Eternal, and, finally, what constitutes the primitive substance of things.[42] But when God is compared to light, when the efficient cause of the world is subordinated to a higher principle, and the universe considered as the body of the invisible word, we must necessarily consider the beings as isolated words of that infinite light. We wish also to remark that the gnostic pantheism is more or less connected with the fundamental principle of the theology of the Parsees.[43]

4. According to the Kabbalistic belief, as well as according

[40] See Eugene Burnouf, Commentaire sur le Yacna, ch. I, to p. 146.

[41] This is the sect of the Zerdustians. The following is their view as given by Sharistani in the Latin translation of Thomas Hyde (de Vet., Pers. rel., p. 928): "et postquam effluxissent 3000 anni, transmisisse voluntatem suam in forma lucis fulgentis in figuram humanam."

[42] They say that Ormuzd and Ahriman were *given* by Zervan, the eternal time. That Ormuzd has *given* the heavens and all its products. But the sense of this important word is nowhere determined clearly.

[43] It is nevertheless important to note that in the Zend Avesta (Vol. II, p. 180) Ormuzd is called the "body of the bodies." Is it not, perhaps, the "substance of the substances," the "basis" (יסוד — Y'sod) of the Kabbalists? Burnouf mentions also a very old Phelvic commentary, where we find, as in the Sefer Yetzirah and in the Zohar, both worlds represented by the symbol of a burning coal; the higher world is the flame, and the visible nature is the burning matter.—Comment. sur le Yacna, p. 172.

to the Platonian system, all beings of the world existed at first in a more complete form in the invisible world. Each one of them has in the divine thought its invariable model, which can come to light here below only through the imperfection of matter. This conception, wherein the dogma of pre-existence is mingled with the principle of the theory of ideas, is found also in the Zend Avesta under the name of "Ferouer." The greatest orientist of our days explains this word as follows: "It is known that by "Ferouer" the Persians understood the divine type of each intelligently endowed thing, its idea in the thought of Ormuzd and the higher spirit that breathes in it and watches over it. This meaning is supported by the tradition as well as by the texts."[44]

The interpretation of Auquetil-Duperon agrees perfectly with this one,[45] and we shall not cite all the passages of the Zend Avesta that confirm it. We would rather point out a very remarkable coincidence on one particular point of this doctrine between the Kabbalists and the disciples of Zoroaster. We still recall that magnificient passage in the Zohar where the souls, about to be sent to earth, represent to God how they will suffer while away from Him; what misery and contamination awaits them in our world. Well then, in the religious traditions of the Parsees the Ferouers make the same complaint, and Ormuzd answers them nearly as Jehovah answers those souls which are grieved over leaving heaven. He tells them that they were born for struggle, to combat evil and make it disappear from the creation, that they can only then enjoy immortality and heaven, when their task upon earth shall have been accomplished.[46] "Think what advantage you will have when, in the world, I shall permit you to stay in bodies. Fight and make the children of Ahriman disappear. In the end I shall rehabilitate you in your first estate and you

[44] Comment. sur le Yacna, p. 270.

[45] See "Explanatory compendium of the Theological system of Zoroaster," Zend Av., vol. III, p. 595, and the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscript., vol. XXXVII, p. 623.

[46] Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript., vol. XXXVII, p. 640.

will be happy. In the end I shall set you again in the world, and you will be immortal, ever young and faultless." (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 350). Another feature that reminds us of the Kabbalistic ideas, is that the nations have their ferouers just as the individuals, and thus the Zend Avesta often invokes the ferouer of Iran where the law of Zoroaster was recognized first. However, this belief, which we meet also in the prophecies of Daniel, (Ch. X, 10ff.) was probably long since widely spread among the Chaldeans before their political and religious fusion with the Persians.

5. If the psychology of the Kabbbalists has some resemblance with that of Plato, it has greater resemblance with that of the Parsees, as represented in a collection of very old traditions which have been, for the most part, reproduced by Auquetil-Duperron in the "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions." (Vol. 38, p. 646-648.) Let us first recall that according to the Kabbalistic theories there are in the human soul three powers, perfectly distinct one from another, which are united only during earthly life. On the highest level is the spirit proper (נשמה—N'shamah), the pure emanation of the Divine Intelligence, destined to return to its source, and unaffected by earthly contaminations; on the lowest level, immediately above matter, is the principle of motion and sensation, the vital spirit (נפש—Nefesh) whose task ends at the brink of the grave. Between these two extremes, finally, is the seat of good and of evil, the free and responsible principle, the moral person (רוח—Roo-ah).[47]

We must add that several Kabbalists and some philosophers of great authority in Judaism have added to these three principal elements two others, one of which is the vital principle (חיה —He-hoh), the intermediary power between the soul and the body, apart from the principle of sensation; the other is the type, or, we may say, the idea which expresses the articular form of the individual (יחידה—Y'hidah, צלם—Tselem, דוגמא—Dougma).

[47] See Part II, ch. III.

This form descends from heaven into the womb of the woman at the time of conception and leaves thirty days before death. During this period (of thirty days) it is replaced by a shapeless shadow.

The theologic traditions of the Parsees set up precisely the same distinctions in the human soul. We easily recognize the individual type in the ferouer which, having existed in heaven in a pure and isolated state, is compelled, as we have seen above, to unite with the body. In no less evident manner do we find again the vital principle in the Dian, whose part it is, as the author our guide says, to conserve the forces of the body and to maintain the harmony in all its parts. Like the "He-yah" of the Hebrews, it takes no part in the evil of which man is guilty; it is but a light vapor that comes from the heart, and which must mix with the earth after death. The Akko, on the contrary, is the highest principle. It is above evil, as the preceding principle is below it. It is a kind of light that comes from heaven, and which must return thither when our body is returned to the dust. It is the pure intelligence of Plato and of the Kabbalists, but restricted to the knowledge of our duties, to the prevision of future life and to resurrection, in short, to moral consciousness. We finally come to the soul proper or the moral person, which is one, notwithstanding the diversity of its faculties, and which alone is responsible to divine judgment for our actions.[48] Another distinction, though much less philosophical but equally admitted by the Zend books, is the one which makes man the image of the world and which recognizes in his consciousness two opposite principles, two Kedras, one, coming from heaven, leads us to good, while the other, created by Ahriman, tempts us to do evil.[49] These two principles which, nevertheless, do not exclude liberty

[48] The soul proper or the moral person, is itself composed of three faculties; 1, the principle of sensation; 2, the Roe or intelligence proper; 3, the Rouan, which holds the centre between the power of judgment and imagination. These three faculties are inseparable and make up the one soul. Otherwise, I admit that this part of the psychology of the Parsees is not very clear to me.

[49] Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript., passage quoted.

of action, play quite a prominent role in the Talmud where they become the good and the evil desire (יצר טוב —Yetzer Tov, יצר הרע—Yetzer Ha-rah); possibly also the good and the evil angel.

6. Even the conception of Ahriman, notwithstanding its purely mythological character, was preserved in the doctrines of the Kabbalah; for darkness and evil are personified in Samael, just as the divine light is represented in all its splendor by the heavenly man. As to the metaphysical interpretation of this symbol, namely that the evil principle is matter, or, as the Kabbalists say, the "shell," the last degree of existence, it is found, without straining the subject, in the sect of the Zerdustians who established between the divine light and the kingdom of darkness the same relation as between the body and its shadow.[50]

But another fact, more worthy of our attention, because not to be found elsewhere, is that we find in the oldest parts of the religious codes of the Parsees the Kabbalistic view that the prince of darkness, Sama-el, by losing half of his name, becomes at the end of days, an angel of light, and, together with all that was cursed, returns to divine grace. A passage in the Yacna reads: "This unjust, this impure, this gloomy king who knows but evil, will say Avesta at the resurrection, and, fulfilling the law, he will establish it even in the dwelling of the damned (the derwands). (Zend Av., vol. II, p. 169.) The Bundehesh adds that at the same time Ormuzd and the seven first genii on one side, and Ahriman with an equal number of evil spirits on the other side, will be seen together offering a sacrifice to the Eternal, Zervane Akerene. (Zend Av., vol. III, p. 415). We shall add, finally, to all these metaphysical and religious ideas a very peculiar geographical system which is found with some slight variations in the Zohar and in the sacred books of the Parsees. According to the Zend Avesta (Vol. II, p. 70) and the Bundehesh (Zend Av., vol. III, p. 363) the earth is divided into seven parts (keshvars), which are watered by just as many great rivers, and separated

[50] Thomas Hyde, work cited, p. 296, 298, ch. XXII.

from one another by the "water spilled in the beginning." Each of these parts form a world in itself and supports inhabitants of different nature; some are black, some are white; these have their bodies covered with hair, like animals, the others differentiate themselves by some other more or less fantastic formation. Finally, only one of these great parts of the earth received the law of Zoroaster.

Let us now have the view of the Kabbalists on the same subject. In quoting it, we shall confine ourselves to the role of a translator only. "When God created the world, he stretched above us seven heavens, and formed beneath our feet as many lands. He made also seven rivers, and set up the week of seven days. Now, as each of these heavens has its separate constellation and angels of a particular nature, so also have the lands here below. Placed one above the other, they are all inhabited, but by beings of different nature, as it was said of the heavens. Among the beings, some have two faces, some four, and others but one. They differ just as well in their color; some are red, some black and some white. These have clothes, the others are naked like worms. If the objection be raised that all the inhabitants of the world descend from Adam, we ask if it is possible that Adam travelled in all these regions for the purpose of populating them with his children? How many wives did he have? But Adam lived only in that part of the earth which is the most elevated and which is enveloped by the higher heaven."[51] The only difference that separates this opinion from that of the Parsees is that instead of considering the seven parts of the earth as natural divisions of the same surface, they represent them as enveloped one in another, like the layers of an onion אלין על אלין כנלדי בשלים, as the text says.

[51] Zohar, part III, p. 9b, 10a, sect. ויקרא, Amsterdam ed. We consider it our duty to note here that the ideas do not follow one after the other in the text. We were obliged to omit many repetitions and digressions which were not only useless, but extremely wearisome and entirely too long.

These are, in their full simplicity and without any systematical arrangement, the elements that constitute the common foundation of the Kabbalah and the religious ideas brought forth under the influence of the Zend Avesta. No matter how numerous and how important they may be, we would still retreat before the deduction that follows from this parallel if we had not found also in the sacred books of the Parsees all the heavenly and infernal mythology, part of the liturgy and even some of the most essential dogmas of Judaism. Nevertheless, God forbid that we accuse the Kabbalists of having been but servile imitators, of having adopted strange ideas and beliefs without examination or, at least, without modification, and of having confined themselves to clothing them with the authority of the sacred books.

As a general rule there is no instance of a nation, no matter how strongly the influence of another nation may act upon it, giving up its true existence—the exercise of its inner faculties—and being content with a borrowed life, and if I may also say, with a borrowed soul. We can not possibly consider the Kabbalah as an isolated fact, as accidental in Judaism; on the contrary, it is its heart and life.[52] For, while the Talmud took possession of all that relates to the outward practice and the material execution of the Law, the Kabbalah reserved for itself exclusively the domain of speculation and the most formidable problems of the natural and revealed theology. It was able, besides, to arouse the veneration of the people by showing inviolate respect for their gross beliefs, and in giving them to understand that their entire faith and cult rested upon a sublime mystery. By carrying the principle of the allegorical method to its last consequences, the Kabbalah had no need of trickery to accomplish this.

[52] The author should have added: "Judaism after the return from the Babylonian exile until the conclusion of the Talmud." For the present-day Judaism the Kabbalah is an entirely strange element.[a]—Jellinek

[a] A rather unfortunate remark by the German translator. Can any one deny the preponderant influence of the Kabbalah upon Judaism during the Middle Ages, and even now through its direct descendant—Hassidism?—Transl.

We have also seen to what rank it has been raised by the Talmud, and what influence it exerted upon popular imagination. The sentiments it once instilled have remained to the days nearest to us; for it was by depending upon the Kabbalistic ideas that the modern Bar Kochba, Sabbathai Zebi, had disturbed for a while all the Jews of the world.[53] The ideas also caused the liveliest agitation among the Jews of Hungary and Poland towards the close of the eighteenth century by giving birth to the sect of the Zoharites and Neo-Hassidim, and by leading thousands of Israelites into the bosom of Christianity. When we now consider the Kabbalah, per se, we can not help seeing therein an immense advance upon the theology of the Zend Avesta. Here, indeed, dualism is the cornerstone of the structure, although not as absolute as commonly thought, and although born as a principle in a religion which acknowledges one Supreme Being. Ormuzd and Ahriman alone exist in reality, with a divine character and with real power; while the Eternal, that limitless time from which both of them sprang, is, as we said, a pure abstraction. With the desire to relieve Him (the Eternal) of the responsibility for evil, the management of the world was taken from Him, and consequently all participation in good; nothing but a name with a shadow of existence was left to Him. But this is not all. All ideas relating to the invisible world, all the great principles of the human mind in the Zend Avesta, and in the later traditions connected with it, are still wrapped in a mythological veil through which they appear as visible realities and as distinct persons made in the image of man.

The doctrine of the Kabbalists presents quite a different character. Here monotheism is the foundation, the basis and the principle of all; dualism and all other distinctions of whatever nature exist only formally. God alone, God, One and Supreme, is at once the cause, the substance and the intelligible essence,

[53] See Lacroix, Memoires de l'empire Ottoman, p. 259ff—Peter Beer, work cited, vol. II, p. 260ff. Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, Book IX, etc.

the ideal form of all that is. Only between Being and Not-being, between the highest form and the lowest degree of existence is there an opposition, a dualism. That one is light, this one is darkness. Darkness, therefore, is but a negation, and light, as we have shown several times, is the spiritual principle, the eternal wisdom, the infinite intelligence which creates all that it conceives, and conceives or thinks by its very existence. But if this be so, if it be true that at a certain height the being and the thought blend, then the great conceptions of the intelligence can not exist in mind alone, then they do not represent mere forms from which abstractions are made at will; on the contrary, they have a substantial and an absolute value, that is to say, they are inseparable from the eternal substance. This is precisely the character of the Sefiroth, of the Heavenly Man, of the Great and Small Face, in short, of all the Kabbalistic personifications which, as we see, differ greatly from the individual and mythological realizations of the Zend Avesta.

The frame, the outline of the Zend Avesta, still remained the same, but the background completely changed its nature, and the Kabbalah offers, by its very birth, the peculiar spectacle of a mythology passing into the state of metaphysics under the very influence of religious sentiment. However, the system which was the fruit of that movement, does not belong as yet, notwithstanding such volume and depth, among the works where human reason makes free use of its rights and powers. Mysticism, per se, does not show itself there in the most elevated form, for it still remains chained to an external power—the revealed word. No doubt that this power is more apparent than real; undoubtedly also that allegory soon made of the sacred letter a compliant sign which expresses whatever one wishes, a docile instrument at the service of the mind and its most liberal inspirations. But it can not be denied that such a procedure—whether due to deliberation or to sincere illusion—this art of shielding new ideas under some venerable text, is the sanctioning of fatal prejudice against true philosophy. Thus it is that the Kabbalah has a religious and

a national character, although born under the influence of a strange civilization, and notwithstanding the pantheism that underlies all its doctrines.

By taking refuge, first under the authority of the Bible and then under the oral law, it retained all the appearances of a theological system, and especially of a Jewish theology. Before admitting it, therefore, into the history of philosophy and humanity, those appearances had to be wiped out and the Kabbalah had to be shown in its true light, that is to say as a natural product of the human mind. This course was accomplished, as we already said, slowly but surely, in the capital of the Ptolomeans. There, for the first time, the Hebrew traditions stepped over the threshold of the sanctuary, and mingling with many new ideas, but losing none of their own substance, they spread into the world. Desiring to recover a property which they considered their own, the guardians of these traditions welcomed ardently the most noble results of the Greek philosophy and mingled them more and more with their own beliefs. The pretended heirs to the Greek civilization, on the other hand, became gradually accustomed to this mingling, and thought only of bringing it into an organized system where Reason and Intuition, Philosophy and Theology would be equally represented. Thus it was that the Alexandrian school developed that brilliant and profound summary of all the philosophical and religious ideas of antiquity. Thus is explained the resemblance, yes, I dare say, the identity we have found in all the essential points or Neoplatonism and of the Kabbalah. But the Kabbalah having entered by this path the common ground of the human mind, was nevertheless transmitted among the Jews of Palestine in a small circle of the elite and was considered the secret of Israel. In this manner it was introduced into Europe, and in this manner it was taught until the publication of the Zohar. Here begins a new order of research, viz.: What influence did the Kabbalah exert upon the hermetic and mystic philosophy which attracted such attention from the beginning of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth

century, of which Raymond Lullus may be considered the first, and Francis Mercurius van Helmont the last representative. This may be the subject of a second work that will be considered perhaps as a complement to the present work. We believe, though, we have attained the aim we have set with reference to the Kabbalistic system proper, and we have only to point out in a quick recapitulation the results which we believe we have attained.

1. The Kabbalah is not an imitation of the Platonic philosophy; for Plato was unknown in Palestine where the Kabbalistic system was founded. Furthermore, notwithstanding the several resembling traits which strike us at first glance, the two doctrines differ totally in the most important points.

2. The Kabbalah is not an imitation of the Alexandrian school. First, because it antedates the Alexandrian school, and secondly because Judaism has always shown a profound aversion to and an ignorance of Greek civilization even when it raised the Kabbalah to the rank of divine revelation.

3. The Kabbalah can not be regarded as the work of Philo, although the doctrines of the philosophical theologian contain a great number of Kabbalistic ideas. Philo could not transmit these ideas to his Palestinian compatriots without at the same time initiating them into the Greek philosophy. Because of the nature of his mind, Philo was not capable of founding a new doctrine. What is more, it is impossible to find in the monuments of Judaism the least trace of his influence. Finally, Philo's writings are of more recent date than the Kabbalistic principles, the application as well as the substance of which we find in the Septuagint, in the Proverbs of Ben Sirach and in the Book of Wisdom.

4. The Kabbalah has not been borrowed from Christianity, for all the great principles upon which it stands antedate the coming of Christ.

5. The striking resemblances which we have found between this doctrine and the religious beliefs of the several sects of Persia, the numerous and odd relations which it presents to us

with the Zend Avesta, the traces that the religion of Zoroaster has left in all parts of Judaism, and the outward relations which existed between the Hebrews and their old teachers since the Babylonian captivity, force us to the conclusion that the materials of the Kabbalah were drawn from the theology of the ancient Persians. But we believe we have demonstrated at the same time that this loan did not destroy the originality of the Kabbalah; for the Kabbalah substituted the absolute unity of cause and substance for the dualism in God and in nature. Instead of explaining the formation of beings as an arbitrary act of two inimical forces, it presents them as divine forms, as successive and providential manifestations of the Infinite Intelligence. The ideas, finally, take in its bosom the place of realized personifications, and the mythology is supplanted by metaphysics. This seems to us to be the general law of the human mind. No absolute originality, but also no servile imitation from one nation and from one century to another. Whatever we may do to gain unlimited independence in the domain of moral science, the chain of tradition will always show itself in our boldest discoveries; and no matter how motionless we sometimes appear to be under the sway of tradition and authority, our intelligence paves the way, our ideas change with the very power that weighs them down, and a revolution is about to break loose.

APPENDIX

(JELLINEK)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES ON THE ZOHAR

A

NAMES OF THE ZOHAR

Jewish authors adopted preferably the three following names for the grand monument of the Kabbalah:

1. מדרשו (Midroshau)—his Midrash, or מדרש של ר' שמעון בן יוחאי (Midrosh shel R. Simeon ben Yohai)—the Midrash of Simeon ben Yohai. Under this name the Zohar appears with the following authors: Behai (died 1340),[1] Commentary to the Pentateuch, section Mishpatim; R. Simeon ben Zemach Duran (died 1444), Responsa, vol. III, questions 56 and 57; R. Meier ben Gabbai (born 1481), Abodath ha-Kodesh;[2] R. Judah Moscato (died 1580), Nefuzat Yehudah (fol. 116b, 211a). This name guarantees the genuineness of the work.

2. מדרש יהי אור (Midrash Y'hi Or)—Midrash Let There be Light. So named by Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto (flourished 1502) in his "Sefer ha-Yuhasin" under רשב"י, and by Hayim Joseph David Azulai (died 1807) in his "Shem ha-G'dolim,"

[1] Behai (Bahya) ben Asher ben Halevi. Not to be confounded with the well known philosopher Behai ben Joseph ibn Pakuda of the eleventh century, author of "Hoboth Halvovoth (חובות הלבבות).—Transl.

[2] Omitted in the Jewish Encyclopedia. Listed in "Seder Hadoreth." —Transl.

vol. II, fol. 49b. The probable reason for adopting this title by these authors is to be found in the fact that a few manuscripts of the Zohar begin with the commentary to the verse יהי אור—Let there be Light (Gen. 1, 3); or, what is more probable, to point out the illumination that is bound to accrue to the reader of this work.

3. זהר (Zohar), Splendor, Brightness. So called according to Daniel XII, 3. והמשכילים יזהירו כזהר הרקיע—And the Wise shall shine as the Brightness of the firmament. Compare רעיא מהימנא Zohar, vol. III, fol. 64a in the Sulzbach edition.[3] This last name has become the predominating one since the author of "Yuhasin" in 1502.

B

EDITIONS OF THE ZOHAR

1. The first edition of the Zohar was published by R. Meier ben Ephraim and Jacob ben Naftali at Mantua in 1560. 3 vol. 4°.

2. In the same year it was again published in folio at Cremona. The preface to this edition, written by Yitzhak de Lattes, dates from 1558 to which the ירוע אף יצריך פרט points.

3. According to R. Yisahar Beer (אמרי בינה, end of preface. Compare also Bartolocci, Magna Bibliotheca Rabbinica, vol. IV, p. 446) an edition of the Zohar appeared also at Venice.

4. Levi ben Kalonymos published a folio edition of the Zohar at Lublin in 1623. In this edition the numbering of the pages is the same as in that of the Cremona edition. Von Rosenroth considers this edition very faulty.

5. The last named scholar had a Zohar printed, also folio, at Sulzbach in 1684.

6. Another edition, patterned after the Mantua edition, appeared at Amsterdam in 1714.

[3] The passage quoted from רעיא מהימנא refutes also Milsahagis ראבי"ה, fol. 20b) contention about the genesis of this name, and justifies Zunz's (Sermons, p. 406) explanation.—Jellinek

7. An edition printed at Constantinople in 1736 (Molitor, vol. I, p. 76).

8. Another edition at Amsterdam in 1805.

9. Milsahagi, author of ספר ראב"יה quotes also a Salonica edition.

Editions 2, 4 and 5, because printed in folio, are usually called זהר גדול (Zohar Godaul—Large Zohar); the others, because printed in quarto, are designated זהר קטן (Zohar Kotaun —Small Zohar).

C

Elements of the Zohar

Besides the

1. Zohar (זהר) proper which serves as commentary to the Pentateuch, this work contains also:
2. Sifra d-Zeniuta (Book of Mystery),
3. Idra Rabba (Great Assembly),
4. Idra Zutah (Small Assembly),
5. Saba (The old man),
6. Midrash Ruth[4] (fragments only),
7. Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brightness),
8. Tosefta (Addendum),
9. Raya Mehemna (The Faithful Shepherd),
10. Hekalot (Palaces),
11. Sitra Torah (The mysteries of the Law),
12. Midrash ha Ne'elam (The hidden Midrash),
13. Razi di Razin (Mystery of Mysteries),
14. Midrash Hassid (Midrash to Song of Songs),
15. Maamar Ta-Hazee (Treatise which begins with "come and see."),
16. Yanuka (Boy),
17. Pakuda (Explanation of the Law),

[4] I know of no reason why this Midrash was named after the Book of Ruth.—Jellinek

18. Hibbura Kadma-ah (Previous Work),
19. Mathnithin (Doctrines).

All these elements are to be found in the Sulzbach edition; the Mantua edition contains only Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 12.[5]

D

Translations of the Zohar

1. A Hebrew translation of the Zohar (manuscript), written in 1506, from section אחרי מות to the end of the work and bearing the title מראות הצבאות is in possession of S. D. Luzatto, professor at the Rabbinic College at Padua. Compare the Hebrew Year Book כרם חמר (Prague, Landau 8.) VII, 79.

2. Zevi Hirsch ben Yerachmiel of Krakau in his book נחלת צבי (Frankfort O. M. 1711), translated into Jargon some fragments of the Zohar. Wolf, B. H. I. 999.

3. The "Book of Mysteries," the Idra Rabba and the Idra Zutah were translated into Latin by Rosenroth in the second volume of his "Kabbalah denudata."

4. Several fragments of the Zohar have been translated into French by the author of this book, and by the translator into

5. German.[6]

[5] Wolf (Bibliotheca hebraea I, 1141) is mistaken when he adds, after counting the ספרא דצניעותא among the elements of the Cremona edition, the following: Mantuana vero quatuor tantum ex his exhibet, nempe; Tosaphta, Medrash Neelam, Raja Mahemena, et Sitre Tora. —Jellinek

[6] And into English by the present translator.

For those wishing to go deeper into the study of the Kabbalah or of the Zohar in particular I append here a list of translations of the whole or part of the Zohar, literature on the Zohar and commentaries on the Zohar.—Transl.

TRANSLATIONS

ENGLISH:

[1] Kabbala denudata. The Kabbalah unveiled. Containing the following books of the Zohar:. 1. The Book of Concealed Mystery. 2. The Greater Holy Assembly. Translated into English from the Latin version of Knorr von Rosenroth by S. L. M. Mathers. London 1887, 359 p. 8°.

[2] Qabbalah. Quotations from the Zohar and other writings. Treating of the Qabbalistic or Divine Philosophy. By Isaac Myer, LL.B. Reprinted from Oriental Review 1893. 7 p.

[3] Scattered passages may be found in the Theosophical literature, as in Isis Unveiled by Blavatsky and in the "Word" a theosophical publication.

[4] The Sepher Ha-Zohar; or the Book of Light. By Nurko de Manhar. An English translation of the Zohar from Section Genesis to Section Lekh Lekah. In "the Word," a theosophical publication; vols. 5 to 17; 1907-1913.

FRENCH:

[1] Sepher ha-Zohar. (Le livre de la splendeur.) Doctrine Esoterique Des Israelites. Traduit pour la première fois sur le texte chaldaique et accompagné de notes par Jean De Pauly. Oeuvre posthume entièrement revue corrigée et completée. Publiée par . . . Emile Lafuma-Giraud. 8°. v. 6. Paris 1906-1912.

[2] Le Zohar; traduction française de Henri Chateau, avec lettre-préface de Papus. Paris 1895. 210 p. 8°.

[3] Paul Vulliaud. La Kabbala Juive Histoire et Doctrine. Tome Second.

Chapitre XVII. Comment il faut lire le "Sepher ha-Zohar. p. 111-136.

[4] Albert Jounet. La Clef Du Zohar. 231 p. Paris 1909.

GERMAN:

[1] Selected passages from the Zohar in the yearbook "Vom Judentum" (Bergman, Mueller) as well as in the periodicals "Der Jude" 1916-1920 (Mueller, Seidman) and "Freie Lebensstimme," 1919 (Fiebig).

[2] Seidman, Jankew. Aus dem heiligen Buche Sohar. Eine Auswahl. Berlin 1920.

[3] Tholuck, Wichtige Stellen des rabbinischen Buches Sohar. Berlin 1824.

[4] Die juedische Mystik und Kabbala. Von Dr. Philipp Bloch. Der Sohar, der Abschluss der Kabbala, p. 270-282 (In "Die Juedische Literatur" edited by Winter and Wunsche. Vol. III.)

[5] Stern, Ignatz. Versuch einer umstaendlichen Analyse des Sohar. "Ben Chananya" Monthly for Jewish Theology. p. 1-111. Years 1858-1860.

HEBREW:

Rosenberg, Yudel. ספר הזוהר

Zeitlin, Hillel. מפתח לספר הזוהר In the "Hat'kufa" pgs. 314-334.

YIDDISH:

Setzer, S. In the "Wort" 1921-1925.

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[1] S. Karppe. Etude sur les Origines et la Nature du Zohar. Paris 1901. p. 604. 8°.

[2] Levi, E. Le Livre des Splendeurs. Paris 1894, p. 333. 8°.

[3] Bischoff, Erich. Die Elemente der Kabbalah; Uebersetzungen, Erlaeuterungen und Abhandlungen. (Geheime Wissenschaften) 1. Theoretische Kabbalah. 2. Praktische Kabbalah. Berlin 1913. 8°.

[4] Gewurz, Elias. The hidden treasures of the Ancient Kabbalah. Chicago, 1918. IV. 16°.

[5] Ginsburg, Christian David. The Kabbalah. Its doctrines, development and literature. London 1865. 163p. 8°.

[6] Langer, George. Die Erotik der Kabbala. Prag 1923. 167p. 8°.

[7] Misses, Isaac. Darstellung und kritische Beleuchtung der juedischen Geheimlehee. Heft 1-2. Krakau 1862-63—2pts. in IV. 8°.

[8] Pick, Bernard. The Zohar and its influence on the Cabala. Open Court. 24 (1910). 233-243.

[9] Waite, Arthur Edmund. The doctrine and literature of the Kabbalah. London 1902. 508p. 8°.

[10] Waite, A. E. The secret doctrine in Israel; a study of the Zohar and its connections. London 1913. 329 p. 8°.

[11] Westcott, Lynn. Introduction to the Kabbalah.

[12] Buzazla, S. מ׳מקדש מלך פי׳ על ס׳ הזוהר Przemysl, 1871-80. 3pt. in IV. 8°

[13] Lurie, D. ס׳ נפש דוד כולל באורים והנהות על הזוהר, Wilna 1882, 28p. 4°.

[14] Mueller, Ernst. Der Sohar und seine Lehre. Einleitung in die Gedankenwelt der Kabbalah. Wien 1920, 79p. 8°. (See "Textproben" p. 63-79.)

[15] Bergman, Hugo. Die Heiligung des Namens. In the Year Book "Vom Judentum," Leipzig, 1913, and in "Jawne and Jerusalem." Berlin 1919.

[16] Landauer M. H. "Vorlaeufiger Bericht ueber meine Entdeckungen in Ansehung des Sohar" and appendix thereto. "Literaturblatt des Orients," 1845.

[17] Sellin. Die Geisteswissenschaftliche Bedeutung des Sohar. Berlin 1913.

[18] Siener, Meir. Die Lyrik der Kabbalah. Eine Antalogie. Wien 1920.

19 Bloch, Geschichte und Entwickelung der Kabbala. Trier 1894.
20 Azulai, בקיצור (בראשית) ס' זהרי חמה, והוא פירוש על הזוהר
21 Luzzato, Samuel David, שיחה ע"ד הזוהר
22 Kunitz, Moses. בן יוחאי. Wien 1815.
23 Langer, M. D. George. Die Erotik der Kabbala. p. 167. Prag 1923.

LITERATURE ON THE BOOK OF FORMATION (SEFER YETZIRAH)

1 Castelli. Il Commento di Sabbatai Donnolo, Florence 1880.
2 Postell. Abraham Patriarchae Liber Iezirah, Paris 1552.
3 Pistor. Liber Iezirah, in Ars Cabalistica, Basel 1557.
4 Rittangel in the Amsterdam edition of 1642.
5 מ'יצירה... ערוך ומסודר מחדש בנוסחא נכונה... מאת פינחס.. הכהן מארדעל. Philadelphia 1895.
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8 Rosenthal in בנסת ישראל v. 2 pp. 29-68.
9 ס' יצירה, בעברית ואנגלית, דר' איזידאר קאליש. New York 1877. This is the Hebrew title page of the book by the same author mentioned later on.
10 S. Bernfeld, דעת אלהים, pp. 106-110. Warsaw 1897.
11 ספר יצירה עם פי' מספק. קארעץ, תקל"ט
12 ספר יצירה, עם חמשה פירושים, פי' הראב"ד, רב סעדי' גאון, ר' אליעזר מגרמיזא, ר' משה בוטריל, והגאון אליהו מווילנא, לעמבערג תר"ב.
13 ספר יצירה עם פי' מספיק. קארעץ, תקל"ט
14 ספר יצירה. לר' מנחם מענדיל עקשטיין מארמארשיסונעט. תר"ע.
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ERRATA

Page 66, note 8. Instead הקב"ת read הקב"ה.

Page 67, note 10. Insert the word יקר before "should have been translated."

Page 113, note 66. Read מהימנתא instead of מהימנת

Page 142, line 11 from top. Insert the word "the" between "than" and "events."

Page 161, note 46, line 6. Read וחכמתא instead of וחמתא

Page 163, line 5 from bottom. Insert after "type" the word דמום

Page 171, note a. Instead of "here shown," read "shown at the beginning of the book."

Page 175, note 78. Insert "I" after "ch."

Page 183, note 19. Read אדם instead of ארש

Page 184, note a. Read חיילין instead of היולין

Page 190, note 4. Read ותולעה instead of ותולעת.

Page 202, note 28. Insert the word ירא after the words "comes from the root."

Page 234, line 20 from top. Insert (νοῦς) after "Intelligence."

Page 265, note 93. Insert ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος.

Page 291, note 23. Insert נשא after "sect."

Very Truly

Gossnitz.

Translator

THE KABBALAH

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