

“The Book of Splendours:
containing The Judaic Sun, the Christian Glory and the Flaming Star”

[English translation of “Le Livre des Splendeurs:
contenant Le Soleil Judaïque, La Gloire Chrétienne et L'Étoile Flamboyante”]

(1894)

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Part One

The Idra Suta or The Great Synod

Commentary on the Siphra Dzeniuta
by Simeon Ben-Jochai

Part I

Jerusalem had just been destroyed by the Romans. It was forbidden to the Jews, on pain of death, to return to mourn the ruins of their homeland. The entire nation had been dispersed, the holy traditions lost. The true Qabalah had given way to puerile and superstitious subtleties. Those who claimed to preserve the heritage of hidden doctrine were nothing more than sorcerers and fortune-tellers, justly proscribed by the laws of nations. It was then that a venerable rabbi named Simeon Ben-Jochai gathered round him the last initiates of primitive science, having resolved to explain to them the book of high theogony called the Book of Mystery. Each of them knew the text by heart, but only the rabbi Simeon was acquainted with the profound meaning of this book which had, up to this time, been transmitted from mouth to mouth, from memory to memory, without explication or even benefit of the written word.

In order to assemble them round him, here are the words he sent them:

“Why, in these days of great torment, should we remain as a house supported by a single column, or as a man who stands on only one foot? It is time to take action for the Lord, for men have lost the true sense of the law.

Our days grow short, the master calls; the harvest has been abandoned, the reapers have strayed far from the ripened vine.

Come together in this same countryside where so much has so lately gone undone. Come, as if for combat, armed with wisdom, counsel, intelligence, knowledge and attention; let your feet be as unencumbered as your hands.

Acknowledge as your only master he who holds sway over life and death, and together we shall utter the words of truth which heaven's saints are wont to hear, and they will come down among us to hear us.”

On the appointed day, the rabbis assembled in the fields, in a circular space enclosed by a high wall.

They arrived in silence. Rabbi Simeon sat down in the midst of them, and seeing them all together, he wept.

“I am lost,” he cried, “if I reveal the great mysteries! I am lost if I leave them unexplained!”

The rabbis remained silent.

At last one of them, named Rabbi Abba, spoke, saying:

“With the master's permission. Is it not written: "The secrets of the Lord belong to those who fear him"? And all we who are here, do we not fear the Lord, and are we not already privy to the secrets of the Temple?”

Now here are the names of those who were present: Rabbi Eleazar, son of Rabbi Simeon, Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Jehuda, Rabbi Jose, son of Jacob, Rabbi Isaac, Rabbi Thiskia, son of Raf, Rabbi Jose and Rabbi Jesa.

All, binding themselves to secrecy, put their hand in that of Rabbi Simeon and with him pointed towards heaven. Then they took their seats in the circumscribed area, where they were well hidden by large trees.

Rabbi Simeon stood and prayed; then he sat down again and said to them:

“Come, all of you, and place your right hand on my breast.”

They did so; and he, taking all these hands in his own, said solemnly:

“Cursed be he who makes for himself an idol and hides it! Woe unto him who covers falsehood with the veils of mystery!”

The eight rabbis answered:

“Amen.”

Rabbi Simeon went on:

“There is only one true God, before whom no other gods exist, and there is only one true people, the body of those who worship the one true God.”

Then he called his son Elcazar and had him seat himself before him. Near him, he placed Rabbi Abba and said:

“We now form a triangle, the primordial figure of all that exists; we represent the door of the temple and its two columns.”

Rabbi Simeon then refrained from speaking, and his disciples likewise. An obscure murmur made itself heard, like that of a large gathering. It was the spirits of heaven who had come down to listen.

The disciples trembled, but Rabbi Simeon said to them:

“Fear nothing and rejoice. For it is written: “Lord, I have heard the sound of your presence and I trembled.”

‘Formerly God ruled over man through fear, but now his reign is that of love. Has it not been said: “You shall love your God”? And did he not himself say: “I have loved you”?’

Then he added:

“The secret doctrine is for reflective souls; the troubled and restless soul cannot understand it. Can one have confidence in a nail fixed to a moving wall, ready as it is to crumble at the slightest shock?

The whole world is founded on mystery, and if discretion is necessary in worldly affairs, how much greater should be our reserve when dealing with the mysterious dogmas which God does not even reveal to the highest of his angels?

Heaven bends down to listen to us, but my words must remain veiled. The earth moves in order to hear, but what I say will be in symbols.

We are, at this very moment, the gate and the columns of the universe.”

At last Rabbi Simeon spoke, and tradition preserved in the mystery of mysteries assures us that when he opened his mouth, the earth trembled beneath his feet and that his disciples felt its trembling.

The Idra Suta
or The Great Synod

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by Simeon Ben-Jochai

Part II

He spoke first of the kings who ruled over Edom before the coming of the king Israel, symbols of the unbalanced powers which manifested themselves at the beginning of the universe, before the triumph of harmony.

“God,” said he, “when he wished to create, threw over his radiance a veil and in its folds, he cast his shadow. From this shadow there arose giants who said: “We are kings”: but they were nothing more than phantoms. They appeared because God had hidden himself by creating night within chaos; they disappeared when there was brought forth in the east that luminous head, that glowing head that humanity gives itself by proclaiming the existence of God, the sun, governor of our aspirations and our thoughts.

The gods are mirages made of shadow, and God is the synthesis of splendours. Usurpers fall away when the king mounts his throne, and when God appears, the gods are banished.”

The Idra Suta
or The Great Synod

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Part III

“Thus, when God had permitted the night to exist, in order that the stars might appear, he turned towards the shadow he had made and considered it, to give it a face.

He formed an image on the veil with which he had covered his glory, and this image smiled at him, and he regarded this image as his own, so that he might create man in accordance with it.

In a manner of speaking, he tried out this prison reserved for created spirits. He looked at this face that was to become one day the face of man, and his heart was moved, for already he seemed to hear the lamentations of his creations.

You who wish to subject me to the law, it seemed to say, give me proof that this law is just, by subjecting yourself to it as well.

And so God became man in order that he might be loved and understood by men.

Now, of him we know only this image, formed on the veil which hides his splendour. This image is our own, and he wishes that we recognize it to be also his.

Thus we know him without knowing him; he shows us a form and possesses none. We have given him the image of an old man, he who has no age.

He is seated on a throne from which escape eternally sparks of light by the millions, and he commands them to become worlds. His hair radiates and stirs the stars.

Universes revolve around his head, and suns bathe themselves in his light.”

The Idra Suta
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Part IV

"The divine image is a double one. There are the heads of light and of shadow, the white ideal and the black ideal, the upper head and the lower. One is the dream of the Man-God, the other is the invention of the God-Man. One represents the God of the wise, and the other, the idol of the lowly.

All light, in truth, implies shadow and possesses its brilliance only in opposition to that shadow.

The luminous head pours out upon the dark one a constant dew of splendour. "Let me in, my beloved," says God to intelligence, "for my head is filled with dew, and among the curls of my hair wander the tears of night."

This dew is the manna by which the souls of the just are nourished. The elect are hungry for it and gather it abundantly in the fields of heaven.

These drops are round pearls, brilliant as diamonds and clear as crystal. They are white and glow with all colours, for there is one simple truth alone: the splendour of all things."

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Part V

“The divine image has thirteen rays: four on each side of the triangle in which we enclose it and one at its uppermost point.

Draw it in the sky with your thought, trace its lines from star to star, it will contain three hundred and sixty multitudes of worlds.

For the high old one called the Macroprosopopeia or the great creative hypothesis is also called Arich-Anphin, the immense countenance. The other, the human god, the face of shadow, the Microprosopopeia, the limiting hypothesis, is called Seir-Anphin or the contracted countenance.

When this countenance beholds the face of light, it grows and becomes harmonious. Order is thus restored; but this cannot last, for the thoughts of man are as changeable as man himself.

But there is always a luminous thread which attaches shadow to light. This thread runs through the innumerable conceptions of human thought, linking them all to divine splendour.

The head of light sends out its whiteness to all thinking heads or entities, when they follow the path of law and reason.”

The Idra Suta
or The Great Synod

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Part VI

“The head of the supreme old one is a closed receptacle, where infinite wisdom lies at rest like a fine wine whose lees cannot be disturbed.

This wisdom is impenetrable, possessor of itself in silence within eternity, inaccessible to the vicissitudes of time.

It is the light, but it is the dark head which is the lamp. The oil of intelligence is meted out, and its brilliance, by thirty-two ways, is made manifest.

God revealed is God hidden. This human shadow of God is like the mysterious Eden from which there issued a spring that divided itself into four rivers.

Nothing pours forth from God himself. His substance is without issue. Nothing departs from him and nothing enters in, for he is impenetrable and immutable. All that begins, all that appears, all that is divided, all that flows and passes, begins, appears, is divided, flows and passes in his shadow. He is, unto himself, immovable in his light, and he remains thus, like an old wine laid to rest.”

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by Simeon Ben-Jochai

Part VII

Do not seek to penetrate the thoughts of the mysterious head. Its intimate thoughts are hidden, but its exterior, creative thoughts shine forth like a head of hair. White hair without shadow and whose strands are never tangled.

Each strand is a thread of light attached to millions of worlds. The hairs are divided at the forehead and descend on either side; but each side is the right side. For in the divine image which constitutes this head of light, the left side has no place.

The left side of the head of light is the dark head, for in traditional symbolism, the lower reaches are the equivalent of the left.

Now, between the heights and the depths of the image of God there must be no more antagonism than between the left hand and right hand of man, since harmony results from the analogy or opposites.

Israel in the desert grew discouraged and asked: "Is God with us or against us?"

Thus they spoke of him whom one knows and of him who is not known.

Thus they separated the white head from the dark head.

The god of shadow became, then, an exterminating phantom.

They were punished because they had doubted through lack of confidence and love.

One does not understand God, but one loves him; and it is love that produces faith.

God hides from the mind of man, but reveals himself to the heart.

When man says: "I do not believe in God," it is as if he were to say: "I do not love."

And the voice of shadow answers: "You will die because your heart renounces life."

The Microprosopopeia is the great night of faith, and it is in faith that the just live and breathe. They stretch forth their hands and take hold of the hair of the father, and from these splendid strands fall drops of light which come to illuminate their night.

Between the two sides of these divided strands is the pathway of initiation, the middle path, the path of opposites in harmony.

There, all is reconciled and understood. There, only good triumphs and evil is no longer.

This pathway is that of supreme balance and is called the last judgment of God.

The hairs of the white head spread out in perfect order on all sides, but do not cover the ears.

For the ears of the Lord are always open to prayer. And nothing can prevent them from hearing the orphan's cry or the wail of the oppressed.”

THE COLLOQUY

Part I

On the forehead of the supreme head resides the majesty of majesties, the goodness of all goodnesses united, the true pleasure of all true pleasures.

“This is love, whose power is created and shared by all those who love.

Humanity's will, symbolized by the forehead of the Microprosopopeia, must correspond to this love.

The forehead of collective man is called Reason. It is often veiled in shadow, but when it shows itself, God gives ear to the prayers of Israel. When, then, does it show itself?”

Rabbi Simeon paused a moment, then reiterated his question:

“Yes, when?”

And turning toward Rabbi Eleazar, his son, he repeated:

“When does it show itself?”

“At the time of common prayer on the day of the Lord,” answered Rabbi Eleazar.

“How?” asked the master.

“Men, when they pray, prostrate themselves before God whom they imagine as angry; the forehead of the head of shadow is then covered with clouds and it seems that thunder and lightning must issue from them.

But the shadows part, struck by a ray from the supreme face: eternal serenity imprints its image on them and even the dark face grows brighter.

When the just pray, they address divine goodness, and this sentiment of goodness drives away from them all shadows of fear. Serenity on the face of man is the radiating light of the divine countenance.

When anger is stilled in the heart of man, he dreams of God's forgiveness; but it is man alone who pardons, for God is never angered.

Adam is driven from earthly paradise by the anger and maliciousness of the head of shadow, but the face of light smiles on him ceaselessly from its celestial paradise.

Eden, divided by four rivers, is a mystery of the head of shadow. Obscure symbols come from obscure thought, the dogmatic god is the father of mysterious allegories.

The higher Eden has no divisions or exclusions: there are no poisoned apples in the garden of the supreme God.

But only the father knows this Eden, he alone understands his love, pitiless for all eternity, for he is without weakness and without anger.”

THE COLLOQUY

Part II

“Let us continue mentally to draw the hieroglyphic head which symbolizes the father. What eyes shall we give him?

Eyes other than mortal eyes, eyes without lids and lashes.

For God never sleeps; his eyes are never closed.

Is it not written: "The guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps"?

It is also written: "The eyes of the Lord gaze without ceasing throughout the expanse of the universe."

And yet it is said: "The gaze of the Lord falls on those who fear him, the eye of Adonai is fixed on Israel."

Is this a contradiction? No, in truth. For the Lord who sees the entire universe is the god of light; he who sees and prefers a single people is the god of shadow.

The preference accorded Israel would be an injustice and hence a lie, if God did not look at the same throughout the whole of the universe. The eye of privilege would see poorly if he were not sustained, rectified by the eye of justice. It is for this reason that we give two eyes to the supreme head; but these two eyes are the two ends of an ellipse, and this ellipse of two eyes makes only one eye in all.

This single eye has three rays and three halos.

These halos are crowns which constitute the triple kingdom of all things visible to God.

There are two eyes, but should one wish to distinguish between them, they merge into one.

This is the right eye of the single face composed of light and shadow, for the two faces are in fact one, as the two eyes are one eye.

The left eye, this is the Microprosopopeia, and it has eyebrows which frown and eyelids which close.

This one slumbers often, for it is made in the image of man, and it is this one we address when we say: "Lord, awake! and turn your eye upon us."

Woe to the man who sees the eye of God as red, inflamed with anger!

He who believes in a wrathful God, where will he seek his pardon?

The Ancient of days is all goodness, and the beam of his eye is always the whitest and purest of lights.

Happy is the lot of the just and wise man, who views all with this same purity and whiteness!

It is written: "Come, family of Jacob, and walk in the light of Adonai."

The name of the supreme master remains, however, shrouded in mystery.

Nowhere in the law is it explained, except in this passage where God says to Abraham: "I swear by my own self that through you shall Israel be blessed."

Who can so bind himself by an oath, if not the human God? And what is Israel in the divine order, if not the divine faith of Israel?

And if God says through the mouth of the prophet: "Israel, you shall be my glory," is this not the God of shadow who wishes to glorify himself in the splendour of Israel's God of light?

To give him a name, we call him the Ancient of days. As it is said in the prophecy of Daniel: "I have seen thrones overturned and the Ancient of days sit down."

Stand up, Rabbi Jehuda, and tell us what are these thrones which are overturned."

"It is written," said Rabbi Jehuda:

"His throne is the seat of life-giving fire. God sits on the throne and fire gives life instead of devouring and destroying.

If God leaves the throne, the fire is extinguished; otherwise whole worlds might be consumed.

Where God is seated, there is balance.

When his power makes for itself a centre, it creates a new universe, and all the others displace themselves to rotate around it. For God moves in order to seat himself, and he seats himself in order to move."

And Rabbi Simeon said to Rabbi Jehuda:

"May God direct you in the eternal ways and may he remain in your thoughts."

THE COLLOQUY

Part III

“Come and see. It is written: "I am, before all things, myself. In the beginning I am, and at the end of all I am myself, wholly."

Everything is him, for everything reveals him. He hides within all that is. His breath gives life to all that breathes, and this is why, among the mysteries of his allegorical face, we shall now speak of the symbolism of the nose.

It is the nose, above all, on which the character of a face depends.

Now, the head of light and the head of shadow are of quite different characters.

The nose of the supreme head breathes life toward the lower head.

From one nostril comes personal life, from the other, collective life.

But the unique spirit of this double breath is appeasement and pardon.

It is this breath which, in the time of the Messiah, is to still all storms and quiet all angers.

The spirit of wisdom and intelligence,

The spirit of counsel and strength.

The spirit of knowledge and awe of the Lord.

Are these different spirits? We have said the breath of the father is single. Stand up. Rabbi Jose.”

Rabbi Jose got up and from his place said:

“In the days of the Messiah, wisdom will no longer be hidden, for understanding will flower.

The breath of the father, the spirit of God will come with the six spirits that are in actuality one, like the six steps of Solomon's single throne.

Thus are explained the seven spirits of the throne spoken of by the ancient prophets. These are the seven hues of light, the seven notes of music, the seven breathings which form the one breath of spirit.”

“May yours,” said Rabbi Simeon,

“rest in peace in the world to come!

Come now and see: When the prophet Ezekiel invokes spirit to bring the dead back to life, he summons the four breaths which make up the spirit of life.

What are these four quickening breaths? That of God towards man, that of man towards God, that which results from their mingling, and lastly, the immense and eternal breath of God which circles around all worlds and returns to the mouth of the father.

These four breaths are in reality one: the spirit of life. Thus the prophet, turning to face the four cardinal points, summons only a single spirit.

Is it not said that in the time of the Messiah's reign, when the spirit of understanding and knowledge shall be infused into all flesh, each human soul, without need of teaching, shall know the truth.

For at that time, when the veils of falsehood will be forever torn asunder, souls will no longer be separated by error in all its forms and will live one through the other, looking freely one within another.

Each will radiate and receive the light of all others, by a sort of universal inhalation and exhalation. Thus in all things is the spirit of life composed of four breaths.

There will come a time of universal resurrection for the life of the intelligence.

For these four spirits in one are symbolized by the square which encloses the triangle, and thus is explained, in the symbolism of numbers, the mystery of the seven spirits.

The nose of the white-haired old one, the nose of the supreme head, breathes creations that are forever new. That of the head of shadow breathes destruction and consuming fire. The dark head breathes in life and exhales death; the white head takes in death and breathes out life.

Who can conceive of these strange and monstrous heads? Who has ever seen them, and who will ever understand them?

The kings of kings, that is, the masters of science and wisdom, can alone understand where and why the imagination draws their outlines and how it can be so that, at one and the same time, they do and do not exist.”

The Mysteries of the White Beard

Rabbi Simeon had paused a moment; he took up again where he had left off, saying:

“Woe to him who reaches with profane hands towards the majestic beard of the father of fathers! For this beard is glorious beyond all glory, a mystery which enfolds all mysteries. No one has seen it, no one may touch it.

The beard is the adornment of adornments, the majesty of majesties.

The beard forms the link between the ears and mouth, it radiates from the lips like the word which gives light and life to the soul.

It is for this reason that we take it as a symbol of the Word.

It contains all mysteries and teaches all truths.

It is white as snow and casts a shadow darker than night.

It is divided into thirteen parts on which are poured the most precious of perfumes: the two parts descending from the nose to the comers of the mouth, separated by a scant space of flesh; the two parts which join the beard to the beginning of the ears; the beard itself, divided into three sections, each divided again into three.

This beard is perfect, since we take it to be the Word, which is, itself, perfect.

It is all beauty, all balance, all rightness.

The cheeks shine forth from above, like two scarlet apples, projecting the light of life on to the somber Microprosopopeia.

White and red combined are the colour of the mysterious rose, the whiteness of milk and the redness of blood, the white of light and the redness of fire.

All in nature that is white and red derives from the supreme rose.

The thirteen parts of the white beard represent the synthesis of all truths, and the man who understands this allegorical beard is a man full of truth.

Do we not say proverbially of a wise, strong man, of a man who lowers his eyes reflectively before undertaking an enterprise: This is a man who considers his beard!

And those who raise a hand and swear on oath on the beard of the old man, these swear on the truth itself, symbolized by the thirteen sections of the supreme beard.

Four, the four letters of the holy name, the four elements, the four comers of a square, the four cardinal points of heaven, and nine, that is, three multiplied by three: the active and the passive and the equilibrium they create as they reproduce themselves.”

Mystery of the Black Beard

“Does the beard of the Microprosopopeia possess such a system and orderly disposition? Stand up, Rabbi Isaac, and speak to us of the parts of the black beard.”

Rabbi Isaac stood and began:

“Listen to these thirteen sayings of the prophet Micah:

- I. Is there any who can be likened to you, Lord?
- II. You take away injustice and cause it to disappear.
- III. You pass, treading on sin.
- IV. For it is your desire in the end, that your people be saved.
- V. You will not for ever remain angry.
- VI. For your wish is for forgiveness.
- VII. Mercy will come to us again.
- VIII. Our iniquities shall be vanquished
- IX. Even the last memory of our faults shall be buried in the very bottom of the sea.
- X. To the family of Jacob shall be given the heritage of truth.
- XI. And to the family of Abraham, eternal mercy.
- XII. We trust in the oath which you gave to our fathers.
- XIII. We believe in the promise made in olden times.”

“These,” continued Rabbi Isaac, “are thirteen drops of precious balm, fallen from the thirteen parts of the supreme beard, and which bring order to the chaos of the lower beard.

The dark beard is made up of coarse, unwieldy hairs, tangled together.

But the thirteen drops of the balm of mercy force them to adapt to the harmonious disposition of the higher beard.

For the white beard sends down to the black its long, supple, silken strands, and its rivers of gentleness soften the coarseness of this dark fleece.

Thick twisted hairs are often a mark of intellectual servitude.

And if one considers the hair an extension of the brain, a quiet, lucid thought must be represented by a head of hair that is even, supple and soft.

Now, the mouth is analogous to, yet distinct from, the hair. The hair takes up its growth behind the ears, and near the ears begins the beard which radiates outwards from the mouth.

The black beard is the shadow of the white, as the law is the shadow of freedom, and as a threat is the shadow of forgiveness and love.

Now, we have said that light and shadow are necessary to the manifestation of day, and that all illumination is perceived as a mixture of light and shade.

Thus can we say that, in divine revelation, absolute shadow does not exist: all is light.

The light which shines is the white light; and the light which envelops itself in shadow is the black light.

The law is written on a white page with black coals, taken from the altar with tongs by the Seraphim.

This is the great sheet of light, bearing characters of fire.

It is for this reason we represent divine thought, the spirit of the scriptures, by a soft, white beard, in contrast to the other, both tangled and rough.

For one is an image of spirit, the other, the letter of the law.

The same can be said for the heads of hair. That of the God of light is as white as snow, its strands even and flowing.

That of the God of shadow is as black as a raven's wing, and its locks are twisted and snarled.

But the white beard impregnates the black beard with its perfumes, and the hair of the head of light permeates the hair of shadows with its splendour, so that the two heads of hair and the two beards belong to a sole identical head, which is the symbolic and allegorical image of God."

Details
Concerning the Great White Beard

Part One

The first part of the mysterious beard is that which begins near the right ear, descending to the corner of the mouth.

“The beard has its origin in the virile heat of the blood, thus we may call it the daughter of the heart of man; but here, since it more or less continues the hair, itself a radiation of the brain, we may also call it the daughter of thought.

The hairs are tender, soft, they have attained no great length. This is the Word in divine generation.

There are thirty-one small curls, arranged in perfect order, and each curl is made up of three hundred and ninety hairs.

These numbers represent worlds of intellect which God wishes to bring into being by means of the Word. Each world is to engender other worlds, multiplied by the mysterious figure, two, and the holy figure, three.

From tens to hundreds, from hundreds to myriads, worlds are multiplied by reason of creative ideas, in exact proportion to the germinal origins already formed.’

Each hair of the young-growing beard ends in a point of light, and each point of light works to produce a sun.

For each sun there comes into being a night, which this new star will enliven, a night filled with phantoms and horrors that the nascent sun illumines and dissipates with a smile.

It is thus that the glowing beard of the father streams out toward the rough, black beard of the God of darkness.

And one cannot perceive the supreme beard, except in the brilliance it gives to the beard of shadow.

Is it not said in the book of Psalms: "The perfume of the supreme head is poured out on to the beard of the father, and from there, on to the beard of Aaron"?

What is Aaron? He is the great priest. And what is the great priest, if not the shadow and human personification of the dark God?

The psalm we have quoted begins by saying that the perfection of good and the triumph of happiness lies in the remaining together of brothers.

Who are these brothers, if not the two old ones?

For us, God has need of a high priest, but this high priest would become the night of death, were he to be separated from God.

God gives his light to the priest, and the priest lends to God his shadow.

The priest is the brother of God, as shadow is the sister of light.

What the priest does on earth in the exercise of his ministry, God performs in heaven, with a difference as that of right to left, of day to night, of reproachful anger to peace-giving mercy.

And it *is* thus that religious harmony results from the analogy of opposites.

May supreme harmony shine down on you!" said Rabbi Simeon to Rabbi Isaac.

"May the glowing beard be the sign of your eternal strength! May we together see the face of the Ancient of days, and may the peace and joy of righteous souls be your lot and mine in the world to come!"

Details
Concerning the Great White Beard

Part Two

“Stand, Rabbi Chiskija, and from where you are tell us the glories of one part of the holy beard.”

Rabbi Chiskija got up and said:

“It is written: "I am my beloved's, and his good will is turned toward me."

It is for man, for each one of us, that the supreme thought becomes the Word, the creator of all thoughts and all substance.

I see a river of light, descending from divine understanding and changing into three hundred and thirty-five harmonious voices.

In this light, night comes to bathe, cleansing itself of shadow.

I saw shadowy forms plunge deep in the white waves, coming out again as white as the waves themselves.

And I prayed the higher intelligences to explain to me what I had seen.

And I was answered: "You see in what manner injustice is effaced by God.

"For between his ear and his mouth, between his understanding and his Word, there is no place for falsehood.

"In the living light, in the light which reaches everywhere, shadow cannot exist; and should it wish to, it must necessarily take on a whiteness, transforming itself to light.

"Now, it is thus that God will one day change man's evil into good."

This is what I am inspired to say by the second part of the holy beard, analogous and parallel to the first.”

Rabbi Chiskija, having so spoken, regained his seat.

Rabbi Simeon said then:

“The world is no longer for us an enigma nor a hell. Be blessed, oh Rabbi Chiskija, by the supreme old one, for you have consoled our hearts.

All the rays converge towards their centre: I see the harmonious totality of the Creator's work. From the heights we occupy we can already see the holy land in the impending flowering of its destiny.

We can see that which Moses himself was denied when he went up a second time into Mount Sinai: the sun of justice in which we believe, the sun which is to come, illuminating our faces.

I feel mine growing with faith and hope, and more fortunate than Moses, I know why it is so. Moses did not even know that his face had grown luminous through contemplation of God.

I see before my eyes this allegorical beard, as if it had been sculpted by a capable hand in thirteen parts, representing the whole of truth.

As you explain them, I see all these parts arrange themselves in orderly fashion, firmly attached to the ideal head which supports the mysterious crown.

The king appears to me, then, as if from a mid-point in his uncountable years. Effects come together with causes, causes are united, set forth by principles, and the principle of principles reigns with sovereign dominion from its centre which is everywhere.

Rejoice, my companions, in this holy revelation, for the world surely will not understand what we have been given to understand, nor see what we can now see, before the Messiah's reign!"

Details Concerning the Great White Beard

The Other Parts

Thus, one by one, the great rabbis analysed the holy beard. Explanation must now be given directly, summarizing, as it were, the vague subtlety and lengthiness of their exact words.

The hair, radiating outwards from the skull, is for these great priests an image of divine thought; likewise is the beard, radiating outwards from the mouth, a symbol of the holy word. The hair is the Word of God in its own awareness of itself; the beard is the Word made manifest, in works or in inspired writings. This beard is divided into thirteen parts because the secret theology of the Qabalists is inextricably bound to the nine ciphers which make up all numbers and to the four letters which make up the name of Jehovah.

The science of numbers, taken as the algebra of ideas, is the Beraschith; the science of the letters of the sacred name is the Mercavah. Beraschith or Bereschith means genesis, generation or gencology. Mercavah means chariot, as if the four symbolic letters were the wheels of God's chariot which Ezekiel saw in a vision. These were wheels of light, turning one in another, celestial spheres, intersecting circles whose centres are everywhere, whose circumferences are everywhere, whose common centre is everywhere, and whose final, definitive circumference is nowhere.

But the name of Jehovah has in reality only three letters, since the fourth is a repetition of the second: ***Jod-Hé-Van-Hé***,

Thus the thirteen sections of the supreme beard are the equivalent of the cycle of twelve, plus the centre which must be given to these numbers in order to arrange them in a circle on the clock of time.

These theological subtleties linked to numerical abstractions were, so to speak, the scholastic system of the ancient rabbis, fathers of Qabalistic philosophy. The result of this method was deductions which, often sublime, sometimes puerile, were nevertheless exact. 'God,' said Solomon, 'created everything with weight, measure and number.' It was the natural conclusion in the thought of certain naive thinkers that algebra was the sacred fire of Prometheus and that men could be created by pronouncing words. This is sometimes true, as great orators know so well, but only in a metaphorical, figurative sense. Doubtless matter obeys the movement resulting from forces which can be determined by numbers. For the Hebrews, numbers are symbolized by the letters of the alphabet, and thus it was by means of these letters that God created space and worlds. The letter is, in fact, the conventional sign of power, but a sign only, not power itself. In similar fashion, in the book of the Sohar which we are examining, the great rabbis assembled round Rabbi Simeon attach their ideas on divinity to the allegorical figure of a human head, whose eyes and ears represent understanding, whose hair represents thought, whose beard represents the word, or rather, the expression and manifestation of

truth. They have said repeatedly that this head has no existence in visible or tangible reality, that God is inaccessible to our senses and even to our thought, that we can understand him only through his action upon us and relative to us. All of which has not kept a great number of superstitious men from attributing a human visage to God, and not only in far-off times, but recently as well.

Swedenborg, for example, this otherwise astonishing and admirable mystic, maintains that the universe is in reality an immense man with hair of light, with legs and arms of stars, truly made in the image of God, who is himself so great and so brilliant a man that no human eye can see him. The Mormons, in these very days in which we live, believe that the universe is limited and that God, in the form of a gigantic man, occupies the centre, seated on a colossal Urim-Thummim, that is, on two great precious stones with innumerable facets in which are reflected all that comes to pass in the existing worlds. This thought is scarcely more advanced than that of the Scandinavians in which Odin is seated beneath an oak along whose branches there scampers eternally a squirrel who comes to whisper in his ear all that happens in the universe.

Let us pass over the details of the thirteen sections of the allegorical beard so as not to tire our readers, examining only the conclusions which Rabbi Simeon draws from them.

Conclusion

Concerning the Allegorical Figure of the Macroprosopopeia

Then said Rabbi Simeon to his companions:

“Your words are like embroidery on the great veil which permits us, without being dazed and blinded, to lift our eyes towards the eternal light.

I saw this work being done as you spoke: your thoughts determined the image, and the image came of itself to take its place in this wondrous tapestry.

It was thus that in former times Moses had the holy tabernacle's veil embroidered and hung from four columns by rings of gold.

Thus the sacrificial altar had four corners, like the square that can be drawn in all the circles of the heavens; and there was in the middle of the altar a hooked bar which served to stir the sacrificial fire, for this fire could not be touched by human hands.

Our allegories are like this bar, allowing us to touch the burning truth. We progress, with well-ordered imagination, thanks to the law of analogies and the exactness of numbers. What we know serves as a basis for what we believe. The order which we see calls for the order we suppose exists in the heights beyond our comprehension. Thus, nothing in our images is left to chance, all is fixed in a harmonious and justifiable order. You speak and the picture takes shape. Your voice determines the forms which appear, and they arrange themselves in all magnificence, like the ornaments of a crown.

The columns of the temple are moved: they seem reborn, emerging from the ground to hear you.

The armies of heaven surround you, and their admirable discipline justifies your words.

Oh! be happy in the world to come, for the words which come out of your mouth are fore-ordained by truth and justice, following the path of righteousness without fail, straying neither to the right nor to the left.

The most holy God, whom you bless, rejoices to hear them, and he listens to them that they may be accomplished.

For, in the world to come, all good words spoken in the world at hand will take on living forms, and you are creatures of goodness, you who manifest through the Word that which is true!

The truth is a fine wine which never vanishes. It falls drop by drop from the cup of the wise, reaching even beyond the grave to moisten the lips of the dead. It descends even to the hearts of our sleeping fathers, making them speak again, as in a dream.

For the truth is always alive, it abandons no one once it has touched him.

And when the children on earth give living testimony to it, the fathers who sleep beneath the earth begin to smile, answering softly: "Amen!"

The Microprosopopeia

We know of nothing in the ancient books as great as this great council of initiates, busying themselves, in truth and reason, with the creation of a hieroglyphic figure of God. They know that any form, in order to be seen, must have light and cast a shadow. But can shadow represent supreme intelligence? No, of course not. It can only represent its veil. The ancient Isis was veiled; Moses, speaking of God, covered his head with a veil. All theology of the ancients is veiled with more or less transparent allegories: mythology is nothing other than this. To mythology there succeeded the mysteries, which are the darkened veil, stripped of its adornments, pointing more and more to the face of shadow outlined by the great Rabbi Simeon. But all this harkens back to the first, the earliest imagery, so that the pages we translate here, by analysing them, seem to be the origin of all symbolisms and the fundamental principle of all dogmas.

Nothing is as beautiful nor as encouraging as this explanation given to certain images of the Bible, representing God as wrathful, repentant or changeable, in the manner of man. Such emotional behaviour, Simeon Ben-Jochai would say, belongs only to the face of shadow: it is the mirror of human passion. The face of light is always peaceful and radiant, but God, who has no face, remains unchanging above this light and shadow. The man who seeks God can find only man's ideal; how can the finite conceive of the infinite?

Ordinary man must have a God which resembles himself. If the master did not grow angry when men do evil, they would believe that evil goes unpunished, and thus would remain unchecked in their wickedness. If the master were not harsh, severe, mysterious, difficult to satisfy and to understand, they would easily fall prey to indifference and indolence. Troublesome childhood has need of the rod, and the father must know how to feign anger, even though he may wish to smile at the mischievousness of his children.

Thus, according to our ancient masters, the image of divinity has two faces, one which surveys the faults of man and becomes angry, the other which contemplates eternal justice and smiles.

This mystery of higher initiation was known even to the Greeks, who sometimes gave to Pluto the attributes of Jupiter. Egypt prayed to the black Serapis, and images of Bacchus have been preserved wherein this god whose adventures recall the story of Moses, this god whose celebrations brought forth the cry *Io Evohé (Jod hé Van hé)*, the four letters of Jehovah's name, is shown like Janus with two faces. One is young and fair like that of Apollo, the other, grotesque and frowning like that of Silenus.

Apollo and Bacchus characterize the two principles of exaltation in mankind: enthusiasm and drunkenness. Sublime souls find intoxication in poetry and beauty, vulgar souls seek enthusiasm in the drunkenness that wine produces.

But for the vulgar man, wine is not the only source of exaltation. Lowly men grow drunk on all 'vapours' which affect the brain: insatiable greed, undisciplined lusts, vain glory, fanaticism. There exist ascetic imaginations even wilder and madder than those of the

Bacchantes; there are self-styled protectors of the faith who, changing sweetness to bitterness and true preaching to satire, are condemned by incorruptible nature to wear the satyr's mask. Insolence, like red-hot iron, has burned their lips, and their guarded eyes denounce, in spite of them, the perversity of their hearts.

The face of shadow which our rabbis describe is not, however, the God of Garasse, of Patouillet or Veuillot; it is the veiled god of Moses, the after-God, if I may refer to him thus, thereby alluding to a Biblical allegory. Moses prayed to God, to the invisible God, to appear. 'Look in the cleft of this rock,' said the Lord. 'I will pass and lay my hand thereon, and when I will have passed, you shall see me from behind.'

Moses, writing this page, was conscious of the symbolism of the head of shadow, the only one which it is given to man to look upon without being blinded by light. The God of light is he of whom the wise man dreams; the God of shadow is the dream of the foolish. Human folly sees everything in reverse, and if we may use the daring metaphor of Moses, the face which the multitudes worship is only the divine image glimpsed from behind, the after-shadow of God.' *Videbis posteriora mea.*'

The Text of the Sohar Continued
Prologue concerning the Microprosopopeia

Ready yourselves now, and give your attention to a symbolic description of the Microprosopopeia, this veil of shadow fitted to cover a shape of light, this visible fiction which makes the splendour of the invisible accessible to our eyes, the dark old one who gathers in and reflects the light of the white old one.

“Wisdom is your guide, your tools are order, justice and beauty.

Give a form to the whole body of human thought which ascends toward the invisible author of all forms.

And let this form be a human one, for we seek the king who shall reign over all men.

A human form, so that we can seat it on a throne and worship it.

Has not the prophet said: "I saw a throne in the heavens, and on this throne some immense thing resembling a human form"?

Let us use the human form, for this is for us the synthesis of all forms.

For the name of man is for us the synthesis of all names.

Let us use the human form, for the human idea contains for us all the secrets of thought, and all the mysteries of the ancient world, the world created before man, the world in which no balance could be attained until the appearance of the form called Adam.”

The Kings of Edom

“We read in the book of Mystery: "Before the Ancient of ancients revealed his grandeur, he let there come into being gigantic forces which, before the advent of the people of God, reigned like kings in the land of Edom."

Nature was given over to the spirit of their enmity, and they eventually destroyed each other. For they could not reach an agreement as to how to form a human body, seeing as how they, themselves, lacked a head.

The human head was missing from all living nature, and nature was in a state of chaos, like the human mind when it lacks the idea of God!

Thus these terrestrial Elohim, these anarchic kings of the world, were destroyed.

They were destroyed, but they were not annihilated.

Destroyed as reckless powers, they were preserved as powers which must be controlled.

And they took their place in the order of things, when order was created.

As a matter of fact, nothing is ever destroyed, everything simply changes place, shifts position, and when beings change in obedience to the eternal order, it is this which we, as men, call dying.

Even the king of Egypt is not dead, he has come down from his throne to make place for the Eternal.

It is said that Adam named all beings, for at the time of his coming a hierarchy instigated itself in nature, and all beings, finding themselves for the first time in their appointed place, had just reason to be called and determined by a name.'

Only one of the pre-Adamite monsters was not destroyed, the great Androgyn, male and female like the palm tree.

This is the productive, generative force which existed before Adam and which God will not destroy.

It existed, but it was not controlled; it was at work, but the law of its working was not fixed until it had produced its master work: the living form of Adam."

The Skull of the Microprosopopeia

(Air, Fire and Dew)

“When the white head decided to add to its beauty with an ornament, it sent out a spark from its own light.

It breathed on the spark to cool it, and the spark grew firm.

It expanded and hollowed itself out, like a blue, transparent skull enclosing thousands, myriads of worlds.

This cavity is full of eternal dew, white on the side of the father, red on the side of the son. It is the dew of light and life, the dew that engenders universes and resurrects the dead.

Some are resurrected in light, and the others in fire.

Some in the eternal whiteness of peace, the others in the redness of fire and the torments of war.

The wicked are the disgrace, so to speak, of their father, and it is they who cover the face with its redness.

In this skull of universal man, only begotten son of God, resides knowledge, with its thirty-two paths and its fifty gates.”

The Hair of the Microprosopopeia

“Hair represents thoughts, as it radiates outward from the head.

The head of the Microprosopopeia is surrounded by myriads of myriads and millions of millions of black hairs, coarse and kinked and tangled together.

There, intermingled, are to be found the bright and the dark, the true and the false, the just and the unjust.

These hairs are divided in the centre by a single straight line, corresponding identically to one on the white head.

For balance is the same for God and for man, and the laws which govern balance are no different in heaven than on earth.

Among human thoughts, some are harsh and pitiless, others are soft and pliable.

The same sense of balance weighs them and modifies the rigidity of the left by the mercifulness of the right.”

The Forehead of the Microprosopopeia

(The Eyes and their Colour)

“When the forehead of light, is shining, the forehead of shadow is bathed in its glow.

When anger brings shadows to cover the forehead of the God of man, the dark twisted hairs stand on end, a breath of ire makes them hiss like serpents.

Prayers of ignorance rise like a black smoke and cloud the forehead of the idol still more.

Then rises the prayer of the just.

It comes out of the shadow and ascends directly towards the light.

The celestial head bends down, and the shadowy forehead below is bathed in splendours.

Ire ceases, the storm abates and vengeance is changed to forgiveness.”

The Eyes

“He has black, thick eyebrows; round his eyes bristle lashes the colour of shadow.

When his sombre eyelids open, he seems then to awaken.

His gaze takes on the reflection of the higher light and resembles the gaze of God.

It is to him the prophet speaks when he says: "Awake, Lord, why do you sleep so long? Is it not time to shake off your sleep at last?"

During the sleep of the God of shadow, foreign nations gain dominion over Israel.

The God of man slumbers when man's faith falls asleep.

But when our God wakes, he rolls his eyes and, casting a scornful glance at the nations which oppress us, he overwhelms them with his lightning.

When they are open, his eyes are soft like the eyes of doves, and there are to be found these basic colours, black, white, yellow, red.

‘The black of the Microprosopopeia's eyes can be linked to that stone which comes forth from the abyss once every thousand years, from the abyss of the great sea.

And when this stone appears, a great tempest arises, the waves are lashed into fury, and the noise they make is heard by the immense serpent, named Leviathan.

This stone comes from the deep abyss, it rolls in the boiling torment of the sea, out of which it rises at last; and darkness covers all, a darkness next to which all other darknesses seem as nothing. Now, the initiated know that in this darkness are hidden all the mysteries of knowledge.

Such is the darkness of the eye of the old one, a blackness containing and surpassing all obscurity.

His whiteness is borrowed from the supreme gaze: it is the milk of mercy, falling upon him drop by drop like tears.

His redness is that of fire, which destroys and renews life.

His look of kindness is burnished yellow, shining like gold.

When he grows wrathful, when he threatens, in the corners of his flashing eyes there hang two tears.

His lightening bursts forth, his anger plunges to the depths of the abyss, fire breaks out, devouring its victims for ever.

The powerful of the earth are overthrown, cedars are twisted like blades of grass, the abyss is gratified, anger is appeased, the sombre God grows calm, and on the hanging tears glows a brilliant beam from the light of a God of love.

The eyelids close, the tears fall, and in falling they extinguish the fire of eternal hell.”

The Nose and the Beard Analysis

Simeon Ben-Jochai continued to explain the Book of Mystery, describing the anatomy of the dark God. This God is neither the Ahriman of the Persians, nor the evil principle of the Manicheans: this is a loftier concept, a mediating shade between infinite light and the feeble eye of man, a veil, made in humanity's image, with which God deigns to veil his glory. In this shadow, the meaning of all mysteries is to be found. This shadow explains the terrible God of the prophets, the God who threatens and calls for fear. It is the God of priests, the God who requires sacrifice, the God who slumbers and wakes to the sound of trumpets from the temple, the God who repents of having created man, and who, won over by prayers and offerings, is appeased as he raises his hand to strike.

It must be remarked here that this obscure conception of divinity, far from seeming a poor one to the great rabbis and revelators of mystery, appears, rather, just and essential.

The ancient sanctuary was veiled, and when the veil was torn, this catastrophe heralded the end of a religion and of a world. The veil is not torn without the earth trembling: this happened at the death of Christ; but the sanctuary unveiled is a sanctuary profaned. Soon Caligula will place his idols there, waiting for the torches fired by Titus's soldiers. A voice cries; the gods have taken leave, while Christianity silently prepares another sanctuary and weaves another veil.

The two figurative heads of the old ones must be represented as concentric or superimposed in such a way that one is the reflection of the other, but a reflection in opposition, the white in the one being black in the other and vice versa.

The great rabbis apply themselves diligently to detailing the two heads, they count the tresses of hair and the divisions of the beard, they describe the two noses and the contrary streams of breath escaping from the four nostrils. The long and majestic nose of the supreme father breathes divine and eternal life; the short, wrinkled nose of the irate God breathes fire and smoke: this is the smouldering volcano of earthly life as well as what the great rabbis seem to mean by the eternal fire of hell.

This fire, say they, can be quenched only by the altar's fire, and this smoke dispelled only by the smoke of sacrifice. He can be understood, this dark God with the smouldering nostrils, for ever inflamed for they are the very vents of hell.

Here the dark God takes on something of our Devil, and it is to this particular fiction of the rabbis that the Persian Ahriman, the wicked God of the Manicheans, and the Christian Devil, all owe their common origin. It is a disfigured symbol: no longer the shadow of God, but, so to speak, a distorted mask, a caricature of the shadow. This misrepresentation, produced by ignorance working on so bold an image, proves the necessity for occultism and justifies the secrecy of the rabbis in shrouding the Qabalah in mystery.

After the nose, the rabbi describes the ears of the dark God. They are covered with wiry hairs, for in man, of whom the dark God is the image, understanding is clouded by the disorder of thought. When the vulgar God slumbers, his ears do not hear and evil is done in the world. The evil which offends and angers the God of shadow does not exist for the God of light. Relative to absolute order, disorder does not exist.

When the God of men awakens, he shakes out his hair, and the sky trembles. Then his ears are uncovered and available for prayer. These are days of victory for Israel: they triumph over Aman and vanquish their enemies.

From the ears, Rabbi Simeon passes to the beard, describing its separate sections. He counts nine of them, not thirteen as in the white beard of the supreme old one, because the negative Word of the God of shadow could never explain the divine quaternary. The ternary multiplied by itself gives nine, and this is the number for every hierarchy and classification in the Qabalistic method. There are nine choirs of angels; there are also nine classes of demons. The number nine has, then, its luminous and shadowy sides, but the divine quaternary is the perfect number which admits no negation. The negation of the quaternary would be the monstrous fiction of absolute evil. This would be the Satan of the diabolists, an impossible monster, unknown to the ancient masters, the great Hebrew Qabalists.

The nine sections of the beard of shadow represent the negative Word. These are the shadows of the great lights.

The great lights are the nine divine conceptions which precede the idea of creation.

First Light

The crown or supreme power

Shadow of this light

Despotism or absolute power

Second Light

Eternal wisdom

Shadow of this light

Blind faith

Third Light

Active intelligence

Shadow of this light

The dogma which claims to be unchanging
and which inevitably develops

Fourth Light

Spiritual beauty

Shadow of this light

Blind faith

Fifth Light
Eternal justice
Shadow of this light
Divine vengeance

Sixth Light
Infinite mercy
Shadow of this lightt
Voluntary sacrifice

Seventh Light
The eternal victory of good
Shadow of this light
Abnegation and voluntary austerity

Eighth Light
Eternity of goodness
Shadow of this light
Everlasting hell

Ninth Light
Fertility of goodness
Shadow of this light
Celibacy and sterility

Here, necessarily, the dark numbers stop, for the number ten is the number of creation. But creation cannot be negative. Celibacy and sterility produce nothing.

Celibacy has always been mysticism's dream, even in Judaism which formally condemns sterility.

Asceticism is in fact incompatible with the duties of the family. Travelling prophets had no wives. The family is the world, and mysticism is the desert.

The family is true life, and mysticism is dreaming.

The family necessitates property, and mysticism commands abnegation and voluntary austerity.

Mysticism is the religious sentiment pushed to the extreme. Thus, should it be tempered and governed by sacerdotal authority; mystics are children whose pedagogues and tutors are the priests. We speak here of orthodox mystics who escape the drunkenness of folly thanks to the limitations of obedience. Undisciplined mystics are madmen capable of great fury and which it would be wise to shut away.

The Microprosopopeia
Considered as Androgynous

Here is what we have learned:

Rabbi Simeon then said:

“These mysteries of the Word should be revealed only to those who can maintain equilibrium *with* one foot on each end of the scale. They must not be told to those who have not entered the crypt of great trials, but only to those who have entered there and come out again

For he who enters but does not come out again, it would be better were he never to have been created.”

Commentary

Here we can clearly see that the occult dogma of Moses, professed to by Rabbi Simeon, comes from the sanctuaries of Egypt. There, in fact, one was subjected to great trial before being admitted to initiation. These trials took place in immense underground spaces, which those who gave way to fear were never to leave. The adept who, on the contrary, came out again triumphant, received the key to all religious mysteries, and the first great revelation, whispered close to his ear in passing, was contained in this formula:

Osiris is a dark God

That is: the God worshipped by the profane is only a shadow of the true God.

We give him man's anger so that he may be dreaded by man.

For if men are not presented with a master who resembles them, the idea of divinity will so surpass their feeble intelligence that it will escape them completely, and they will fall into atheism.

When man does evil, he throws himself into disorder, he transgresses the law which guards his happiness. Then he is miserable, dissatisfied with himself, and he is told that God is angry with him, in order to explain to him the workings of his own angered conscience. He must placate God with expiations which, like punishments inflicted on unreasonable, wilful children, serve to impress on the mind a horror of evil. He must above all return to the path of goodness, and then, from the calm he experiences, he feels that God has forgiven him. God, however, does not forgive, for he is never angered; but if you say to the vulgar man that the supreme judge lives in the heart of his own conscience, he will believe that God is only a word, and he will come to argue with his conscience,

attributing his scruples or his remorse to learned prejudice. He will thus have no other guide than the self-interest of his passions which are the harbingers of death.

CONTINUATION OF THE TEXT

“Here is a summary of all these words:

The Ancient of ancients exists within the Microprosopopeia, light is hidden within shadow, the large is figured in the small: everything is in supreme unity. It is here that all has been, is and will be. Supreme unity will not change, has not changed, does not change.

It has no forms, but conforms to our own. It takes on for us the form which contains all forms and the name which holds within it all names.

This form, by means of which it can appear to us in our thoughts, is not really its form, it is the analogy of a form. It is an artificial head on which to place diadems and crowns.

Man's form summarizes all forms, of higher as well as lower things.

And because this form summarizes and represents all that is, we use it to make for ourselves a representation of God in the form of the supreme old one.

Then, parallel to this form and as its shadow, our imagination creates the Microprosopopeia.

And if you ask me what difference there is between the two old ones, I will answer that the two represent a single, selfsame thought.

They are the two sides of an image: turned towards the sky, the image is serene and splendid; turned towards the ignorance and vice of man, the image is threatening and cloudy.

Thus the Lord, during the exodus from Egypt, precedes Israel in a cloud, luminous from Israel's side, but shadowy on the side of the Egyptians.

Light and shadow, are they not opposed?

They seem irreconcilable, contrary to such a degree that when one exists, the other cannot.

They coincide admirably, however, and it is their harmonious accord which makes all forms visible.

But these mysteries are accessible only to the harvesters of the sacred fields.

It is written: "The mystery of the Lord belongs to those who fear him." "

Commentary

Here Rabbi Simeon attempts to explain the mysteries of Genesis where God is represented in human form creating Adam in his own image. This human form ascribed to God is the prototypal form of the great Adam, that is, of humanity in its entirety, pre-existing in the Word of God.

Now, by the great Adam whom they call Adam Kadmon or Adam the Protoplast, the Jewish initiates do not mean, as we do, the first human individual, but rather, have the entire human race appearing at once on the face of the earth. By the great Adam, they mean primitive humanity and even something more, for the body of Adam contains all animated beings and all the spirits of the universe. Thus they give to him the most gigantic proportions. His forehead touches the sun's zenith, his right hand touches the east, his left, the west. When he lifts his foot to walk, the shadow of his heel causes an eclipse of the sun. He is androgynous, with two faces, the masculine face in front, the feminine face behind. Each face is also androgynous, that is, masculine on the right and feminine on the left.

The prototype of the great Adam which is in the Microprosopopeia is likewise androgynous in front, behind, to the right, to the left, on top and underneath, all of which symbolizes the universal equilibrium and balance of forces, either active or passive, in the whole of nature.

Symbols will make all of this more easily understood, and we can give several here.

We will not follow Rabbi Simeon in his descriptions of the divine androgyn contained in the prototype which is the dark old one or the God of shadow. These are monstrous anatomical fictions which recall the bizarre combinations of certain hybrid gods of India. A great thought presides over all these dream images, no doubt, but their expression is too far removed from our habits and modes of thinking. Suffice it to say that the rabbi represents typical couples, the Microprosopopeia with nature, his wife, and Adam Kadmon together with his Eve, in the act of eternal fertility, explaining their ardours and their amorous languor, making of immensity an enormous nuptial bed without alcove, covering or curtain.

On Justice
Following the Text of Rabbi Simeon

“Woman does not possess within herself strength and justice, these she must receive from man.

She aspires after them with untellable thirst, but cannot receive them until she is entirely submissive.

When she rules, she brings about only revolt and violence.

It is in this way that woman became man's overseer by drawing him into sin.

In the incontinence of her desires, she became a mother and gave birth to Cain.

Then she said: "God and I have made a man, and this man is my property."

She was not yet ready for true maternity, for the serpent had infected her with his jealousy and anger.

The birth of the cruel and pitiless Cain was a violent and terrible one, exhausting all the energies of woman.

She grew softer then, weaker, and brought forth the gentle Abel.

These two conflicting generations could not find peace together: the strong, without measure, was destined to absorb the weak, without defence; and this is what occurred.

Then the God of shadow awoke and he tore from the stomach of Cain this latter's brother whom he had devoured.

But neither Cain nor Abel were considered just enough to remain alive before him.

He relegated Abel to life's limbo regions and threw Cain into the great ocean of tears.

There, they seek each other still in order to continue their struggle and each, on his own, produces a spirit of violence and weakness.

Happy are the souls who descend in a direct line from the great Adam! For the children of the useless Abel and those of the criminal Cain are no better one than the other: they are the unjust, the sinners.

True justice unites goodness and strength, it is neither violent nor weak.

Happy are you, you who understand these words, words of the spirit which joins the right with the left, the higher with the lower.

Happy are you, you the masters of masters, harvesters of the holy field, who contemplate and recognize the Lord, looking at him face to face, and who, by your union with the eternal Word, make yourselves worthy of immortality in the world to come.

About you it is written: "From this day forth you will know that the Lord reigns at one time from the highest heaven and from the deepest earth."

The Lord, the Ancient of days, God!, that is, the unique, the only, his reign is everywhere. May his name be blessed in this century and in the century of centuries!"

Final Words On the Supreme Man

Rabbi Simeon said:

“By looking down on things, we see them from above, and by observing them from above, we see things which lie below.

The ten fingers of our hands recall the ten crowns of knowledge, the holy numbers and their equilibrium, five on one side and five on the other.

It is the same with our toes: that which is above is like that which is below.

'The higher forms govern the lower forms, the top is like the bottom, woman is analogous to man.

Opposites govern opposites, extremes find contact, and different forms adhere one to another and act one upon another.

Man and woman united together form the perfect body of humanity.

They come one out of the other, they need one another, they act and react one on the other.

The life they possess is the same: thus the blood in the body's vessels is distributed to the right and left throughout the entire body.

All the vessels of the body intermingle their flow; all the nerves share in the communication of luminous fluid and sensitivity.

Like worlds in space, sending each other again and again the light of their suns.

All that is outside this mutual, universal life of the great body is foul. Do not go near spirits who exist outside the great communion, as if they might teach you something, for you will receive nothing from them but stain and blemish.

These wandering spirits are like decapitated heads, forever thirsty, but the water they drink drips away with their blood and does not quench their thirst.

If it is thus, you say, the very angels are part of the great body of the Synagogue?'

How could you doubt it?

If it were not so, they could participate neither in holiness nor in life.

For the synagogue of the wise is the body of humanity, the body of God.

The angel of the Lord in the prophecy of Daniel, is he not called Gabriel? And what does Gabriel signify if not man *par excellence*, the man of God, or the Man-God?

Tradition teaches us that vile spirits cannot take on the beauties of the human form, for they exist separately from the harmony of the perfect body.

They are wanderers, flitting here and there throughout the world, unable to assume specific shape.

They find themselves rejected everywhere, for they have in them the disobedience of Cain: they are driven from the field whose brilliant tents are the stars.

Never can they take their stand within the realm of truth; at one moment they will hover above it, at another, below, but either way, they are always vile.

The impure spirits coming from Abel are gentler and can approach the great body, even, to all appearances, attaching themselves to it.

But they are as superfluous, artificial limbs: they are added to the body, but cannot remain there.

All these spirits are like aborted being? or detached limbs floating in space: they listen from the heights or from the depths to all they can hear, but they understand nothing, as we all know who busy ourselves with the subject.”

Now, here is the tradition concerning the book's mystery. When the conjugal prototype regained its equilibrium through the appeasement of the God of shadow, the Adamic couple came together for the third time.

And a balanced generation was made.

Harmony was then established between heaven and earth.

The higher world brought life to the lower, for man, the mediator between thought and form, had at last found peace.

There was then the divine glory of the upper regions and the divine glory of the lower, the Shekinah of heaven and the Shekinah of earth.

Holy is the Lord in the thoughts of heaven, holy is the Lord in the forms of earth, holy is the Lord whose thought descends from idea to form and back again!

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of harmonious beings, well ordered like armies!

All the earth is full of his glory, and all that exists is a single body, given life by a single soul.

Here is one of our traditions:

There exists a compensatory balancing of beings one with another.

It is written in the Song of Songs: "We will make for you gold necklaces inlaid with silver."

'It is thus that, to embellish one with the other, mercy and justice are limited.

And they are like the palm tree which always grows in twos; they are like brother and sister, ageing equally.

Thus we know that he who separates himself from humanity by refusing to love, espousing no one, he will find no place after death in the great human synthesis, but will remain outside, a stranger to the laws of attraction and to the transformations of life.

And nature, ashamed of him, will cause him to disappear, as we hasten to rid ourselves of the dead.

Why does the law command that, upon his death, we do not leave the body of a man to pass the night in the house in which he lived?

It is out of respect for the human form, become useless, that it may not be dishonoured.

It is to prevent that which was once a person from becoming a futile, nameless thing.

It is to distinguish the venerable body of man from animal carrion.

Death must not be allowed authority when it is a question of man: for man is the scope of immortal spirit.

A human body without soul is a gap in nature, and yet the corpse is worthy of honour because of its human shape.

One must make haste to put an end to this contradiction and it is for this reason that we bury our dead before the night following their passing.

Men who renounce their humanity in the hope of conquering heaven are nothing more than dwarves who wish to bring back the crimes of the giants, unrighteous, contrary creatures.

For it is written: "The sons of God, having seen the daughters of man and finding them beautiful, bent down too far to see them and were hurled into the abyss."

There they engendered impure spirits and demons, and it was in this time that there were giants on the earth.

Their fall, contrary to nature's order and as a consequence, unforeseen by the supreme orderer of all things, explains the repentance or remorse of God when it is said that the Lord regretted having created man.

And the text adds "On earth", for the divine plan remained unaltered in heaven. The heavenly man had not sinned.

But the angel, by falling, broke the equilibrium of earth, and God was forced, so to speak, to act against his own wishes.

For it is man's equilibrium which makes nature's balance here on earth, and if man were no longer, there would be no more world.

For man is the receptacle of divine thought which creates and preserves the world, man is earth's *raison d'être*, all that existed before him was merely in preparation for his birth, and the entirety of creation without him would have come to nothing.

It is thus that the prophet, in a vision, saw angels set up a throne on high, and on it was seated a figure similar to the image of a man.

And Daniel said that he saw someone like the son of man, walking among the clouds of the sky, ascending slowly toward the Ancient of days.

And at length he arrived before him and was made to draw nigh to the face of the Lord."

Conclusion

“Up to this point our words have been full of mystery, hiding a higher sense, outside the grasp of most. Fortunate is he who can understand them without error!

For these words have been given only to the masters, to the harvesters of the sacred field, to those who have undertaken the trial and come through it.

It is written: "The ways of the Lord are straight, and the just walk in them without hindrance, but the transgressors of the law must always find there some stumbling lock." ”

Having said all these things, Rabbi Simeon wept and raising his voice, said:

“If some of you, oh, my brothers, are to reveal to the wicked the things you have heard, may God take you again unto himself and hide you in his glory!

For it is better that we take leave of this world than to reveal to the children of this world the most sublime mysteries of heaven.

I have revealed them to you alone, in the presence of the Ancient of ancients: I have not done it for my own glory, nor for that of my father's house, nor for the honour of my brothers gathered here with me.

But only to prevent them from straying out of the paths of great wisdom, in order that they may present themselves without shame before the gate of the holy palace, in order that they shall not be erased, like a badly formed letter, from the pages of the book of life,”

Now this is what we have learned:

Before the departure of the rabbis assembled in the enclosure, three of them died suddenly.

They were: Rabbi Jose

And Rabbi Thiskia

And Rabbi Jesa.

Their companions saw them lifted, carried away by holy angels beyond the veil which had been stretched over their heads.

Rabbi Simeon spoke briefly and prostrated himself.

Then he uttered a cry, saying:

“Is it true, God forgive us, that a death sentence has been pronounced against us for having revealed mysteries which have remained unknown to all men since the day when Moses, gazing face to face upon the divine image, stood before the Lord on Mount Sinai?

If we are to be punished for this, why has not death befallen me first and why am I still among the living?”

And he heard a voice which said:

“Most fortunate are you. Rabbi Simeon, and most fortunate is your lot, as well as that of those who are with you. For there has just been revealed to you what the Lord does not reveal to all the army of heaven.

But come and see!

It is written: "This doctrine will fall to the eldest son, but before the youngest, the gates shall be closed."

Those who have just died were not strong enough to carry such knowledge on the earth.

They opened their souls to enchantment and their ecstasy carried them away.

The holy angels took them and carried them away beyond the veil.”

Rabbi Simeon answered:

“They are happy!”

And the voice took up again:

“Go now, you who remain, for the Lord has made you strong to withstand both heaven and earth. You exist in perfect balance and harmony, and you shall live.”

They got up then, and everywhere they walked, sweet perfumes came out of the ground.

And Rabbi Simeon said:

“I see now that the earth will be blessed on our account.”

And their faces were so radiant that no one could have looked on them.

Thus it is that, as we have learned, ten entered the enclosure, but only seven came out.

Rabbi Simeon was full of joy, but Rabbi Abba felt a great sadness because of those who were no more.

But one day while the seven were seated around the master. Rabbi Simeon uttered a mysterious word.

And they saw the three who had been taken from them.

Highly placed angels waited upon them, and opening golden doors, they showed them the treasures which had been laid aside for them.

Then the soul of Rabbi Abba was calmed.

From that time, the seven masters did not leave the dwelling of Rabbi Simeon.

And Rabbi Simeon said:

“We are the eyes of the Lord.”

Rabbi Abba said:

“We are six lamps who owe our light to a seventh, and this seventh is you,”

And Rabbi Jehuda called it the Great Sabbath of the week of mysteries.

One day Elijah appeared to them in his hair shirt, his face glowing with a triple light.

And Rabbi Simeon said to him:

“Were you not with us in the enclosure when we discussed the words of knowledge?”

Elijah answered:

“I wanted to be there, but the angels refused me their wings, as I had another mission to fulfill.

On that day I went to console and deliver your brothers who are in captivity. I rubbed their chains with a balm which will one day break them.

For the just should never be chained, unless it is with interlinking crowns.

Thus are the days of trial linked with those of glory, and following the week of work, comes the week of rest.

Then will every chain be as nothing before the throne of God. And when the last of the just are saved, how great will be the glory of the righteous.

The peoples of the earth will be their crown, and they will be likened to the feast times of the Lord, sparkling from without the crown of the other days.

A triple banquet awaits the just in the solemn rituals of the future's Great Sabbath.

It is written: "You will call the sabbath the delight of the just and you will compare it to the holy one of God."

Now, who is this holy one of God?

It is Rabbi Simeon Ben-Jochai, whose name is glorified in this world and shall gather further glory in the world to come."

Thus finishes the holy book of the Great Synod.

Part Two Christian Glory

[Christian Glory]

Christian glory is the triumph of intelligence over the beast, of truth over falsehood, of light over shadow, of humanity over the devil.

God becomes man to prevent the Devil from becoming God.

What is the Devil? It is the beast, it is shadow. It is falsehood. Why does it exist?

Because shadow is necessary as a receptacle and reflector of light, because evil is the foundation of good.

Thus are explained the shadows of the old sanctuaries, as well as the obscurities of the Bible. A shadow must exist to catch and reflect the light. The vulgar multitude has need of a terrible divinity who stirs human passions with his anger and vengeance. The exterminating God, the God of calamities is the God of shadow, the God made in the image of man, and he is the exact opposite of the God of the wise. The dark face is like a mask placed over the serene countenance of the eternal father of all beings, in order to inspire fear in disobedient children.

This doctrine should have been kept secret, for it could never be understood except by higher intellects. Unfortunately it did, in fact, creep into the world, and the result was precisely that which had been feared. Limited intellects did not understand this fictitious God with two so unlike faces, and the idea of an absurd duality sprang up in the minds of some thinkers. The dogmas of the false Zoroaster can be traced to this point. The face of light was called Ormuzd and the face of shadow became the fatal head of the dark Ahriman. Thus was the Devil created.

Note that the Bible attributes to God himself actions which might be more easily laid to the account of the usurper of the kingdom of hell. It is God who hardens Pharaoh's heart in order to punish him, together with all his people, by terrifying plagues, driving him finally to his ultimate impenitence. It is God who sends one of his messengers or angels to derange the mind of Ahab, pushing him to wage an ill-fated war. 'How will you go about it?' God asks his messenger. And the angel answers: 'I will be a spirit of untruth in the mouths of false prophets.' 'Go,' answers the Lord, 'and you will be victorious.' At this time it could not yet be imagined that the kingdom of God might be divided, nor that he kept for himself the light in order to allow his enemy to rule the realm of shadow. The God of evil had not yet been invented.

Evil, being the negation of good, can have no power; for the negation of good implies the negation of truth, whose force strikes to the very root of our being. What sort of victories might be won by a general who inevitably and voluntarily let himself be deceived? The existence of the Devil is a drastic lie. His guiding genius, if it were even possible, would be

an immense madness. To struggle eternally against God, what a dream! But for this to at least appear possible, Satan must make for himself a God in his own image. He does not comprehend what even the simplest child can understand. Spirit of blindness, he is blindness personified. Curious power, to say the least: that of a blind monarch in a kingdom of shadows! All his thoughts must be false, all his efforts must be in vain: even the insane inmates of Bedlam would be justified were they to mock him.

But, one might say, there do exist here below perverse men who deny the existence of God, or, still more horrible, who believe in him and blaspheme him. The influence of these men of falsehood is great. They have a genius for destruction, they deceive, they mislead, they devour, and Providence allows them this power. Their existence and their passing triumph substantiate Satan's transitory reign. When they succeed in their calumny, in their oppression of the just, can one say, without blasphemy, that they owe their victory to God? But if it is not God who gives them the power to do evil, there must exist a dark Providence of shadows, an accursed force which God will one day vanquish, but which, for the time being, combats the very power of God and triumphs over him as soon as we give it the complicity of our hearts.

There does exist, in fact, a power which renders evil possible to a certain degree; but this power is not cursed of God, otherwise it could not exist: it is the power that God gives to any intelligent creature, that he may choose between the higher attractions of the soul and the desires from out of the base instincts of a limited nature bound to terrestrial needs. No one can love evil for evil's sake: we find at the root of all vices only ignorance and error. When one performs evil, one gives it the guise of goodness, for the very attraction inherent in disobedience is the love of freedom!

Freedom! This is the name of that power which explains evil and renders it necessary.

Freedom, which could be called man's divinity, the most beautiful, the most superb, the most irrevocable of all the Creator's gifts. Freedom which God himself cannot repress without denying his own existence. Freedom which must be won through struggle, when it is not already possessed as the supreme ruler. Freedom which is a victory, and so implies combat. The fatal attraction against which we must fight is not evil, but a blind force which must be submitted to the power coming from God that he gives to us either as a treasure or a torment, our motivating drive, which we must take hold of in order to guide it, so as not to be destroyed by it: it is a mill and we are the grain, unless we possess sufficient courage and capability to become the millers, the proprietors, those who are in control.

Theologians of the Devil, do you suppose that Satan is free? if he is, there is still time for him to revert to the paths of goodness; if he is not, he is not responsible for his actions, he is only the instrument of someone stronger than he: he is the slave of God's justice; he does nothing which God himself does not wish for. It is God who, using him, tempts, leads into sin and torments his weak creatures. Thus Satan is not the ruler of the realm of shadows, he is the agent of light behind a veil. He is of service to God, he performs God's work: God has not rejected him, for he holds him still in his hand. If God were to condemn

him, he must necessarily reject him for ever. But the agent of God is the representative of God, and in accordance with all laws of logic, the representative of God is God himself.

What is the Devil, then, in the final analysis? The Devil is God working evil. A harsh and shocking definition, to be sure, for it affirms the impossible. Let us say it in a better way: the Devil is the negation of what God affirms. Now, God affirms being; thus the Devil must affirm nothingness. But nothingness can neither affirm nor be affirmed, it is nothing more than a negation, so that if the ultimate definition of God according to the Bible is this: 'He who is', the definition of the Devil must necessarily be this: 'He who is not'.

Enough, then, against this black idol, against the false god of the Persians and the Manicheans, against the colossal, nearly omnipotent Satan which superstition still dreams of. There remains to be examined Satan, chief of the Eggregores, the fallen angel who retains a shred of liberty since final judgment has not been pronounced upon him, and who profits from this delay by drawing the weak into his camp, as if he hoped to reduce the magnitude of his own sins by augmenting the number of his accomplices.

Nowhere in Genesis, nor even in the entire Bible, is allusion made to the sinfulness and fall of the angels: to find traces of this story, one must go to the apocryphal book of Enoch. This book, obviously predating the Christian era since it is cited by the apostle St Jude, held great authority in the eyes of the first Christians. Tertulian mentions it with esteem, but could not understand it, his bitter, severe genius being so foreign to the mysteries of the Qabalah, at that time preserved only by the Joannite school, albeit already deformed and profaned by the errors of Gnosticism.

The Qabalists refer all absolute ideas to the hieroglyphic and numerical value of the twenty-two letters of the primitive alphabet, which they believe to have been that of the Hebrews. A guiding genius, they say, presides over each of these letters; each letter is alive, each letter is an angel. Those who are familiar with oriental poetry should understand this figure of speech. But it is a peculiarity of the vulgar to take everything literally and to render it as tangible as possible. Now, among these letters, two represent divinity; these are the first and the last, the *aleph* and the *thau*, in Greek, the *alpha* and the *omega*, in Latin, *a* and *z*, from which has been formed the word AZOTH, in occult philosophy the expression of the absolute.

Now, the book of Enoch tells us that there existed Eggregores, that is, spirits who never sleep, heads of whole multitudes, and that twenty of these spirits dissociated themselves from their guiding principle and allowed themselves to fall.

Here is an image of the obscuring of truth in the world. Numbers detach themselves from ultimate unity. The letters of light become letters of shadow. But why?

Because the daughters of men were beautiful and the angels of heaven grew jealous of their love.

The idea was then absorbed by form, and the very principle of its beauty, exalted by beauty itself, abandoned both its guiding spirit and its ends.

The fallen angels gathered around their chief, Samiexas, on a high mountain, which has been called ever since 'the mountain of the Oath', for the Eggregores pledged themselves there one to the other with a sacrilegious vow.

A mountain, in symbolism, represents a centre of ideas. Horeb, Sinai, Zion, Tabor, Calvary, Olympus, Parnassus, the Vatican, the Revolutionary Mountain are at the same time real and allegorical.

Some of these angels have Hebrew names, others, Persian, for in the mysterious book Abraham and Zoroaster joined forces:

The first is	Samiexas
The second	Artakuph
The third	Arakiel
The fourth	Kababiel
The fifth	Oramammeh
The sixth	Ramiel
The seventh	Siupsick
The eighth	Zalchiel
The ninth	Balchiel
The tenth	Azazel

Now, in this inverted hierarchy, the last must necessarily occupy the position of the first. Azazel deposes Samiexas and becomes the head of the ten primary demons. For the number ten, being the synthesis of all numbers in unity, represents the multitude, and it is well known that in the Gospels the Devel is called Legion.

The first, second, fifth and seventh Eggregores have Persian or pagan names. Why? Because the veritable names belong to faithful angels and are unfit for fallen spirits, seeing as how *one*, *two*, *three* and *seven* are the keys to the holy numbers.

There is a second half-score of fallen spirits: these are the shadows of shadows, servants of intellectual revolt.

The first or the eleventh is called	Pharmarus
The second or the twelfth	Amariel
The third or thirteenth	Thanazael
The fourteenth	Anaguemas
The fifteenth	Samael
The sixteenth	Sarinas
The seventeenth	Ehumiel
The eighteenth	Tyriel
The nineteenth	Jamiel
The twentieth	Sariel

The meanings of these names are like those of the sacred letters, but in reverse, that is, they stand for the opposite of what is represented by pure numbers.

These spirits materialize, they take on corporeal forms in order to participate in human beauty, and the result is a race of criminals and giants, grants like the Titans of the myth, who pile up mountains to climb to heaven; in other words, spirit absorbed by matter gives disproportionate value to matter and form. This occurred in olden times and unfortunately still occurs today.

Azazel become king of the world by denying God brings dangerous knowledge and war. He teaches men to use gold, precious stones, and iron: he makes jewellery for women and weapons for men. Henceforth, men begin quarrelling over gold and women clamour for lances and swords; coquetry and dueling are inseparable. He who was to be the angel of the kingdom has become the angel of anarchy. Instead of growing more civilized, men fight, so that women may be magnificently adorned.

The eleventh angel, the one who in the Tarot corresponds to strength, taught men the art of glamour and charm, the false masks of strength. The ninth, corresponding to the number of initiation, taught them how to cause the stars to fall from the sky, that is, how to unseat the most luminous truths and drag them into the way of error. Men learned divining, using the air, the earth, the other elements, instead of simply trusting in the light of the sun. Oracles were sought in the pale reflections of the moon, and it was the seventh angel, the one of light with its seven colours, who, apostate to himself, taught this belief in the changing influences of night's beacon. Women were then initiated into the great mysteries, and men, having broken all the bonds of society and of the hierarchy, were governed by rivalry and uncontrolled greed, devouring each other. The weakest then gave forth cries of anguish towards heaven, and the four angels of harmony — those which represent the letters of the divine Tetragrammation: Michael, the angel of the letter *yod*, the father-spirit, creativity as an active force; Gabriel, the angel of the letter *he*, representing the mother, creativity as a passive force; Raphael, the angel of the letter *van*, the spirit of creative work; and Uriel, the angel of generating fire — touched by the plaintive cries of man, came to the foot of the throne of God and begged him to put a stop to the frightful disorderliness of the world. It was then that God announced his plan to purify the earth by means of the flood, in order to suppress the cursed race of the giants. And seeking to save the oppressed, he saw that they also were cowardly and wicked, and he found only the family of Noah to be worthy of mercy before the Lord.

And God said to Raphael, the angel of true knowledge and of pure initiation, he who governs the planet Mercury, the sacred spirit of the triple Hermes: 'Go, lay hold of Azazel and cast him, bound hand and foot, into the darkness. You will also bind closed his eyes, so that henceforth he shall see no more light; then, striking the earth with your foot, you will make a great abyss in the desert of Dodoel. There you will hurl him down upon the sharp rocks and pointed stones, and this will be the end of him for ever.

“Then, on the day of the great judgment, he will be called to answer for his crimes, and so condemned to eternal fire.

As for you, make known on the earth the ways of health, give the world medicine for its wounds. And bring back to the side of truth the revelations of Azazel, which have brought about so many sins among men.”

Further on, the author of the book of Enoch adds this remarkable passage:

“The souls of the giants, born of an unholy alliance, are half spiritual and half material; their impure origin makes them evil, and these are the wicked spirits who wander through the atmosphere. Natural enemies of justice, they originate perverse forces and powerful currents of evil. They subsist without food and will not touch sacrificial flesh. They cause visions and give rise to phantoms whose property it is to change shape, but with a tendency to dwindle and fade. They are dead, moreover, and are to be one day resurrected with the other children of men.”

Here is certainly a terrifying revelation for raisers of spirits and amateur spiritualists. What we have called in our earlier works ghosts and vampires, coagulations and unhealthy projections of astral light, are in reality, according to the book of Enoch, monstrous hybrid souls formed out of the commerce of the Eggregores with prostitutes of the ancient world; the souls of giants exterminated in the flood, unwholesome exhalations of the earth and of the venom of the serpent, Python.

Three remarks must be made on this obviously ancient legend:

1. The facts thus recounted are allegorical, as in the Apocalypse and the tales of the Talmud. These are metamorphoses after the fashion of Ovid: it is impossible for beings, whoever and whatever they are, to change their nature. It would be utterly in vain for a man to fall in love with a graceful dove, he could never become one himself, and even if he could, it does not follow that the dove could give birth to other types of birds. The same must be said for these so-called angels, immaterial spirits who mythically fell in love with women and so transformed themselves into men, thus spawning the race of giants.
2. It must not be supposed that angels ever wished to dethrone God, revolting against him: this is a monstrous and impossible idea, borrowed from the Titans of Greek mythology. The Titans can, according to legend, climb to the heights of Olympus, but can one imagine a host of angels declaring war on infinity?
3. Finally, the spirit of false knowledge (become man, let us not forget), was thrown before the flood, bound hand and foot, into the abyss where he must remain until the day of judgment. Therefore, he has nothing in common with Satan who wanders about the earth tempting mankind, and the book of Enoch, even were it to be taken literally rather than apocryphally, proves nothing in favour of the modern Devil.

Satan is mentioned in the book of Job, but there he does not play the role of an angel cast out of the heavens and banned for ever from the presence of God. He is, rather, a kind of

public prosecutor who dwells among the Beni-Elohim, that is, the sons of God. The Lord speaks to him, asks him questions and gives him missions to carry out. He wanders through the earth and returns before Adonai to give account of what he has seen. He is ordered to test Job, and the power behind all these trials, Satan, bring down upon the head of this holy man all the evil possible. Job is victorious over all and God rewards him; but Satan has gained neither punishment nor blame, he has only obeyed God.

The book of Job is, moreover, simply an allegory whose meaning is to show that evil on earth is a test of virtue. All the characters in this oriental poem are symbolic, even their names make this clear. Job, is the afflicted; Satan stands, in general, for the test, and in particular, for calumny. The details of the story are as ridiculous as those of a fable, but the philosophical meaning is quite beautiful. Out of all this, in any case, nothing reasonable can be concluded as to the real existence of a being named Satan.

In Moses's book of Genesis, it is the serpent who tempts woman. Now, this serpent, in the sacred myths of antiquity, sometimes represents fire, sometimes the vital fluid, the flowing force of terrestrial life. In Greek mythology, Vulcan, god of fire, angers Jupiter because of his ugliness, and the master of Olympus hurls him down with a single blow. He is the husband of Venus who tempts mortals and leads them astray, he lives in caverns full of flames where he busies himself by forging weapons and thunderbolts, thereby laying the way for war and violent storms.

In the Gospels, Jesus gives out this profound oracle of eternal wisdom:

“The Devil is a liar, together with his father.”

The Devil, whatever he may be, cannot then be one of God's creatures, at least in his quality as the Devil.

But what is this father of the Devil? The father of the Devil is falsehood.

He is, himself, falsehood and the father of falsehood.

Compared to He who is, he deserves to be called he who is not; and yet he has an actual existence.

Let us explain this seeming contradiction. He does not exist, cannot exist as a single and powerful personality.

Hell is anarchy, and there is no other king of hell than the image of the dark God such as Rabbi Simeon explains it.

Satan is not the Ahrim an of the Persians, nor the Anti-god of the Manicheans; he was never an angel of light, for his light is only an hallucination of the wicked.

He was never a creative spirit, for he is nothing more than an immense folly.

But he is a force, a terrible one, calculating, crafty, taking on a thousand forms and entering freely everywhere, sometimes threatening, sometimes cajoling, always powerful; a force desired by God when he gave liberty to man, although it is a force which inevitably produces bondage; a force which takes on a personification among the vast multitudes who voluntarily go astray. In the Gospels, the Saviour asks him his name and he answers:

“I am called Legion, for I am many.”

The Devil is the beast, or rather, the beastliness, the stupidity which governs the multitudes: he is *the attraction, the fatal magnetism of evil*.

This magnetism of evil makes it possible for all subjects of the dark kingdom, or better, of shadowy anarchy, to understand each other from one end of the world to the other without speaking. It leads astray the pagans, these persecutors of the Christians, as well as the Christians themselves, persecutors of free-thought. It has come into the world under the names of Nero, of Torquemada, of Proud'hon and of Veuillot. It has furnished soldiers to the Pope and false prophets to the partisans of independent morality. It is positivist with Littré, spiritist with Allan-Kardec, diabolist with de Mirville and Gougenot-Desmousseaux. It regrets nothing so much as the axes of the Committee for Public Health, unless it is the pyres of St Dominic and of Pius V. Under two different guises, it has presided over the congress of Malines and the congress of Geneva, for its transformations are prompt and elusive. It inspires the foolish and attempts to paralyse the wise. Its character is always that of evil or stupidity. It loves despotism and anarchy equally; what it hates above all is reason. It is willing that Desbarreaux be an atheist, provided that Pascal be Jansenist. With Ravailac and Damiens it takes the form of bigotry, with Robespierre and Marat, philosophy. It is the serpent of a thousand colours and coils, he guides his forked tongue and flattened head everywhere. He drools venom on all that is pure, tears down all that is beautiful, draws to himself all shame and ugliness. He follows men everywhere, he can be encountered at all times: one might say that the entire world is his. He is more horrible than horror, more fearsome than fear, deadlier than death. He is the father of nightmares, the king of treacherous visions: he is a dwarf and a giant. Now he is a Typhoeus with a thousand heads, now he is an all but invisible scorpion who scurries beneath your feet. Callot and Goya only half glimpsed his grotesque transformations. Dante in his dream saw only a portion of his dreadfulness, and the sculptors of our cathedral portals have never succeeded in carving his utter ugliness. For who can sound the bottom of all folly? To whom has fever breathed its final word? Give a body of pain and torture to nothingness and tell me just how far towards impossibility hideous distortion can go. Then I will answer:

“There is the Devil, there is the pontiff of black magic; there is the one sorcerers call up, the one who appears to them, promising treasure, only to cast them into the abyss!”

The magnetic force, this powerful vehicle of thought and life, has been placed by nature in the service of man's will: our virtues and our perversities together determine its currents. The sacred serpent of Aesculapius has the same symbolic form as the serpents of Tisiphone, Moses himself, who tells us how a serpent introduced sin and death into the

world, had erected the image of a bronze serpent to cure those victims mortally wounded by snake-bite in the desert.

The catholic, that is, universal dogma has not yet been formulated in the Church except as a mystery. It is accepted without being understood, even by faith, for it has been imposed without the acceptance of the free concurrence of reason. It seems, in fact, sometimes to contradict knowledge, for we have not yet learned to distinguish history from allegory, or mystic fictions, however perceptive, from scientific realities which remain inaccessible to the onslaught of faith. If someone tells me, for example, that a Virgin has become a mother while remaining a virgin, that a child has come out of her as a ray of sunlight passes through a crystal without breaking it, I respect and admire this image: but I cannot, unless I were a fool, believe that it is a question of a material and natural childbirth, for I know that such circumstances cannot be. When the Bible tells me that the mountains leapt like rams and the hills like lambs, I do not like this literally. When I find that Joshua stopped the sun in its course (and alas! It is for this that Galilee has been condemned!), I understand that we are dealing with an expression characteristic of oriental poetry and which signifies that the exploits of the Hebrews on that day doubled or tripled the 'value' of the day. Napoleon I was perhaps also not far from believing he commanded the sun on the day of the battle of Austerlitz.

If we read in the symbolic statement of Nicaea that the son of God was born of the father before the beginning of all time and if we are simultaneously taught that he is eternal like the father, we must understand that this birth has nothing whatsoever to do with a normal, material one, since it is a question of a birth that is not even a beginning. If we find later in this same statement that this selfsame son of God came down from heaven for ourselves and for the salvation of mankind, are we to imagine infinity coming down from above? Relative to God, is heaven up above and the earth below? Expressions of faith, then, have no connection with those of knowledge or science, and the same words, used in explaining dogma, do not necessarily always mean the same thing.

The Church, to use the words of the prophet David, officially calls the Devil the arrow which flies by day and the nameless thing which wanders by night. Elsewhere he is called, still more remarkably, the impetuous current and the spirit of great heat (*ab incursu* and *daemonio meridiano*). St Paul says we must combat the powers of our atmosphere (*potestates aeris hujus*).

Is it not clear that these designations refer to forces rather than to persons? And so what does it matter that in its exorcisms the Church should speak to the demon as to a person capable of hearing? Are the sea and the winds also persons? Yet we see that in the Gospels Jesus Christ speaks to them, saying, 'Wind, be still; sea, be calm,' and in addition, that the sea and the wind, as if capable of hearing, quieted immediately.

The Gospels, which St Jean calls the eternal Gospels, are not the story of a man named Jesus, but the symbolic history of the son of God, the legend of the eternal Word. The stars of the sky wrote this all before the birth of man and the magi had already seen it there when they came to adore the living materialization. Egypt's hieroglyphics are full of it. Isis nursing Horns is as gentle as the Virgin mother, crowned with stars and with the

moon beneath her feet. Devaki presenting her chaste breast to Krishna is worshipped by wise men of India, who have also preserved the story in their gospels. The stories of Krishna and Christ seem copied one from the other. The Indian fable even contains Moses's serpent and the struggles of the Saviour against Satan. The Gospels are the eternal Genesis of liberty; the tender triumph of spirit over brute matter.

This is a description and a condemnation of the ephemeral reign of Satan, that is, of falsehood and of tyranny. In our book entitled *The Science of Spirit* we discussed this truth, comparing the texts of the canonical Gospels and the apocryphal Gospels. We are going to complete our work here by giving the most remarkable passages of this marvellous Indian fable which we might be tempted to call the Gospel of Krishna.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER I
The Conception

The soul of the earth complained to Brahma, saying:

“The race of giants, the children of iniquity have grown infinitely numerous.

Their pride is unbearable and I wail, oppressed by the weight of their iniquity.
Come to my aid, on, Brahma!”

Then Brahma, accompanied by all the gods, betook himself to that mysterious sea whose waves are of milk and upon which Vishnu reposes in glory and beatitude.

Standing near this glitteringly white sea, Brahma meditated upon himself, worshipping himself in the divine Trimurti; then, revealing the mysteries of supreme will, he said:

“Vishnu shall become man.”

Then the serpent, Scissia, made its hiss heard and Brahma said to it: 'You will become man at the same time, in order to perpetuate his glory, and he will triumph over you and over fatality, your sister.

“He will be called Krishna, which is to say. Azure, for he will be the son of the heavens.

“Wisemen and patriarchs, return upon the earth to worship him; make shepherds of yourselves, for such will he be.”

Oh! who can speak worthily of the acts of this God? Those who fill themselves with this divine story will be submerged in an ocean of delights. The evils of this world and those to come will no longer have a hold on them. This man-God advances, his large eyes full of majesty; a smile is on his lips, a mark stands in the centre of his forehead and his curly hair drifts gracefully down. Those who have looked upon him cannot ever wish to turn away their eyes. May his image be engraved on every heart! May the memory of this God, of this infant shepherd, brought up by cattle and lambs, be ever present to all spirits of heaven and earth!

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER II
The Nativity

Cangassem, king of Madura, having learned that the beautiful Devaki, wife of Vassondeva, was to bring a child into the world who would one day replace him, resolved to kill the infant as soon as it was born.

However when the time came, Vishnu filled Vassondeva with his light, and Vassondeva concentrated and reflected this light into the chaste breast of Devaki.

Devaki thus became with child in a wholly celestial fashion and without the ordinary workings of man.

Cangassem then ordered that she be put in prison; but when the hour of the birth of Krishna was come, the prison opened of itself, and the infant-God was transported to the stable of Nanden where he lay surrounded by shepherds.

Brahma, Shiva and the other gods came to worship him in this humble shelter, showering him with flowers. The angels, Gheadaruver, sang, danced and played the most melodious of instruments. All stars and planets were at this time aligned in favourable aspect. Vassondeva prostrated himself before this divine child, worshipped him and said:

“Oh, you who have engendered Brahma and who are born here among us, here you lie imprisoned in a mortal body, governed by destiny and open to the accidents befalling matter, you who are not material, inaccessible to death; the hour draws nigh when Cangassem will come to kill you. Make it possible for us to save your life and ours with you!”

Devaki made a similar prayer; then Krishna opened his mouth and spoke. He reassured his parents, revealed to them the supreme destinies, and having promised them eternal blessedness, he retreated again into silence, behaving normally as any child.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER III
The Massacre of the Innocents

Now Cangassem, having learned that Devaki had given birth, ran to the prison and thought he saw her lying there with a child beside her. A mule nearby began to bray, and the tyrant believed this to be a warning from heaven. He drew his sword. It was in vain that Devaki showed him the child was only a girl; Cangassem threw her into the air and held out his sword in order to catch her again on its point. But the infant, soaring above his head, cried,

“I am Fatality. Tremble and quake, for your future conqueror is hidden in an inaccessible retreat, and henceforth until the hour of your punishment, I shall remain suspended over you.”

Cangassem was afraid and prostrated himself at Devaki's feet. He offered her gifts as well as her freedom to escape with Vassondeva where she might choose. However Krishna grew and remained hidden.

Cangassem was tortured by fear; he grew furious and commanded, throughout all his states, the massacre of every newborn child.

Only the young Krishna escaped the king's assassins. The giants of evil, for their part, also plotted his loss. One day one of them came in the form of a terrible chariot, rolling violently forward towards the infant as if to crush him. Krishna held out his foot, smiling, and as soon as this tiny foot touched the chariot, it broke into a thousand pieces which fell around the divine child without touching him.

Another giant, running with the speed of the wind, carried off Krishna, setting him on his shoulders and taking him to the middle of the sea to drown him. But the child grew so heavy that the giant, bent beneath the weight, was drowned himself, and Krishna returned to dry land, walking on the water.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER IV
Childhood Anecdotes Similar
to Those of the Gospels

Krishna, wishing in his childhood to appear as other children of men, often played mischievous tricks which astonished his parents themselves, but which always ended advantageously. One day, for example, he made off with the clothes of several girls who were swimming, and to have them back, they were obliged to stand immobile, their eyes raised towards heaven and their hands joined above their heads. Thus they were made to blush over their immodesty, but also were taught the attitude of prayer.

He took milk and butter from the rich, giving them to the less fortunate. One day, to punish him for this, he had been chained to a millstone; he broke his chain, picked up the stone and threw it against two large trees which were felled by the blow. But out of these two trees came two men who worshipped the child and said to him:

“Be praised! You are our saviour! We are Nalacon ben and Manicrida, and as punishment for our faults, we were imprisoned in these trees. For us to regain our freedom, a God had to come and cast them down.”

Another time, the trees and fields caught fire; the young Krishna, smiling, parted his lips and gently breathed in the flame. The entire holocaust detached itself then from the earth and came to die on the scarlet lips of Krishna.

Brahma, as a trial, had hidden the flocks which had been entrusted to his guard. Krishna made lambs of clay and gave them life. Brahma declared himself conquered and gave back the flocks he had hidden, proclaiming Krishna the creator and master of all things.

Not long after, the animals and shepherds, having drunk from the river of Colinady, died instantly; for Nakuendra, king of serpents, vanquished by Gheronda, prince of the Misans, had hid himself in the waters of this river. Krishna came down to the banks. Immediately the king of serpents threw himself upon him and surrounded him with his coils. But Krishna disengaged himself, forced the reptile to bend down his head, climbed upon it and, holding himself thus upright in the middle of the waters, began to play the flute. Immediately the shepherds and flocks who had died were brought back to life. Vishnu pardoned the serpent, who, having lost his venom, could do no more harm; but he ordered him to withdraw to the isle of Ratnagaram.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER V
The Baptism

Devendra, god of the waters, feeling himself neglected because of Krishna, the honours due him unpaid, caused it to rain for seven days and seven nights in order to submerge the shepherds' fields: but Krishna, lifting with one hand the mountain of Gavertonam, set it between the sky and the earth. Devendra then recognized his powerlessness and, prostrating himself before Krishna, he said to him:

“Oh, Krishna, you are the supreme Being; you have neither desire nor passion; however, you act as it you did. You protect the righteous and punish the wicked. Only one of your moments contains Brahma in infinite repetition. Save me, oh, you, whose eyes have the sweetness of the tamarisk's flower!”

Krishna smiled and answered:

“Oh, prince among the gods, I humiliated you to make you greater. For I bring low him whom I wash to save: be gentle and humble of heart.”

Devendra spoke again:

“I am commanded by Brahma to consecrate you and recognize you as the king of Brahmins, as the good shepherd of all sheep and as the master of all souls who seek mildness and peace.”

Then he arose, gave him holy unction and named him shepherd of shepherds.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER VI
The Song of Songs

Krishna was playing the pastoral flute and all the young women were following him. Young girls, in order to hear him, left the homes of their fathers.

And Krishna said to them:

“Oh, women, do you not fear the anger of your husbands? Young maidens, do you not dread the reproach of your fathers? Return to those who have reason to be jealous of your love.”

And the women said, and the young girls answered:

“If we left our husbands and fathers for a man, we would be wicked: but how can mortals have the right to be jealous of the love which draws us to a god?”

Then Krishna, seeing to what degree their desires were pure, gave them all his tenderness. He satisfied them all in his divine embrace, and all of them were happy; but each of them believed herself alone to be the faithful companion and chaste spouse of Krishna.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER VII
The Transfiguration

A great sacrificial feast was to take place at Madura and the king Cangassem invited Krishna in order to have an opportunity to kill him.

The giant Acrura came before him with his cart on which Krishna did not refuse to mount.

The river Emuneh was on the way, and Acrura, having got down to bathe himself, saw Krishna mirrored in the waves, glowing with pure light. On his forehead, the God had a triple diadem. His four arms were thickly covered with bracelets of pearls. Sparkling eyes glittered like precious stones over his whole body, and his hands stretched in all directions to the very limits of the universe. The heart of Acrura was then changed, and when he found Krishna seated calmly on his cart, he worshipped him sincerely and wished for him that he escape the traps laid by the old Cangassem and that he exit victorious from this most dangerous of trials.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER VIII
The Triumphal Entry

Then Krishna made his entry into the royal city of Madura. He was poorly clothed, as are all shepherds ordinarily, and the first thing he encountered were slaves bearing on a wagon the clothes of the king.

“The king's clothes are mine,” said Krishna; but the slaves only laughed at him.

Then he stretched out his hand and they fell dead, the wagon toppled over and the royal vestments came by themselves to lie at the feet of Krishna.

Seeing this, all the inhabitants of the city came to offer him gifts. Vases of gold and silver, most precious jewels awaited him along the path he was to take; but he did not deign to stoop and take them. A poor gardener named Sandama came in his turn and offered Krishna his most beautiful flowers. The God stopped then, gathered up this poor man's offering and asked him what he might desire in exchange.

“I ask that your name be glorified,” said Sandama.

“I ask that the entire world love you; and as for myself, I entreat you to make me more and more open to the cries of the unfortunate.”

Krishna saw then that he loved Sandama and came to rest several hours in his house.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER IX
Krishna Triumphs Over All the Giants

Cangassem perished while seeking to kill Krishna, and the young God freed Cangassem's father from prison and restored his kingdom which his son had usurped; then he returned to solitude and gave himself over to the study of the Vedas. Giants made war on him and were all conquered. One day they had surrounded the mountain where he had retired with fire and they laid siege to it with innumerable armies. Krishna rose above the flames, and having made himself invisible, passed through the very midst of the enemy and withdrew to another solitary place.

However it was written in the heavens that Krishna was to die in order to atone for the sins of his race. His parents were of the tribe of the Yadavers, which was to grow so numerous as to cover the whole of the earth. But proud of their numbers and their riches, they insulted the prophets of Ixora, and the terrible God caused a great iron sceptre to fall among them, saying:

“Here is the rod which shall break the pride and hope of the Yadavers.”

They consulted Krishna, and he advised them to dissolve the iron rod, reducing it to dust. They did this and the iron powder was thrown into the water; but as it happened, one sharp splinter had been overlooked in the dissolving of the sceptre. A fish, having swallowed it, was wounded and taken by a fisherman who withdrew the iron needle and affixed it to the end of an arrow. And all this was accomplished by the will of the gods who, for the salvation of the world and the deliverance of Vishnu, were laying plans for the death of Krishna.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER X
Words Before the Passion

It is also told that an ugly and misformed woman carrying a vase of sweet-smelling oil of great price came to Krishna and poured it out upon his head. Immediately her ugliness disappeared, her deformities vanished, and she went away endowed with wonderful beauty.

However, the hour of the great sacrifice was approaching: signs and wonders appeared in heaven and on earth. Owls cried in the full light of day and ravens croaked the night through; horses spit fire, raw harvested rice sprouted, the globe of the sun was tinged with many colours.

Krishna threatened the Yadavers with impending destruction and counselled them to leave their city in order to escape the plagues which were to befall it; but they did not listen, and having grown divide among themselves, they took up weapons, hard pointed sticks like swords which might have been born from the iron rod that had been ground to dust and cast upon the water. The sceptre of despotism had been destroyed, but from its dust had arisen civil war and anarchy.

Krishna had a favourite disciple named Ontaven. This disciple asked him for some instruction, that he might keep it in his memory, and Krishna said to him:

“In seven days the city of Danvaragay will be destroyed. The Calyugam will begin its course. In this new age, men will be wicked, without truth and without mutual goodwill. They will be physically weak, full of illness and of short life; thus, leave the world entirely behind and retire to a solitary place; there you will think always of me, you will forsake the pleasures of the world and reform your souls through attentive meditation. Learn to live in thought; believe that the universe is in me, that it has no existence except through me; triumph over maya which is only the illusion of appearances; keep company with wise men, that I may be always in you and you in me. He who renounces the vanity of falsehood for the truth which gives wisdom will draw unto himself the divine light. His heart will become as pure as a perfectly calm sea, and he will be a reflection of my image.

Renounce entirely the spirit of possession of temporal things; this is the first step in the way of perfection; it is by absolute detachment that the passions can be mastered.

The soul is the sovereign of the senses, and I am the sovereign of the soul.

Space is greater than the elements, and I am greater than space.

Will is stronger than all obstacles, and I am the master of will.

Brahma is greater than the gods, and I am greater than Brahma.

The sun is the most luminous of all the other stars, and I am more luminous and life-giving than the sun.

In words, I am truth; in vows, I am he who orders that nothing having life be killed; in charity. I am the gift of bread; among the seasons, I am the springtime which gives life. Truth, wisdom, love, charity, goodness, prayer, the Vedas, Eternity, these are my images.”

Having received these instructions, Ontaven withdrew into the desert of Badary.

The Legend of Krishna
Selection from the Bhagavadam

CHAPTER XI
The Death of Krishna

Krishna then returned to the Yadavers, those of his own race, and found they had exterminated each other entirely. The country they had lived in was no longer anything more than a field covered with bodies of the dead. He raised his eyes and saw the souls of those he had loved on earth returning to heaven.

Finding himself alone and sad, he lay down at the foot of a mysterious bush whose powerful roots ran visibly along the ground and whose branches, covered with red leaves and thorns, twisted far away in all directions. Krishna lay full length near the trunk of the bush, his feet crossed and of his four hands, two extended in an attitude of worship, two joined in prayer. An arrow came then by chance and struck him; an aimless arrow shot by a hunter came to fasten the crossed feet of Krishna to the bush. It was the arrow which had been made with the sharp fragment of the sceptre that Krishna had broken. This was the final vengeance of tyranny and death.

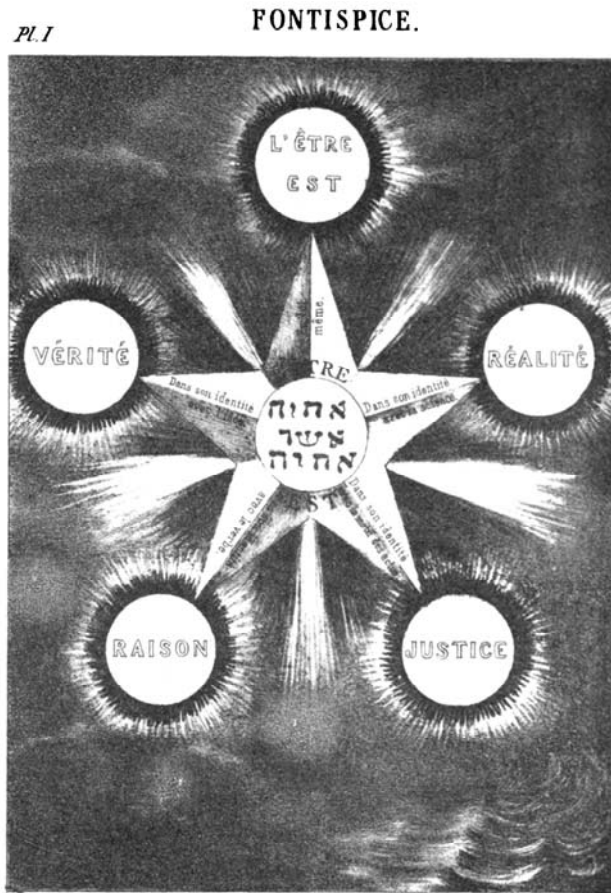
Hardly had he died than the thrones of the unjust toppled of themselves, his body disappeared suddenly and was miraculously found in Geganadam where a temple was built to him and where he has since been worshipped under the name of Jagganath.

This legend is taken from the Baghavadam, one of the Puranas, the holy books of the Indians, to which they attribute the very greatest antiquity. We have divided it into chapters to which we have given titles indicative of the connections that may be made with our Gospels, whose spirit is clearly manifest in this wonderful ideal of divine incarnation. What foolish brahmin could ever take this sacred poetry for history? None-the-less, will not India someday produce its own Renan who will write, choosing this and ignoring that, a colourless and prosaic life of Krishna?

Part Three The Flaming Star

[The Flaming Star]

The flaming star is a Masonic symbol which represents the absolute in being, in truth, in reality, in reason and in justice. (See *the figure at the beginning of our history of magic.*)



[this is the image at the beginning of the "History of Magic"]

Among the mysteries of Masonic initiation, there is a mysterious and obviously quite ancient legend which sheds light on the high philosophy of the Gospels and which tells of the eternal martyrdom of righteousness for ever oppressed by evil, but for ever triumphant over it. In this legend, it is envy, cupidity and pride which are the three heads of the infernal demon, but this demon is the spirit-genius of perverse men, represented by the three traitors. We are speaking here of the legend of Hiram.

Masonic philosophy, the Same as that of the ancient Qabalah, is a protestation against cults which constitute an outrage to nature. Its basis is eternal order. Its guiding Principle is the immutable justice which presides over the laws of the universe; it rejects all idea of caprice and privilege; it teaches equality within the hierarchic order, it regards

as a necessity the degrees of initiation and the classification of brothers by order of knowledge and merit; it admits, finally, all beliefs, but it rectifies them through faith in the eternal order.

Among its symbols, it admits the cross, sign of sacrifice and death, but united with the rose, which represents love and life. The square and the compass, these represent justness united with justness. Masonic philosophy points out the dogmas which divide priests and pastors into factions, these men who exist ostensibly to bring unity to mankind. It preaches to all charity and goodwill.

Freemasonry is the first attempt at universal synthesis and truly catholic association. We are aware that this name seems to belie the thing; but this illogicity must be taken into consideration: the so-called Catholics are the most exclusive of men and the Freemasons who, under the guise of the profane, seem to exist at the fringes of human majority, are in reality the only serious partisans of universal alliance.

To reconcile Freemasonry and Catholicism what would be necessary? Bringing mutual distrust to a halt and the cultivation of mutual understanding. For these two contrary but not contradictory doctrines are at bottom the double solution of a single problem: the reconciliation of reason and faith. But how to reconcile opposites? We have already said it: never to confuse them, but always to associate them, remembering this great axiom of occult philosophy — harmony results from the analogy of opposites.

Masonic Legends

Extracts from a Ritual Manuscript of the Eighth Century

First Legend

Solomon, the wisest of all the kings of his time, wanting to build a temple to the Eternal, assembled together in Jerusalem all suitable workers for the construction of this edifice. He had an edict published throughout his kingdom and which spread thence over the entire world: that whoever wished to come to Jerusalem to work on the building of the temple would be well received and recompensed, on the condition that he be virtuous, full of zeal and courage and not subject to any vice. Soon Jerusalem was filled with a multitude of men who were aware of the noble virtues of Solomon and who asked to be inscribed as workers on the temple. Solomon, having thus assured himself of a large number of workmen, made treaties with all the neighbouring kings, in particular with the king of Tyre, to the effect that he might select from Mount Lebanon all the cedars and other woods and materials necessary.

The work was already under way when Solomon remembered a man named Hiram, in architecture the most knowledgeable man of his time, and wise and virtuous as well, one who, because of his fine qualities, had found favour with the king of Tyre. He noted also that so great a number of workers could not carry on their work without a great deal of difficulty and confusion; thus the temple's progress was beginning to be greatly hampered by the discussions which took place among them. Solomon resolved, then, to give them a chief capable of maintaining order, and chose this man Hiram, an Ethirian by nationality.

He sent deputies loaded with gifts to the king of Tyre, asking him to send the famous architect called Hiram. The king of Tyre, delighted with the esteem Solomon showed him, accorded his request, sending him back Hiram and his deputies burdened with riches and instructed to tell the ruler that beyond the treaty they had made together, he accorded Solomon an alliance for ever, placing at his disposition all that might be found in his kingdom which could prove useful. The deputies arrived in Jerusalem, along with Hiram, on 15 July . . . , a beautiful summer day. They entered Solomon's palace. Hiram was received with all the pomp and magnificence due his great virtues. The same day Solomon gave a feast for all the temple workers in honour of his arrival.

The next day Solomon called together the Chamber of Advisers to settle matters of importance; Hiram was among them and received with favour. Solomon said to him before all present:

“Hiram, I chose you as chief and head architect for the temple, as I chose each of the workers. I give you full power over them, your decisions will be final; thus I regard you as my friend to whom I would confide the greatest of my secrets.”

Next they left the council chamber and went to the temple's site where Solomon himself said in a loud and intelligible voice to all the workers, showing Hiram to them:

“Here is the man I have chosen as your chief, it is he who shall guide you; you will obey him as you would me. I give him full power over you and over the work. All dissention as regards my orders or his shall be punished in whatever manner he sees fit.”

Then they made a tour of the work that had been done; and all was put into Hiram's hands, and Hiram promised the king that all would soon return to order.

The following day Hiram called together all the workers and said to them:

“My friends, the King, our master, has put me in charge of maintaining order among you and of regulating all work on the temple. I have no doubt that all of you are filled with zeal to execute his orders and mine. There are those among you who deserve distinguished salaries; each of you may achieve this, the proof will be in your work. It is for your own peace of mind and to honour your zeal that I am going to form three classes out of all of you: the first will be composed of apprentices, the second, of fellows, and the third, of masters.

The first will be paid accordingly and will receive its salary at the gate of the temple, column J.

Likewise the second at the gate of the temple, column B.

And the third in the sanctuary of the temple.”

Payment was higher in accordance with rank, and each of the workers was happy to accept the authority of so worthy a chief. Peace, friendship and concord reigned among them. The good Hiram, wanting that all remain orderly and wishing to prevent any confusion among the workers, applied to each rank signs, words and gestures by which its members could recognize each other. They were prohibited, however, from confiding these to any others without express permission of the king or of their chief. Thus they received their salary only upon giving their sign; and the masters were paid as masters, the fellows as fellows, and the apprentices as apprentices. In accordance with so perfect a system, each continued in peace, and the work progressed steadily as Solomon desired it should.

But could so fine an order remain for long without upset and revolution? No. Three fellows, impelled by avarice and envy to receive the pay of masters, resolved to learn the necessary word; and as they could only obtain it from the respectable master Hiram, it became their design to get it from him either willingly or by force. Since the good Hiram went daily into the sanctuary of the temple towards five o'clock in the evening in order to make his prayers to the Eternal, they agreed together to wait for his exit, and then to ask him the word of the masters. There being three doors to the temple, one to the east, one to the west and the other to the south, they stationed themselves individually, one at each of

the doors, armed respectively with a measuring stick, an iron rod and a mallet; and they waited.

Hiram, having finished his prayer, made to exit by the southern door where he encountered one of the traitors, armed with a measuring stick, who stopped him and demanded to know the master's word. Hiram, astonished, was quick to point out that it was not in this way that he might obtain the secret, that he would, in fact, sooner die than give it out. The traitor, maddened by this refusal, struck him with his stick. Hiram, stunned by the blow, withdrew into the temple and made for the western door where he met with the second traitor who demanded the same as the first. Hiram remained firm in his refusal, angering this second man who struck him a blow with his metal bar. Hiram stumbled back inside and, certain of success this time, made his way to the eastern door. But here he encountered the third traitor who repeated the same demand. Hiram told him that he preferred death to revealing to him a secret he did not yet merit, and this traitor, outraged by such a refusal, gave him so great a blow with his mallet that he killed him. As it was still day, the traitors took the body of Hiram and hid it in a pile of waste north of the temple, waiting for the fall of night in order to transport it further away. And accordingly, when it was dark, they carried it out of the city on to a high mountain where they buried it. Deciding that they would take it even further away one day, they planted on the grave an acacia branch so as to be able to recognize the place, and then they returned to Jerusalem.

The good Hiram was in the habit of going daily, first thing in the morning, to Solomon, giving him an account of the work, and receiving his orders. Not seeing Hiram on the following day, Solomon sent one of his officers to fetch him, but the man returned saying he had searched everywhere and that no one had been able to find him. This answer saddened Solomon, who went himself to look for him in the temple and had a thorough search made of all the city. The third day, Solomon, having gone to pray in the temple's sanctuary, came out by the eastern door. There he was surprised to see a few traces of blood. He followed them to the pile of waste on the building's northern side, and had it searched, nothing was found, except that the rubbish itself had been recently disturbed. He trembled with horror and concluded that Hiram had been murdered. He went back into the sanctuary to mourn the loss of so great a man, then out into the court of the temple where he called together all the masters, saying to them:

“My brothers, the loss of your chief is a certainty.”

At these words, each of them fell into a deep sadness, which brought about a long period of silence, interrupted at last by Solomon, saying that nine from among them must leave in search of Hiram's body, which once found should be brought back inside the temple.

Solomon had scarcely finished speaking when all the masters voiced their desire to go, even the oldest, without regard for difficulty of the surrounding roads. Seeing their zeal, Solomon repeated that only nine of them would leave and these would be chosen by vote. Those whom chance selected for the search were so transported by joy that they undid their sandals so as to be more agile and set out directly. Three took the road to the south, three the road to the west, and three that to the east, promising one another to meet in

the north on the ninth day of their walk. Eventually one of them sat down to rest, and finding himself quite tired and wishing to stretch out on the ground, took hold of an acacia branch for support; but the ranch, freshly planted, remained in his hand. This, of course, surprised him, and it was then that he saw a rather large space of newly turned earth and deduced that Hiram was buried in this place.

His strength renewed and animated by courage, he rejoined the other masters who came together, explained what had happened, and they all began to dig in the ground, enlivened with a single purpose. The body of the good Hiram was, in fact, buried in this spot, and when they uncovered it at last, they recoiled in horror, trembling. Then sorrow took hold of their hearts and they wept a long time; but at last they found again their courage. One of them went into the grave and took hold of Hiram by the right index finger, thinking to raise him. But Hiram's flesh was already in a state of decomposition and foul smelling, which made him fall back, saying '*Iclinque*', which means 'he smells'. Another took hold of him by the finger next to the index; but the same thing happened to him as had happened to the first, and he withdrew, saying '*Jakin*'. (The response is: *Boaz*.)

The masters held a consultation. Since they did not know that in dying, Hiram had preserved the secrecy of the master's word, they resolved to change it, deciding that the first word uttered when the body was raised from its tomb would be the new word from then on. Then the oldest one of them entered the grave and gripped the good Hiram just above the right wrist, pressing their chests together, his left hand behind the cadaver's back and against its shoulder, and in this way he lifted Hiram from the ground. His body made a muffled sound which frightened them, but the master, still full of courage, cried '*Mac-Benack*', which means, 'the flesh comes away from the bones'. Next they repeated the word one to another, embracing one another, then took up the body of the good Hiram and transported it back to Jerusalem. They arrived in the middle of the night, but the moon was exceedingly bright, and they entered the temple where they set the body down. Informed of their arrival, Solomon came to the temple, accompanied by all the masters, all attired in an apron and white gloves, where they gave the last honours to the good Hiram. Solomon had him buried in the sanctuary and had placed on his tomb a gold plate, triangular in shape, wherein was engraved in Hebrew the name of the Eternal. Then he rewarded the masters with compasses of gold which they attached to their garments by means of a blue ribbon; and they exchanged the new words, signs and gestures.

These same ceremonies are performed when, on the occasion of his reception, the candidate is lifted from a coffin.

The password is Giblinge, the name of the village nearest to where Hiram's body was found.

Masonic Legends

Extracts from a Ritual Manuscript of the Eighth Century

Second Legend

Having laid Hiram's body to rest in the sanctuary with all due pomp and magnificence, Solomon called all the masters together and said:

“My brothers, the traitors who committed this murder must not go unpunished. Their identity can be discovered, this is why I command you to carry out a search with all the ardour and care possible. And when they are discovered, I wish no harm to befall them; they should be brought to me alive so that whatever vengeance is undertaken, it will be mine. To this effect, then, I command twenty-seven of you to carry out this search, taking care to obey my orders exactly.”

Each of them wished to be included, but Solomon, always just and moderate in his desires, repeated that only twenty-seven were needed and that nine would take the eastern road, nine the southern road, and the others the western road, and that they would all be armed with cudgels against whatever dangers they might encounter. He had them named directly, by general vote, and those who were chosen left immediately, promising to carry out the king's orders to the letter.

The three traitors, Hiram's murderers, having resumed work following their crime, and seeing that Hiram's body had been discovered, felt certain that Solomon would proceed to an investigation in order to determine who the killers were, which is precisely what did occur. They left Jerusalem at nightfall, splitting up so that were they to be discovered, they would be less suspect. Each fled, going far from Jerusalem and hiding in foreign lands.

The fourth day of walking was scarcely over when nine of the masters found themselves, utterly fatigued, surrounded by the rocks of a valley at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains. They rested there, and as night was falling, one of them stood guard somewhat ahead of the others. The watch he was keeping caused him to walk some distance away and he perceived a far-off tiny light, gleaming through a crack in the rock. He was surprised and he trembled, but at last took courage and ran to the spot, resolved to find out what it was. As soon as he drew near, a cold sweat broke out all over his body, but at last he again took courage and made ready to enter what had turned out to be the entrance of a cave from which the light was shining. The entrance was narrow and very low so that he had to bend over, his right hand extended before his head as protection against the points of rock, placing one foot ahead of the other, making as little noise as possible. In this way, he came finally to the heart of the cave where he saw a man lying asleep. He recognized him immediately as one of the workers at the temple site in Jerusalem, one of the class of fellows, and certain that he had come upon one of the assassins, his desire to avenge the death of Hiram made him forget Solomon's commands, and arming himself with a dagger

which he found lying at the traitor's feet, he plunged it into his body, then cut off his head. Having done this, he felt himself suddenly thirsty, then seeing a spring that bubbled at the traitor's feet, he quenched his thirst before leaving the cave, the dagger in one hand, the head of the traitor in the other, holding it by the hair.

In this way he rejoined his comrades, who were seized with horror at the sight. He told what had occurred in the cave and how he had come upon the traitor who had sought refuge there. But his comrades explained to him that his too-great zeal had caused him to disobey the orders of the king. Realizing his fault, he stood speechless, but his comrades, familiar with the goodness and mercy of the king, promised him to obtain his pardon. They immediately took the road back to Jerusalem, accompanied by he who still held the traitor's head in one hand and the dagger in the other. They arrived nine days after their initial departure, at the moment when Solomon, as was his custom, had closed himself in the sanctuary with the masters to mourn for the good and worthy master Hiram. All nine went in, that is, eight together, and the ninth brandishing the head and the dagger and crying three times, '*mecum*', which means *vengeance*, making a genu-flexion at each cry. But Solomon trembled at the sight and said: 'Wretch, what have you done? Did I not tell you that all vengeance was to be mine?'

Immediately all the masters placed one knee on the ground and cried: 'Be merciful to him!' explaining that it was his too-great zeal alone which had caused him to forget his orders. Full of kindness, Solomon pardoned him and ordered that the traitor's head be exposed on the end of an iron pole at one of the doors of the temple, in full sight of all the workers. This was immediately carried out, and attention was directed to the discovery of the two remaining traitors.

Masonic Legends

Extracts from a Ritual Manuscript of the Eighth Century

Third Legend

Seeing that the traitors had split up, Solomon believed it would be difficult to find the two others, and so he had an edict published throughout his kingdom, prohibiting anyone from opening his door to a stranger and promising huge rewards to those who might bring the traitors to Jerusalem or give knowledge of their whereabouts. A worker in the quarries of Tyre was well acquainted with a foreign man who had taken refuge in a cave near the quarries and who had confided his secret, making the worker promise to guard it with his life. Since this man came daily to the next village in order to procure food for the fugitive in the cave, he found himself therein at precisely the moment that Solomon's edict was made known and thought long about the rewards promised to those who would assist in the discovery of Hiram's murderers. Personal interest eventually won out over fidelity to the promise he had made. Thereupon he left, taking the road to Jerusalem.

Soon he met up with nine masters, deputed to search for the guilty ones, and seeing that their presence made him change colour, these men asked him where he came from and where he was going. He made a gesture as if to tear out his tongue, placed one knee on the ground and kissing the right hand of his interlocutor, said:

“I believe you to be the envoys of Solomon, seeking the traitors who murdered the architect of the temple. I have something to say, although I promised to keep silence. I cannot do otherwise than to follow the orders of king Solomon which he has made known to us in an edict. One of the traitors you seek is a day's walk from here, hiding in a cave among the rocks near the quarries of Tyre and next to a large bush. A dog is stationed at the entrance of the cave in order to warn of anyone's approach.”

Hearing this, the masters commanded him to lead them to this cave. He obeyed and took them to the quarries of Tyre, pointing out the place where the traitor lay in hiding. They had been gone from Jerusalem fourteen days when they discovered the traitor. Night was falling, the sky was overcast and a rainbow had formed above the bush, making it seem to bum. As they stared, they became aware of the entrance of the cave. They drew closer, saw the dog asleep, and took off their shoes so as not to be heard by him. A few of them went into the cave where they found the traitor asleep. They bound him and led him back to Jerusalem along with the man who had taken them to him.

They arrived on the eighteenth day following their departure just at the time when work on the temple was ceasing. Solomon and all the masters were in the sanctuary, mourning Hiram as was their custom. The nine went in, presenting the traitor to Solomon, who questioned him and made him admit his guilt. Solomon passed sentence that his body be laid open, his heart torn out, his head cut off and placed on the end of a metal bar, like the

first, in full view of the workers. And his body was thrown on a rubbish heap to serve as fodder for scavengers. Solomon then rewarded the quarry worker and sent him, satisfied, back to his country. And attention turned to the search for the third and final traitor.

Masonic Legends

Extracts from a Ritual Manuscript of the Eighth Century

Fourth Legend

The last nine masters had begun to despair of ever finding the third traitor when on the twenty-second day of their search they found themselves lost in a forest of Lebanon and obliged to cross over several perilous places. They had to spend the night there; they naturally chose spots where they could rest assured of protection from the wild beasts that roamed the countryside. The next morning as day was beginning to break, one of them set out to explore a little this place in which they were. From a distance he spied a man with an axe who lay at the foot of a rock. It was the traitor they were looking for, who, having learned of the arrest of his accomplices, was fleeing into the desert to hide. Seeing one of the masters coming towards him and recognizing him from the site of the temple in Jerusalem, he got up and came forward, thinking he had nothing to fear from a single man. But then noticing the eight others further off, he turned and fled with all his strength, all of which only served to prove his guilt to the masters, indicating he was, in fact, the one they were seeking.

They gave pursuit. At last the traitor, fatigued by the difficult terrain he was obliged to cross, could do nothing more than wait for them resolutely, determined to defend himself and die rather than be taken. As he was armed with an axe, he threatened to spare none of them. Paying no attention, the masters, armed with their cudgels, drew closer to him, telling him to give himself up. But stubborn in his resolve, he jumped into the midst of them and defended himself furiously for a long time, without wounding any of them, for the masters only warded off his blows, wishing to bring him back alive to Solomon in Jerusalem. And to this end, half of them rested while the others fought.

Night was beginning to fall when the masters, fearful lest the darkness allow the traitor's escape, attacked him in full force, seizing him at the very moment he wished to jump from the edge of a high rock. Then they disarmed him, bound him and led him back to Jerusalem where they arrived on the twenty-seventh day following their departure, at that same time of day when Solomon and the other masters were in the sanctuary, praying to the Eternal and mourning Hiram. The returning masters went in and presented the traitor to Solomon, who questioned him and found he was unable to justify himself. He was condemned to have his stomach opened, his entrails torn out, his head cut off and the remainder of his body burned and the ashes scattered to the four corners of the earth. His head was exposed on the end of an iron bar. The names of the traitors were written out and hung from each pole, with tools like those they had used in the murder of Hiram. All three were of the tribe of Judah: the oldest was named Sebal, the second, Oterlut, and the third, Stokin. For three days the three heads remained in sight of all the workers on the temple. The third day, Solomon had a great fire lit and the three heads, the tools and the written names cast into it where all was burned, entirely consumed. The ashes were scattered to the four comers or the earth.

All these things being accomplished, Solomon directed the work on the temple with the aid of all the masters, and peace was restored.

Masonic Legends

Extracts from a Ritual Manuscript of the Eighth Century

History of the Knight of the Lion

It is said that when Solomon had pardoned the fellows who had considered revolt and had made certain they had returned to their duties, one of these same fellows who could not forget the punishment meted out to his three companions and finding it unjust, resolved himself to make an attempt on the life of Solomon. He entered his palace with a dagger and killed one of the king's officers who tried to stop him. He then fought with Solomon who forced him to take flight and to flee to a hiding place in the mountains. Solomon's guards spent twelve days in pursuit of him with no success, when one of them named Boece saw a lion dragging a man into its lair. He fought with the lion and killed it and recognized the man as he whom they were seeking, choked to death by the lion. Boece cut off his head and carried it to Solomon, who rewarded him by giving him a ribbon, symbol of virtue, from which hung a golden lion, symbol of valour; and in its mouth the lion held the cudgel with which it had been killed.

After the temple was finished, several workers placed themselves under a single leader and worked for the reformation of moral behaviour, building spiritual edifices and gaining a reputation for their charity. They were called the Kadosh Fathers, which means 'detached by the holiness of their lives'.

They did not last too long a time, however, for they forgot their duty and their obligations, and avarice made them hypocrites.

The Ptolemy Philadelphians, kings of Egypt, princes of astrologers, were among the most celebrated and constant friends of truth; they ordered that sixty brothers work on a translation of the holy Scriptures.

The Kadosh Fathers soon strayed from their duties by over-reaching the limits of decency. Nevertheless, the order was preserved, for several of them, devoted observers of the laws they had originated, withdrew to themselves. They elected a grand master for life; one part remained in Syria and Sicily, centering their lives on good works; the other part went to live in the lands which they held in Lybia and Thebaid. These same solitary places were later inhabited by recluses known as Fathers of the Desert [aka "the Desert Fathers"]; once again they were called Kadosh, meaning 'holy' or 'separate'.

Neither Jews nor Christians have ever said anything bad of them. Their grand master was named Manchemm.

After the destruction of the temple, several embraced Christianity, adopting it because they saw nothing in it which was not in conformity to their way. They formed groups, members of a single larger family. All they possessed became common property.

Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria, was the movement's greatest partisan and ornament. They passed their lives praising and blessing God and helping the poor whom they considered their own brothers. It is in this way that this respectable order maintained itself until near the end of the sixth century; and all brothers today seek to enhance its honored reputation.

Masonic Legends
Extracts from a Ritual
Manuscript of the Eighth Century
The Key to the Masonic Parables

Solomon is the personification of supreme knowledge and wisdom.

The temple is the realization and image of the hierarchic reign of truth and reason on the earth.

Hiram is man, come to power through knowledge and wisdom.

He governs with reason and order, giving to each according to his works.

Each degree of the order has a word which expresses its capacity for understanding.

There is only one word for Hiram; but this word can be pronounced in three different ways.

One way is for the apprentices;

And pronounced by them it signifies — nature,

And is explained through work.

Another way is for the fellows.

And with them it signifies - thought, explained through study.

Still another way is for the masters; and, in their mouths, the word signifies truth and is explained through wisdom.

There are three degrees in the hierarchy of beings;

There are three gates to the temple;

There are three rays in a beam of light;

There are three forces in nature.

These forces are symbolized by the measuring stick which unites, by the metal rod or lever which elevates, and the mallet which steadies and makes firm.

The rebellion of brute instinct against the autocracy of wisdom arms itself successively with these three forces.

There are three rebels:

The rebel against nature,

The rebel against knowledge,

The rebel against truth.

They were symbolized in the hell of the ancients by the three heads of Cerberus.

In the Bible they are symbolized by Corea, Dathan and Abiron.

In Masonic legend they are designated by symbols whose Qabalistic combinations vary according to the degree of initiation.

The first, ordinarily called Abiram or murderer of Hiram, strikes the grand master with the measuring stick.

It is in this way that so many of the just were sacrificed in the name of the law.

The second, named Miphiboseh, from the name of an absurd pretender to David's throne, strikes Hiram with the iron rod.

It is thus that popular reaction to tyranny becomes another tyranny and proves even deadlier to the reign of wisdom and virtue.

Finally, the third puts an end to Hiram with the mallet, as do the brutal restorers of so called order, who ensure their authority by crushing and oppressing intelligence.

The acacia branch on Hiram's grave is like the cross on the altars of Christ.

This is the symbol of knowledge which survives knowledge itself and which for ever protests against the murderers of thought.

When man's errors have disturbed the order of things, nature intervenes, like Solomon in the temple.

The death of Hiram must always be avenged, the murderers may go unpunished for a while, but their time will come.

He who struck with the measuring stick provoked the dagger's blow.

He who struck with the iron rod will die by the axe.

He who was momentarily victorious with the mallet will fall victim to the force he misused and will be choked by the lion.

The murderer of the measuring stick is unmasked by the very lamp which gives him light and by the spring where he quenches his own thirst, that is, he cannot escape retaliation.

The murderer of the iron bar will be taken by surprise when his watchfulness fails, like that of a sleeping dog.

The lion who devours the murderer of the mallet is one of the forms of the Sphinx of Oedipus; and he who conquers him deserves to succeed Hiram.

The putrefied body of Hiram shows that dead, exhausted forms are not resurrected. Hiram is the only true, the only Ultimate king of the world, and it is of him one should speak in saying:

The king is dead!

Long live the king!

Freemasonry has as its goal the reconstitution of Hiram's monarchy.

And the spiritual rebuilding of the temple.

Then the three-headed dragon will be bound in chains.

Then the shadows of the three murderers will be confined to darkness.

Then the living stone, the cubic stone, the golden cube, the cube with twelve doors, the new Jerusalem will come down to earth from heaven, according to the Qabalistic prophecy of St John.

The spring, flowing near the first murderer, shows that the rebellion of the first age was punished by the flood.

The burning bush and rainbow which lead to the discovery of the second murderer represent the holy Qabalah which rises in opposition to the hypocritical, idolatrous dogmas of the second age.

Finally, the vanquished lion represents the triumph of mind over matter and the submission of brute force to intelligence, which is to be a sign of consummation and of the coming of the *sanctum regnum*.

Since the beginning, by creative mind, of work on the building of the temple of truth, Hiram has been killed many times, and always resurrected.

Hiram is Adonis killed by the bear.

He is Osiris, murdered by Set,

He is Pythagoras outlawed,

He is Orpheus torn to pieces by the Bacchantes,

He is Moses, buried, alive perhaps, in the caves of Mount Nebo,

He is Jesus, murdered by three traitors, Caiphus, Judas Iscariot and Pilate,

He is Jacques de Molay, condemned by a Pope, denounced by a false brother, and burned by order of a king.

The work of the temple is that of Messianism, that is, the accomplishment of Israelite and Christian symbolism.

It is order maintained through the equilibrium of duty and right, unshakeable foundations of power.

It is the re-establishment of the hierarchic initiation and of the ministry of thought, ruling the monarchy of strength and intelligence.

Everything that is done in the world would lack meaning if this work were not some day accomplished.

The Story of Phaleg

When all men were gathered together on the plain of Sennar, under the reign of Nimrod, there was a great architect named Phaleg.

He was the son of Eber, father of the Hebrews, and to protect mankind from a new flood, he drew the plan of a tower.

The first section of the tower was to be round, having twelve doors and seventy-two pillars.

The second was to be square with nine stories, the third, a triangular spiral with forty-two turns.

The fourth was to be cylindrical with seventy-two stories.

Seven staircases joined each of the stories to the others.

The doors of each storey were to be opened and closed by means of mechanisms whose functioning was to be guarded as a hierarchic secret.

All inhabitants of the tower were to have equal civil rights, for those at the top could not live without the assistance of those at the bottom, and those below could not protect themselves from surprise attack without the vigilance of those above.

Such was the plan of Phaleg.

But the workers were disloyal to the great architect.

Secrets from above were revealed to those who worked below, the doors would no longer close, some tried to barricade them, others forced an entry in order to regain the safety of the heights.

And in addition, all wished to work as they liked, without consulting the plans of Phaleg.

Confusion sprang up in their language as it did in their work, and part of the tower collapsed while the rest remained unfinished, for the workers refused to aid one another.

And confusion reigned in their language for there was no more unity in their thought.

Phaleg then understood that he had hoped for too much from men in thinking they would understand one another.

But these men transferred the fault to him and denounced him to Nimrod.

Nimrod condemned him to death.

Phaleg disappeared and it was not known what happened to him.

Nimrod believed he had had him killed and he erected an idol to which he gave the name Phaleg and which gave out oracles in favour of Nimrod's tyranny. But in reality Phaleg had fled into the desert.

He made a trip round the known world as expiation for the too generous error he had committed.

And everywhere he stopped, he built a triangular tabernacle.

One of these monuments was rediscovered in Prussia in 553 in the digs of a salt mine.

Fifteen cubits below ground level a triangular building was found; inside it there was a white marble column on whose base the entire story was written in Hebrew.

Beside this column a tombstone was discovered, covered with dust, but under which lay an agate panel bearing the following epitaph:

Here lie the ashes of our C.:A.: of the Tower of Babel. . .

Adonai has forgiven him the sins of men, for he loved them.

In humiliation he died for them, and thus he has paid for the magnificence of the idols of Nimrod.

The Crossing of the River Nabuzanai

In the seventieth year of the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon, King Cyrus, lying in his bed in the palace, had a dream which troubled him.

He saw a dove hovering above his head and a terrible lion coming towards him.

And as he sought for a means to escape the lion's ferocity, he heard the dove say: 'Give the captives their freedom.'

The king arose, heavy with thought, and was told that a wise Israelite, born on the other side of the river Nabuzanai, had asked to speak with the king.

The king bid this wise man enter, and having recounted the dream he had had, he asked for its interpretation.

Zorobabel (for such was the Israelite's name) said to the king that the Jews must be sent back to their own land and the temple of God rebuilt.

“Oh, king!” said he. “To hold a people captive by force is to misuse force, itself.

Force is the lion you saw in your dream. He must be conquered by justice.

The dove is understanding and mercy and light.”

Cyrus said to him:

“Go, then, assemble all your brothers and rebuild the temple of God.”

Then he gave him a sword, a trowel and a key.

He also gathered together the spoils of the temple which had been pillaged by his predecessors and gave them to Zorobabel.

Then the Israelites came together and made ready to cross the river Nabuzanai.

The first to set foot in the water were devoured by monsters who came out of the deep.

Others arrived and saw that the river bore a hideous collection of bones and other debris.

Now, the monsters who had devoured these victims were a crocodile and a serpent.

The crocodile wore a gold crown on his head; the serpent, a diadem.

It was the evil spirits of the river, the water-demons who, under a thousand frightening forms, offered them all the men who attempted to cross to the other side.

When these things were reported to Zorobabel, he had large fires built on the river banks. Then he had a floating bridge constructed and cast in the middle of the waters.

Thus the bridge found its way on to the river without the demons being aware of its construction, for their attention was occupied elsewhere, being attracted by the fires on the banks.

The people of Israel crossed over.

On the bridge were traced three magic letters which served as talismans for the captives returning to their land.

These were the letters L.:D.:P.:

They stood for the cross, the angular stone and the Word of Truth.

The cross is an expression of creation and sacrifice.

The angular stone is the foundation of the temple, and the Word of Truth presides over the acts of all workers.

The angular stone is called Kether; the cross is Chokmah, and the Word of life is named Binah.

It was by means of these signs that the deliverance of Israel was to be accomplished.

These three letters can be combined in three ways:

These are the signs of the nine masters who avenged the death of Hiram.

These are the hieroglyphs of the three grades of Freemasonry.

In modern terms they signify: Liberty, duty, power.

And Qabalistically they are written thus:

P
L D

Or: power upheld by duty and liberty.

For the vulgar, these letters mean: liberty of passage.

For apprentices and fellows, they mean: liberty of thought.

Baphomet

Tem.: o.: h.:p.: Abb.:

Binario Verbum Vitae Mortem
et Vitam Aequilibrans

Several figures of Baphomet* exist.



[From Levi's "Dogma & Ritual of High Magic Vol. 2"]

Sometimes he is shown with a beard, the horns of a male goat, the face of a man, the breast of a woman, the mane and claws of a lion, the wings of an eagle and the hooves of a bull.

His is the resurrected sphinx of Thebes, Oedipus's monster, by turns captive and conqueror.

He is knowledge rising in opposition to idolatry, protesting through the very monstrosity of the idol.

*For the figure of Baphomet, see *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic, II*.

Between his horns he carries the torch of life, and the living soul of this torch is God.

The Israelites were forbidden to give divine concepts the figure of man or of any animal; thus, on the ark of the covenant and in the sanctuary, they dared sculpt only cherubs, that is, sphinxes with the bodies of bulls and the heads of men, eagles or lions.

These mixed figures reproduced neither the complete form of man, nor that of any animal.

These hybrid creations of impossible animals gave to understand that the image was not an idol or reproduction of a living thing, but rather a character or representation of something having its existence in thought.

Baphomet is not worshipped; it is God who is worshipped, the faceless God behind this formless form, this image which resembles no created being.

Baphomet is not a God: he is the sign of initiation. He is also the hieroglyphic figure of the great divine Tetragrammaton.

He is a hold-over from the Cherbus of the ark and the Holy of holies.

He is the guardian of the key to the temple.

Baphomet is analogous to the dark God of Rabbi Simeon.

He is the dark side of the divine face. This is why, during initiation ceremonies, the member elect must kiss the hind-face of Baphomet or, to give him a more vulgar name, the Devil. Now, in the symbolism of the two faces, the hind-face of God is the Devil and the hind-face of the Devil is the hieroglyphic face of God.

Why the name of Freemasons? Free from what? From the fear of God? Yes, doubtless, for when one fears God, one is looking at him from behind. The dreadful God is the black God, the Devil. The Freemasons wish to build a spiritual temple to the one God, the God of light, the God of understanding and philanthropy. They oppose the God of the Devil and the Devil of God. But they respect the pious beliefs of Socrates, of Vincent de Paul and of Fenelon. What they would willingly, with Voltaire, call the 'vile infamy' is this face, or better, this foolishness which during the Middle Ages took the place of God.

The brighter the light, the darker its bordering shadow. Christianity is at the same time the salvation and the scourge of the world. It is the most sublime of wisdoms and the most frightening of follies. If Jesus was not God, he was the most dangerous of evil-doers. The Jesus of Veuillot is execrable. Renan's is inexcusable. The Gospels' is unexplainable, but the Jesus of Vincent de Paul and of Fenelon is lovable and can be worshipped. If Christianity is for you the condemnation of reason, the despotism of ignorance and of the majority of mankind, you are the enemy of humanity. But if by Christianity you mean the life of God in humanity, the heroism of philanthropy, the reign of charity which gives

divinity to the sacrifices of men and through communion makes them live the same life, inspired with the same love, then you are a saviour of the world.

The religion of Moses is a truth; the so-called Mosaic religion of the Pharisees was a lie.

The religion of Jesus is the same truth, having progressed a step forward, revealing itself to man in a new manifestation. The religion of the inquisitors and oppressors of human consciousness is a lie.

The Catholicism of the Church Fathers and the saints is a truth. The Catholicism of Veuillot is a lie.

It is this lie that Freemasonry has taken upon itself to combat in favour of truth.

Freemasonry wants nothing to do with the doctrines of men like Torquemada and Escobar, but it does admit among its symbols those of Hermes, Moses and Jesus Christ. The pelican at the foot of the cross is embroidered on the ribbon of its initiates of the highest grade. It excludes only fanaticism, ignorance, foolish credulity, and hate; but it believes in one dogma, single in spirit though multiple in form, that of humanity. Its religion is not Judaism, enemy of all other peoples, nor exclusive Catholicism, nor strict Protestantism, but true catholicity worthy of this name, that is, universal philanthropy! This is the Messianism of the Hebrews!

Everything is true in the books of Hermes. But attempts to keep them from the profane have rendered them useless, so to speak, to the world.

Everything is true in the dogma of Moses; what is false is the exclusivity and despotism of some rabbis. Everything is true in the Christian dogma; but Catholic priests have committed the same faults as the rabbis of Judaism.

These dogmas complete and explain one another and their synthesis will be the religion of the future.

The error of the disciples of Hermes was this: error must be left to the profane and truth should be rendered impenetrable to everyone, except priest and kings.

Idolatry, despotism and attempts to destroy the priesthood were the bitter fruits of this doctrine.

The error of the Jews was to claim to be a unique and privileged nation, all other peoples being accursed and they alone being God's elect.

And the Jews, victims of a cruel twist of fate, have been cursed and persecuted by all other nations.

The Catholics have been deceived by three fundamental errors:

1. They believed that faith must at all costs be imposed on reason and even on science, whose progress they have combated.
2. They attributed to the Pope an infallibility which was not only conservative and disciplinary, but absolute, like that of God.
3. They thought that man should revile himself, deny his own importance and make himself unhappy as a preparation for the life to come; whereas quite the contrary is true. Man should cultivate all his faculties, develop them, fill out his soul, learn, know and love his life, in a word: be happy. For this present life is in fact a preparation for the future life and man's eternal happiness begins only when he has acquired the profound peace which results from perfect balance.

These errors have caused nature, science and reason to protest against them, thereby making it momentarily appear that all faith has been lost and all religion fled from the face of the earth.

But the world could no more survive without religion than man could live without a heart. When all religions are dead, the unique and universal religion will live on. This will occur when there is one accord among all men in their belief in universal solidarity, unity of aspiration, diversity of expression, faith in a single God, freedom for symbolism and tolerance of images, orthodoxy in charity, with universality always at the heart of all and, not to say indifference, deference to the spirit, analogous in all peoples, working variously among them, the perfectability of dogma, the possible amelioration of cults, but still behind all this the great and unchanging faith of Israel in one single God at once immaterial, immutable and insubstantial, all of whose conventional representations are idols, a faith in reason, the universal law and in the existence of one nation alone, the instrument of God for the creation and conservation of both insects and galaxies!

And it is also under Israel's auspices and by means of its commercial influence that we hope to see established on earth:

The association of all financial interests;

The federation of peoples;

The alliance of all religious cults;

And universal solidarity.

Profession of Faith*¹

We believe in the eternal and infinite sovereignty of unchanging wisdom and creative intelligence.

We believe in the supreme beauty of equitable goodness and merciful, loving justice.

We believe in the productivity of progress within order and in an order which is eternally progressing.

We believe in the principle of universal life, in the principle of Being and beings for ever distinct from Being and beings, but necessarily present within Being and within beings.

We believe that the entire principle, within everything and everywhere, cannot be contained, enclosed, limited, determined or defined in any way, and that as a consequence, any form, any special name, any personal exclusive revelation of this principle is idolatry and error.

We believe that principle resides in all of us and speaks to each one of us through the voice of consciousness;

That consciousness cannot be enlightened without the participation of faith, of reason, of science and of spirituality.

We believe in absolute reason which must guide and correct particular reasonings, which must be the basis for faith and the standard for all dogmas, lest there be fanaticism, folly and error.

We believe in absolute love which is called charity and inspires sacrifice.

We believe that, in order to grow, one must give, that one is happy as a result of others' happiness, and that well-regulated egoism must begin with one's neighbour.

We believe in liberty, in absolute independence, even in the royalty of self, the relative divinity of the human will when it is governed by sovereign reason.

We believe that God himself - the great undefinable principle — can be neither the despotic ruler nor the executioner-judge of his creatures; that he can neither reward nor punish them, but that the law carries within itself its own consequence, so that good is of itself the reward for good and evil, the punishment but also the remedy, for evil.

We believe that the spirit of charity alone is inflexible when it inspires devotion and peace, but that all men can fall prey to error, above all when acting on things they do not know and so do not comprehend.

¹ * These pages are taken from the Letters of Eliphas Levi which Monsieur le Baron de Spedadiéri has kindly transmitted to us. They are unpublished and we believe our readers will welcome these extracts; we hope later to publish the letters themselves *in extenso*. *Editor's Note*

We believe in the catholicity, that is, universality, of dogma.

We believe that in religion all intelligent men accept the same truths and only disagree regarding errors.

We believe that the most reasonable men are also the most patient, and that the persecutors of those whose beliefs differ prove by the very violence of their persecution that they are in error.

We believe that all gods are phantoms and that all idols are nothing; that established faiths should make place for others, and that the wise man can pray in a mosque or church indifferently. However we prefer the mosque to the pagoda and the church to the mosque, provided that the church remain unsullied by the presence of a bad priest.

In a word, we believe in a single God and in a single religion. In God blessing all gods and in religion absorbing or annihilating all religions.

We believe in universal, absolute and infinite being, demonstrated by the impossibility of nothingness, and we do not accept that nothing can exist, nor that it can become something.

We recognize in Being two essential modes of existence, idea and form, intelligence and action.

We believe in truth, which is Being conceived by Idea;

In reality, which is Idea demonstrated or capable of demonstration by science;

In Justice, which is Being put into action in accordance with its true nature and reasonable proportions.

We believe in the perpetual, progressive revelation of God in the developments of our intelligence and of our love.

We believe in the spirit of truth as inseparable from the spirit of charity, and we refer to this, along with the Catholic Church, as:

“The spirit of science opposed to the obscurantism of bad priests;

The spirit of intelligence opposed to the foolishness of superstition;

The spirit of force to withstand the prejudices and calumny of false believers;

The spirit of piety, filial, social or humanitarian, opposed to the impious egoism of those who would let all else perish in order to save their souls;

The spirit of wise counsel, for true charity begins with the spirit and brings its first assistance to the soul;”

And finally, “The spirit of the fear of evil, which tramples down the fear of men and teaches us not to render unto evil a sacrilegious cult based on a capricious and wicked God.”

We believe that this Spirit is that of the Gospels and of Jesus Christ.

This is why we worship the living, acting God in Jesus Christ, without making him a distinct God, separable from God, himself. For Jesus was a true man and completely human, as we are, but sanctified by the plenitude of the divine Spirit speaking through his mouth, living and acting through him.

We believe in the moral and divine sense of the legendary Gospels whose letter is imperfect, but whose spirit is eternal.

We believe the laws of Moses, of the Apostles and of their successors, the Popes, to have been transitory, but that the law of charity is eternal.

This is why we reject and condemn no one.

We believe that well-ordered egoism begins with others and the truly rich are those who give.

We believe in the infallibility of the spirit of charity, and not in the dogmatic temerity of a few men.

We believe in the eternal life. Thus we do not fear death for ourselves or for those we love.

We ascribe integrally to the thirteen articles of the Symbol of Maimonides, and as a consequence we regard the Israelites as our brothers.

We believe that God alone is God, and that Mohammed was one of *precursory words* (which is what the word *prophet* signifies), and we are sympathetic to the Muslims.

But we both pity and blame the Jews for calling us *goy* and the Muslims for calling us *giaours*. In this we cannot be in sympathy with them, for in this they are outside the bounds of charity.

We ascribe to the Symbol of the Apostles, of St Athanasius and of Nicaea, recognizing, however, that they must be explained in a hierarchical manner and that they express the highest mysteries of occult philosophy.

But we reprove reprobation and we excommunicate excommunication as offences against charity and universal solidarity.

We admit the arbitral and disciplinary infallibility of the head of the Church, but we consider it foolish to ascribe to him an arbitrary infallibility in the creation of dogma.

The Pope is the legal interpreter and preserver of ancient beliefs; but should he wish to impose new ones, he strays from his path of duty and has no more authority than any other speaker of foolishness.

We study tradition, but we do not judge it a critical authority, for it is the common receptacle of antiquity's errors as well as its truths.

Such is the profession of faith which should unite and slowly absorb all others. Such is the religion of great souls to come. How many men are presently capable of understanding it? I cannot say; but I think that if a prophet were to speak of it aloud before all assembled peoples, he would be stoned by the priests, disdained by the people and briefly regretted by a few wise men.

In the meantime, the Pope raises troops and invents dogma. Veuillot distills his gall and analyses the smells of Paris. In its turn, Paris holds its nose against the smell of Veuillot. Veuillot washes his hands of it all and says: this is only the perfume of Rome!

And temporal sovereignty, the Vatican's prostitute, does not blush at having Veuillot for her souteneur!

In Paris, censorship forbids the representation of Ponsard's *Galilée*. Truly, has the world come to an end?

Oh, reign of fear for ever reborn, continual revolt of beast against angel, inevitable alliance of tyrannies against intelligence however free, licensed stupidity, condemned spirit, how long will you continue to hold this poor world upside down?

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi*²

First Lesson
GENERAL PROLEGOMENA

Friend and Brother,

I can give you this title because you are searching for the truth in the sincerity of your heart, ready to make the necessary sacrifices in order to find it.

Truth, being the essence of all that is, is not difficult to find: it is within us and we are within it. It is like light and the blind do not see it.

Being is. This is incontestable and absolute. The exact idea of Being is truth; its knowledge is science; its ideal expression is reason; its activity is creation and justice.

You wish to believe, you say. For this, it is enough to know and to love truth. For the true faith is the unshakeable adhesion of the mind to the necessary deductions of science in conjectural infinity.

Only occult sciences give certitude, for they have their bases in realities and not in dreams.

In every religious symbol, they bring out the true and the false. What is true is the same everywhere, but falsehoods spring up according to places, times and people.

These sciences are three: the Qabalah, Magic and Hermeticism.

The Qabalah, or traditional science of the Hebrews, might be called the mathematics of human thought. It is the algebra of faith. It solves all problems of the soul as equations, by isolating the unknowns. It gives to ideas the clarity and rigorous exactitude of numbers; its results, for the mind, are infallibility (always relative, however, to the sphere of human knowledge) and for the heart, profound peace.

Magic, or the science of the magi, has its ancient representatives in the disciples, and perhaps the teachers, of Zoroaster. It is the knowledge of secret and particular laws of nature which produce hidden forces, magnets and loadstones which may exist even outside the realm of metal. In a word, and to use a modern expression, it is the science of universal magnetism.

² * These letters were kindly brought to our attention by a student of Eliphas Lévi, Monsieur Montaut. They appeared in the magazine, *Initiation* in 1891.

Hermeticism is the science of nature hidden in the hieroglyphics and symbols of the ancient world. It is the search for the principle of life, along with the dream (for those who have not yet achieved it) of accomplishing the great work, that is the reproduction by man or the divine, natural fire which creates and recreates beings.

Here, my friend, are the things you desire to study. The circle they enclose is immense, but the principles are so simple that they are represented and contained in the signs of the numbers and in the letters of the alphabet.

“It is a about of Hercules that is also a child's game,’ say the masters of holy science.”

Characteristics necessary to success in this study are a great rectitude of judgment and a great independence of mind. One must rid oneself of all prejudice and every preconceived notion, and it is for this reason that Christ said:

“Unless you become as a little child, you cannot enter the Malkouht,” that is, “the kingdom of knowledge.”

We will begin with the Qabalah, whose divisions are these: Berechith, Mercavah, Gematria and Lemurah.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Second Lesson
The Qabalah - Goal and Method

In studying the Qabalah, one should strive to arrive at profound peace by means of tranquillity of mind and peace of heart.

Tranquillity of mind is an effect of certainty; peace of heart comes from patience and faith. Without faith, science leads to doubt; without science, faith leads to superstition. Uniting them brings certainty, but in so doing they must never be confused with each other. The object of faith is hypothesis, and this becomes certitude when the hypothesis is necessitated by evidence or by the demonstrations of science.

Science establishes facts. From the repetition of facts, it presupposes laws. The generality of facts in the presence of such and such a force demonstrates the existence of laws. Intelligent laws are necessarily imposed and governed by intelligence. Unity within the laws presupposes the unity of legislative intelligence. This intelligence, which we are forced to imagine, only seeing it at work in external manifestations, and which we can in no way define, is what we call God!

You receive my letter; there is an obvious fact. You recognize my handwriting and my thoughts and you conclude from this that it is indeed I who have written to you. This is a reasonable hypothesis, but the necessary hypothesis is that someone wrote the letter. It could be counterfeit, though you have no reason to suppose it is. Were you to suppose so, groundlessly, you would be making a very doubtful hypothesis. Were you to claim that the letter, fully written, fell from the sky, you would be making an absurd hypothesis.

Here is, then, according to Qabalistic method, how certitude is formed:

Evidence	
Scientific demonstration	certitude
Necessary hypothesis	
Reasonable hypothesis	probability
Doubtful hypothesis	doubt
Absurd hypothesis	error

By keeping to this method, the mind acquires a veritable infallibility, for it affirms what it knows, believes what it must necessarily suppose, admits reasonable suppositions, examines doubtful ones, and rejects those which are absurd.

All the Qabalah is contained in what the masters call the thirty-two roads and the fifty gates.

The thirty-two roads are thirty-two absolute and real ideas attached to the signs of the ten arithmetical numbers and to the twenty-two letters of the Hebraic alphabet.

Here are these ideas:

NUMBERS

1 Supreme power	6 Beauty
2 Absolute wisdom	7 Victory
3 Infinite intelligence	8 Eternity
4 Goodness	9 Productivity
5 Justice or harshness	10 Reality

LETTERS

Aleph	Father	Lamed	Sacrifice
Beth	Mother	Mem	Death
Gimel	Nature	Nun	Reversibility
Daleth	Authority	Samekh	Universal being
He	Religion	Pe	Immortality
Vav	Liberty	Ayin	Balance
Zayin	Ownership	Sadhe	Shadow and reflection
Cheth	Distribution	Koph	Light
Teth	Prudence	Resh	Recognition
Yod	Order	[Shin	?]
Kaph	Force	Tav	Synthesis

Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Third Lesson Use of the Method

In the preceding lesson I spoke only of the thirty-two roads; later I will talk of the fifty gates.

The ideas expressed by numbers and letters are incontestable realities. These ideas follow from one another and agree like the numbers, themselves- One proceeds logically from one to the next. Man is the son of woman, but woman comes out of man as number comes out of unity. Woman clarifies nature, nature reveals authority, which creates religion, basis for liberty, which makes man master of himself and of the universe, etc - . . . (Get hold of a Tarot - I believe in fact you already have one - and, in two series, lay out the ten allegorical cards numbered from one to twenty-one. You will see all the figures which correspond to the letters. As for the numbers from one to ten, you will find them repeated four times with the symbols of the baton or sceptre of the father, the cup or *délices* of the mother, the sword of love and the coins of productivity. The Tarot is included in the hieroglyphic book of the thirty-two roads, and its summary explanation can be found in the book attributed to the patriarch, Abraham, which is called *Sepher-Jezirah*.

The savant Court de Gebelin was the first to discover the importance of the Tarot, which is the great key to the hieratic hieroglyphs. Its symbols and numbers are to be found in the prophecies of Ezekiel and of St John. The Bible is an inspired book, but the Tarot is the book of inspiration. It has also been called the wheel, *rota*, whence *tarot* and *torah*. The ancient Rosicrucians knew it well and the Marquis de Suchet speaks of it in his book on visionaries.

It is from this book that our card games have come. Spanish cards still bear the principal signs of the primitive Tarot and they are used to play the game of the *hombre* or man, vague reminiscence of the early use of a mysterious book, containing oracular decrees about all human divinities.

The earliest Tarots were medals which have since become talismans. The *clavicules* or little keys of Solomon were made up of thirty-six talismans bearing seventy-two engravings analogous to the hieroglyphic figures of the Tarot. These figures, altered by copyists, can still be found on ancient *clavicules* which exist in some libraries, A manuscript of this type exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale and another in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. The only authentic manuscripts of the *clavicules* are those which give the series of thirty-six talismans with the seventy-two mysterious names; the others, however ancient they may be, belong to fantasies of black magic and contain nothing more than clever tricks.

For an explanation of the Tarot, see my *Dogma and Ritual of True Magic*.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

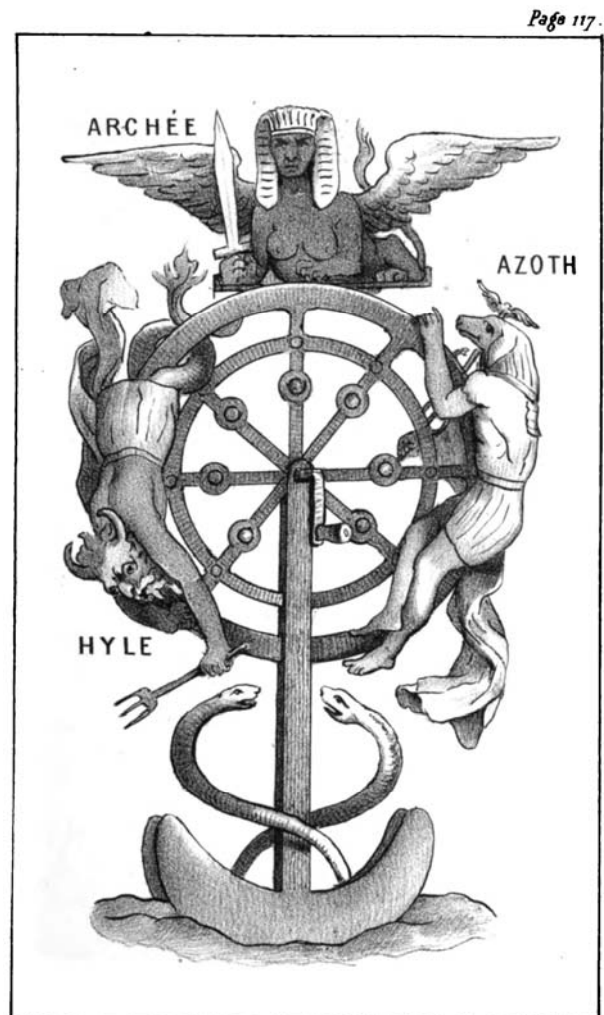
[Given as examples of Levi's Tarot:]



LE CHARIOT D'HERMÈS

Septième clef du Tarot (page 332).

[“Seventh key of the Tarot”]



La dixième clé du Tarot .

[“The Tenth key of the Tarot”]

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Fourth Lesson
The Qabalah I

Brother and Friend,

Bereschith means 'genesis'; Mercavah means 'chariot'; alluding to the wheels and mysterious animals of Ezekiel.

The Bereschith and the Mercavah summarize the science of God and of the world.

I say 'science of God' and yet God is infinitely unknowable. His nature entirely escapes our investigations. He is the absolute principle of being and of beings and must not be confused with the effects he produces; and it can be said, affirming his existence all the while, that he is neither being nor a being. Such a definition confounds reason, without however causing us to go astray, and keeps us for ever from all idolatry.

God is the only absolute *postulatum* of all science, the entirely necessary hypothesis which serves as a basis for any certainty; and here is how our ancient masters established, above science itself, this assured hypothesis of faith: Being is. In Being is life. Life is made manifest by movement. Movement is perpetuated by the balancing of forces. Harmony results from the analogy of opposites. There are, in nature, an immutable law and an undefinable progress. A perpetual changing of forms and the indestructibility of substance, this is what one finds upon observing the physical world.

Metaphysics presents us with analogous laws and facts either in an intellectual or a moral order, on one side, unchanging truth, on the other, fantasy and imagination. On one side there is goodness which is truth, on the other, evil, which is false, and from these apparent conflicts arise both judgment and virtue. Virtue is composed of goodness and justice. Its goodness makes it indulgent. Its justice makes it harsh. Good because it is just and just because it is good: it is always beautiful.

This great harmony of the physical and moral worlds, incapable of having a cause superior to itself, reveals and demonstrates to us the existence of an unchanging wisdom and of an infinitely active creative intelligence. Upon this wisdom and this intelligence, each inseparable from the other, reposes the supreme power which the Hebrews have named the crown, The crown and not the king, for the idea of a king would imply an idol. For Qabalists, the supreme power is the crown of the universe and the entirety of creation is the kingdom, or if you prefer, the domain of this crown.

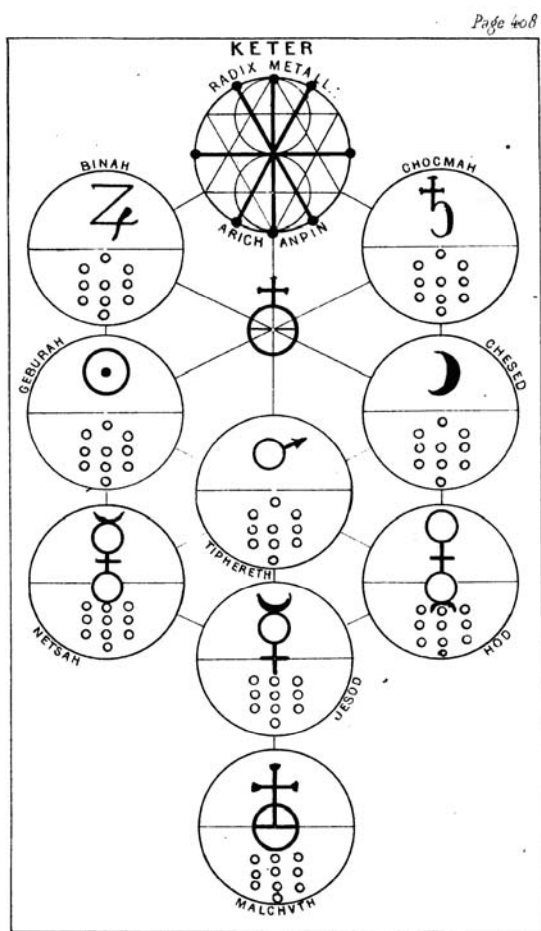
No one can give what he has not, thus we can assume that what we see manifested in effects is also present in the cause.

God, Then, is the supreme power or crown (Kether) which sits upon immutable wisdom (Chokmah) and creative intelligence (Binah); in him are goodness (Hesed) and justice (Geburah) which are the ideal of beauty (Tiphereth). In him are for ever victorious movement (Netzach) and the great eternal rest (Hod). His desire is a continual giving of life (Yesod) and his kingdom (Malkuth) is the immensity which populates the universe. Enough: we are acquainted with God!

Yours in the holy science,

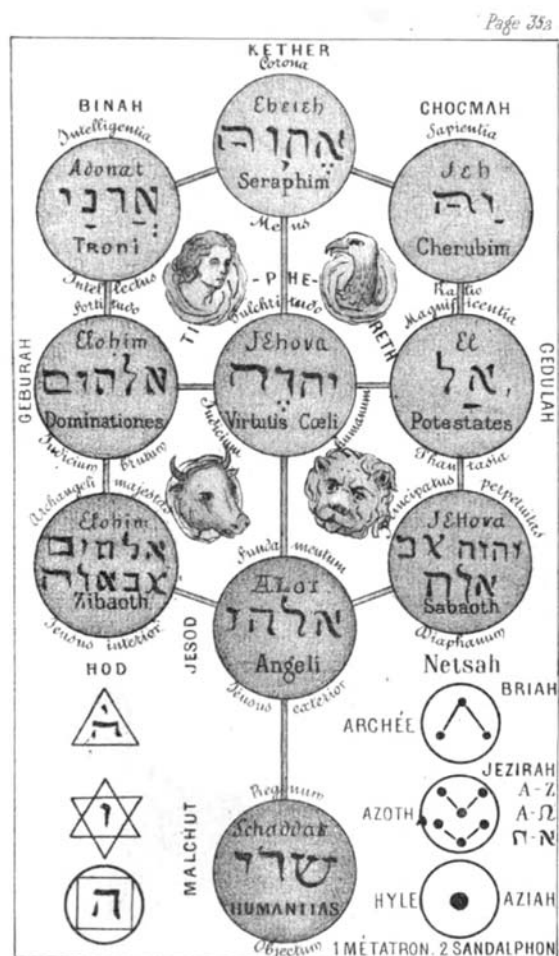
Eliphas Lévi

[Given as examples of Levi's Qabalah Tree:]



Les Séphirot métalliques.

[“The Metallic Sephiroth”]



Les Séphirot avec les noms divins

Clé des notions théologiques suivant les Hébreux.

[“The Sephiroth with the divine names”]

[“Key of the theological notions following the Hebrews”]

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Fifth Lesson
The Qabalah II

Brother and Friend,

This rational conscience of divinity, spread over the ten ciphers which compose all numbers, give you the whole method of Qabalistic philosophy. This method is composed of thirty-two means or instruments of knowledge which are called the thirty-two roads, and of fifty subjects to which the science may be applied and that are called the fifty gates.

Universal synthetic science is thus regarded as a temple to which there lead thirty-two paths and which may be entered through thirty-two doors.

This numerical system, which could also be called decimal since it is based on the number ten, establishes by means of analogies an exact classification of all human knowledge. Nothing is more ingenious, but likewise nothing is more logical and exact.

This number ten applied to absolute notions of being in the divine order, in the metaphysical order and in the natural order is thus repeated three times which gives thirty for purposes of analysis; add syllepsis and synthesis, that is, unity which begins as a concept in the mind and unity which brings together as one all that is, and you have the thirty-two roads.

The fifty gates are a classification of all being into five series of ten each and which embraces all one can know and extends into the entire body of knowledge.

But it is not enough to have found an exact mathematical method; in order to be perfect, this method must be progressively revelatory, that is, it must give us the means of making all possible deductions unerringly, of obtaining new knowledge and of developing the mind without leaving anything to the capriciousness of the imagination.

This is what one obtains through the Gematria and the Lemurah, which are the mathematics of idea. The Qabalah has its ideal geometry, its philosophical algebra and its analogic trigonometry. It is thus that, so to speak, it obliges nature to render up her secrets.

Once such high knowledge is acquired, one goes on to the final revelations of the transcendental Qabalah, studying in the schememamphorash the source and reason of all dogmas.

There, brother and friend, is what there is for you to earn. Does it frighten you? My letters are short, but concise, and say much. I have spaced my first five lessons rather far apart so as to give you time for reflection. I can write to you more often if you so desire.

With the ardent wish of being useful to you, I remain, your devoted servant in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Sixth Lesson The Qabalah III

Brother and Friend,

The Bible gives man two names. The first is Adam, which means 'drawn from the earth' or 'man of earth'; the second is Enos or Enoch, which means 'divine man' or 'lifted to God'. According to Genesis it is Enos who first spoke publicly on the principle of beings and this same Enos was, it is said, taken alive up into heaven after having engraved the primitive elements of religion and universal science on two stones which are called the columns or pillars of Enoch.

This Enoch is not a person, but a personification of humanity uplifted by religion and science to a sense of immortality. At the time designated by the name of Enos or Enoch, the cult of God appears on earth and ritual worship begins. This time also marks the beginning of civilization with writing and the hieratic movements.

The civilizing genius which the Hebrews personify in Enoch was named Trismegistus by the Egyptians, and by the Greeks, Kadmos or Cadmus, he who saw the living stones of Thebes rise of themselves and take their place to the accompaniment of Amphion's lyre.

The primitive sacred book, the book that Postel calls the genesis of Enoch, is the first source of the Qabalah, tradition at once divine, human and religious. Here in all its simplicity appears the revelation of supreme intelligence to reason and to the love of man, the eternal law governing infinite expansion, the numbers in infinite expansion, the numbers in immensity and immensity in numbers, poetry in mathematics and mathematics in poetry.

Who would believe that the book which inspired all these theories and religious symbols has been preserved, coming down to us in the form of a deck of strange cards? Nothing is truer, however, and Court de Gebelin, since followed by all those who have seriously studied the symbolism of these cards, was the first to discover it, in the last century.

The alphabet and the ten numerical signs are of course the basic elements of alt sciences. Add to them the signs of the four cardinal points of heaven or of the four seasons and you have the book of Enoch in its entirety. But each sign represents an absolute or, if you will, essential idea.

The form of each cipher and of each letter has its mathematical reason and hieroglyphic significance, ideas, inseparable from numbers, follow their movement, by addition, multiplication, etc., and acquire their exactitude.

The book of Enoch is the arithmetic of thought.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Seventh Lesson
The Qabalah IV

Brother and Friend,

In the twenty-two keys of the Tarot, Court de Gebelin saw the representation of Egyptian mysteries and attributed their invention to Hermes Trismegistus, who was also called Thoth. It is certain that the hieroglyphs of the Tarot can be found on the ancient monuments of Egypt; it is certain that the signs of this book, traced in synoptic ensembles on steles or metal tables similar to the Isiac table of Bembo, were separately reproduced on engraved stones or medals which later became amulets and talismans. Thus the pages of the infinite book were separated into diverse combinations in order to assemble, transpose and re-transpose them for the obtaining of inexhaustible oracles of truth.

I have in my possession one of these ancient talismans which a travelling friend brought me from Egypt. It shows the two of coins, the figurative expression of the great law of polarity and equilibrium, producing harmony through the analogy of opposites. Here is how this symbol is shown in the Tarot which we possess and which is sold today. S The medallion I have is rather worn, about as big as a silver five-franc piece, but thicker. The two polaric points are shown exactly as in our Italian Tarot, a lotus flower with a halo.

The astral current which separates and at the same time attracts the two polaric seats is represented on our Egyptian talisman by the Goat of Mendes placed between two vipers analogous to the serpents of the caduceus. On the reverse side, one sees an adept or Egyptian priest who, having substituted himself for Mendes between the two points of universal equilibrium, is leading the goat, now simply a docile animal governed by man the imitator of God, down a long avenue planted with trees.

The ten numerical signs, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet and the four astronomical signs of the seasons are the summary of the entire Qabalah.

Twenty-two letters and ten numbers give the thirty-two ways of the Sepher Jetzirah; four gives the mercavah and the shememamphorash.

It is as simple as a child's game and as complicated as the most arduous problem of pure mathematics.

It is as profound and naive as truth and nature.

These four elementary, astronomical signs are the four forms of the sphinx and the four animals of Ezekiel and St John.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Eighth Lesson
The Qabalah V

Brother and Friend,

The science of the Qabalah makes doubt, as regards religion, impossible, for it alone reconciles reason with faith by showing that universal dogma, at bottom always and everywhere the same, though formulated differently in certain times and places, is the purest expression of the aspirations of the human mind, enlightened by a necessary faith. It points out the usefulness of religious practices which fortify will by fixing the attention, throwing light on all the cults. It proves that the most effective cult is that which brings together, so to speak, divinity and man, making him see it, touch it and incorporate it into himself.

It is enough to say that I am speaking here of the Catholic religion.

This religion, to the vulgar mind, appears to be the most absurd of all, for it is the most *revealed*; I use the word in its veritable sense, *revelare*, to re-veil, to veil again. You know that, according to the Gospels, at the death of Christ the veil of the temple was rent asunder, and all down the ages the Church has worked dogmatically to weave a new one.

It is true that the heads of the sanctuary, themselves, having wished to become its princes, long ago lost keys of high initiation. This does not, however, prevent the letter of dogma from being sacred, nor the sacraments from having their effect. I have set forth in my books that the Christian-Catholic cult is high magic organized and regularized by symbolism and hierarchy. It is a safety device offered to human weakness so as to fortify the desire for good.

Nothing has been forgotten, neither the dark mysterious temple, nor the incense, both calming and exalting, nor the long monotonous chants which rock the brain into a kind of semi-somnambulism. The dogma, whose obscure formulae appear to be the despair of all reason, serves as a barrier to the quibblings of inexperienced and indiscreet criticism. These formulae seem incomprehensible so as to better represent infinity. The mass itself, celebrated in a language which most of the people do not understand, gives width to the thought of he who officiates and allows him to satisfy, through prayer, all the needs of his mind and heart. This is why the Catholic religion resembles this sphinx of the fable who, century after century, becomes its own successor, always arising from its ashes; this great mystery of faith is simply a mystery of nature.

It would seem an enormous paradox were one to say that the Catholic religion is the only one which can justifiably be called natural, and yet, this is true, for it alone satisfies with any fulness at all this natural need of man, which is the religious sense.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Ninth Lesson
The Qabalah VI

Brother and Friend,

If the Catholic-Christian dogma is entirely Qabalistic, the same must be said for the great religions of the ancient world. The legend of Krishna as it is recounted in the Bhagavadam, is a veritable Gospel, similar to ours, but more naïve, more brilliant. The incarnations of Vishnu number ten like the Sephiroth of the Qabalah and in some ways form a more complete revelation than ours- Osiris killed by Typhon, then resurrected by Isis, is Christ denied by the Jews, then honored in the person of his mother. The *Thebaid* is a great religious epic which must be placed beside the great symbol of Prometheus. Antigone is as pure a type of divine woman as Mary. Everywhere good triumphs through voluntary sacrifice, after having been temporarily subjected to the wild assaults of evil. Even the rites are symbolic and are transmitted from one religion to another. Diadems, mitres, surplices belong to all the great religions. And so the conclusion is that all of them are false; whereas it is only this conclusion which is false. The truth is that religion, like humanity, is one, always progressing, always changing, always the same.

If, with the Egyptians, Jesus Christ is named Osiris, for the Scandinavians, Osiris is named Balder. He is killed by the wolf, Jeuris, but Odin calls him back to life, and the Valkyries themselves serve him hydromel in Valhalla, The skalds, the druids, the bards sing of the death and resurrection of Tarenis or of Tetenus, distribute to their faithful a sprig of holy mistletoe as we dispense the sacred palm during feasts of the summer solstice, and maintain a cult to virginity inspired by the priestesses of the isle of Seyne.

We can then, in all fair conscience, set about performing the duties imposed on us by our native religion. Religious practices are collective acts, repeated with direct, persevering intention. Such acts are always useful in that they strengthen the will, they are in a sense its gymnastics, and they bring us eventually to the spiritual goal which we wish to attain. Magic practices have the same end and give results analogous to religious practices, but less perfect.

How many men do not have the energy to do what they would like and what they ought to do? And there are such great numbers of women who devote themselves unflaggingly to labours as repugnant as those of the hospital or of teaching! Where do they find such strength? In small repeated religious practices. Each day they say their rosary, kneeling in prayer.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi

Elements of the Qabalah
in Ten Lessons

Letters of Eliphas Levi

Eighth Lesson
The Qabalah VII

Brother and Friend,

Religion is not a servitude imposed on man, but an aid which has been offered him. From time immemorial, sacerdotal castes have sought to exploit, sell and transform this aid into an unbearable yoke and burden; and the evangelical work of Jesus had as its aim the separation of the priest from religion, or at least, the return of the priest to his place as the minister, the servant of religion, by giving back to human consciousness all its liberty and reason. Look at the parable of the Good Samaritan and at these precious words: the law was made for man and not man for the law. Woe to you who lay upon others burdens you would not so much as touch with the tip of your finger, etc. The official Church which declares itself infallible in the *Apocalypse*, the Qabalistic key to the Gospels, has always existed side by side with occult strains of Christianity that maintained an interpretation of dogma quite different from that given out to the vulgar.

The Templars, the Rosicrucians, the Freemasons of high grade, all belonged, before the French Revolution, to that church which counted among its apostles Pasqualis Martinez, Saint-Martin and even Mme de Krudemer.

The distinctive characteristic of this school is to avoid publicity and never to grow into what might be referred to as a 'dissident sect'. The count Joseph de Maistre, this radical Catholic, was far more sympathetic than one might think to the society of the Martinistes, thus announcing an impending regeneration of dogma through the lights which shine forth from the sanctuaries of occultism. There exist today fervent priests initiated into antique doctrine and one bishop among others has just died who asked me for Qabalistic information. The disciples of Saint-Martin called themselves the unknown philosophers, and now other disciples of a modern master, fortunate enough to remain anonymous, need take no name at all, for the world does not even suspect their existence, Jesus said that the yeast must be hidden in the bottom of the trough of dough in order that it may work night and day in silence until fermentation of the entire mass has taken place.

An initiate can then with simplicity and sincerity practise the religion into which he was born, for all rites diversely represent one and the same dogma. But no initiate should open the depths of his conscience except to God, nor give account of his most intimate beliefs to anyone. The priest cannot judge that which the Pope himself cannot understand. The exterior signs of the initiate are modest knowledge, philanthropy without show, equality of character and the most inalterable goodness.

Yours in the holy science,

Eliphas Lévi