

RENÉ GUÉNON
ON KABBALAH AND JUDAISM

INDEX

| <i>Chapter</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| 1.- Some observations on the name Adam..... | 3 |
| 2.- The Heart of the World in Hebrew Kabbalah..... | 7 |
| 3.- The Shekinah and Metatron..... | 14 |
| 4.- Qabbalah | 21 |
| 5.- Kabbalah and the Science of Numbers..... | 25 |
| 6.- The Jewish Kabbalah by Paul Vulliaud..... | 33 |
| 7.- The Siphra di Tzeniutha..... | 47 |
| - Book reviews: | |
| Marcel Bulard, The Scorpion, Symbol of the Jewish People | 51 |
| Emmanuel Malynski and Leon de Poncins, The Hidden War | 52 |
| Leon de Poncins, The Mysterious Jewish International..... | 53 |
| Charles Marston, The Bible Has Spoken the Truth | 53 |
| The Protocols of the Elders of Zion | 55 |
| Dion Fortune, The Mystical Kabbalah..... | 57 |
| Enel: A Message from the Sphinx | 58 |
| H. de Vries de Heekenlingen, Jewish Pride | 60 |
| Eliphas Lévy, The Key to the Great Mysteries..... | 61 |
| Robert Ambelain, Adam, Red God | 62 |
| - Magazine Reviews | |
| La Vita Italiana..... | 64 |
| Revue Juive | 64 |
| Hommes et Mondes | 65 |
| Cathar Studies Notebooks..... | 65 |
| - Excerpts from other works by René Guénon..... | |
| - Letters | 92 |

1.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE NAME ADAM*

In our study on "the place of Atlantean tradition in Manvantara," we said that the literal meaning of the name Adam is "red," and that this can be seen as one of the indications of the connection between Hebrew tradition and Atlantean tradition, which was that of the red race. On the other hand, our colleague Argos, in his interesting chronicle on "blood and some of its mysteries", examines a derivation for the same name Adam that may seem different: after recalling the usual interpretation according to which it would mean "taken from the earth" (adamah), he wonders whether it might not rather come from the word *dam* "blood"; but the difference is only apparent, since all these words actually have one and the same root.

It should be noted from the outset that, from a linguistic point of view, the common etymology, which derives Adam from *adamah*, translated as 'earth', is impossible; the reverse derivation would be more plausible; but, in fact, both nouns come from the same verbal root *adam*, which means 'to be red'. Adamah is not, at least originally, the earth in general (*erets*), nor the element earth (*iabashah*, a word whose primary meaning indicates 'dryness' as a characteristic quality of this element); it is properly "red clay", which, due to its plastic properties, is particularly suited to representing a certain potentiality, a capacity to receive forms; and the potter's work has often been taken as a symbol of the production of beings manifested from the undifferentiated primordial substance. For the same reason, 'red earth' seems to have special importance in Hermetic symbolism, in which it can be taken as one of the figures of 'prime matter', even though, if taken literally, it could only play this role in a very relative way, since it is already endowed with definite properties. Let us add that the relationship between a designation of the earth and the name Adam, taken as a type of

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Humanity is found in another form in the Latin language, in which the word *hu-mus*, "earth," is also singularly close to *homo* and *humanus*. On the other hand, if this same name, Adam, refers more specifically to the tradition of the red race, this corresponds to earth among the elements, as with the West among the cardinal points, and this latter correspondence also justifies what we said earlier.

As for the word *dam*, "blood" (common to Hebrew and Arabic), it also derives from the same root *adam*¹: blood is properly the red liquid, which is, in fact, its most immediately apparent characteristic. The relationship between this designation for blood and the name Adam is therefore indisputable and can be explained by the derivation from a common root; but this derivation appears to be direct for both, and from the verbal root *adam*, it is not possible to pass through *dam* to arrive at the name Adam. It would be possible, it is true, to approach things in another way, less strictly linguistic, and say that if man is called "red" it is because of his blood; but such an explanation is unsatisfactory because the fact of having blood is not unique to man, but is common to animal species, so that it cannot really serve to characterise him. In fact, the colour red, in Hermetic symbolism, is that of the animal kingdom, just as green is that of the plant kingdom and white that of the mineral kingdom²; and this, as far as the colour red is concerned, can be related precisely to blood considered as the centre, or rather the support, of animal vitality proper. On the other hand, if we return to the more specific relationship between the name Adam and the red race, the latter, despite its colour, does not seem to be related to a predominance of blood in the organic constitution, since the sanguine temperament corresponds to fire among the elements, and not to earth; and it is the black race that corresponds to the element of fire, as well as to the South among the cardinal points.

Let us also point out, among the derivatives of the root *adam*, the name *edom*, which means "blond" and which, moreover, differs from the name Adam only in the vowel points; in the Bible, Edom is a nickname for Esau, hence the name Edomites given to

¹ The initial aleph, which exists in the root, disappears in the derivative, which is an exceptional occurrence; this aleph does not in any way constitute a prefix with an independent meaning, as Latouche claims, whose linguistic conceptions are too often imaginary.

² See our study *L'Esotérisme de Dante* for more on the symbolism of these three colours.

their descendants, and that of Idumea to the country they inhabited (which, in Hebrew, is also Edom, but feminine). This reminds us of the "seven kings of Edom" mentioned in the Zohar, and the close resemblance of Edom to Adam may be one of the reasons why that name is used here to designate the vanished humanities, that is, those of the preceding Manvantaras³. We can also see the relationship that the latter has with the question of what has come to be called the "pre-Adamites": if Adam is taken as the origin of the red race and its particular tradition, it may simply be a question of the other races that preceded it in the course of the current human cycle; if, in a broader sense, he is taken as the prototype of all present humanity, it will be those previous humanities to which the "seven kings of Edom" refer. In any case, the discussions that this question has given rise to seem rather futile, as there should be no difficulty in this; in fact, there is no difficulty in it, at least in Islamic tradition, where there is a hadith (saying of the Prophet) that says that "before the Adam we know, God created a hundred thousand Adams" (that is, an indeterminate number), which is as clear an affirmation as possible of the multiplicity of cyclical periods and corresponding humanities.

Since we have referred to blood as the source of vitality, we will recall that, as we have already explained in one of our works⁴, blood effectively constitutes one of the links between the physical organism and the subtle state of the living being, which is properly the "soul" (*nefesh haiah* in Genesis), that is, in the etymological sense (*anima*), the animating or life-giving principle of the being. This subtle state is called *Taijasa* by the Hindu tradition, by analogy with *tējas* or the fiery element; and, just as fire, in terms of its own qualities, is polarised into light and heat, this subtle state is linked to the bodily state in two different and complementary ways, through blood in terms of its caloric quality, and through the nervous system in terms of its luminous quality. In fact, even from a simple physiological point of view, blood is the vehicle of animating heat; and this explains the correspondence, which we have indicated above, between the sanguine temperament and the element of fire. On the other hand, it can be said that, in fire, light represents the superior aspect, and heat the inferior aspect: Islamic tradition teaches that angels were created from "divine fire" (or "divine light"), and that those who rebelled following Iblis lost the luminosity of

³ *Le Roi du Monde*, chap. VI in fine.

⁴ *L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védânta*, chap. XIV. Cf. Also *L'Erreur spirite*, pp. 116-119.

its nature so as not to retain anything but a dark heat⁵. As a result, it can be said that blood is directly related to the lower side of the subtle state; and hence the prohibition of blood as food, since its absorption implies that of the coarsest aspect of animal vitality, which, by assimilating and mixing intimately with the psychic elements of man, can indeed have quite serious consequences. Hence also the frequent use of blood in the practices of magic, and also of witchcraft (inasmuch as it attracts "infernal" entities by conformity of nature); but, on the other hand, this is also susceptible, under certain conditions, to a transposition to a higher order, hence the religious or even initiatory rites (such as the Mithraic "taurobolium") involving animal sacrifices; as the sacrifice of Abel as opposed to that of Cain, which was bloodless, has been alluded to in this regard, we may return to this last point on another occasion.

⁵ This is indicated by the relationship in Arabic between the words *nûr*, 'light', and *nâr*, 'fire' (in the sense of heat).

2.

THE HEART OF THE WORLD IN HEBREW KABBALAH*

We have previously referred (February 1926, p. 220) to the role played in the Hebrew tradition, as in all other traditions, by the symbolism of the heart, which, here as elsewhere, essentially represents the 'Centre of the World'. What we want to talk about is what is called Kabbalah, a word which, in Hebrew, means nothing other than 'tradition', the doctrine transmitted orally for many centuries before being recorded in written texts; it is in this doctrine that we can find interesting information on the subject in question.

In the Sepher Yetsiráh, there is mention of the "Holy Palace" or "Inner Palace," which is the Centre of the World: it is at the centre of the six directions of space (above, below, and the four cardinal points) which, together with the centre itself, form the septenary. The three letters of the divine name Jehovah, formed of four letters, iod, hé, vau, hé, but among which there are only three that are distinct, the hé being repeated twice), by their sixfold permutation following these six directions, indicate the immanence of God within the World, that is, the manifestation of the creative Word at the centre of all things, at the primordial point from which indefinite extensions are nothing more than expansion or development: "He formed something out of Tohu (emptiness) and made something that did not exist into something that does exist. He carved great columns from the incomprehensible ether¹. He reflected, and the Word (Memra) produced every object and all things by his Name alone" (Sepher Yetsirah, IV, 5).

*Originally published in Regnabit, July-August 1926. Not included in any other posthumous compilation.

¹These are the "columns" of the Sephirotic Tree: the middle column, the right column, and the left column (see our articles from December 1925, p. 292).

Before going any further, we should point out that Eastern doctrines, particularly Hindu doctrine, also frequently refer to the seven regions of space, which are the four cardinal points, plus the zenith and the nadir, and finally, the centre itself. It can be observed that the representation of the six directions, opposed two by two from the centre, forms a three-dimensional cross, three rectangular diameters of an undefined sphere. It can also be noted, by way of concordance, that St Paul alludes to the symbolism of the directions or dimensions of space when he speaks of the "breadth, length, height and depth of the mystery of the love of Jesus Christ" (Ephesians, III, 18); but here there are only four terms stated distinctly instead of six, because width and length correspond respectively to the two horizontal diameters taken as a whole, while height and depth correspond to the upper and lower halves of the vertical diameter.

On the other hand, in his important work on Jewish Kabbalah², Paul Vulliaud adds the following regarding the passages from the *Sepher Yetzirah* that we have just quoted: "Clement of Alexandria says that from God, the Heart of the Universe, infinite extensions emanate, one towards the top, the other towards the bottom, one to the right, the other to the left, one forward and the other backward. Turning his gaze towards these six extensions as towards an ever-equal number, he ended the world; it is the beginning and the end (the alpha and the omega), in it the six infinite phases of time end, and it is from it that they receive their extension towards infinity; such is the secret of the number 7"³. We have had to reproduce this quotation verbatim, and we regret that its exact reference is not indicated; the word "infinite", which appears three times, is inappropriate and should be replaced by "indefinite": only God is infinite; space and time can only be indefinite. The analogy, not to say identity, with Kabbalistic doctrine is most remarkable; and there is material here, as will be seen later, for other comparisons that are even more surprising.

² 2 vols. In 8°, Paris, 1923. This work contains a wealth of interesting information, some of which we will use here. It could be criticised for devoting too much space to discussions of secondary importance, for not going deeply enough into the doctrine, and for a certain lack of order in its presentation. Nevertheless, it is undeniably a very serious work and very different in this respect from most other books written on the subject by modern authors.

³ *La Kabbale juive*, volume I, pp. 215-216.

The primordial point, from which the creative Word is uttered, develops not only in space but also in time; it is the Centre of the World in every respect, that is to say, it is both the centre of space and the centre of time. This, let it be clearly understood, concerns only our world, the only one whose conditions of existence can be directly expressed in human language; it is the sensible world that is subject to space and time, and in order to move on to the supra-sensible order (since we are dealing with the Centre of all worlds), it would be necessary to carry out a kind of analogical transposition in which space and time would no longer have any meaning other than a purely symbolic one; this is indeed possible, but we need not concern ourselves with it here, and we can limit ourselves to the cosmogonic point of view as it is commonly understood.

Clement of Alexandria discusses six phases of time corresponding to the six directions of space: these are six cyclical periods, subdivisions of another more general period, and sometimes represented as six millennia. The Zohar, like the Talmud, divides the duration of time into millennial periods: 'The world will subsist for six thousand years, to which the first six words of Genesis allude (Siphra di Zeniutha: Zohar, II, 176 b); and these six millennia are analogous to the six 'days' of creation ('A thousand years are like a day in the eyes of the Lord', says Scripture). The seventh millennium, like the seventh 'day', is the Sabbath, that is, the phase of return to the Beginning, which naturally corresponds to the centre, considered as the seventh region of space. There is a kind of symbolic chronology here, which should certainly not be taken literally; Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews, 1, 4) observes that six thousand years make ten "great years", the "great year" being six centuries (it is the Naros of the Chaldeans); but, on the other hand, what is designated by this same expression is a much longer period, ten or twelve thousand years among the Greeks and Persians. This, however, does not matter here, where it is not a question of making conjectures about the real duration of our world, but only of taking these divisions at their symbolic value: they may be six indefinite phases, and therefore of indeterminate duration, plus a seventh that corresponds to the end of all things and their restoration to their original state (this last millennium is undoubtedly comparable to the "thousand-year kingdom" mentioned in the Apocalypse).

Now, consider the radiant Heart of the astronomical marble of Saint-Denis d'Orques, studied here by L. Charbonneau-Lassay (February 1924), and reproduced

again here. This Heart is located at the centre of the planetary circle and the zodiacal circle, which represent respectively the indefiniteness of space and time⁴. Is there not a striking similarity here with the "Holy Palace" of the Kabbalah, also located at the centre of space and time, and which is effectively, in the words of Clement of Alexandria, the "Heart of the Universe"? But that is not all, and there is something in this same figure that is perhaps even stranger, which we will discuss next.

Let us return to the cosmogonic doctrine of the *Sefer Yetzirah*: "It is," says Paul Vulliaud, "the development from Thought to the modification of Sound (the Voice), from the impenetrable to the comprehensible. It will be noted that we are in the presence of a symbolic exposition of the mystery that has universal genesis as its object and is related to the mystery of unity. In other passages, it is about the 'point' that develops in lines in all directions, and which becomes comprehensible only through the 'Inner Palace'. It is in the incomprehensible ether (Avir) that concentration occurs, from which light emanates (Aor)⁵. The point is, as we have already said (May 1926), the symbol of unity: it is the principle of extension, which exists only through its radiation (the previous "void" being nothing more than pure virtuality), but it can only be understood by situating itself in this extension, of which it is then the centre. The emanation of light, which gives reality to extension, "making something out of the void and what did not exist into what exists", is an expansion that follows concentration; these are the two phases of inhalation and exhalation that are often discussed in Hindu doctrine, the second of which corresponds to the production of the manifested world; and we have already noted the analogy that also exists in this regard with the movement of the heart and the circulation of blood.

But let us continue: "Light (Aor) springs from the mystery of ether (Avir). The hidden point was revealed, that is, the letter iod"⁶. This letter represents the Principle in hieroglyphics, and it is also said that all the other letters of the Hebrew alphabet are formed from it.

⁴Mr Charbonneau has shown us a curious document that he found since the publication of his article; it is a medal of Antoninus, minted in Egypt, on the reverse of which appears Jupiter-Serapis, apparently surrounded by the two planetary and zodiacal circles; the similarity is noteworthy.

⁵ *La Kabbale juive*, vol. I, p. 217.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

It is also said that the incomprehensible primordial point, which is the unmanifested One, forms three points, which are the Beginning, the Middle, and the End (like the three elements of the monosyllable Aum in Hindu symbolism and ancient Christian symbolism), and that these three points together constitute the letter iod, which is thus the manifested One (or more precisely affirmed as the principle of universal manifestation), God becoming the Centre of the World through his Word. When that iod has been produced, says the Sepher Yet-siráh, what remained of that mystery or of the hidden Avir (ether) was Aor (light); and, indeed, if the iod is removed from the word Avir, Aor remains.

Paul Vulliaud quotes, in this regard, the commentary of Moses de León: 'Having recalled that the holy one, blessed be He, unknowable, can only be apprehended according to His attributes (middoth) by which He created the worlds, let us begin with the first word of the Torah: Bereshith (the word with which Genesis begins: In the beginning). Ancient authors have taught us about this mystery that is hidden in the supreme degree, the pure and impalpable ether. This degree is the sum total of all the posterior (i.e., exterior) mirrors; they proceed from the mystery of the point, which is itself a hidden degree, emanating from the mystery of the pure and mysterious ether. The first degree, absolutely hidden, cannot be apprehended. Likewise, the mystery of the supreme point, although deeply hidden, can be apprehended in the mystery of the inner Palace. The "mystery of the supreme Crown (Kether, the first of the ten Sefiroth) corresponds to that of the pure and unapprehensible ether (Avir). It is the cause of all causes and the origin of all origins. In that mystery, the invisible origin of all things, is where the hidden point from which everything proceeds takes birth. That is why it is said in the Sepher Yetziráh: "Before the One, what can you take into account?" That is, before that point, what can be counted or understood? Before that point there was nothing except Aín, that is, the mystery of pure and incomprehensible ether, so named (by simple negation) because of its incomprehensibility. The comprehensible beginning of existence is found in the mystery of the supreme "point". And since that point is the beginning of all things, it is called "Thought" (Mahasheba). The mystery of creative Thought corresponds to the hidden "point". It is in the Inner Palace that the mystery linked to the hidden "point" can be understood, for the pure and incomprehensible ether always remains mysterious. The "point" is the ether made palpable in the mystery of the inner Palace or Holy of Holies. Everything, without exception, was first conceived in Thought⁷. And if someone were to say, "Behold, there is someone new in the

⁽⁷⁾ It is the Word as divine Intelligence, which is the "place of possibilities".

world!”, silence it, for it was previously conceived in Thought. From the hidden “point” emanates the inner Holy Palace. It is the Holy of Holies, the fiftieth year (an allusion to the Jubilee, which represents the return to the primordial state), which is also called the Voice that emanates from Thought⁸. All beings and all causes then emanate by the force of the “point” above. This is what relates to the mysteries of the three supreme Sefiroth⁹. We have chosen to include this entire passage, despite its length, because, in addition to its intrinsic interest, we will undoubtedly have to refer to it in the continuation of these studies in order to establish comparisons with other traditional doctrines.

The symbolism of the letter iod should still hold our attention: we have previously recalled (February 1926) the fact, already pointed out by R. P. Anizan, that in an engraving drawn and engraved by Callot for a thesis defended in 1625, the Heart of Christ is seen containing three iod, which can be considered as representing the Trinity. Moreover, as we have seen before, the letter iod, formed by the union of three dots, is in itself an image of the Triune God; and undoubtedly the three iod represent very well the three Persons of the Trinity. On the other hand, it has been pointed out to L. Charbonneau-Lassay that, in the heart of Saint-Denis d'Orques, the wound is in the shape of an inverted iod; is this a purely accidental resemblance or should we see something intentional in this shape? We would not dare to say anything on the subject, and we even admit that the person who draws a symbol is not necessarily aware of everything that it really contains; However, the Carthusian monk who sculpted the astronomical marble has otherwise demonstrated sufficient knowledge that it is not implausible that there was an effective intention on his part; and, in any case, that iota, whether intentional or not, appears to us to be full of meaning. Even its inverted position is not without meaning: it may be an allusion to the Incarnation, or, more generally, to the manifestation of the Word in the World, considered in a certain sense as a "descent" (such is the exact meaning of the Sanskrit term *avatāra*, which designates all divine manifestations). As for the iod itself, it has the meaning of 'beginning', as we have said before, and also of 'seed' (a word which, let us say in passing, is applied to Christ in various passages of scripture): the iod in the heart is, in a way, the seed enclosed in the fruit.

⁸It is also the Word, but as divine Word: it is first pure Thought, and then Word in the external world, the Word being the manifestation of Thought (see our article of January 1926), and the first word uttered is the Iehi Aor (*Fiat Lux*) of Genesis.

⁹ Quoted in *La Kabbale juive*, volume I, pp. 405-406

It is also an indication of a very close relationship between the symbol of the Heart and that of the "Egg of the World", to which we have already alluded; we will have occasion to return to this, and we will then explain ourselves more fully on this point, which is important enough to deserve separate treatment; we will not dwell on it further for the moment.

Here is now that strange thing we mentioned earlier: the heart of Saint-Denis d'Orques, with its iod-shaped wound, radiates light (Aor)¹⁰in such a way that we have here both the iod and the Aor, that is, the two terms of the differentiation of the primordial Avir. Furthermore, this iod and this Aor are placed respectively inside and outside the Heart, as is fitting, since the former comes from concentration and the latter from expansion, and it is from this successive concentration and expansion that the very distinction between inside and outside arises. For the rest, we do not claim that all this was expressly intended by the sculptor, for we have no means of acquiring certainty about it; but it must be agreed that, if it is unintentional, there is an unconscious encounter with Kabbalistic doctrine, and that is even more extraordinary, that the Carthusian monk has supplemented the science he lacked with an intuition of the most surprising kind; we will leave everyone free to choose between the two hypotheses.

Be that as it may, what is indisputable is that the Heart itself, in this remarkable figure, is identified with the "Holy Palace" of Kabbalah; it is also that same Heart, the centre of all things, which Hindu doctrine, for its part, describes as the "Divine City" (Brahma-pura). The "Holy Palace" is also called the "Holy of Holies," as we have seen in the quotation from Moses de León; and, in the Temple of Jerusalem, the "Holy of Holies" was nothing other than a figure of the true "Centre of the World", a very real figure indeed, since it was also the place of divine manifestation, the dwelling place of the Shekinah, which is the effective presence of the Divinity.

There is another aspect of the symbolism of the heart in Hebrew tradition, closely linked to the previous one, which will be the subject of our next article.

¹⁰Perhaps there is also a symbolic intention in the alternation of the two types of rays, straight and sinuous, which may represent two different movements in the propagation of light, or even two secondary aspects of it.

3.

THE SHEKINAH AND METATRON

Certain timid spirits, whose understanding is strangely limited by preconceived ideas, have been frightened by the very designation of "King of the World," which they have immediately associated with that of the Princeps hujus mundi, who is mentioned in the Gospel. It goes without saying that such an assimilation is completely erroneous and unfounded; to refute it, we could simply point out that the title 'King of the World' is commonly applied to God Himself in Hebrew and Arabic¹. However, as it may give rise to some interesting observations, we will examine in this regard the theories of the Hebrew Kabbalah concerning the "celestial intermediaries," which, moreover, have a very direct relationship with the main subject of the present study.

The "celestial intermediaries" in question are the Shekinah and Metatron; and we will say first of all that, in the most general sense, the Shekinah is the "real presence" of the Divinity. It should be noted that the passages of Scripture where she is mentioned most specifically are mainly those dealing with the establishment of a spiritual centre: the construction of the Tabernacle, the building of the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. Such a centre, established under regularly defined conditions, was in fact to be the place of divine manifestation, always represented as

"Light"; and it is curious to note that the expression "very bright and very regular place", which Freemasonry has preserved, seems to be a reminder of the ancient priestly science that governed the construction of temples and was not exclusive to the Jews; we will return to this later. We need not go into the development of the theory of "spiritual influences" (we prefer this expression to the word "blessings" to translate

¹ There is also a great difference in meaning between "the World" and "this world", to such an extent that in certain languages there are two completely different terms to designate them: thus, in Arabic, "the World" is *el-âlam*, while "this world" is *ed-dunyâ*.

the Hebrew berakoth, especially since the meaning has been very clearly preserved in Arabic in the word baraka); But even limiting ourselves to this single point of view, it would be possible to explain the words of Elijah Levita, which Paul Vulliaud recounts in his work on Jewish Kabbalah: "The Masters of Kabbalah have great secrets in this regard."

The Shekinah manifests itself in multiple aspects, among which there are two main ones, one internal and one external; however, there is also, in Christian tradition, a phrase that designates these two aspects as clearly as possible: "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis". The words Gloria and Pax refer, respectively, to the internal aspect, in relation to the Principle, and to the external aspect, in harmony with the manifested world; and, if these words are considered in this way, one can immediately understand why they are pronounced by the Angels (Malakim) to announce the birth of "God with us" or "in us" (Emmanuel). One could also, for the first aspect, recall the theories of theologians about the 'light of glory' in and through which the beatific vision (in excelsis) operates; and, as for the second, we find here the "Peace" to which we alluded earlier, and which in its esoteric sense is indicated everywhere as one of the fundamental attributes of the spiritual centres established in this world (in terra). On the other hand, the Arabic term Sakinah, which is obviously identical to the Hebrew Shekinah, is translated as "Great Peace", which is the exact equivalent of the Pax Profunda of the Rosicrucians; and, in this way, one could undoubtedly explain what they understood by the "Temple of the Holy Spirit", just as one could also interpret, in a precise manner, the numerous Gospel texts that speak of "Peace"², especially since "the secret tradition concerning the Shekinah would have some connection with the light of the Messiah". Is it unintentional when P. Vulliaud, in giving this last indication³, says that it is a tradition "reserved for those who followed the path that led to Pardes", that is, as we shall see later, to the supreme spiritual centre?

²It is clearly stated in the Gospel itself that what is meant here is not peace in the sense understood by the secular world (St John, XIV, 27).

³ La Kabbale juive, volume I, p. 503.

This leads us to a related observation: Vulliaud speaks of a "mystery concerning the Jubilee"⁴, which is related in a certain sense to the idea of "Peace", and, in this regard, he quotes the text of the Zohar (III, 52 b): 'The river that flows out of Eden is called Iobel', as well as that of Jeremiah (XVII, 8): 'He shall spread his roots towards the river', from which it follows that the 'central idea of the Jubilee is the return of all things to their original state'. It is clear that this refers to the return to the 'primordial state' considered by all traditions, which we had the opportunity to emphasise somewhat in our study on Dante's Esotericism; and when we add that "the return of all things to their first state will mark the messianic era," those who have read this study will recall what we said there about the relationship between the "Earthly Paradise" and the "Heavenly Jerusalem." On the other hand, to tell the truth, what is always involved in all this, in different phases of cyclical manifestation, is the Pardes, the centre of this world, which the traditional symbolism of all peoples compares to the heart, the centre of being, and the "divine residence" (Brahma-pura in the Hindu tradition), as well as the Tabernacle, which is its image and which, for this reason, is called mishkan or

"God's dwelling place," a word whose root is the same as that of Shekinah.

From another point of view, the Shekinah is the synthesis of the Sefiroth; now, in the Sephirothic tree, the "column on the right" is the side of Mercy and the "column on the left" is the side of Rigour⁵; therefore, we must rediscover these two aspects in the Shekinah, and we can immediately observe, to relate this to what precedes, that, in a certain way at least, Rigour is identified with Justice, and Mercy with Peace⁶.

"If man sins and strays from the Shekinah, he falls under the power of the powers (Sârim) that depend on Severity, and then the Shekinah is called 'hand

⁴ Ibidem , volume I, pp. 506-507.

⁵ A comparable symbolism is expressed in the medieval figure of the 'tree of the living and the dead', which also has a very clear connection with the idea of 'spiritual posterity'; it should be noted that the Sephirothic tree is also considered to be identified with 'the Tree of Life'.

⁶According to the Talmud, God has two seats, that of Justice and that of Mercy; these two seats also correspond to the "Throne" and the "Chair" of Islamic tradition. This also divides the divine names *çifatiyah*, that is, those that express attributes proper to Allah, into "names of majesty" (*jalâliyah*) and "names of beauty" (*jamâliyah*), which once again corresponds to a distinction of the same order.

of Rigor"⁷ , which immediately brings to mind the well-known symbol of "the hand of Justice"; on the contrary, if man approaches the Shekinah, he is freed, and the Shekinah is the "right hand" of God, that is, the "hand of Justice" thus becomes the "blessed hand"⁸ . These are the mysteries of the "House of Justice" (Beith-Din), which is another name for the supreme spiritual centre⁹; it is hardly necessary to point out that the two sides we have just examined are those into which the elect and the damned are divided in Christian representations of the "Last Judgement". A comparison could also be made with the two paths that the Pythagoreans symbolised with the letter Y, which represented in an exoteric form the myth of Hercules between Virtue and Vice; with the two heavenly and infernal gates, which among the Latins were associated with the symbolism of Janus; with the two cyclical phases of ascent and descent¹⁰ which, among the Hindus, are also related to the symbolism of Ganesh¹¹ . In short, it is easy to understand in this way what expressions such as 'right intention', which we will come across again below, and 'good will' ('Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis', and those who are familiar with the various symbols we have just mentioned will see that it is not without reason that the Christmas festival coincides with the time of the winter solstice), when one takes care to leave aside all the external, philosophical and moral interpretations to which they have given rise from the Stoics to Kant.

⁷ La Kabbale juive, vol. 1, p. 507.

⁸ According to St Augustine and various other Church Fathers, the right hand represents Mercy or Goodness, while the left hand, especially in God, is the symbol of Justice. The 'hand of Justice' is one of the common attributes of royalty; the 'blessed hand' is a sign of priestly authority and has sometimes been taken as a symbol of Christ. This figure of the 'blessing hand' is found on certain Gallic coins, as is the swastika, sometimes with curved arms.

⁹This centre, or any of those constituted in its image, can be symbolically described both as a temple (priestly aspect, corresponding to Peace) and as a palace and a court (royal aspect corresponding to Justice).

¹⁰These are the two halves of the zodiac cycle, which is often depicted on the facades of medieval churches in a manner that clearly conveys the same meaning.

¹¹ All the symbols listed here would require lengthy explanations; perhaps we will do so one day in another study.

"The Kabbalah gives the Shekinah a partner who bears names identical to hers, and who consequently possesses the same characteristics"¹², and which naturally has as many different aspects as the Shekinah itself; his name is Metatron, and this name is numerically equivalent to that of Shaddai¹³ , "the Almighty" (which is said to be the name of the God of Abraham). The etymology of the word Metatron is very uncertain, among the various hypotheses that have been put forward in this regard; one of the most interesting is that which derives it from the Chaldean Mitra, which means rain, and which also has a certain connection with "light" at its root. If this is the case, we should not believe that the similarity with the Hindu and Zoroastrian Mitra is sufficient reason to admit that Judaism borrowed from foreign doctrines, as it is not in an external form that we should examine the relationships that exist between different traditions; and we will say the same with regard to the role attributed to rain in almost all traditions, as a symbol of the descent of 'spiritual influences' from Heaven to Earth*. In this regard, we should point out that Hebrew doctrine speaks of a 'dew of Light' that flows from the 'Tree of Life' and through which the resurrection of the dead must take place, as well as an 'effusion of dew' that represents the celestial influence communicating with all worlds, which is particularly reminiscent of alchemical and Rosicrucian symbolism.

The term Metatron encompasses all the meanings of guardian, Lord, envoy, mediator; he is the 'author of theophanies in the sensible world' ¹⁴; he is "the Angel of the Face" and also "the Prince of the World" (Sâr ha-ôlam), and from this latter designation we can see that we have not strayed far from our subject. To use the traditional symbolism we explained earlier, we will gladly say that, just as the head of the initiatory hierarchy is "the Earth Pole," Metatron is the "Heavenly Pole"; and the latter is reflected in the former, with which it is directly related according to the "Axis of the World." "His name is Mikael, the High Priest who is a burnt offering and oblation before God, and everything that the Israelites do on earth is done according to the prototypes of what happens in the celestial world. The High Pontiff here below symbolises Mikael, Prince of Mercy... In all the passages where Scripture speaks of the

¹² La Kabbale juive, volume I, pp. 497-498.

¹³ The number of each of these names, obtained by adding up the values of the Hebrew letters of which it is composed, is 314.

* The passage beginning with "as a symbol..." does not appear in the first edition; however, the word "oriental" added to "traditions" does appear, which is not present in the second edition. Translator's note.

¹⁴ La Kabbale juive, volume I, pp. 492 and 499.

appearance of Mikael, it is dealing with the Glory of the Shekinah" ¹⁵. What has been said here about the Israelites can equally be said of all peoples who possess a truly orthodox tradition; it must be said even more so of the representatives of the primordial tradition from which the others derive and to which they are subordinate; and this is related to the symbolism of the 'Holy Land', an image of the celestial world, to which we have already alluded. On the other hand, according to what we have said previously, Metatron not only has the aspect of Mercy, but also that of Justice; he is not only the "High Priest" (Kohen ha-gadol), but also "the Great Prince" (Sâr ha-gadol) and the "chief of the heavenly armies", that is to say, he embodies the principle of royal power as well as that of priestly or pontifical power, to which the function of "mediator" properly corresponds. It should also be noted that Melek, 'King', and Maleak, 'angel' or 'messenger', are in fact only two forms of one and the same word; moreover, Malaki, 'my messenger' (that is, the messenger of God, or 'the angel in whom God is', Maleak ha-Elohim), is an anagram of Mikael¹⁶.

It should be added that, although Mikael is identified with Metatron, as we have just seen, he represents only one aspect; alongside the luminous face there is a dark one, represented by Samaël, who is also called Sâr ha-ôlam; here we return to the starting point of these considerations. Indeed, it is this latter aspect, and this aspect alone, that is 'the genius of this world' in an inferior sense, the Princeps hujus mundi of whom the Gospel speaks; and his relationship with Metatron, of whom he is like a shadow, justifies the use of the same designation in a double sense, while at the same time making it understandable why the apocalyptic number 666, the "Number of the Beast", is also a solar number¹⁷. On the other hand, according to Saint Hippolytus¹⁸, "The Messiah and the Antichrist" both have as their emblem the "Lion", which is a

¹⁵ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 500–501.

¹⁶ This last observation naturally brings to mind the words:

"Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini"; these are applied to Christ, whom the shepherd of Hermas assimilates precisely to Mikael in a way that may seem rather strange, but which should not surprise those who understand the relationship between the Messiah and the Shekinah. Christ is also called "Prince of Peace" and is at the same time "Judge of the living and the dead".

¹⁷This number is formed with the name Sorath, 'demon of the Sun', and as such opposed to the angel Mikael; we will see another meaning later on.

¹⁸ Quoted by P. Vulliaud, *La Kabbale juive*, vol. II, p. 373.

once again a solar symbol; and the same observation could be made about the serpent¹⁹ and many other symbols; from a Kabbalistic point of view, it is the two opposing sides of Metatron that we are dealing with here; we need not dwell on the theories that could be formulated, in general terms, about this double meaning of symbols, but we will only say that the confusion between the luminous and the dark aspects constitutes "Satanism" proper; and it is precisely this confusion that is undoubtedly committed involuntarily and out of simple ignorance (which is an excuse and not a justification) by those who believe they have discovered an infernal meaning in the designation 'King of the World'²⁰

The Shekinah and Metatron, chapter III of The King of the World

¹⁹The two opposing aspects are represented in particular by the two serpents of the caduceus; in Christian iconography, they are brought together in the 'amphisbaena', the two-headed serpent, one head representing Christ and the other Satan.

²⁰ Let us point out once again that the 'Globe of the World', the symbol of imperial power or universal monarchy, is often placed in the hand of Christ, which shows, moreover, that it is the emblem of spiritual authority as well as temporal power.

4.

QABBALAH*

The term qabbalah, in Hebrew, means nothing more than "tradition" in the most general sense; and although it most often refers to esoteric or initiatory tradition when used without further precision, it is also sometimes applied to exoteric tradition itself¹. Thus, this term, in itself, is capable of designating tradition; but as it belongs to the Hebrew language, it is normal that, as we have already pointed out on occasions, when another language is used, it is reserved precisely for the Hebrew tradition, or if you prefer another, perhaps more accurate way of speaking, for the specifically Hebrew form of tradition. We insist on this because we have noticed in some people a tendency to give this word another meaning, to use it to refer to a special type of traditional knowledge, wherever it may be found, because they believe they have discovered in the word itself all kinds of more or less extraordinary things that are not actually there. We have no intention of wasting our time pointing out imaginary interpretations; it is more useful to clarify the true original meaning of the word, which is enough to reduce them to nothing, and that is what we propose to do here.

The root Q B L, in Hebrew and Arabic², essentially means the relationship between two things that are placed opposite each other; this is the source of all the different meanings of the words derived from it, such as encounter and even opposition. This relationship also gives rise to the idea of a passage from one of the two terms to the other, hence ideas such as receiving, welcoming and accepting, expressed

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¹ This causes certain misunderstandings: thus, we have seen some people attempt to link the Talmud to Kabbalah understood in an esoteric sense; in fact, the Talmud is the "tradition", but purely exoteric, religious and legal.

² We draw attention to the fact, not sufficiently taken into account, that these two languages, most of whose roots are common, can often be clarified by each other.

in both languages by the verb qabal; and from this derives directly qabbalah, that is, properly "that which is received" or transmitted (in Latin *truditum*) from one to another. With this idea of transmission, we see the idea of succession appear here; but it should be noted that the primary meaning of the root indicates a relationship that can be both simultaneous and successive, both spatial and temporal. This explains the double meaning of the preposition qabal in Hebrew and qabl in Arabic, which means both "before" (i.e. "in front of", in space) and "before" (in time); and the close relationship between the two words "before" and "earlier", even in our language, clearly shows that there is always a certain analogy between these two different modalities, one simultaneous and the other successive. This also allows us to resolve an apparent contradiction: although the most common idea, when it comes to a temporal relationship, is that of anteriority and, therefore, refers to the past, it also happens, however, that derivatives of the same root designate the future (in Arabic *mustaqbal*, literally meaning that which one goes towards, from *istaq-bal*, "to go forward"). But do we not also say in our language that the past is before us and that the future is before us, which is entirely comparable? In short, in all cases it is sufficient for one of the terms considered to be "before" or "ahead" of the other, whether it is a spatial or temporal relationship.

All these observations can also be confirmed by examining another root, equally common to Hebrew and Arabic, which has meanings very close to those mentioned above, even identical in large part, since, although the starting point is clearly different, the derived meanings coincide. This is the root QDM, which primarily expresses the idea of "preceding" (*qadam*), referring not only to temporal precedence, but also to any priority of order. Thus, for words that come from this root, apart from the meanings of origin and antiquity (*qedem* in Hebrew, *qidm* or *qidam* in Arabic), there is also that of primacy or precedence, and even that of march, advance or progression (in Arabic *teqaddum*)³; and, here too, the preposition *qadam* in Hebrew and *qoddám* in Arabic has the double meaning of "before" and "earlier". But the main meaning here refers to that which is first, either hierarchically or chronologically; also, the most frequently expressed idea is that of origin or primacy and, by extension, of antiquity when it comes to temporal order: thus,

³ Hence the word *qadam*, which means "foot", that is, what is used for walking.

qadmô in Hebrew and qadim in Arabic mean "old" in common usage, but when referring to the domain of principles, they must be translated as "primordial"⁴.

It is still worth pointing out other considerations that are not without interest in relation to these same words: in Hebrew, derivatives of the root QDM are also used to designate the East, that is, the side of the "origin" in the sense that it is where the rising sun appears (oriens, from oriri, from which origo also comes in Latin), the starting point of the sun's daily progress; and, at the same time, it is also the point that one has before one when one "orients" oneself by turning towards the sun where it rises⁵. Thus, qe-dem also means "East", and qadmô "eastern"; but we should not see in these designations an affirmation of the primacy of the East from the point of view of the history of terrestrial humanity, since, as we have often said, the original source of the tradition is Nordic, even 'polar', neither Eastern nor Western; the explanation we have just given seems to us to be entirely sufficient. In this regard, we would add that these questions of "orientation" are generally quite important in traditional symbolism and in the rites based on that symbolism; moreover, they are more complex than one might think and can cause some errors, since, in various traditional forms, there are several different modes of orientation. When one faces the rising sun, as mentioned above, the south is designated as the "right side" (yamîn or yaman; cf. the Sanskrit dakshina, which has the same meaning), and the north as the "left side" (shemôl in Hebrew, shîmâl in Arabic); but sometimes orientation is also taken by turning towards the sun at the meridian, and then the point in front of you is no longer the East, but the South: thus, in Arabic, the South side, among other names, is also called qiblah, and the adjective qibli means "southern". These latter terms bring us back to the root Q B L; and it is well known that the same word qiblah also designates, in Islam, ritual orientation; in all

⁴ Insânul-qadîm, meaning "primordial man", is one of the Arabic names for "universal man" (synonymous with El-insânul-kamîl, which literally means "perfect man" or "complete man"); it is exactly the same as the Hebrew Adam Qadmôn.

⁵ It is curious to note that Christ is sometimes called Oriens; this name can undoubtedly be related to the symbolism of the rising sun; but, because of the double meaning indicated here, it may also, or even above all, be related to the Hebrew Elohi Qedem, an expression that designates the verb as "Ancient of Days", that is, that he is before the days, or the Beginning of the cycles of manifestation, symbolically considered as "days" by various traditions (the "days of Brahmâ" in the Hindu tradition, the "days of creation" in the Hebrew Genesis).

In any case, it is the direction one faces; and what is also quite curious is that the spelling of this word qiblah is exactly identical to that of the Hebrew qabbalah.

Now, we can ask ourselves this question: why is tradition, in Hebrew, designated by a word that comes from the root QBL, and not from the root QDM? One might be tempted to say, in this regard, that since Hebrew tradition is only a secondary and derivative form, it would not be appropriate to give it a name that evokes the idea of origin or primacy; but this reason does not seem essential to us because, directly or indirectly, all tradition is linked to origins and comes from the primordial Tradition, and we ourselves have seen elsewhere that all sacred languages, including Hebrew and Arabic themselves, are considered to represent in some way the primitive language.

The real reason, it seems, is that the idea that must be emphasised above all else is that of regular and uninterrupted transmission, an idea which, moreover, is also expressed by the very word "tradition", as we indicated at the beginning. This transmission constitutes the "chain" (shelsheleth in Hebrew, silsilah in Arabic) that links the present to the past and must continue from the present into the future: it is the "chain of tradition" (shelsheleth haqabbalah), or the "initiatory chain" that we have recently had occasion to discuss, and it is also the determination of a "direction" (here we find again the meaning of the Arabic qiblah) which, through the succession of times, guides the cycle towards its end and links it to its origin, and which, extending even beyond these two extreme points because its primary source is timeless and "non-human", harmoniously links it with the other cycles, concurring with them to form a vaster "chain", which certain Eastern traditions call the "chain of worlds", where the entire order of universal manifestation is integrated, link by link.

5.

KABBALAH AND THE SCIENCE OF NUMBERS*

We have often emphasised the fact that the 'sacred sciences' belonging to a given traditional form are actually an integral part of it, at least as secondary and subordinate elements, far from representing merely a kind of adventitious addition that has become more or less marginally linked to it. It is essential to understand this point well and never lose sight of it if one wishes to penetrate, even slightly, the true spirit of a tradition. Drawing attention to this is all the more necessary since, quite frequently nowadays, those who claim to study traditional doctrines tend to disregard the sciences in question, either because of the difficulties involved in assimilating them, or because, in addition to the impossibility of fitting them into modern classifications, their presence is particularly disturbing to anyone who strives to reduce them to a single framework or because, in addition to the impossibility of fitting them into modern classifications, their presence is particularly troublesome for anyone who strives to reduce everything to an exoteric point of view and to interpret doctrines in terms of "philosophy" or "mysticism." Without wishing to dwell again on the futility of such studies 'from the outside' and with completely profane intentions, we will nevertheless say once more — for we see the appropriateness of this every day, so to speak — that the distorted conceptions to which they inevitably lead are certainly worse than simple and pure ignorance.

Sometimes it even happens that certain traditional sciences play a more important role than we have just indicated, and that, in addition to their intrinsic value in the contingent order, they are taken as symbolic means of expression for the higher and essential part of the doctrine, so much so that the latter becomes totally unintelligible if one attempts to separate it from them. This is particularly true of the Hebrew Kabbalah, with the "science of numbers", which, moreover, is largely identified with the "science of letters", as is the case in esotericism.

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Islamic esotericism, by virtue of the very constitution of the Hebrew and Arabic languages, which, as we noted recently, are so close to each other in all respects¹.

The predominant role of the science of numbers in Kabbalah is so obvious that it cannot go unnoticed even by the most superficial observer, and even the most prejudiced 'critics' cannot deny or conceal it. However, the latter continue to give this fact, at the very least, erroneous interpretations in order to make it fit, somehow, into the framework of their preconceived ideas. Here we propose, above all, to dispel these more or less deliberate confusions, which are due in part to the abuses of the all-too-famous "historical method," which at all costs wants to see "borrowings" wherever it notices certain similarities. It is well known that, in university circles, it is fashionable to link Kabbalah with Neoplatonism, thereby diminishing both its antiquity and its scope. Is it not accepted as an indisputable principle that nothing can come from anywhere other than the Greeks? In this, unfortunately, it is forgotten that Neoplatonism itself contains many elements that are not specifically Greek, and that, in the Alexandrian environment, Judaism in particular had an importance that was far from negligible, so much so that, if one side really took something from the other, it could well have been in the opposite direction to that which is claimed. This hypothesis would be even more likely, firstly because the adoption of a foreign doctrine is not very compatible with the "particularism" that has always been one of the dominant features of the Jewish spirit, and secondly because, whatever one may think of Neoplatonism, it represents in any case only a relatively exoteric doctrine (even if it is based on elements of an esoteric nature, it is only an "externalisation" of these), and as such could not have exerted any real influence on an essentially initiatory and even very "closed" tradition such as Kabbalah has always been². Furthermore, we do not see any particularly striking similarities between Kabbalah and Neoplatonism, nor do we see that, in the way the latter is expressed, numbers play the role that is so characteristic of Kabbalah; the Greek language, moreover, would not have provided much scope for this, while

¹ See the previous article: *Qabbalah*; we refer readers to the study on *The Science of Letters* (currently Chapter VI of *Symboles de la Science Sacrée*).

² This last reason also applies to the claim that esotericism is linked to Neoplatonism itself; among the Arabs, only philosophy is of Greek origin, as is, moreover, wherever it is found, everything to which the name "philosophy" (in Arabic *falsafah*) can properly be applied, which is like a sign of that same origin; but here we are not dealing with philosophy at all.

After all, we repeat, there is something inherent in the Hebrew language itself and which, consequently, must have been linked from the outset to the traditional form expressed through it.

Naturally, there is no denying that the Greeks had a traditional science of numbers; as we know, it was even the basis of Pythagoreanism, which was not simply a philosophy, but also had an initiatory character, and from this Plato drew not only the cosmological part of his doctrine, as expounded in the *Timaeus*, but also his "theory of ideas", which is essentially nothing more than a transposition, using different terminology, of the Pythagorean conceptions of numbers as the principles of things. Thus, if one really wanted to find a term of comparison with Kabbalah among the Greeks, one would have to go back to Pythagoreanism; but this is precisely where the inanity of the "borrowing" thesis becomes most apparent: we are truly in the presence of two initiatory doctrines that similarly attach paramount importance to the science of numbers; but this is presented in radically different ways by each.

Here, some more general considerations will not be useless: it is perfectly normal for the same science to be found in different traditions, since in no field can truth be monopolised by a single traditional form to the exclusion of others; this fact, therefore, cannot be a cause for surprise, except, of course, to 'critics' who do not believe in truth; and even the opposite would be not only surprising but difficult to conceive. There is nothing in this that implies a more or less direct communication between two different traditions, even if one was indisputably older than the other: can't a certain truth be recognised and expressed independently of those who have already expressed it before, and, moreover, isn't this independence all the more likely since that same truth will, in fact, be expressed in another way? Moreover, it is necessary to note that this in no way contradicts the common origin of all traditions; but the transmission of principles from a common origin does not necessarily entail, in an explicit manner, the transmission of all the developments involved and all the applications to which they may give rise. in short, everything that is a matter of 'adaptation' can be considered to belong properly to this or that particular traditional form, and if its equivalent is found elsewhere, it is because the same principles had to be drawn from it.

naturally have the same consequences, whatever, on the other hand, the special form in which they may have been expressed here or there (subject, of course, to certain symbolic modes of expression which, being the same everywhere, must be considered as going back to the primordial Tradition). Furthermore, the differences in form will generally be greater the further we move away from the principles to descend to a more contingent order; and this constitutes one of the main difficulties in understanding certain traditional sciences.

These considerations, as will be readily understood, remove almost all interest in the origin of traditions or the provenance of the elements they contain, from the 'historical' point of view, as understood in the secular world, since they render the assumption of any direct filiation completely useless; and, even where a similarity is observed, it can be explained much less by often implausible "borrowings" than by "affinities" due to a set of common conditions or similarities (race, type of language, mode of existence, etc.) among the peoples to whom these forms are respectively addressed³. As for cases of real filiation, they cannot be totally excluded, because it is evident that not all traditional forms come directly from the primordial Tradition, but that sometimes other forms have had to play the role of intermediaries; but, in most cases, the latter are those that have disappeared completely and, in general, these transmissions date back to times too distant for current history, whose field of research is ultimately very limited, to have the slightest knowledge of them, not to mention that the means by which they have been carried out are not accessible to its methods of research.

³ This may apply particularly to the similarity of expression that we have already pointed out between Kabbalah and Islamic esoterism; and with regard to the latter, a rather curious observation can be made in this regard: its "exoteric" adversaries, within Islam itself, have often tried to devalue it by attributing a foreign origin to it, and, on the pretext that many of the best-known Sufis were Persians, they have sought to see in it supposed borrowings from Mazdeism, extending this notion even to the "science of numbers": well, there is no trace of anything similar among the ancient Persians, whereas, on the contrary, such a science exists in Judaism in a completely comparable form, which, incidentally, is simply explained by the "affinities" to which we alluded, without mentioning the more distant community of origin, to which we shall return; but, at least, this fact was the only one that could give some semblance of plausibility to the idea of a borrowing from a pre-Islamic and non-Arabic doctrine, and it seems to have escaped them entirely.

All this does not distract us from our subject except in appearance, and returning to the relationship between Kabbalah and Pythagoreanism, we can now ask ourselves this question: if the former cannot be derived directly from the latter, even supposing that it does not really precede it, and even if only because of a difference in form that is too great, to which we shall return shortly in more detail, could we not at least consider a common origin for both, which, in the opinion of some, would be the tradition of the ancient Egyptians (which, needless to say, would take us far beyond the Alexandrian period)? This, let us say at once, is a theory that has been greatly abused; and, as far as Judaism is concerned, it is impossible for us, despite certain fantastic assertions, to discover in it the slightest connection with anything that can be known of Egyptian tradition (we refer to form, which is the only thing to be considered here, since, for the rest, the substance is necessarily identical in all traditions); there would undoubtedly be more real links with the Chaldean tradition, either by derivation or by simple affinity, and to the extent that it is possible to grasp something of these traditions that have been extinct for so many centuries.

As for Pythagoreanism, the issue is perhaps more complex; and Pythagoras' travels, whether taken literally or symbolically, do not necessarily imply borrowings from the doctrines of this or that people (at least in essence, and regardless of certain points of detail), but rather the establishment or strengthening of certain ties with more or less equivalent initiations. It seems, in fact, that Pythagoreanism was above all the continuation of something that already existed in Greece itself, and that there is no reason to look for its main source elsewhere: we refer to the Mysteries and, more particularly, to Orphism, of which it was probably nothing more than a "readaptation" in that period of the 6th century BC which, by a strange synchronism, saw changes taking place in the traditions of almost all peoples. It is often said that the Greek Mysteries themselves were of Egyptian origin, but such a general statement is too "simplistic", and, while it may be true in certain cases, such as the Mysteries of Eleusis (which, if anything, seem to be particularly noteworthy), there are others in which it would not be tenable in any way⁴. However, whether we are talking about Pythagoreanism itself or the earlier Orphism, it is not in Eleusis that we should look for the 'point of contact', but in Delphi, and the Delphic Apollo is by no means Egyptian, but Hyperborean, an origin which, in any case, is impossible to

⁴ It hardly needs to be said that certain accounts, in which Moses and Orpheus are seen receiving initiation at the same time in the temples of Egypt, are nothing more than fantasies with no basis in reality.

consider for the Hebrew tradition⁵ ; this, moreover, brings us directly to the most important point concerning the science of numbers and the different forms it has taken.

In Pythagoreanism, this science of numbers appears closely linked to that of geometric forms; and the same is true of Plato, who, in this respect, is purely Pythagorean. This could be seen as the expression of a characteristic feature of the Hellenic mentality, applied above all to the consideration of visual forms; and it is well known that, in fact, of the mathematical sciences, geometry is the one that the Greeks developed most particularly⁶. However, there is something else, at least as far as 'sacred geometry' is concerned, which is what we are dealing with here: the 'geometer' God of Pythagoras and Plato, understood in its most precise and, shall we say, 'technical' meaning, is none other than Apollo. We cannot, in this regard, go into developments that would take us too far afield, and we will return to this subject on another occasion; However, it should be noted that this fact clearly contradicts the hypothesis of a common origin of Pythagoreanism and Kabbalah, particularly at the very point where attempts have been made to link them, and which, in truth, is what may have given rise to the idea of such a link, namely the apparent similarity between the two doctrines in terms of the role played by the science of numbers in each.

In Kabbalah, this same science of numbers is not presented in any way as being linked in the same way to geometric symbolism; and it is easy to understand why this is so, since this symbolism could not suit nomadic peoples such as the Hebrews and Arabs were, in principle⁷. On the contrary, we find there something that has no equivalent in the Greeks: the close union, one might even say identification, in many respects, of the science of numbers with

⁵ This refers to direct derivation; even if the primordial Tradition was Hyperborean, and if, consequently, all traditional forms without exception are ultimately linked to this origin, there are cases, such as that of the Hebrew Tradition, in which this is highly indirect and involves a more or less long series of intermediaries, which, moreover, would be very difficult to reconstruct exactly.

⁶ Algebra, on the other hand, is of Indian origin and was not introduced into the West until much later, through the Arabs, who gave it the name it has retained (*el-jabr*).

⁷ On this point, see chapter XXI of the book *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, entitled *Cain and Abel*. It should not be forgotten that, as we indicated at the time, Solomon had to resort to foreign workers for the construction of the Temple, a fact that is particularly significant because of the intimate relationship between geometry and architecture.

of letters, because of their numerical correspondences; this is what is eminently characteristic of Kabbalah⁸, and is not found anywhere else, at least in this aspect and with this development, except, as we have already said, in Islamic esotericism, that is, in short, in the Arab tradition.

At first glance, it may seem surprising that considerations of this kind remained foreign to the Greeks⁹, given that letters also have a numerical value among them (which, incidentally, is the same as in the Hebrew and Arabic alphabets for those that have equivalents), and that they never even had other numeric symbols. The explanation for this fact, however, is quite simple: Greek writing is, in reality, nothing more than a foreign import (either "Phoenician," as is often said, or "Cadmean," that is, "Oriental" without further specification, as attested to by the names of the letters themselves), and in its numerical or other symbolism, it never formed a body, so to speak, with the language itself¹⁰. On the contrary, in languages such as Hebrew and Arabic, the meaning of words is inseparable from literal symbolism, and it would be impossible to give a complete interpretation of their deepest meaning, which is what really matters from a traditional and initiatory point of view (for we must not forget that these are essentially "sacred languages"), without taking into account the numerical value of the letters that compose them; the relationships that exist between numerically equivalent words and those to which they sometimes give rise are, in this respect, a particularly clear example¹¹. There is, therefore, in

⁸ Let us remember, in this regard, that the word *gematria* (which, being of Greek origin, must have been introduced, like a number of other terms of the same origin, in relatively recent times, which in no way means that what it designates did not exist previously), does not derive from geometry, as is often claimed, but from *grammateis*; thus, it is really the science of letters.

⁹Only in Christianity can something like this be found in Greek writings, and then it is clearly a transposition of fundamental elements whose origin is Hebrew; we refer, in this regard, mainly to the Apocalypse; and probably things of the same order could also be pointed out in what remains of the writings linked to Gnosticism.

¹⁰ Not even in the symbolic interpretation of words (for example, Plato's *Cratylus*) does consideration of the letters that compose them come into play; the same is true, moreover, of *nirukta* in relation to the Sanskrit language, and although there is a literal symbolism in certain aspects of Tradition, even a highly developed one, it is based on principles that are totally different from those discussed here.

¹¹ This is one of the reasons why the idea of writing Arabic in Latin characters, put forward by some on the pretext of 'convenience', is totally unacceptable and even absurd (without prejudice to other more contingent considerations, such as the impossibility of establishing a truly accurate transcription, precisely because not all Arabic letters have their equivalent in the Latin alphabet). The real reasons why certain Orientalists propagate this idea are, moreover, completely different from those they put forward, and

something that, as we said at the beginning, is essentially due to the very constitution of these languages, which is linked to them in a truly "organic" way, rather than having been added to them from outside and at a later date, as in the case of the Greek language; and since this element is found in both Hebrew and Arabic, it can legitimately be considered that they come from the common source of these two languages and the two traditions they express, that is, what can be called the 'Abrahamic' tradition.

Now, then, we can draw the necessary conclusions from these considerations: if we consider the science of numbers among the Greeks and the Hebrews, we see it in two different forms, based, on the one hand, on geometric symbolism and, on the other, on literal symbolism¹². As a result, it cannot be a question of 'borrowing' on either side, but only of equivalences as are necessarily found among all traditional forms; Furthermore, we completely sidestep any question of "priority", which is of no real interest in these circumstances and perhaps insoluble, as the real starting point can be found much further back than the periods for which it is possible to establish a chronology, even if it is not very rigorous. Furthermore, the very thesis of an immediate common origin must also be ruled out, since we see how the tradition of which this science is an integral part goes back, on the one hand, to an "Apollonian" source, that is, directly Hyperborean, and, on the other hand, to an "Abrahamic" source, which is probably linked above all (as suggested, moreover, by the very names "Hebrews" and "Arabs") to the traditional current coming from the "lost island of the West"¹³.

must be sought in an "anti-traditional" intention in relation to political concerns; but that is another story.

¹² We say "based" because, in both cases, these symbolisms constitute the sensible "support" and, as it were, the "body" of the science of numbers.

¹³We consistently use the expression "science of numbers" to avoid any confusion with profane arithmetic; perhaps, however, a term such as "arithmology" could be adopted; but we must reject the recently invented term "numerology" because of the "barbarism" of its hybrid composition. However, a term such as "arithmology" could be adopted; but we must reject, because of the "barbarism" of its hybrid composition, the recently invented term "numerology", by which, moreover, some seem to want to designate above all a kind of "divinatory art" that has almost no relation to the traditional science of numbers.

6.

THE JEWISH KABBALAH OF PAUL VULLIAUD*

Until now, there has been no truly serious comprehensive work on the study of Kabbalah. Indeed, Adolphe Frank's book, despite its reputation, showed the extent to which its author, full of academic prejudices and completely ignorant of Hebrew, was incapable of understanding the subject he attempted to address. As for certain compilations that are as indigestible as they are fanciful, such as that of Papus, it is better not to mention them. There was therefore a regrettable gap to be filled, and it seemed to us that the important work of Mr Paul Vulliaud¹ should have been intended precisely for that purpose; but although this work has been done very conscientiously and contains many interesting things, we must admit that on reading it we experienced a certain disappointment.

This work, which we would have liked to recommend without reservation, does not deliver what its very general title seemed to promise, and the content of the book is far from flawless.

To tell the truth, the subtitle 'Critical Essay' should have alerted us to the spirit in which the book was conceived, for we know only too well what is meant by the word 'criticism' when used by 'official' scholars; but since Mr Vulliaud does not belong to that category, at first we were simply surprised that he used an expression susceptible to such an annoying interpretation. Later, we better understood the intention that the author had wanted to convey through this means; we found this intention expressed very clearly in a note in the

* *La Kabbale juive*, review published in the magazine "Ignis," Rome, 1925, p. 116, translated from Italian by Gabriela Pirinoli. Reproduced in *Formes Traditionnelles et Cycles Cosmiques*.

¹ *La Kabbale juive: histoire et doctrine*, 2 vols. in-8° of 520 and 460 pages. (Paris, 1923). (Reprinted in Editions d'Aujourd 'hui, Paris, 197?. Translator's note.)

which states that it has set itself a "dual purpose": "To discuss Kabbalah and its history, and then to explain the scientific method used by most reputable authors" (volume II, p. 206).

Thus, for him, it was not a question of following the authors in question or adopting their prejudices but, on the contrary, of combating them, for which we can only congratulate him. Only he wanted to combat them on their own ground and, in a sense, with their own weapons, and that is why he has become, so to speak, a critic of the critics. Indeed, he too takes the standpoint of pure and simple erudition; but, even though he has done so voluntarily, one wonders to what extent such an attitude has been truly skilful and advantageous. Vulliaud defends himself against being a Kabbalist, and he defends himself with an insistence that has surprised us and which we do not quite understand. Is he, then, one of those who glory in being "profane" and whom we have hitherto encountered mainly in "official" circles and towards whom he has shown just severity? He goes so far as to describe himself as a "mere amateur"; in this we wish to believe that he is slandering himself. Does he not thus deprive himself of some of the authority he would need when confronting authors whose assertions he disputes? Moreover, this prejudice of considering a doctrine from a "profane" point of view, that is, "from the outside", seems to us to exclude any possibility of deep understanding. And even if such an attitude is only feigned, it is no less regrettable, for even if he has attained such understanding on his own, he will thus be forced to reveal nothing of it, and the interest of the doctrinal part will be greatly diminished as a result. As for the critical part, the author will be considered more of a polemicist than a qualified judge, which will constitute an obvious disadvantage for him. Moreover, two aims for a single work are probably too many, and in the case of Mr Vulliaud, it is very regrettable that the second of these aims, mentioned above, too often makes him forget the first, which was nevertheless by far the most important. Discussions and criticisms follow one another from one end of his book to the other, even in chapters whose titles would seem to announce a purely doctrinal theme; all this gives a certain impression of disorder and confusion. On the other hand, among Mr Vulliaud's criticisms, although some are amply justified, for example those concerning Renan and Frank, as well as certain occultists, and which are the most numerous, there are others that are more debatable; particularly those concerning Fabre d'Olivet, with regard to whom Vulliaud seems to echo certain rabbinical hatreds (unless he has inherited Napoleon's own hatred for the author of *La langue hébraïque restituée*, but this second hypothesis is much less likely). In any case, even if it is a question of

The most legitimate criticisms, which can usefully contribute to destroying usurped reputations, could the same thing not have been said more briefly and, above all, more seriously and in a less aggressive tone? The work would certainly have benefited, first of all, because it would not have appeared to be a polemical work, an aspect that it too often presents and that some ill-intentioned people could use against the author. More seriously, the essential would have been less sacrificed to considerations that, in short, are only incidental and of rather relative interest. There are also other regrettable flaws: the imperfections in form are sometimes annoying; we are not referring only to the extremely numerous printing errors, of which the errata correct only a tiny fraction, but also to the all too frequent inaccuracies which, even with a great deal of goodwill, are difficult to attribute to the typography. Thus, there are several truly unfortunate "slips". We have noticed a number of them, and curiously, they are found mainly in the second volume, as if it had been written more hastily. For example, Frank was not a "professor of philosophy at the Collège Stanislas" (p. 241), but at the Collège de France, which is quite different. Mr Vulliaud also writes Cappelle and sometimes Capele, the name of the Hebrew scholar Louis Cappel, whose exact name we can establish with certainty, as we have his own signature before our eyes as we write this article. Could it be that P. Vulliaud has only seen this name in its Latinised form? All this is not a big deal, but on the contrary, on p. 26, it is a divine name of 26 letters, and further on, we find that the same name has 42 letters; this passage is really incomprehensible, and we wonder if there is not some omission in it. We will point out another negligence of the same order, but one that is all the more serious in that it is the cause of a real injustice: criticising an editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Mr Vulliaud ends with this sentence: "One could not expect sound logic from an author who, in the same article, considers that Kabbalistic doctrines have been *absurdly over-estimated* and that, at the same time, the *Zohar* is a *farrago of absurdity*" (vol. II, p. 418). The English words have been quoted by Vulliaud himself; however, *over-estimated* does not mean "*under-estimated*", but rather the opposite, "*over-estimated*", and thus, whatever other errors may be contained in the author's article, the contradiction for which he is criticised is in no way actually found there. Of course, these things are mere details, but when one is so severe towards others and always ready to catch them out, should one not strive to be irreproachable? In the transcription of Hebrew words, there is a truly annoying lack of uniformity; we know full well that no transcription can be perfectly accurate, but at least, once one has been adopted, whatever it may be, it would be preferable to stick to it.

to her constantly. In addition, there are terms that seem to have been translated too hastily, and for which it would not have been difficult to find a more satisfactory interpretation; we will give a fairly precise example below. On page 49 of volume II, there is an image of *teraphim* on which the word *luz* (*light*) is inscribed, among others. Mr Vulliaud has reproduced the different meanings of the verb *luz* given by Buxtorf, following each one with a question mark, to such an extent did they seem inapplicable to him, but he did not think that there was also the noun *light*, which generally means "almond" or "fruit stone" (and also "almond tree", because it designates both the tree and its fruit). Well, this noun, in rabbinical language, is the name of a small indestructible part of the body to which the soul remains attached after death (and it is curious to note that this Hebrew tradition most likely inspired certain theories of Leibniz); this latter meaning is the most plausible and, moreover, is confirmed, in our opinion, by the very place that the word *luz* occupies in the figure.

Sometimes the author is wrong to touch on topics about which he is clearly much less informed than about Kabbalah, and which he could very well have dispensed with discussing, which would have spared him certain mistakes that, however excusable (since it is hardly possible to have the same competence in all fields), can only detract from a serious work. Thus, we have found (vol. II, p. 377) a passage dealing with a supposed "Chinese theosophy" in which we have had some difficulty recognising Taoism, which is not "Theosophy" in any sense of the word, and whose summary, based on a source we do not know very well (because the reference is missing here), is eminently fanciful. For example, "active nature, *tien* = heaven" is contrasted with "passive nature, *kuen* = earth"; however, *Kuen* has never meant "earth", and the expressions "active nature" and "passive nature" are much less reminiscent of Far Eastern concepts than of Spinoza's "naturung nature" and "*nature naturata*". With the utmost naivety, two distinct qualities are confused here: that of 'active perfection', *Khien*, and that of 'passive perfection', *Kuen* (we say 'perfection' and not 'nature'), and that of 'heaven', *tien*, and 'earth', *ti*.

Since we are discussing Eastern doctrines, we will make another observation in this regard: after having rightly pointed out the disagreement between Egyptologists and other "specialists" of the same kind, which makes it impossible to...

Although his opinion can be trusted, P. Vulliaud points out that the same thing happens among Indianists (t II, p. 363), which is accurate; but how could he not see that this last case was in no way comparable to the others? Indeed, in the case of peoples such as the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians, who disappeared without leaving any legitimate successors, we obviously have no means of direct verification, and one may well feel a certain scepticism about the value of certain fragmentary and hypothetical reconstructions. but, on the other hand, for India or China, whose civilisations have continued to the present day and are still alive, it is perfectly possible to know what to expect; what matters is not so much what Indianists say, but what Hindus themselves think. Mr Vulliaud, who is careful to use only Hebrew sources to find out what Kabbalah really is, in which he is quite right, since Kabbalah is the Hebrew tradition itself, could he not admit that one must not act differently when studying other traditions? There are other things that Mr Vulliaud does not know much better than the doctrines of the Far East and which, nevertheless, should have been more accessible to him, if only because they are Western. Thus, for example, Rosicrucianism, about which he seems to know little more than "profane" and "official" historians, and whose essentially hermetic character seems to have escaped him; he only knows that it is something totally different from Kabbalah (the occult and modern idea of a Kabbalistic Rosicrucianism is, in fact, pure fantasy), but in order to support this assertion and not settle for a simple denial, it would also be necessary to demonstrate precisely that Kabbalah and Hermeticism are two totally different traditional forms. As far as Rosicrucianism is concerned, we do not think it possible to 'arouse a little emotion in the dignitaries of classical science' by recalling the fact that Descartes tried to make contact with the Rosicrucians during his stay in Germany (vol. II, p. 235), for this fact is more than well known; but the truth is that he did not succeed, and the very spirit of his works, as contrary as possible to all esotericism, is both proof and explanation of that failure. It is surprising to see cited, as evidence of Descartes' affiliation with the Brotherhood, a dedication (that of the *Thesaurus Mathematicus*) that is manifestly ironic and in which, on the contrary, one senses all the contempt of a spurned man who had been unable to obtain the affiliation he had sought. Even more remarkable are Mr Vulliaud's errors concerning Freemasonry; immediately after mocking *Eliphas Lévi*, who did indeed accumulate confusions when he wanted to talk about the Kabbalah, Vulliaud, in turn, when talking about Freemasonry, also makes statements that are no less amusing. Let us quote the following passage intended to establish that there is no link between Kabbalah and Freemasonry: 'An observation must be made about the fact of limiting Freemasonry to the borders

European. Freemasonry is universal, global. Is it as cabalistic among the Chinese and blacks? (vol. II, p. 319). Certainly, Chinese and African secret societies (the latter referring more specifically to those in the Congo) have had no connection with the Kabbalah, but neither have they had any connection with Freemasonry; and if the latter is not "limited to European borders," it is only because Europeans have introduced it to other parts of the world.

And this, no less curious: How can this anomaly be explained (if we accept that Freemasonry is inspired by Kabbalah): the Freemason Voltaire, who had nothing but contempt for the Jewish race? (p. 324). Is Mr Vulliaud unaware that Voltaire was only admitted to the lodge "Les Neuf Soeurs" ("The Nine Sisters") on a purely honorary basis, and only six months before his death? On the other hand, even taking a better example, that would not prove anything either, since many Freemasons, we should say most of them, even in the highest degrees, have no real knowledge of Freemasonry (and we could include among them certain dignitaries of the Grand Orient of France whom Mr Vulliaud, undoubtedly impressed by their titles, cites without any reason as authorities). Our author would have been better inspired to invoke, in support of his thesis, the fact that in Germany and Sweden there are Masonic organisations from which Jews are strictly excluded; we must believe that he was completely unaware of this, as he makes no mention of it whatsoever. It is very interesting to extract the following lines from the note at the end of the same chapter (p. 328): "Various people might reproach me for reasoning as if there were only one form of Freemasonry. We are not unaware of the anathemas of spiritualist Freemasonry against the Grand Orient of France, but, on balance, we consider the conflict to be a family dispute." We would point out that there are not only "two Masonic schools", but many, and that the Grand Orient of France, like that of Italy, is not recognised by other organisations because it rejects certain *landmarks* or fundamental principles of Freemasonry, which, after all, constitutes a rather serious "dispute" (whereas among other "schools", the differences are far from being so profound). As for the expression "spiritualist Freemasonry", it does not correspond to anything at all, since it is nothing more than an invention of certain occultists, whose suggestions Mr Vulliaud is generally less inclined to accept. And, a little further on, we see the Ku Klux Klan and the Orangists (we assume this refers to *the Royal Order of Orange*) mentioned as examples of "spiritualist Freemasonry", that is, two purely Protestant associations, which undoubtedly may have Freemasons among their members, but which, in themselves, have no more connection with Freemasonry than the Congo societies we have mentioned.

We have dealt with this before. Naturally, Vulliaud has the right to ignore all these things and many others, and we do not intend to reproach him for it; but, once again, what compelled him to talk about it, given that these matters were outside the scope of his subject and, moreover, he did not claim to be entirely comprehensive on this subject? In any case, if he was interested in doing so, it would have been easier for him, at least in some of these cases, to gather sufficiently accurate information than to search for a large number of rare and unknown books, which he takes pleasure in citing with a certain ostentation.

Of course, all these reservations do not prevent us from recognising the true merits of the work, nor from paying tribute to the considerable effort it demonstrates; on the contrary, if we have insisted so much on its flaws, it is because we believe that it is a favour to an author to criticise him on very specific points. Now we must say that P. Vulliaud, contrary to modern authors who dispute him (and among these, strangely enough, there are many Israelis), has clearly established the antiquity of Kabbalah, its specifically Jewish and strictly orthodox character; among "rationalist" critics, it is fashionable to oppose esoteric tradition to exoteric rabbinism, as if these were not two complementary aspects of one and the same doctrine. At the same time, he has destroyed a good number of legends that are too widespread (by these same "rationalists") and devoid of any foundation, such as the one that seeks to connect Kabbalah with Neoplatonic doctrines, the one that attributes the *Zohar* to Moses de León and thus makes it a work that only dates from the 13th century, the one that seeks to make Spinoza a Kabbalist, and several others of varying importance. He has also made it perfectly clear that Kabbalah is in no way a form of "pantheism", as some have claimed (no doubt because they believe they can link it to Spinoza's theories, which are truly "pantheistic"); and he quite rightly observes that "this term has been strangely misused", being applied left, right and centre to the most varied conceptions with the sole intention of "trying to produce an effect of terror" (vol. I, p. 429), and also, we would add, because those who do so believe themselves to be exempt from any further discussion. This absurd accusation is gratuitously and very frequently repeated against all Eastern doctrines; but it always has an effect on some timid minds, even though the word 'pantheism', through being used abusively, ends up meaning nothing at all. When will it be understood, then, that the names that modern philosophy has invented are only applicable to these systems exclusively? Mr Vulliaud also shows that a supposed 'mystical philosophy' of the Jews, different from the Kabbalah, is something that has never actually existed; but, on the contrary, he makes the mistake of using the word...

He uses the term "mysticism" to describe Kabbalah. Undoubtedly, this depends on the meaning given to this word, and the meaning he indicates (which would make it roughly synonymous with "Gnosis" or transcendent knowledge) would be tenable if we had to concern ourselves only with etymology, since it is true that "mysticism" and "mystery" have the same root (vol. I, pp. 124 and 131-132), but we must take into account established usage, which has considerably modified and restricted its meaning. On the other hand, in neither of these two cases can we accept the statement that "mysticism is a philosophical system" (p. 126); and if too often in this work, Kabbalah takes on a "philosophical" appearance, this is a consequence of the "external" point of view from which it has chosen to situate itself. For us, Kabbalah is much more a metaphysics than a philosophy, much more initiatory than mystical; one day, moreover, we will have the opportunity to explain the essential differences that exist between the path of the initiates and that of the mystics (which, let us say in passing, correspond respectively to the 'dry path' and the 'wet path' of the alchemists). Be that as it may, the varied results we have pointed out could henceforth be considered definitively established if the incomprehension of some self-styled scholars did not always call everything into question, referring to a historical point of view that P. Vulliaud has given (we would be tempted to say unfortunately, without thereby disregarding its relative importance) too much space with respect to the strictly doctrinal point of view. With regard to the latter, we would point out as particularly interesting, in the first volume, the chapters concerning *En Soph* and the *Sefiroth* (chap. LX), the *Shekinah* and *Metatron* (chap. XIII), although it would have been desirable to find in them more developments and details, as well as the chapter in which Kabbalistic procedures are explained (chap. V). Indeed, we wonder whether those who have no prior knowledge of Kabbalah will find sufficient clarification in reading it.

Regarding what might be called applications of Kabbalah, which, although secondary to pure doctrine, are certainly not to be dismissed, we will mention, in the second volume, the chapters devoted to ritual (chap. XIV), those devoted to amulets (chap. XV) and to messianic ideas (chap. XVI); they contain truly new or at least little-known information; in particular, chapter XVI contains a wealth of information on the social and political aspects that largely contribute to giving the Kabbalistic tradition its distinctly Jewish character. As a whole, Vulliaud's work seems to us above all capable of rectifying a large number of misconceptions, which is certainly something, and even a lot, but perhaps not enough for such an important work that aims to be more than just a simple

Introduction. If the author ever publishes a new edition, it would be desirable for him to separate the doctrinal part as completely as possible, significantly reduce the first part, and expand the second part, even if doing so means running the risk of no longer being considered a 'mere amateur', a label to which he has been overly keen to confine himself.

To conclude this review of Mr. Vulliaud's book, we will make a few more observations on a subject that deserves particular attention and is related to the considerations we have already had occasion to discuss, especially in our study of *Le Roi du Monde*. We are referring to the subject of the *Shekinah* and *Metatron*. In its most general sense, the *Shekinah* is the 'real presence' of the Divinity; the first thing we must point out is that the passages of Scripture in which it is specifically mentioned are mainly those dealing with the establishment of a spiritual centre: the construction of the Tabernacle, the building of the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel. Such a centre, established under regularly defined conditions, was to be, in effect, the place of divine manifestation, always represented as a "Light"; and, although Mr. Vulliaud denies any connection between Kabbalah and Freemasonry (while acknowledging, however, that the symbol of the "Great Architect" is a common metaphor among rabbis), the expression "very illuminated and very regular place" that the latter has retained seems to be a reminder of the ancient priestly science that governed the construction of temples and which, moreover, was not particular to the Jews. It is pointless for us to address here the theory of "spiritual influences" (we prefer this expression to "blessings" to translate the Hebrew *berakoth*, especially since this is the meaning that the Arabic word *Ba-rakah* has clearly retained); but even considering things from this single point of view, it would be possible to explain the phrase of Elijah Levita that Mr. Vulliaud refers to: "Regarding this, the Masters of the Kabbalah have great secrets." Now, the matter is all the more complex in that the *Shekinah* presents itself in multiple aspects: it has two main ones, one internal and one external (vol. I, p. 495); but here, Mr. Vulliaud could have been a little clearer than he is, especially since, despite his intention to deal only with "Jewish Kabbalah," he has pointed out precisely "the relations between Jewish and Christian theologies concerning the *Shekinah*" (p. 493). Well, precisely in the Christian tradition there is a phrase that designates with the utmost clarity the two aspects he speaks of: *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*. The words *Gloria* and *Pax* refer respectively to the internal aspect, with regard to the Principle, and to the external aspect, with regard to the manifested world; and if both words are considered in this way, it can be immediately understood why they are pronounced by the

angels (*Malakim*) to announce the birth of "God with us" or "in us" (*Emmanuel*). It would also be possible, for the first aspect, to recall the theologians' theory of the "Light of Glory" in which and through which the beatific vision (*In excelsis*) takes place; and for the second aspect, we will also say that "Peace", in its esoteric sense, is indicated everywhere as a spiritual attribute of the spiritual centres established in this world (*terra*). On the other hand, the Arabic word *Sakinah*, which is clearly identical to the Hebrew word, is translated as "Great Peace", which is the exact equivalent of the "*Pax Profunda*" of the Rosicrucians and, in this way, it would undoubtedly be possible to explain what they understood by the "Temple of the Holy Spirit". Similarly, a number of Gospel texts could be interpreted accurately, especially since 'the secret tradition concerning the *Shekinah* would have some connection with the light of the Messiah' (p. 503). Is it unintentional, then, that Mr Vulliaud, in giving this last indication, says that it is a tradition 'reserved for those who follow the path that leads to *Pardes*', that is, as we have explained elsewhere, to the supreme spiritual Centre? This now leads us to another observation; a little further on, there is a "mystery concerning the jubilee" (p. 506) which is in a certain sense connected with the idea of "Peace", and in this regard, the following text from the *Zohar* (III, "The river that flows out of Eden is called *Joyel*, as in Jeremiah (XVII, 8): 'He shall spread his roots towards the river', from which it follows that the central idea of the Jubilee is the return of all things to their original state." It is clear that this refers to the return to the "primordial state" considered by all traditions and which we had to deal with in our study of Dante; and when it is added that "the return of all things to their first state will herald the messianic age" (p. 507), those who have read that study will remember what we said about the relationship between the "earthly Paradise" and the "heavenly Jerusalem". On the other hand, what is at stake here, always and everywhere, in the various phases of cyclical manifestation, is the *Pardes*, the centre of this world, which the traditional symbolism of all peoples compares to the Heart, the centre of being and "divine residence" (*Brahmapura* in Hindu doctrine), as the tabernacle that is its image and which, for this reason, is called in Hebrew *mishkan* or "dwelling place of God" (p. 493), a word that has the same root as the word *Shekinah*. From another point of view, the *Shekinah* is the synthesis of the *Sefiroth*; for in the Sephirotic tree, the "column on the right" is the side of Mercy, and the "column on the left" is that of Rigour; thus, we must also find them in the *Shekinah*. Indeed, "if man sins and strays from the *Shekinah*, he falls into the power of the forces (*Sárim*) that depend on Rigour" (p. 507), and then the *Shekinah* is called "the hand of rigour", which immediately brings to mind the well-known symbol of "the hand of justice". But, on the contrary, if man draws near to the *Shekinah*, he is freed, and the *Shekinah* is "the right hand".

of God, that is, that the "hand of justice" then becomes the "blessing hand". These are the mysteries of the "House of Justice" (*Beith-Din*), which is also another name for the supreme spiritual centre; it is hardly necessary to point out that the two sides we have considered are those on which the elect *and* the damned are divided in Christian representations of the "Last Judgement". A connection could also be established with the two paths that the Pythagoreans represented by the letter Y, and which in exoteric form were symbolised by the myth of Hercules between Virtue and Vice; with the two gates, heavenly and hellish, which among the Latins were associated with the symbolism of Janus; and with the two cyclical phases, ascending and descending, which among the Hindus were similarly linked to the symbolism of Ganesha. In short, it is easy to understand what expressions such as "right intention" and "good will" (*Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*, and those who are familiar with the numerous symbols we have alluded to here will see that it is not without reason that the feast of Christmas coincides with the winter solstice), when one takes care to set aside all the external philosophical and moral interpretations that have been given to it from the Stoics to Kant.

"The Kabbalah gives the *Shekinah* a Paredro, who bears names identical to hers and who, consequently, possesses the same characteristics" (pp. 496-498), and who naturally has as many divine aspects as the *Shekinah* herself; his name is *Metatron*, and this name is numerically equivalent to that of *Shaddai*, the 'Almighty', which is said to be the name of the God of Abraham." The etymology of the word *Metatron* is highly uncertain; in this regard, P. Vulliaud refers to several hypotheses, one of which derives it from the Chaldean *Mitra*, which means "rain" and which, moreover, has a certain connection with "light" due to its root. If this is the case, on the other hand, the similarity with the Hindu *Mitra* and the Zoroastrian *Mitra* is not sufficient reason to admit that Judaism has taken anything from foreign doctrines, just as the role attributed to rain in the various Eastern traditions is not plagiarism. In this regard, we will point out that Jewish tradition speaks of a "dew of light" emanating from the "Tree of Life," through which the resurrection of the dead will take place (p. 99), as well as an "effusion of dew," which represents the heavenly influence that is communicated to all worlds (p. 465), and which is singularly reminiscent of alchemical and Rosicrucian symbolism.

"The term *Metatron* includes all the meanings of guardian, Lord, envoy, and mediator" (p. 499); he is the "Angel of the Face" and also "the Prince of the World" (*Sâr ha-ôlam*); he is "the author of theophanies, divine manifestations in the sen-world

We would readily say that it is the "Celestial Pole" and, given that this is reflected in the "Earthly Pole", with which it is directly related according to the "axis of the world", could this be why it is said that *Metatron* himself was Moses' instructor? Let us also quote these lines: "His name is Mikael, the High Priest who is a burnt offering and oblation before God. And everything the Israelites do on earth is carried out in accordance with what happens in the celestial realm. The High Priest, in this lower world, symbolises *Mikael*, prince of Mercy... In all passages where Scripture speaks of the appearance of *Mikael*, it is the glory of the *Sheki-nah*" (pp. 500-501). What has been said here about the Israelites can be said of all peoples who possess a truly orthodox tradition; with even greater reason it must be said of the representatives of the primordial tradition, from which all others derive and to which all are subordinate. On the other hand, *Metatron* has not only the aspect of Mercy, but also that of Justice; in the heavenly world he is not only the Priest (*Kohen ha-gadol*), but also the Prince (*Sâr ha-gadol*), which is to say that the principle of royal power is found in him as much as that of priestly or pontifical power, to which the function of "mediator" also corresponds. It should also be noted that *Melek*, "king", and *Maleak*, "angel" or "messenger", are in reality but two forms of one and the same word. Furthermore, *Malaki*, "my messenger" (that is, the messenger of God or "the angel in whom God is", *Maleak ha-Elohim*) is an anagram of *Mikael*. It should be added that, although *Mikael* is identified with *Metatron*, as we have seen, he nevertheless represents only one aspect of him; alongside the luminous face there is also a dark face, and here we touch on other mysteries. Indeed, it may seem strange that Samael is also called *Sâr ha-ôlam*, and we are somewhat surprised that Mr Vulliaud has limited himself to mentioning this fact without the slightest comment (p. 512). It is this latter aspect, and this alone, which, in a lower sense, is 'the genius of this world', the *Princeps hujus mundi* referred to in the Gospel; and this relationship with *Metatron*, of whom he is like a shadow, justifies the use of the same designation in a double sense, and at the same time makes us understand why the apocalyptic number 666 is also a solar number (it is formed in particular by the name *Sorath*, demon of the Sun, and opposed as such to the angel *Mikael*). Moreover, Mr Vulliaud observes that according to Saint Hippolytus, "the Messiah and the Antichrist both have the lion as their emblem" (vol. II, p. 373), which is also a solar symbol; and the same observation could be made for the serpent and many other symbols. From a Kabbalistic point of view, these are also the two opposing faces of *Metatron*; more generally, on this subject of the double meaning of symbols, it would be appropriate to develop a whole theory that does not yet seem to have been clearly expounded. We will not dwell, at least for now, on this aspect of the matter, which is perhaps one of the most difficult to explain.

But let us return once more to the *Shekinah*: it is represented in the lower world by the last of the *Sefirot*, which is called *Malkuth*, meaning "Kingdom", a designation well worth noting from our point of view (as is that of *Tsedeck*, "The Just", which is sometimes its synonym); and *Malkuth* is the reservoir into which the waters from the river above flow, that is, all the emanations (graces or spiritual influences) that it pours out in abundance" (vol. I, p. 509). This "river above" and the waters that flow from it strangely remind us of the role attributed to the celestial river *Gangâ* in Hindu tradition, and it could also be noted that *Shakti*, of which *Gangâ* is an aspect, is not without a certain analogy with the *Shekinah*, if only because of the "providential" function they have in common. We are well aware that the usual exclusivity of Jewish conceptions is not very comfortable with such comparisons, but this does not make them any less real, and for us, who are not accustomed to allowing ourselves to be influenced by certain prejudices, it is of enormous interest to note them, as they confirm the essential doctrinal unity that lies behind the apparent diversity of external forms.

Naturally, the reservoir of heavenly waters is identical to the spiritual centre of our world; from there spring the four rivers of *Pardes*, flowing towards the four cardinal points. For the Hebrews, this spiritual centre is the Holy Mount of Zion, which they call the "heart of the world", and which thus becomes for them the equivalent of *the Mérû* of the Hindus or the *Alborj* of the Persians. "The Tabernacle of Holiness, the residence of the *Shekinah*, is the *Holy of Holies*, the heart of the Temple, which is in turn the centre of Jerusalem, just as Holy Zion is the centre of the Land of Israel, and the Land of Israel is the centre of the world" (p. 509).

In this way, Dante also presents Jerusalem as the "spiritual pole," as we have had occasion to explain, but when one departs from the strictly Jewish point of view, this becomes primarily symbolic and no longer constitutes a location in the strict sense of the word. All secondary spiritual centres, established with a view to adapting the primordial tradition to specific conditions, are images of the supreme centre. Zion may in reality be nothing more than one of these secondary centres and yet, by virtue of this analogy, be symbolically identified with the supreme centre. What we have already said elsewhere about the

"Holy Land", which is not only the Land of Israel, will make it easier to understand. Another very notable expression, synonymous with "Holy Land," is "Land of the Living"; it is said that "the Land of the Living comprises seven lands," and Mr. Vulliaud points out in this regard that "that land is Canaan, in which there were seven peoples" (vol. II, p. 116).

This is undoubtedly accurate in a literal sense, but symbolically, do these seven lands not correspond to the seven *dvīpas* which, according to Hindu tradition, have *Mēru* as their common centre? And if so, when the ancient worlds or creations prior to ours are represented by the "seven kings of Edom" (the number here is related to the seven "days" of Genesis), is there not a similarity, too strongly emphasised to be accidental, with the eras of the seven *Manus*, counted from the beginning of *the Kalpa* to the present day? We offer these few reflections only as an example of the consequences that can be drawn from the data contained in Paul Vulliaud's work; unfortunately, it is very likely that most readers will not be able to perceive this and draw their own conclusions. However, by following the critical part of our exposition with a doctrinal part, we have done, within the limits to which we have necessarily had to confine ourselves, what we would have liked to find in Mr. Vulliaud's work.

7.

THE *SIFRA DI TZENIUTHA**

Mr Paul Vulliaud has just published, as the first in a series of "fundamental texts of Kabbalah", a translation of the *Sifra di-Tzeniutha*, preceded by a long introduction, much longer than the translation itself, and even longer than the two translations, since this volume actually contains two successive versions of the text, one literal and the other paraphrased. This introduction seems primarily intended to show that, even after Jean de Pauly's *Zohar*, such work was far from useless; for this reason, it is largely devoted to a detailed historical review of the French translation of the *Zohar*, which, it seems, contains approximately everything there is to know about the life of the translator himself, a truly enigmatic character whose origins are still not definitively clear. This whole story is very curious, and in order to explain the gaps and imperfections in that work, it is important to know the conditions under which it was produced and the strange difficulties the publisher had with the unfortunate Jean de Pauly, who was somewhat afflicted with paranoia. However, we would venture to say that these details take up too much space here; on reading them, one might almost regret that P. Vulliaud did not devote himself to what might be called the minor aspects of the story, as he would undoubtedly have contributed to it with his unusual style of writing; but Kabbalistic studies would have lost out enormously.

Regarding their current state, the introduction itself contains general considerations in which Mr. Vulliaud attacks, as he knows how to do, the "Doctors," that is, the "officials," to whom he had already spoken harsh truths in his *Kabbale juive*, and then to a Jesuit, Fr. Bonsirven, whom some now seem determined to present as an incomparable authority on Judaism. This occasion gives rise to a number of very interesting observations, particularly on the procedures of the Kabbalists and the way in which they quote scriptural texts, "pas-

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mosaic," according to critics; and Vulliaud adds: "Contemporary exegesis has proved particularly incapable of analysing the 'quotations' from the Gospels properly, because it has decided to ignore the procedures of Jewish hermeneutics; we must transport ourselves to Palestine, since the Gospel work was produced in that region." This seems to agree, at least in tendency, with the works of a Jesuit, Fr. Marcel Jousse; and it is a pity that he is not mentioned, as it would have been interesting to contrast him with his colleague... On the other hand, Fr. Vulliaud rightly points out that Catholics who mock the magical formulas, or supposedly such, contained in Kabbalistic works, and who are quick to label them "superstitious," should take note that their own rituals are full of things of the same kind. Similarly, with regard to the accusation of "eroticism" and "obscenity" levelled against a certain type of symbolism: "Critics belonging to Catholicism should reflect, before joining their voices to those of rationalist Jews and Protestants, that Catholic theology, like Kabbalah, is easily open to ridicule in this regard." It is good that these things are said by a writer who professes Catholicism; and, in particular, some fanatical anti-Jews and anti-Masons should take advantage of this excellent lesson.

There are also many other points worth noting in the introduction, particularly regarding the Christian interpretation of *the Zohar*: Mr Vulliaud rightly expresses reservations about certain rather forced comparisons made by Drach and accepted by Jean de Pauly. He also returns to the question of the antiquity of *the Zohar*, which opponents of Kabbalah stubbornly continue to dispute with rather clumsy arguments. But there is something else we are very happy to emphasise: Mr Vulliaud states that "in order to translate certain essential passages properly, it is necessary to be initiated into the mysteries of Jewish esotericism" and that "de Pauly tackled the version of *the Zohar* without possessing such initiation"; later, he observes that the Gospel of St. John, as well as the Apocalypse, "were addressed to initiates"; and we could point out other similar examples. Thus, there is a certain change of attitude in Vulliaud, for which we can only congratulate him, since, until now, he seemed to experience a strange scruple about pronouncing the word "initiation", or at least, if he did so, it was little less than to mock certain "initiates" whom, to avoid any annoying confusion, he should rather have described as "pseudo-initiates". What he now writes is the exact truth: it is really "initiation" in the proper sense of the word, as far as Kabbalah is concerned, as well as any other esotericism truly worthy of the name; and we must add that this goes far beyond the deciphering of a kind of cryptography, which is what above all pa-

Mr Vulliaud should bear this in mind when he speaks as we have just seen. That also exists, without doubt, but it remains only a matter of outward form, which, moreover, is far from negligible, since one must pass through it in order to arrive at an understanding of the doctrine; but one should not confuse the means with the end, nor place them on the same level as the end.

Whatever the case may be, it is true that most of the time, Kabbalists may be talking about something very different from what they appear to be talking about; and these procedures are not exclusive to them, far from it, as they are also found in the Western Middle Ages; We had occasion to see this in relation to Dante and the "Fideli de Amor" (Faithful of Love), and we indicated at that time the main reasons for this, which are not all simply prudence, as the "profane" may be tempted to believe. The same thing also exists in Islamic esoterism, and developed to a degree that no one in the Western world, we believe, can suspect; moreover, the Arabic language, like Hebrew, lends itself admirably to this. Here, we find not only that symbolism—the most common—which Luigi Valli, in the work we have discussed, showed to be common to Sufis and "Faithful of Love"; there is something even better: is it conceivable to Western minds that a simple treatise on grammar, or geography, or even commerce, could at the same time have another meaning that makes it a work of high initiatory significance? And yet this is the case, and these are not random examples; these cases are those of three books that really exist and are now in our hands.

This leads us to offer a slight criticism of Vulliaud's translation of the title of *the Sifra di-Tzeniutha* itself: he writes "Secret Book" or "Book of Secrets," and the reasons he gives for this seem inconclusive to us. It is certainly childish to imagine, as some have done, that "this title recalled the flight of Simeon ben Yohai, during which the rabbi secretly composed this opus"; but that is not at all what "Book of Secrets" means, which in reality has a much higher and deeper meaning than "Secret Book". We are alluding to the important role that, in certain initiatory traditions, the very ones we are now concerned with, the notion of a 'secret' (*sôd* in Hebrew, *sîrr* in Arabic) plays, which has nothing to do with discretion or dissimulation, but is such by the very nature of things; Should we recall in this regard that, in early times, the Christian Church itself had a "discipline of secrecy" and that, in its original sense, the word "mystery" properly designates the inexpressible?

As for the translation itself, we have already said that there are two versions, and they are not a useless repetition, since the literal version, however useful it may be for those who want to refer to the text and follow it in detail, is often unintelligible. Furthermore, as we have said on many occasions, this is always the case when it comes to sacred books or other traditional writings, and if a translation had to be necessarily 'literal' in the school and university sense, they would have to be declared truly untranslatable. In reality, for us, who take a completely different point of view from that of linguists, it is the paraphrased and annotated version that constitutes the meaning of the text and allows it to be understood, where the literal version has the effect of a kind of "logograph", as Vulliaud says, or of incoherent rambling. We only regret that the commentary is not more extensive and explicit; the notes, although numerous and very interesting, are not always "illuminating", so to speak, and it is to be feared that they can only be understood by those who have more than a basic knowledge of Kabbalah; but we must certainly look forward to the continuation of these "fundamental texts", which, we hope, will happily complete this first volume. Mr Vulliaud owes it to us, and also to himself, to now provide a similar work concerning the *Iddra Rabba* and the *Iddra Zuta*, which, with the *Sí-fra di-Tzeniutha*, as he himself says, instead of being simply "annexes or appendices" to the *Zohar*, "are, on the contrary, its central parts", which contain, in a certain way, in the most concentrated form, all the essentials of the doctrine.

'S BOOK REVIEWS

Marcel Bulard: *The Scorpion, symbol of the Jewish people in religious art of the 14th-15th and 16th centuries.* (E. de Boccard, Paris.)

Based on his examination of paintings in the Saint-Sébastien chapel in Lans-le-Villard, Savoy, the author has collected all the similar documents he has been able to find and has produced a detailed study of them, accompanied by numerous reproductions. These are depictions of the scorpion, either on the banner carried by the personified Synagogue or, more frequently, in the representation of certain scenes from the Passion; in the latter case, the banner with the scorpion is generally associated with banners bearing other emblems and, above all, the letters SPQR, clearly indicating the participation of both the Jews and the Romans; there is something curious that seems to have escaped the author's attention: it could also be pointed out that these same letters, arranged in a different order (S Q R P), phonetically evoke the very name of the scorpion. As for the interpretation of this symbol, the author, drawing on the "Bestiaries" as well as on the dramatic poetry of the late Middle Ages, shows that it means above all falsehood and perfidy, and he also points out, quite rightly, that in the period in question, symbolism, which had previously been 'dogmatic', had become mainly 'moral', which, in short, is equivalent to saying that it was close to degenerating into simple 'allegory', a direct and inevitable consequence of the weakening of the traditional spirit. Be that as it may, we nevertheless think that, at least originally, there must have been something else, perhaps an allusion to the zodiac sign of Scorpio, which is linked to the idea of death; we can also say that, without such an allusion, the very passage of the Gospel in which the scorpion is contrasted with the egg (St Luke, XI, 11-12) remains completely incomprehensible. Another interesting and enigmatic point is the attribution of common symbols, particularly the scorpion and the basilisk, to the Synagogue and Dialectic; here, the applications considered, such as the reputation for dialectical skill that the Jews had, seem to us truly insufficient to account for such an association; and we cannot help but think of a tradition according to which the works of Aristotle, considered the master of Dialectic, contain a hidden meaning that only the Antichrist, who is said to be of Jewish descent, can penetrate and apply; could there be something to look for on this side?

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Emmanuel Malynski and Léon de Poncins, *La Guerre occulte [The Hidden War]* (Gabriel Beauchesne, Paris). Here, as in Léon de Poncins' previous works, which we have already had occasion to discuss, there are many very fair considerations regarding criticism of the modern world. The authors rightly denounce common errors, such as the belief that revolutions are "spontaneous movements", are among those who think that modern deviation, the stages of which they study most particularly in the course of the 19th century, must necessarily respond to a well-structured "plan", conscious at least in those who lead this "occult war" against everything that has a traditional, intellectual or social character. But when it comes to investigating "responsibilities," we have many reservations; the matter is not so simple or so easy, it must be acknowledged, since, by definition, what is at stake is not visible to the outside world, and the apparent pseudo-leaders are nothing more than more or less unconscious instruments. In any case, there is a tendency to greatly exaggerate the role attributed to Jews, to the point of assuming that they alone ultimately rule the world, without making certain necessary distinctions in this regard. How can they not realise that, for example, those who take an active part in certain events are nothing more than Jews who are entirely disconnected from their own tradition and who, as is always the case in such situations, have retained only the defects of their race and the negative aspects of their particular mentality? There are, however, passages (especially pages 105-110) that closely touch on some truths concerning "counter-initiation": it is true that we are not dealing here with just any "interests", which can only serve to move vulgar instruments, but with a "faith" that constitutes "a metaphysical mystery unfathomable even to the intelligence of ordinary man"; it is no less true that "there is a current of Satanism in history"... But this current is not only directed against Christianity (and perhaps this overly restricted way of looking at things is the cause of many "optical errors"); it is also directed, in the same way, against all traditions, whether Eastern or Western, without exception, including Judaism. As for Freemasonry, we would perhaps surprise the authors greatly if we said that the infiltration of modern ideas, to the detriment of the initiatory spirit, has made it not one of the agents of the "conspiracy" but, on the contrary, one of its first victims; and yet, reflecting on certain current efforts to "democratise" Catholicism itself, which have certainly not escaped them, they should, by analogy, come to understand what we mean by this... Dare we add that a certain desire to divert investigations, arousing and maintaining various "obsessions" (whether with Freemasonry, the Jews, the Jesuits, etc.)...

tas, the "yellow peril", or any other), is also precisely part of the "plan" they propose to denounce, and that the real "intimacies" of certain anti-Masonic blunders are particularly instructive in this regard? We know only too well that by insisting on this, we run the risk of displeasing everyone, on both sides; but is this a sufficient reason for not telling the truth?

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Léon de Poncins, *La mystérieuse Internationale juive [The Mysterious Jewish International]* (Gabriel Beauchesne, Paris). What we said recently here about *La Guerre occulte*, of which Léon de Poncins is also one of the authors, regarding certain exaggerations concerning the role of Jews in the world, and regarding the need to make certain distinctions in any case, also applies to this new volume. There is undoubtedly much truth in what is said about two "Internationals", one revolutionary and the other financial, which are undoubtedly much less opposed than a superficial observer might believe; but is all this, which is part of a much larger whole, really under the direction of the Jews (or rather, some Jews), or is it in fact being used by 'something' that is beyond them? We believe that a serious study should be made of the reasons why Jews, when they are unfaithful to their tradition, become more easily than others instruments of the 'influences' that preside over modern deviation; this would, in any case, be the opposite of the 'mission of the Jews', and it could be taken quite far... The author is quite right to speak of a 'conspiracy of silence' with regard to certain issues; but what would happen if he decided to touch on matters that are even more 'mysterious' and which, let us say in passing, 'anti-Jewish Masonic' publications are the first to refrain from ever mentioning?

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Charles Marston, *La Bible a dit vrai*. French version by Luce Clarence (Librairie Plon, Paris).

This book contains, first and foremost, if one may say so, an excellent critique of biblical 'criticism', which perfectly highlights everything that is biased in its methods and erroneous in its conclusions. It also seems that the position of such criticism, which believed itself to be so sure of itself, is now seriously compromised in the opinion of many, as all the recent archaeological discoveries do nothing but disprove it; perhaps this is the first time that such discoveries have finally served a purpose whose scope goes beyond that of simple scholarship... Needless to say, moreover, that

Those who truly understand tradition have never had any need for this type of evidence; but it must be acknowledged that, being based on facts that are in a certain sense 'material' and tangible, they are particularly appropriate for impressing the modern mind, which is sensitive only to things of this order. We will note in particular that the results obtained directly contradict all "evolutionary" theories and show "monotheism" at the very origins, and not as the result of a long development from a supposed primitive "animism". Another interesting point is the proof of the existence of alphabetic writing in the time of Moses and even earlier; and texts almost contemporary with him describe rites similar to those of the Pentateuch, which "critics" claimed were of "late" institution; finally, numerous historical facts referred to in the Bible and whose authenticity was disputed are now entirely confirmed. Naturally, alongside this, there are still many more or less doubtful points; and what we fear is that people will want to go too far in the direction of a narrow and exclusive 'literalism' which, whatever anyone says, has nothing at all to do with tradition in the true sense of the word. It is debatable whether we can speak of 'biblical chronology' when we go back beyond Moses; the time of Abraham may well be more distant than is supposed; and, as far as the Flood is concerned, the date that is assigned to it would reduce its importance to that of a local and very minor catastrophe, comparable to the floods of Deucalion and Ogyges. Also, when it comes to the origins of humanity, we should be wary of the obsession with the Caucasus and Mesopotamia, which is not traditional either and has arisen solely from interpretations formulated when certain things were no longer understood in their true sense. We cannot dwell too much on certain more specific points; however, we will point out this: how, while recognising that 'Melchizedek has been considered a very mysterious character' throughout tradition, can one attempt to make him simply the king of any small city, which was not even called Salem but Jebus? And, moreover, if one wishes to place the country of Midian beyond the Gulf of Aqaba, What about the tradition that the site of the Burning Bush is located in the crypt of St. Catherine's Monastery, at the foot of Mount Sinai? But, of course, none of this detracts from the value of the truly important discoveries, which will undoubtedly continue to multiply, especially since, after all, they only began about ten years ago. We can only recommend this clear and thorough exposition to all those who wish to find arguments against destructive and anti-traditional 'criticism'. To conclude, we need only issue a "warning" from another point of view: the author seems to rely on modern "metapsychics" to explain or at least admit miracles, the gift of prophecy

and, in general, relationships with what he rather unfortunately calls the "In-visible" (a word that has been overused and abused by occultists of all kinds; moreover, he is not the only one in this case, as we have recently observed other examples of a similar tendency; this is an annoying illusion, and on this side there is a danger that is all the greater the less one is aware of it; we should not forget that "diabolical tricks" take all forms, depending on the circumstances, and show almost inexhaustible resources!)

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I Protocolli dei Savi Anziani di Sion. Italian version with appendix and introduction (*La Vita Italiana*, Rome). The Italian translation of the famous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, published in 1921 by Dr. Giovanni Preziosi, editor of *La Vita Italiana*, has just been reissued with an introduction by Julius Evola, who attempts to bring some order to the endless discussions to which this "text" has given and continues to give rise, distinguishing between two different and not necessarily related issues, that of its "authenticity" and that of its "veracity", the latter being, in his view, the most important in reality. Its authenticity is hardly tenable, for many reasons that we will not examine here; in this regard, we will only draw attention to one point that seems not to have been sufficiently taken into consideration, and which is nevertheless perhaps the most decisive: that a truly and seriously secret organisation, whatever its nature, never leaves written documents behind.

On the other hand, the "sources" from which numerous passages in the *Protocols* have been obtained almost verbatim have been indicated: Maurice Joly's *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Ma-chiavel et Montesquieu*, a pamphlet directed against Napoleon III and published in Brussels in 1865, and the speech attributed to a rabbi from Prague in the novel *Biarritz*, published in 1868 by the German writer Hermann Goedsche under the pseudonym Sir John Retcliffe. There is yet another "source" that, to our knowledge, has never been mentioned: the novel entitled *Le Baron Jéhova*, by Sidney Vigneaux, published in Paris in 1886 and dedicated, curiously enough, "to the very gentlemanly A. de Gobineau, author of *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, who entered Valhalla on 13 October 1882". It should also be noted that, according to an indication given in the *Mémoires d'une aliénée* by Miss Hersilie Rouy, published by E. Le Normant des Varannes (Paris, 1886, pp. 308-309), Sidney Vigneaux was, like the latter, a friend of Dr Henri Favre, whom we have mentioned above; it is a strange story in which the name of Jules Favre also appears, who is otherwise found mixed up in

embedded in so many similar issues that it is difficult to see it as a mere coincidence... In *Le Baron Jéhova* (pp. 59-87), one can read a supposed "Testament of Ybarzabal" that bears striking similarities to the *Protocols*, but with the important distinction that the Jews appear only as the instrument of execution of a plan that was neither conceived nor desired by them. Similar features can also be seen in the introduction to Alexandre Dumas' *Joseph Balsamo*, although here it is not Jews at all that are involved, but an imaginary Masonic assembly. we would add that this assembly is not unrelated to the pseudo-Rosicrucian "Parliament" described, almost exactly on the same date, by the American writer George Lippard in "Paul Ardenheim, the Monk of the Wis-sahickon", an extract reproduced by Dr. Swinburne Clymer in *The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America*. It is clear that all these writings, in their more or less "novel" form, draw their general inspiration from the same "current" of ideas, whether or not their authors approve of these ideas, and that, moreover, according to their tendencies or particular prejudices, they always attribute their origin to the Jews, the Freemasons or whoever else; the essence of all this, in short, and what constitutes, one might say, their element of "truthfulness," is the assertion that the entire orientation of the modern world responds to a "plan" established and imposed by some mysterious organisation. It is well known what we think about this, and we have often explained the role of "counter-initiation" so that there is no need to insist on it again. To tell the truth, it was not at all necessary to be a 'prophet' to realise these things at the time when the *Protocols* were written, probably in 1901, nor at the time when most of the other works we have referred to date from, i.e. around the middle of the 19th century; even then, although they were less apparent than today, a little perceptive observation was enough; but now we must make a point that does not do justice to the intelligence of our contemporaries: if someone simply "honestly" states what they observe and what they logically deduce from it, no one believes them or even pays attention to them; if, on the contrary, they present the same things as emanating from an imaginary organisation, these quickly take on a "documentary" aspect, and everyone springs into action: a strange effect of the superstitions instilled in modern people by the all-too-famous "historical method" and which are also part of the indispensable suggestions for the fulfilment of the "plan" in question. We must also point out that, according to the 'fabrication' of the *Protocols* themselves, the organisation that invents and propagates modern ideas in order to achieve its goals of world domination is perfectly aware of the falsity of its ideas; it is clear that this must indeed be the case, for it knows only too well what to expect; but then it seems that the

The adoption of such a lie cannot, in itself, be the true and sole objective it sets out to achieve, and this leads us to consider another point which, indicated by Evola in his introduction, has been taken up and developed in the November issue of *Vita Italiana*, in an article signed by "Arthos" and entitled "*Transformazioni del Regnum*". In fact, the *Protocols* not only set out a 'tactic' aimed at the destruction of the traditional world, which is its most negative aspect and corresponds to the current phase of events; there is also the idea of the merely transitory nature of this phase and the subsequent establishment of a supranational "Regnum", an idea that can be considered a distortion of that of the "Holy Empire" and other similar traditional conceptions which, as the author of the article recalls, have been expounded by us in *Le Roi du Monde*. To explain this fact, "Arthos" appeals to the deviations which, constituting a veritable "subversion", may be suffered by certain elements, authentically traditional in their origin, which in a way survive themselves when the "spirit" has withdrawn from them; and he cites, in support of this thesis, what we have recently said here with regard to "psychic residues"; on the other hand, the considerations he offers on the successive phases of modern deviation and on the possible constitution, as the ultimate outcome of this deviation, of a true "counter-tradition," of which the "*Regnum*" would be precisely its expression in the social order, may perhaps contribute to elucidating more completely this aspect of the question which, even quite apart from the special case of the *Protocols*, is certainly not without interest.

In *Etudes Traditionnelles*, January 1938. Reprinted in *Le Théosophisme*.

Dion Fortune. *La Cabale Mystique*. Translated from English by Gabriel Trarieux d'Egmont. (Editions Adyar, Paris). Putting together the two words that form the title of this thick volume represents something quite contradictory: to tell the truth, on the other hand, what it deals with is no more mystical than initiatory; it is above all magical, which is something very different. In fact, it is continually a question of "powers," "visions," "evocations," "astral projections," all of which are dangerous, even when they are in fact reduced to simple autosuggestion, and quite insignificant, even when they correspond—on the contrary—to some real results. More precisely, what we are dealing with here is 'ceremonial magic', and we can see in it a good confirmation of what we said on the subject some time ago: it is interesting to note first of all the frequency with which the word 'ceremonies' appears in this book, while the word 'rites' appears only very rarely; then the explicit confession that "ceremonial is pure psychology" and that it is essentially intended to "act on the imagination of the operator"; that is

This is also our opinion, since this is precisely where it differs from true rites, but it is clear that our assessment of the value of such procedures differs entirely from that of the author. The singular idea of designating as 'objective' and 'subjective' what is respectively 'macrocosmic' and 'microcosmic' is also quite significant in the same respect: if the results obtained by a being, as far as its own development is concerned, must be nothing more than 'subjective', it is tantamount to saying that they are non-existent! There are constant appeals to the imagination and, even more disturbingly, to the 'subconscious', to such an extent that she praises Freud's famous theories; here, certainly, is Kabbalah fallen very low... In the end, none of this should surprise us, since we know that the author belonged to the Golden Dawn before founding her own school under the name "Fraternity of the Inner Light," and that she cites MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley as her main "authorities," along with various other theosophical and occult writers. If the "Christian Kabbalah" that was formed during the Renaissance was already very far from the authentic Hebrew Kabbalah, what can be said about the "occult Kabbalah" that saw the light in the 19th century, where the scarce traditional data that has survived despite everything is drowned under a jumble of heteroclitic elements and of sometimes very uncertain origin, of correspondences that are much more confused unintentionally than as a result of manifest ignorance, all brought together in a "syncretism" which, whatever the promoters of the self-styled "Western tradition" may say, has absolutely nothing in common with a synthesis?

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Enel: A Message from the Sphinx.

(...)

The second part is devoted to Kabbalah, which might be surprising if one were not familiar with the author's ideas on the subject: for him, in fact, the tradition came directly from Egyptian tradition, "they are like two consecutive links in the same chain". We have already stated our opinion on this matter, but we will elaborate a little further: the author is undoubtedly correct in admitting that the Egyptian tradition derived from Atlantis (which, moreover, and we can state this more clearly than he does, was not the seat of the primordial tradition), but it was not the only one, and the same seems to be particularly true of the Chaldean tradition; The Arab teaching on the "three Hermes", which we have discussed on another occasion, indicates this relationship quite clearly; but if the main source is thus the same, the difference in these forms was probably determined above all by the encounter with other currents, one coming from the south to Egypt, and another from the north to Chaldea. Now, the Hebrew tradition is essentially "Abrahamic"

ca", of Chaldean origin; the "readaptation" carried out by Moses could undoubtedly, as a result of local circumstances, make use of Egyptian elements, especially with regard to certain more or less secondary traditional sciences; but in no way could it have resulted in removing that tradition from its own lineage and transporting it to another lineage foreign to the people for whom it was expressly intended and in whose language it was to be formulated. Furthermore, once the common origin and background of all traditional doctrines is recognised, the observation of certain similarities does not in any way imply the existence of a direct connection: this is the case, for example, with relationships such as those the author wishes to establish between the *Sefirot* and the Egyptian 'Ennead', even if they are justified; and, ultimately, even if it is considered that these similarities refer to points that are too specific to be traced back to the primordial tradition, the kinship between the Egyptian and Chaldean traditions would in any case be more than sufficient to account for them. As for the claim that early Hebrew writing was derived from hieroglyphics, this is a completely gratuitous hypothesis, since, in fact, no one knows exactly what that writing was; all the evidence that can be found in this regard tends, by far, to suggest the opposite; moreover, it is not at all clear how the association of numbers with letters, which is essential in Hebrew, could have been taken from the hieroglyphic system. Moreover, the close similarities between Hebrew and Arabic, which are not mentioned here at all, also clearly contradict this hypothesis, for despite everything, it would be very difficult to seriously maintain that the Arabic tradition also had to come out of Egypt! We will quickly move on to the third part, which contains opinions on art that, although they contain some valid points, are nevertheless based on a highly debatable assertion. It is not possible to say, at least without further clarification, that "there is only one art," since it is obvious that the underlying unity, that is, of the ideas expressed symbolically, in no way excludes the multiplicity of forms. In the following chapters, the author gives an idea, not of the traditional sciences as one might have wished, but of the few more or less distorted remnants that have survived to our time, especially in the 'divinatory' aspect; the influence that 'occultist' conceptions exert on him is particularly regrettable here. Let us add that it is totally inaccurate to say that some of the sciences taught in ancient temples were purely and simply equivalent to modern and 'university' sciences; in reality, even where there may be an apparent similarity of subject matter, the point of view is nevertheless totally different, and there is always a real gulf between the traditional and the profane sciences. Finally, we cannot refrain from pointing out some errors of detail, for there are indeed some.

astonishing: thus, the well-known image of "beating the sea" is passed off as that of a certain "god Samudra Mutu (*sic*). But perhaps this is more excusable than the errors concerning things that should be more familiar to the author than Hindu tradition, especially the Hebrew language. We are not talking about what is merely a matter of transcription, although this is extremely "careless"; but how can one constantly call *Ain Bekar* what is in reality *Aiq Bekar* (a cryptographic system as well known in Arabic as in Hebrew, in which one could see the prototype of Masonic alphabets), and furthermore confuse, in terms of their numerical values, the final form of the *kaf* with that of the *nûn*, and even mention a "final *samek*" that has never existed and is nothing more than a *mem*? How can it be assured that the translators of Genesis have rendered *thehôm* as "waters" in a place where "*Ain Sof* literally means the Ancient of Days", when the strictly literal translation of this word is "without limit"? *letsirah* is "Formation" and not "Creation" (which is said to be *Beriah*); *Zohar* does not mean 'Celestial Chariot' (an obvious confusion with the *Merkabah*), but 'Splendour'; and the author seems to be completely ignorant of what the *Talmud* is, considering it to be made up of *Notarikon*, *Temurah* and *Gematria*, which are not 'books' as he says, but methods of Kabbalistic interpretation! We will stop here, but it would be advisable not to allow such errors to lead us to blindly accept the author's statements on matters that are so difficult to verify, nor to place unreserved trust in his Egyptological theories...

Enel: *A Message from the Sphinx*. (Rider and Co, London). Review published in *Etudes Traditionnelles*, no. November 1937. Compiled in *Formes Traditionnelles et Cycles cosmiques*.

H. de Vries de Heekelingen. *L'Orgueil Juif*. (Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes, Paris). This book is too 'political' in nature to discuss at length, and we must limit ourselves to making a much more general observation about it: what is referred to here as 'Jewish pride' does not seem to us to be as exceptional as it is made out to be. after all, is the attitude of the Jews towards the *Goyim* very different from that of, for example, the Greeks towards the Barbarians? In principle, moreover, all cases of this kind can be explained by the need, in order to avoid any illegitimate mixing of different traditional forms, to give the adherents of each of them a strong sense of difference between themselves and other men; human nature being what it is, this difference is naturally taken as superiority, at least by the common people who cannot know its true underlying reason, which inevitably leads to the degeneration of this feeling into a kind of pride, and it is even understandable that this should happen, especially when it comes to a collective...

rigidly "closed" society, such as that to which the Jewish tradition is destined... But, in fact, why is there no mention of 'European pride', which is certainly the most insolent of all and which could not find even a shadow of justification or excuse in traditional considerations? We will only add one observation on a point of detail: the author mistakenly believes (and he is certainly not the only one!) that the "Seal of Solomon" (also called the "Shield of David", but not the "Seal of David" as he says) is a specifically Jewish symbol, whereas in reality it belongs as much to Islam and Christian Hermeticism as it does to Judaism. He points out, in this regard, that in the coat of arms of the city of Privas, three fleurs-de-lis have recently been replaced by "three Jewish stars" (*sic*) with six points. we do not know if this is accurate, but in any case, what he is undoubtedly far from suspecting, and what makes the matter truly amusing, is that the two symbols are almost equivalent, both being constructed, like the Chi-Rho, on the same single geometric pattern, that of the six-spoked wheel; and this shows once again that it would be wise to refrain from touching on certain issues when one does not possess at least some basic notions of symbolism!

Published in *Etudes Traditionnelles*, November 1938. Reproduced in *Comptes Rendus*.

Eliphas Lévi. *La Clef des Grands mystères.* (Editions Niclaus, Paris). Our readers know what reservations we have about the works of Eliphas Lévi. It is advisable, moreover, to take their contents as nothing more than the expression of "personal views", since the author himself never claimed any traditional affiliation; he has always stated that he owes nothing more than his own research, and any statements to the contrary are undoubtedly nothing more than legends created by his overly enthusiastic admirers. In the present book, what is perhaps most interesting are the truly curious details he gives about certain "ins and outs" of the period in which it was written; even if only for this reason, it would be worth republishing. On another note, it is worth pointing out some of the documents attached in the appendix, especially the hermetic figures of Nicolas Flamel, although one may wonder to what extent they have been 'touched up', and the translation of *the Asch Mezareph* by the Jew Abraham. in the latter case, it is very regrettable that the provenance of the fragments, which are given separately as supplements to the eight chapters, is not expressly indicated, which would have been a guarantee of their authenticity; the reconstruction of the treatise as a whole is, moreover, presented as nothing more than "hypothetical", but it is very difficult to know to what extent the copyists who "would have broken it up to make it unintelligible" are responsible for this and what part Eliphas Lévi himself played.

Published in *Etudes Traditionnelles*, February 1940. Reprinted in *Comptes Rendus*.

Robert Ambelain, Adam, Dieu rouge. Editions Niclaus, Paris. - The title of this book is rather strange, especially since there is nothing in it that explains or justifies the "divinity" thus attributed to Adam; but what is perhaps even more remarkable is that the opening chapter clearly contradicts the following chapters. This first chapter is, in fact, nothing more than an exposition of the most disruptive opinions of "modern criticism concerning Genesis," without the slightest reflection that might suggest that the author does not entirely adopt them. Now it is clear that these opinions necessarily imply the formal denial of all esotericism in the Bible, whereas, on the contrary, he goes on to affirm the existence of this esotericism, whatever conception is made of it and whatever the quality of what is presented as such. One might wonder whether this is not the effect of a certain "mimicry" that allows the author to present anything indiscriminately as if it were his own ideas; if so, this would prove in any case that he does not have very deep-rooted convictions... Be that as it may, the esotericism he focuses on here is above all that which he attributes to the Ophites; but, as nothing very precise is known about them, any more than about most of the other sects called "Gnostic", this allows him to talk a little about everything in this regard: Kabbalah, Hermeticism and many other things, and also to claim to relate them directly or indirectly to everything in the Judeo-Christian world that has an esoteric character, from the Essenes to the Rosicrucians! We will certainly not attempt to untangle this chaos, but what emerges most clearly from it is that, in the author's mind, it is a "Luciferian doctrine", which he apparently conceives as a dualism, since he specifically states that "the belief in two opposing gods comes from real esotericism"; On the other hand, he labels symbols that in no way have such a character as "Luciferian." It would be very difficult to guess exactly what his intentions may have been, but the least that can be said is that he attests to a very pronounced taste for heterodoxy, and even for the worst forms of it, since he goes so far as to strive to find them even where there is not the slightest trace of them. In the last part, which is said to be dedicated to the "Rosicrucian doctrine", there is in fact nothing specifically Rosicrucian; but the very idea of wanting to establish a link between Rosicrucianism and the "Luciferian" doctrine seems extremely suspicious to us, as do certain reflections on Freemasonry, or the frequent association of the words "Luciferian" and "initiatory", or a certain phrase about Islam where we find again this bizarre obsession with the colour green that we have already had occasion to point out. In the presence of such things, one could certainly not be too distrustful...

Etudes Traditionnelles, October–November 1947. Compiled in *Comptes Rendus*.

'S REVIEWS MAGAZINES

In *Vita Italiana* (June issue), an article by M. Gherardo Maffei on the relationship between Judaism and Freemasonry reflects an attitude similar to that expressed in the article by M. J. Evola mentioned above. The author rightly points out that, as far as the origins of Freemasonry are concerned, the presence of numerous Hebrew elements in its symbolism proves nothing, especially since, alongside them, there are many others linked to very different traditions. Furthermore, these Hebrew elements are related to an esoteric aspect that undoubtedly has nothing to do with the political or other aspects focused on by those who combat Judaism today, many of whom seek to associate it closely with Freemasonry. Naturally, all this has no bearing on the question of the influences that may indeed be exerted in our time on Freemasonry as well as elsewhere, but it is precisely this distinction that, through ignorance or prejudice, is too often forgotten; and we would add even more clearly, for our part, that the actions of Freemasons and even Masonic organisations, insofar as they are at odds with initiatory principles, cannot in any way be attributed to Freemasonry as such.

In *Etudes Traditionnelles*, September 1937. Compiled in *Etudes sur la Francmaçonnerie I*.

In the *Revue Juive de Genève* (December issue), Mr Paul Vulliaud devotes an article to Jewish mysticism; as he says, it has often been argued that there is something to which such a designation could be applied, and indeed, that depends on what is meant by 'mysticism'; it seems to us that he himself uses this word in a rather broad and insufficiently defined sense; perhaps it could be admitted that it applies to a certain extent to Hasidism, but in any case, Kabbalah is undoubtedly of another order, esoteric and initiatory. The use of the word 'pietist' is also an example of the danger of transferring certain terms from one doctrine to another for which they were not intended: 'pietism' is properly one of the many varieties of Protestantism, and is almost synonymous with 'moralism'; which is totally foreign, not to say opposed, not only to all esotericism, but even to simple mysticism. At the end of his article, P. Vulliaud quite rightly protests against the "rationalist" (and "modernist", we might add) opinion that Kabbalah constitutes a "heterodoxy" in the

Judaism, and against the incomprehension of "critics" imbued with the spirit and methods of academia, who go so far as to describe the *Zohar* as an incoherent work!

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In Hommes et Mondes (February 1947 issue), Mr Henri Serouya gives a rather simplified and "superficial" study of the Kabbalah, in which there is unfortunately much confusion: for example, he speaks indifferently of "initiates" and "mystics" as if they were the same thing; he accepts the "pantheistic" interpretation of certain modern thinkers, without realising its incompatibility with the metaphysical character that he otherwise recognises in Kabbalah, and even goes so far as to say that "God is the reflection of everything", which is a strange inversion of the truth; he sees only "voluntary dissimulation" and "artificial procedures" in the way Kabbalists comment on the Scriptures, and is clearly unaware of the plurality of meanings of the latter and the very constitution of sacred languages, as well as the real nature of the relationship between exotericism and esotericism; he seems to find it surprising that *En-soph*, of which he also makes a "Spinozist" conception, is not the creator God, as if the divine aspects were mutually exclusive, as if the "Supreme" and the "Non-Supreme" were on the same level; he gives a diagram of the Sephirotic tree that is not at all traditional and in which the indication of the 'middle column' is notably absent; he confuses the 'embryo' with 'metempsychosis'; and, quoting Lao-Tzu towards the end, he attributes to him, we do not know according to what 'source', a book entitled *The Doctrinal!* On the other hand, it is very difficult to understand exactly what he thinks about all this deep down, and it is very likely that he sees nothing more than "philosophical ideas" or "abstract speculations" of a somewhat special kind; as for the reasons why he has taken an interest in the subject, they seem to be of a very contingent nature and more sentimental than intellectual; would he even feel any attraction to Kabbalah if he understood that it has nothing in common with mysticism?

In *Etudes Traditionnelles*, June 1947. Compiled in *Comptes Rendus*.

- We have received the first issue (January-March 1949) of *Cahiers d'Etudes Cathares*, published by the *Institut d'Etudes Occitanes* in Toulouse and edited by Mr Déodat Roché. He is the author of the main articles, one on the *Tales and Legends of Catharism*, which also includes Gascon tales whose connection with Catharism is perhaps not as obvious as he thinks, and another on Cathar Documents, the Manichean origin and the main schools of Catharism, where we find some of the ideas already expressed in his book, which we reviewed recently (April-May 1949 issue). What is most extraordinary is the influence

exerted on him by the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, whom he calls "the founder of a modern spiritual science" and who he says has "profusely described the spiritual evolution of humanity"; another mark of the same influence is the reproduction of an article on Bardesanes that appeared in the *Goetheanum* magazine in Dornach. In an article on the *Troubadours and Catharism*, Mr. René Nelli acknowledges that "precise references to the Albigensians and their customs are quite rare in the poetry of the Troubadours; he has been able to find only very few traces of a Cathar influence, and even these are mostly quite vague. He also believes that 'they lived on the margins of Catharism, another milder <heresy>, better suited to the society for which they sang'; for our part, we would rather say that they belonged to another 'current' that was not in fact heretical at all, but properly esoteric, and that was none other than that of the 'Fidèles d'Amour'.

- A study on *The Origins and Development of Jewish Kabbalah According to Recent Works*, by Mr. G. Vajda, hardly takes us beyond "historicism": it seems that the main issue here is to determine in which period a particular term or formula first appears in a written document, which certainly does not have the scope that is attributed to it; Let us be clear: Kabbalah is seen as nothing more than the product of a series of individual authors, since in all secular works of this kind, the question of the existence of a 'non-human' element is never even raised, which means that its implicit denial is in fact one of its fundamental postulates. We will not insist further, but we cannot refrain from pointing out that here too there is a constant confusion between esoterism and mysticism; this also seems to be increasingly becoming one of those things that is commonly accepted without further examination and as if it were obvious, so great is the ignorance of our contemporaries regarding the most elementary traditional notions!

In *Etudes Traditionnelles*, July-August 1949. Compiled in *Comptes Rendus*.

EXCERPTS FROM OTHER WORKS BY RENÉ GUÉNON

"Indeed, the Hebrew conception of the constitution of man agrees perfectly with all others; and, to help us better understand this point, using correspondences taken from Aristotelian language, we will say that not only is the ob not the 'spirit' or 'rational soul' (neshamah), but it is also not the 'sensitive soul' (ruahh), nor the 'vegetative soul' (nephesh). Undoubtedly, Jewish tradition seems to indicate, as one of the reasons for the prohibition against evoking the ob, that there is a certain relationship between this ob and the higher principles, and this point should be examined more closely, taking into account the rather particular way in which this tradition considers the posthumous states of man; but, in any case, it is not to the spirit that the ob remains directly and immediately linked, but rather to the body, and that is why the rabbinical language calls it *habal de garmin* or "breath of the bones" (and not "body of the resurrection," as translated by the German occultist Carl von Leiningen (communication made to the Psychological Society of Munich on 5 March 1887).

In L'Erreur spirite

- "According to Kabbalistic tradition, among those who entered the Pardés¹ there were some who 'devastated the garden', and it is said that this devastation consisted more precisely in 'cutting the roots of the plants'. To understand what this means, it is necessary to refer first of all to the symbolism of the inverted tree, which we have already discussed on other occasions: the roots are at the top, that is, at the Principle itself; cutting these roots is therefore to consider the 'plants' or beings symbolised by them as endowed in a certain way with an existence and reality independent of the Principle. In the case in question, these beings are mainly angels, since this naturally refers to degrees of existence of a superhuman order; and it is easy to understand what the consequences may be, particularly for what has been agreed to call "practical Kabbalah". Indeed, the invocation of angels thus regarded, not as the

¹ The Pardés, symbolically represented as a "garden", should be considered here as representing the domain of higher and reserved knowledge: the four letters P R D S, related to the four rivers of Eden, designate respectively the different meanings contained in the sacred Scriptures, to which correspond as many degrees of knowledge; it goes without saying that those who "devastated the garden" had not actually reached a degree beyond which it is still possible to stray.

"celestial intermediaries" who are, from the point of view of traditional orthodoxy, not merely intermediaries but true independent powers, constitutes properly speaking "association" (Arabic: shirk) in the sense given to this term by Islamic tradition, for then such powers inevitably appear as "associated" (on an equal footing) with the divine Power itself, rather than simply derived from it. These consequences are also found, and with greater reason, in the lower applications belonging to the domain of magic, a domain where, moreover, those who commit such an error are necessarily confined sooner or later, since, for that very reason, in their case any real possibility of "theurgy" is excluded, as all effective communication with the Principle becomes impossible once "the roots are cut". We would add that the same consequences extend even to the most degenerate forms of magic, such as 'ceremonial magic'; only in the latter case, if the error is always essentially the same, the actual dangers are at least mitigated by the very insignificance of the results that can be achieved.

(...)

Finally, it should be noted that this immediately explains at least one of the ways in which the origin of such deviations is sometimes attributed to 'fallen angels'; angels are, in fact, truly and genuinely "fallen" when considered in this way, for it is from their participation in the Principle that they actually derive everything that constitutes their being, so that when this participation is unknown, all that remains is a purely negative aspect, like a kind of inverted shadow with respect to that very being.

From Symbols of Sacred Science: The Roots of Plants

"The same number is also, according to Hebrew Kabbalah, the number of creation (the 'work of six days' in Genesis, in relation to the six directions of space; and in this respect, moreover, the attribution of its symbol to the Word is equally well justified: it is, in short, a kind of graphic translation of the *omnia per ipsum facta sunt* of the Gospel of St John".

From Symboles de la Science Sacrée: The Symbols of Analogy

"The 'science of letters' has, moreover, approximately equal importance in Hebrew Kabbalah and in Islamic esotericism."

From Symboles de la Science Sacrée: The Science of Letters

This letter (yod), the first of the tetragrammatic name and the one from which all the other letters of the Hebrew alphabet are formed, whether it stands alone to represent the divine Unity or is repeated three times with a "trinitarian" meaning, is always essentially the image of the Principle. The yod in the heart is, therefore, the Principle residing in the centre, whether from the 'macrocosmic' point of view, in the 'Centre of the World' which is the 'Holy Palace' of Kabbalah, or from the 'microcosmic' point of view and virtually at least, in the centre of every being, a centre always symbolised by the heart in the different traditional doctrines and which constitutes the innermost point, the point of contact with the Divine. According to Kabbalah, the Shechinah or "Divine Presence", which is identified with the "Light of the Messiah", dwells (shachan) both in the tabernacle, called mishkan for that reason, and in the hearts of the faithful; and there is a very close relationship between this doctrine and the meaning of the name Emmanuel, applied to the Messiah and interpreted as 'God in us'. But there are also many other considerations to be developed in this regard, starting above all from the fact that the yod, as well as meaning 'beginning', also means 'seed': the yod in the heart is, therefore, in a certain sense, the seed enclosed in the fruit; there is in this an indication of an identity, at least in a certain respect, between the symbolism of the heart and that of the 'Egg of the World', and it can thus be understood that the name 'seed' is applied to the Messiah in various passages of the Bible.

From Symbols of Sacred Science: The Mustard Seed

It is also well known that Jonah's emergence from the belly of the whale has always been considered a symbol of resurrection, and therefore of passage to a new state; and this must be related, on the other hand, to the meaning of 'birth' which, especially in Hebrew Kabbalah, is linked to the letter nûn and must be understood in a spiritual sense, as a 'new birth', that is, as a regeneration of the individual or cosmic being.

This is very clearly indicated by the shape of the Arabic letter nûn: this letter is made up of the lower half of a circle and a point at its centre. Now, the lower semicircle is also the figure of the Ark floating on the waters, and the point inside it represents the germ contained or enclosed there; the central position of the point shows, moreover, that it is in fact the 'germ of immortality', the indestructible 'core' that escapes all external dissolution.

From Symboles de la Science Sacrée: The Mysteries of the Letter Nûn

"Similarly, in Hebrew Kabbalah, although it is no longer strictly speaking a sacrifice or murder, but rather a kind of 'disintegration'—the consequences of which are otherwise the same—the fragmentation of the body of Adam Qadmon formed the Universe with all the beings it contains, so that these are like parcels of that body, and their 'reintegration' into unity appears as the very reconstitution of Adam Qadmon." This is the 'Universal Man', and Purusha, according to one of the meanings of the term, is also the 'Man' par excellence; it is, therefore, exactly the same thing in all of this.

From Symbols of Sacred Science: Gathering the Scattered

There is more: one of the most widespread designations of the axial tree, in various traditions, is that of "Tree of Life"; and the immediate relationship established by traditional doctrines between "Life" and "Light" is well known; We will not dwell further on this point, as it is a matter we have already dealt with; we will only recall, with immediate reference to our subject, that the Hebrew Kabbalah unites the two notions in the symbolism of the "dew of light" emanating from the "Tree of Life". Furthermore, in other passages of the Zohar that Coomaraswamy also quotes in his study on the "inverted tree", and where two trees are discussed, one upper and one lower and therefore in a certain sense superimposed, these two trees are designated respectively as the "Tree of Life" and the "Tree of Death". This, which is reminiscent of the role of the two symbolic trees in the Garden of Eden, is also particularly significant in completing the connection to which we refer, since these meanings of "life" and "death" are also effectively linked to the dual aspect of the ray, represented by the two opposite directions of the vajra, as we have explained above. As we said then, it is in fact, in the most general sense, the dual power of production and destruction, of which life and death are the expression in our world, and which is related to the two phases, the 'expir' and the 'aspir', of universal manifestation; and the correspondence of these two phases is also clearly indicated in one of the texts of the Zohar to which we alluded, for the two trees are represented there as ascending and descending, so that each takes the place of the other, according to the alternation of day and night: does this not make the perfect coherence of all this symbolism even more fully evident?

From Symbols of Sacred Science: The Tree and the Vajra

"In the angelic correspondence we have just mentioned, that hundredth count must refer to the 'Angel of the Face' (who is, in reality, more than an angel): Metatron [in Hebrew Kabbalah] or er-Rûh [in Islamic tradition]."

From Symbols of Sacred Science: The Chain of Worlds

"When he leaves the temple," says Ossendowski, "the 'King of the World' radiates divine light." The Hebrew Bible says exactly the same thing about Moses when he descended from Sinai², and it should be noted, in relation to this comparison, that Islamic tradition sees Moses as having been the 'Pole' (El-Qutb) of his time; could this be why the Kabbalah says that he was instructed by Metatron himself? Once again, it would be useful to distinguish here between the main spiritual centre of our world and the secondary centres that may be subordinate to it, which represent it only in relation to particular traditions adapted more especially to certain peoples. Without dwelling on this point, we will note that the function of 'lawgiver' (in Arabic *rasūl*), which is that of Moses, necessarily implies a delegation of power representing the name of Manu; and, moreover, one of the meanings contained in this name of Manu indicates precisely the reflection of the Divine Light.

From The Three Supreme Functions, Chapter IV of Le Roi du Monde

In Hebrew, the words *iāin* (wine) and *sod* (mystery) are interchangeable with each other as having the same number (the number of each of the two words is 70).

(...)

The name Melchizedek, or more accurately Melki-Tsedeq, is nothing other than the name under which the very function of the "King of the World" is expressly designated in the Judeo-Christian tradition. We hesitated somewhat in formulating this fact, which involves the explanation of one of the most enigmatic passages in the Hebrew Bible, but once we decided to address this question of the 'King of the World', it was truly impossible for us not to mention it. We could repeat here the words spoken by Saint Paul on this subject: 'We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, because you are slow to understand³'.

First, here is the text of the biblical passage in question: 'And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God (El

² It has also been said that Moses had to cover his face with a veil to speak to the people, who could not bear the brightness (Exodus 24: 29-35); in a symbolic sense, this indicates the need for an exoteric adaptation for the multitude. Let us recall, in this regard, the double meaning of the word

'To reveal', which can mean 'to remove the veil', but also 'to cover with a veil'; this is how the word both manifests and veils the thought it expresses.

³ Epistle to the Hebrews, 5:11.

Élion) and blessed Abram⁴, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, owner of Heaven and Earth; and blessed be the Most High God who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him a tenth of everything he had taken⁵.

Melchizedek is therefore both king and priest; his name means "King of Justice" and he is also king of Salem, that is, of "Peace"; here we find, above all, Justice and Peace, precisely the two fundamental attributes of "King of the World." It should be noted that the word Salem, contrary to popular belief, has never actually referred to a city, but if taken as the symbolic name of Melki-Tsedeq's residence, it can be seen as equivalent to the term Agarth. In any case, it is a mistake to see it as the original name of Jerusalem, since that name was Jebus, or rather, the opposite; if the name Jerusalem was given to this city when a spiritual temple was established there by the Hebrews, it is to indicate that from then on it was like a visible image of the true Salem; and it should be noted that the Temple was built by Solomon, whose name (Shlomoh) also derives from Salem, which means "Peaceful"⁶.

Now, Melchizedek is depicted as superior to Abraham, since he blessed him, and "without question, it is the inferior who is blessed by the superior"⁷; and, for his part, Abraham recognised this superiority, since he gave him a tithe, which is a sign of his dependence. There is in this a true 'investiture', almost in the feudal sense of the word, but with the difference that it is a spiritual investiture; and we may add that this is the point of union between the Hebrew tradition and the great primordial tradition. The "blessing" referred to is properly the communication of a "spiritual influence" in which Abraham will henceforth participate; and it can be observed that the formula used places Abraham in relation to the "Most High God," whom Abraham himself later invokes, identifying him with Jehovah⁸. If Melchizedek is thus superior to Abraham, it is because the 'Most High' (Elion), who is the God of Mel-

⁴ Abram's name had not yet been changed to Abraham; at the same time (Genesis XVII), his wife's name, Sarai, was changed to Sarah, so that the sum of the numbers of these two names remained the same.

⁵ Genesis, 14:19-20. (The 1st edition cites 18-20. Translator's note.)

⁶ It should also be noted that the same root is found in the words Islam and Muslim; "submission to divine will (this is the meaning of the word Islam) is the necessary condition for peace"; the idea expressed here must be related to that of Hindu Dharma.

⁷ Ibid. 7:7.

⁸ Genesis, 14, 22.

ki-Tsedeq, is himself superior to the "Almighty" (Shaddai), who is the God of Abraham, or, in other words, that the first of these names represents a higher divine aspect than the second.

(...)

If we now take the name Melki-Tsedeq in its strictest sense, the attributes of the 'King of Justice' are the scales and the sword; and these attributes are also those of Mikael, considered to be the 'Angel of Judgement'⁹. These two emblems represent, respectively, in the social order, the two administrative and military functions that belong properly to the Kshatriyas, and which are the two constituent elements of royal power, as well as, hieroglyphically, the two characters that form the Hebrew and Arabic root haq, which means both 'Justice' and 'Truth'¹⁰ and which among various ancient peoples has served to designate royalty¹¹. Haq is the power that makes Justice reign, that is, the balance symbolised by the scales, while power itself is symbolised by the sword¹², and this is what characterises the essential function of royal power; and, on the other hand, it is also, in the spiritual order, the force of Truth. Furthermore, it should be added that there is also a softened form of this root haq, obtained by replacing the sign of material force with that of spiritual force; and this form hak properly designates "Wisdom" (in Hebrew *hokmah*), so that it is more particularly suited to priestly authority, as the other is to royal power. This is confirmed once again by the fact that the two corresponding forms are found, with similar meanings, in the root kan, which, in very different languages, means 'power' or 'potency' and also 'knowledge'¹³: kan is above all spiritual or intellectual power, identical to "Wisdom" (from which *kohen*, in Hebrew, "priest"), and qan is material power (from which different words expressing the

⁹ In Christian iconography, the angel Michael appears with these two attributes in depictions of the "Last Judgement".

¹⁰ Similarly, for the ancient Egyptians, Mâ or Maât was both "Justice" and "Truth". She is symbolised on one of the scales of the Judgement, while on the other is a vessel, the hieroglyph for the heart. In Hebrew, haq means "decree".

¹¹ This word Haq has a numerical value of 108, which is one of the fundamental cyclic numbers. In India, Shiva's rosary is composed of 108 beads; and the primary meaning of the rosary symbolises the "chain of worlds", that is, the causal chain of cycles or states of existence.

¹² This meaning could be summarised in the formula: 'force in the service of right', if moderns had not abused it too much, taking it in an external sense.

¹³ See *L'Ésotérisme de Dante*, ed. 1957, p. 58. (The 1st edition says page 75. Translator's note.)

idea of "possession" and especially the name of Cain¹⁴. These roots and their derivatives could undoubtedly give rise to many more considerations, but we must limit ourselves to what is most directly related to the subject of the present study.

To complete the above, we will return to what the Hebrew Kabbalah says about the She-kinah: it is represented in the 'lower world' by the last of the ten Sephiroth, called Malkuth, meaning 'the Kingdom', a designation that is quite noteworthy from our point of view here; but there is more: among the synonyms sometimes given to Malkuth is Tsedeq, the 'Righteous One'¹⁵. This comparison between Malkuth and Tsedeq, or between Kingship (the government of the World) and Justice, is found precisely in the name Melki-Tsedeq. Here, we are dealing with distributive and properly balancing justice, in 'the middle column' of the Sephirothic Tree; it must be distinguished from Justice opposed to Mercy and identified with Rigour, in the "left column", as they are two different aspects (and moreover, in Hebrew there are two words to designate them: the first is Tsedaqah, and the second is Din). The first of these aspects is Justice in its strictest and most complete sense, which essentially implies the idea of balance or harmony, and is inextricably linked to Peace. Malkuth is the "vessel where the waters from the river above gather, that is, all the emanations (graces or spiritual influences) that pour forth abundance"¹⁶. The waters that descend from this 'river above' are strangely reminiscent of the role attributed to the celestial river Gangâ in the Hindu tradition, and we could also point out that Shakti, of which Gangâ is an aspect, offers certain analogies with the Shekinah, if only because of the 'providential' function they have in common. The receptacle of the heavenly waters is identical to the spiritual centre of our world: from there the four rivers of Pardes flow out, heading towards the four cardinal points. For the Jews, this spiritual centre is identified with Mount Zion, which they call the "Heart of the World", on the other hand common to all "Lands".

¹⁴The word Khan, a title given to chiefs by the peoples of Central Asia, is perhaps related to the same root.

¹⁵Tsedeq is also the name of the planet Jupiter, which is why the angel is called Tsadquel-Melek; the similarity to the name Melki-Tsedeq (to which only El is added, as the divine name that forms the common ending of all angelic names) is too obvious here, so there is no need to insist on it. In India, the same planet is called Brihaspati, who is also the Celestial Pontiff. Another synonym for Malkuth is Sabbath, whose meaning of rest clearly refers to the idea of "Peace", all the more so as this notion expresses, as we have seen above, the external aspect of the Shekinah, through which it communicates with the "lower world".

¹⁶ P. Vulliaud, *La Kabbale juive*, volume I, p. 509.

Saints," and that, for them, it thus becomes in a way the equivalent of the Mêru of the Hindus or the Alborj of the Persians¹⁷. "The Tabernacle of the Holiness of Jehovah, the Residence of the Shekinah, is the Holy of Holies which is the heart of the temple, which is itself the centre of Zion (Jerusalem), just as Holy Zion is the centre of the Land of Israel, just as the Land of Israel is the centre of the world"¹⁸. One can take things even further, not only in everything that has been listed here, taking it in reverse order, but also after the Tabernacle in the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle, and, in the Ark of the Covenant itself, the place of the manifestation of the Shekinah (between the two Cherubim), representing as many successive approximations of the "Spiritual Pole." It is also in this way that Dante presents Jerusalem as the "Spiritual Pole," as we have had occasion to explain elsewhere; but this, when viewed from a strictly Jewish perspective, becomes primarily symbolic and is no longer a location in the strict sense of the word. All secondary spiritual centres, constituted as adaptations of the primordial tradition to specific conditions, are, as we have already indicated, images of the supreme centre; Zion may in reality be nothing more than one of these secondary centres, and yet be symbolically identified with the supreme centre by virtue of this similarity. Jerusalem is indeed, as its name indicates, an image of the true Salem; what we have said and what we will say about the 'Holy Land', which is not only the Land of Israel, will make this easy to understand.

In this regard, another very important expression synonymous with 'Holy Land' is 'Land of the Living': it clearly designates the 'abode of immortality', so that in its proper and strict sense it applies to the earthly Paradise or its symbolic equivalents, but this name has also been applied to the Secondary "Holy Lands" and especially the Land of Israel. It is said that "the Land of the Living comprises seven lands," and P. Vulliaud points out in this regard that "this land is Canaan, where there were seven peoples"²⁰. This is undoubtedly accurate in a literal sense, but symbolically these seven lands could very well, like those discussed elsewhere in Islamic tradition, correspond to the seven dwipas which, according to tradition...

¹⁷ Among the Samaritans, it is Mount Gerizim that plays the same role and receives the same names: it is "the Blessed Mountain", "the Eternal Hill", "the Mount of Inheritance", "the House of God", and the Tabernacle of his Angels, the dwelling place of the Shekinah; it is even identified with the "Primordial Mountain" (Har Qadim), where Eden was located, and which was not submerged by the waters of the flood.

¹⁸ P. Vulliaud, *La Kabbale juive*, volume I, p. 509.

¹⁹ *L'Ésotérisme de Dante*, ed. 1957, p. 64. (The first edition says page 84. Translator's note.)

²⁰ *La Kabbale juive*, vol. II, p. 116.

Hindu edition, have Mêru as their common centre, and to which we shall return later. Just as when the ancient worlds, or the creations prior to ours, are symbolised by the 'seven kings of Edom' (the number seven is here related to the seven 'days' of Genesis), there is a similarity that is too striking to be merely accidental with the eras of the seven Manus counted from the beginning of the kalpa to the present time²¹.

From Melki-Tsedeq, chapter VI of Le Roi du Monde

- "Among the traditions we referred to earlier, there is one that is of particular interest: it is found in Judaism and refers to a mysterious city called Luz²². Originally, this name was the place where Jacob had his dream and that is why he called it Beth-El, meaning House of God²³; we will return to this topic later. It is said that the "angel of death" cannot enter this city and therefore has no power there. By a rather unusual but very significant comparison, some place it near Alborj, which for the Persians is also "the abode of immortality".

Near Luz, it is said, there is an almond tree (also called *luz* in Hebrew), at the base of which there is a hole through which one can enter an underground passage²⁴ that leads to the city itself, which is completely hidden. The word *luz*, in its various meanings, seems to derive from a root that designates everything that is hidden.

²¹A Kalpa comprises fourteen Manvantaras; Vaivaswata, the current Manu, is the seventh of this Kalpa, called Shri-Shwēta-Varāha-Kalpa or 'Age of the White Boar'; another curious observation is this: the Jews give Rome the name Edom; now, tradition also speaks of seven kings of Rome, and the second of these kings, Numa, who is considered the lawgiver of the city, bears a name that is the exact syllabic reversal of Manu, and which may also be related to the Greek word *nomos*, 'law'. There is therefore reason to believe that these seven kings of Rome are, from a certain point of view, nothing more than a particular representation of the seven Manus of a given civilisation, just as the seven sages of Greece are, in similar circumstances, a representation of the seven Rishis, in which the wisdom of the cycle immediately preceding ours is synthesised.

²²The information we use here is taken in part from the Jewish Encyclopaedia (VIII, 219).

²³Genesis, 28:19.

²⁴In the traditions of certain peoples of North America, there is also a tree through which men who originally lived inside the Earth would come to the surface, while others of the same race would remain in the underground world. It is likely that Bulwer-Lytton was inspired by these traditions in *The Coming Race*. A new edition is entitled *The Race That Will Exterminate Us*. (This latest edition is not cited in the first edition of this book. Translator's note.)

hidden, covered, enveloped, silent, secret: and it should be noted that the words that originally designated Heaven have the same meaning."

(...)

Let us return to the Hebrew word for light, whose various meanings are worthy of attention: this word commonly has the meaning of 'almond' (and also 'almond tree', referring by extension to both the tree and its fruit) or 'bone'; now, the bone is what is inside and also hidden, and it is completely closed, hence the idea of "inviolability"²⁵(found in the name Agartha). The same word *luz* is also the name given to an indestructible bodily particle, symbolically represented as a very hard bone, to which the soul remains attached after death and until resurrection²⁶. Just as the bone contains the seed and the marrow, this light encompasses the virtual elements necessary for the restoration of the being; and this restoration will take place under the influence of that heavenly dew, reviving the dried-up bones; this is what is referred to most clearly in these words of St. Paul: 'sown in corruption, it shall be raised in glory'²⁷ ". Here, as always, "glory" refers to the Shekinah, considered in the higher world, and with which the "Heavenly dew" has a close relationship, as we have previously explained. Light, being imperishable, is the "core" of immortality in human beings, just as the place designated by the same name is the "abode of immortality": in both cases, the power of the angel of death is halted there. It is, in a way, the egg or embryo of the Immortal²⁸; it can also be compared to the cry-

²⁵ This is why the almond tree has been taken as a symbol of the Virgin Mary.

²⁶It is curious to note that this Jewish tradition probably inspired certain theories of Leibnitz about the "animal" (that is, the living being), subsisting perpetually with a body, but "reduced to small size" after death.

²⁷ First Epistle to the Corinthians, 15:42. These words strictly apply the law of analogy: 'as above, so below, but in reverse'.

²⁸ In Sanskrit, the word *akshara* means 'indissoluble', and by extension 'imperishable' or 'indestructible'; it designates the syllable, the primary element and germ of language, and is applied par excellence to the monosyllable *Om*, which is said to contain within itself the essence of the triple *Veda*.

²⁹ We find the equivalent, in another form, in different traditions, and in particular, with very important developments in Taoism. In this sense, it is analogous in the 'microcosmic' order to what the 'Egg of the World' is in the 'macrocosmic' order, as it encompasses the possibilities of the 'future cycle' (the *vita venturi seculi* of the Catholic creed).

the place from which the butterfly must emerge³⁰, a comparison that accurately reflects its role in relation to resurrection.

The light is located towards the lower end of the spine; this may seem rather strange, but it is clarified by a comparison with what Hindu tradition says about the force called Kundalini, which is a form of Shakti considered to be immanent in human beings. This force is represented by the figure of a serpent coiled upon itself in a region of the subtle organism, corresponding precisely to the lower end of the spine; this is the case at least in ordinary human beings; but, through practices such as Hatha Yoga, it awakens, unfurls and rises through the 'wheels' (chakras) or 'lotuses' (kamalas) that correspond to the various plexuses, to reach the region corresponding to the 'third eye', that is, the frontal eye of Shiva. This stage represents the restoration of the 'primordial state', where man regains the 'sense of eternity' and thus obtains what we have elsewhere called 'virtual immortality'. Up to this point, we are still in the human state; in a later phase, the Kundalini finally reaches the crown of the head³¹, and this last phase refers to the effective conquest of the higher states of being. What seems to result from this comparison is that the localisation of light in the lower part of the organism refers only to the condition of the 'fallen man'; and, for earthly humanity as a whole, the same is true of the localisation of the supreme spiritual centre in the 'underworld'³².

De Luz, Chapter VII of Le Roi du Monde

³⁰ We can refer here to the Greek symbolism of Psyche, which is largely based on this similarity (see Psyche, by F. Pron).

³¹ The word kundali (feminine kundalini) means coiled in the form of a ring or spiral; this coiling symbolises the embryonic and 'undeveloped' state.

³² It is the Brahma-randhra or orifice of Brahma, the point of contact of the sushumnâ or 'crown artery' with the 'sunbeam'; we have fully explained this symbolism in *L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védânta*.

³³ In this sense, and in a certain relationship, its dwelling place is also identified with the cavity of the heart; we have already alluded to a relationship between the Hindu Shakti and the Hebrew Shekinah.

³⁴ All this is closely related to the real meaning of this well-known phrase...
Metaphysical: "Visit inferiora terrae, rectifying you will find the hidden stone, true medicine"; which gives the acrostic word Vitriolum. The "philosopher's stone" is at the same time, from another point of view, "the true medicine", that is, "the elixir of long life", which is nothing other than "the drink of immortality". Sometimes interiora is written instead of inferiora, but the general meaning does not change, and there is always the same clear allusion to the "underground world".

This same point is also, in Hebrew Kabbalah, where the scales mentioned in the Siphra di-Tseniutha are suspended, for upon the pole rests the equilibrium of the world; and this point is designated as 'a place that does not exist', that is, as the 'unmanifested', which corresponds, in the Far Eastern tradition, to the assimilation of the North Star, insofar as it is 'made of Heaven', to the place of the Principle itself; this is also related to what we said earlier about the scales in connection with the Big Dipper. The two pans of the scales, with their alternating upward and downward movement, naturally refer to the vicissitudes of yin and yang; the correspondence with yin on one side and yang on the other also applies, in general, to all double symbols that have axial symmetry.

Note in La Grande Triade: "The City of Willows"

- "This symbolism is also found in Hebrew Kabbalah, which tells us of the "Holy Palace" or "Inner Palace" as being located at the centre of the six directions of space. The three letters of the divine Name Jehovah³⁵, through their sixfold permutation following these six directions, indicate the immanence of God within the World, that is, the manifestation of the Logos at the centre of all things, at the primordial point from which the indefinite extensions are nothing more than its expansion and development: "He formed something out of Thohu (emptiness) and made what was not. He carved great columns out of the unattainable ether³⁶. He reflected, and the Word (Memra) produced every object and every thing by his One Name"³⁷. This primordial point from which the divine Word is uttered does not develop only in space, as we have just said, but also in time: it is the "Centre of the World" in all respects, that is, it is found both at the Centre of space and at the centre of time. This, properly understood, if taken literally, concerns only our world, the only one in which the conditions of existence are directly expressible in human language³⁸; only the sensible world is subject to space and time; but, as it is in reality the Centre of all worlds, one can pass to the supersensible order by effecting a

³⁵ This Name consists of four letters, yod he vav he, but there are only three distinct letters since the he is repeated twice.

³⁶ These are the "columns" of the Sephirotic tree: the centre, right and left columns; we will return to this later. On the other hand, it should be noted that the 'ether' referred to here should not only be understood as the first element of the corporeal world, but should also be given a higher meaning obtained by analogical transposition, as is the case with the Akasha of Hindu doctrine (see *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, III).

³⁷ *Sefer Yetzirah*, IV, 5.

³⁸ *Sifra di-Tseniutha: Zohar*, II, 176 b.

analogical transposition in which space and time retain only a purely symbolic meaning.

In Clement of Alexandria, we have seen that there are six phases of time corresponding respectively to the six directions of space: these are, as we said, six cyclical periods, subdivisions of another more general period, and sometimes represented as six millennia. The Zohar, like the Talmud, also divides the duration of the world into millennial periods. 'The world will subsist for six thousand years, to which the first six words of Genesis allude'³⁹; these six millennia are analogous to the six 'days' of creation. The seventh millennium, like the seventh 'day', corresponds to the Sabbath, that is, the phase of return to the Beginning, which naturally corresponds to the centre, considered as the seventh region of space. There is here a kind of symbolic chronology which, obviously, should not be taken literally, as is the case with those found in other traditions; Josephus indicates that six thousand years constitute ten 'great years', so that the 'great year' consists of six centuries (the Naros of the Chaldeans); but, on the other hand, this same expression designates a much longer period of time, ten or twelve thousand years for the Greeks and Persians. This, however, is of no importance here, since we are not concerned with calculating the actual duration of our world, which would require an in-depth study of the Hindu theory of Manvantaras; but as this is not our purpose here, it suffices to retain the symbolic value of these divisions. Let us only add that there may be six undefined phases, and therefore of indeterminate duration, plus a seventh corresponding to the termination of all things and their restoration to their original state⁴¹.

Let us return to the cosmogonic doctrine of Kabbalah as set out in the *Sefer Yetzirah*. "It is," says P. Vulliaud, "the development from Thought to the modification of Sound (the Voice), from the impenetrable to the comprehensible. It will be noted that we are dealing with a symbolic exposition of the mystery, which has as its object universal genesis and which links up with the mystery of unity. In other passages, it is a question of the 'point' which develops in all directions by means of lines⁴² and which only becomes

³⁹ Let us recall the biblical sentence: "A thousand years are like a day to the Lord."

⁴⁰ Jewish Antiquities, 1, 4

⁴¹ This last millennium undoubtedly corresponds to the "thousand-year kingdom" mentioned in the Apocalypse.

⁴² In Hindu tradition, these lines are represented by the "hair of Shiva".

comprehensible by the "inner palace". It is in the incomprehensible ether (Avir) that concentration occurs, from which light (Aor) emanates⁴³.

Indeed, the point is the symbol of unity; it is the principle of extension that only exists thanks to its radiation (leaving the previous "void" in pure virtuality), but it only becomes understandable by placing itself in this extension, of which it will then be the centre, as we will explain in more detail below. The emanation of light leaves its reality to extension, 'turning the void into something and what was not into what is', it is an expansion that follows concentration; there are the two phases of inspiration and expiration that are so often spoken of in Hindu doctrine, the second corresponding to the production of the manifested world; in this regard, we must also highlight the analogy that exists with the movement of the heart and the circulation of blood in living beings. But let us continue: "Light (Aor) sprang from the mystery of ether (Avir). The hidden point manifested itself, that is, the letter yod"⁴⁴. This letter hieroglyphically represents the Principle and it is said that all the other letters of the Hebrew alphabet were formed from it, a formation which, according to the Sefer Yetsirá, symbolises that of the manifested world⁴⁵. It is also said that the incomprehensible primordial point, which is the unmanifested One, forms three representing the Beginning, the Middle and the End⁴⁶, and that these three points together constitute the letter yod, which is also the manifested One (or, more precisely, affirmed as the principle of universal manifestation) or, in theological language, God becoming the 'Centre of the World' through his Word. "When the yod was produced," says the Sefer Yetsirá, "what remained of this mystery or of the hidden Avir (ether) was Aor (light)"; indeed, if we remove the yod from the word Avir, we are left with Aor.

In this regard, P. Vulliaud quotes the following comment by Moses de León: "After recalling that the Holy One, blessed be He, unknowable, can only be grasped through

⁴³ La Kabbale Juive, vol. I, p. 247.

⁴⁴ Ibid., vol. I, p. 217.

⁴⁵ "Formation" (Yetsirá) should properly be understood as the production of manifestation in a subtle state; manifestation in a gross state is called Asiá, while Beriá is informal manifestation. We have already pointed out elsewhere the exact correspondence between the worlds considered by Kabbalah and the Tribhuvana of Hindu doctrine (Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta, chap. V).

⁴⁶From this point of view, these three points can be equated with the three elements of the monosyllable Aum (Om) in Hindu symbolism, and with those of ancient Christian symbolism (see Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta, chap. XVI, 3rd ed., and The King of the World, chap. IV).

Of his attributes (middoth) by which he created the worlds⁴⁷, let us begin with the exegesis of the first word of the Torah: Bereshit⁴⁸. Regarding this mystery, some ancient authors have taught us that it is hidden in the supreme degree, the pure and impalpable ether. This degree is the sum total of all the subsequent mirrors (that is, external to this same degree)⁴⁹. These proceed from it, through the mystery of the point, which is itself a hidden degree emanating from the mystery of the pure and mysterious ether⁵⁰. The first degree, which is totally hidden (i.e., unmanifested), cannot be grasped⁵¹. Likewise, the mystery of the supreme point, although deeply hidden⁵², can be grasped by the mystery of the inner Palace. The mystery of the supreme Crown (Kether, the first of the ten Sefirot) corresponds to that of the pure and unattainable ether (Avir). It is the cause of all causes and the origin of all origins. It is in this principle, the invisible origin of all things, that the hidden "point" from which everything proceeds is born. This is why it is said in the Sefer Yetzirah: "Before the One, what can you count?" That is to say: Before this point, what can you count or understand? Before this point there was nothing but Ain, that is, the mystery of pure or incomprehensible ether, so named (with a simple negation) because of its incomprehensibility.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The beginning

⁴⁷ Here we find the equivalent of the distinction made in Hindu doctrine between Brahma "unqualified" (nirguna) and Brahma "qualified" (saguna), that is, between the "Supreme" and the "Non-Supreme," the latter corresponding to Ishwara (see *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, chaps. I and X). *Midá* literally means 'measure' (cf. Sanskrit *mātrā*).

⁴⁸ This is the word with which the book of Genesis begins: 'In the beginning'.

⁴⁹ We see that this degree corresponds to the 'universal degree' of Islamic esoterism, and it is in this degree that all other degrees, that is, all states of Existence, are synthesised. This same doctrine also uses comparisons with the mirror and others like it: thus, following an expression we have already quoted elsewhere (*Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, chap. X), Unity, considered as containing within itself all aspects of the Divinity (Asrār rabbāniyah or 'dominical mysteries'), that is, all the divine attributes expressed by the names *zifatiyah* (see *The King of the World*, chap. III), "belongs to the Absolute (to the 'Holy One' unattainable outside His attributes) the reverberating surface of innumerable faces, which magnifies every creature that looks directly at it"; it is hardly necessary to point out that this refers precisely to the Asrār rabbāniyah.

⁵⁰ The degree represented by the point, which corresponds to the Unit, is that of pure Being (Ishwara in Hindu doctrine).

⁵¹ In this regard, we could refer to what Hindu doctrine teaches about what lies beyond Being, that is, the unconditioned state of *Atmā* (see *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, chap. XV, 3rd French ed., where we indicated the teachings of other traditions).

⁵² Being is also unmanifest, but it is the principle of all manifestation.

⁵³ Indeed, unity is the first of all numbers; there is nothing before it that can be counted; here, numbering is taken as a symbol of a distinctive mode of knowledge.

⁵⁴ It corresponds to the metaphysical Zero, or the "Non-Being" of the Far Eastern tradition, symbolised by the "emptiness" (cf. *Tao Te Ching*, XI); we have already explained elsewhere why expressions of comprehensible form

understandable form of existence is found in the mystery of the supreme "point"⁵⁵. And since this point is the "beginning" of all things, it is called "Thought" (Mahasheba)⁵⁶. The mystery of creative Thought corresponds to the hidden "point". It is in the lower Palace that the mystery connected with the hidden 'point' can be understood, since the pure and unattainable ether always remains mysterious. The 'point' is the ether made apprehensible (by means of 'concentration', the starting point of all differentiation) in the mystery of the inner Palace or Holy of Holies⁵⁷. Everything, without exception, must first be conceived in Thought⁵⁸. And if anyone says, "Behold, there is something new in the world," silence them, for it was previously conceived in Thought⁵⁹. The holy inner Palace emanates from the hidden "point" (through the lines emanating from this point in the six directions of space). The Holy of Holies, the fiftieth year (an allusion to the jubilee, which represents the return to the primordial state)⁶⁰, is also called the Voice emanating from Thought⁶¹. Therefore, all beings and all causes emanate by the force of the "point" above. This is all there is to say about the mysteries of the three supreme Sefirot⁶².

In Le Symbolisme de la Croix, chapter IV: "The directions of space"

This central and fundamental point is identical to the "Holy Palace" of Hebrew Kabbalah; in itself, it is not located anywhere, since it is absolutely independent of space, which is nothing more than the result of its indefinite expansion or development in all directions and, consequently, proceeding entirely from it: "Negative transposition"

Negative are the only ones that still seem to apply to what is beyond Being (Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta, chap. XV, 3rd ed.).

⁵⁵ That is, in Being; the principle of Existence, which is the same as universal manifestation, just as unity is the principle and beginning of all numbers.

⁵⁶ Since all things must be conceived by thought before they are realised externally: this must be understood analogically, transferring it from the human order to the cosmic order.

⁵⁷The "Holy of Holies" was represented by the innermost part of the Temple in Jerusalem, which constituted the Tabernacle (mishkán) where the Shekinah, or "divine presence," manifested itself.

⁵⁸ It constitutes the Word as divine Intellect, which, according to an expression used in Christian theology, is the 'place of possibilities'.

⁵⁹ It is the "permanent actuality" of all things in the "eternal present".

⁶⁰ See The King of the World, chap. III: note that $50 = 72 + 1$. In Hebrew and Arabic, the numerical value of the word kol, 'all', is 50. Cf. also the 'fifty gates of Intelligence'.

⁶¹ It also refers to the Word, but as the divine Word; first it is Thought within (that is, within Itself), then Word without (that is, in relation to universal Existence), since the Word is the manifestation of Thought; the first word uttered is Iehi Aor (Fiat Lux), in Genesis.

⁶² Quoted in La Kabbale juive, vol. I, pp. 403-406.

Let us remain in spirit outside this world of dimensions and locations, and there will no longer be any reason to want to locate the Principle.

(...)

It is said that Allah "brings down Peace into the hearts of the faithful" (Huwa elladhâ anzala es-Sakînata fi qulûbil-mûminin); the Hebrew Kabbalah says exactly the same thing: "The Shekinah bears this name," says Hebrew scholar Louis Cappel, "because it dwells (sha-kún) in the hearts of the faithful, whose dwelling place was symbolised by the Tabernacle (mîshkán), in which God dwells." (Critica sacra, p. 311, Amsterdam edition, 1689; quoted by Paul Vulliaud, La Kâbala Judia, t I, p. 493). Perhaps it is not necessary to point out that the "descent" of "Peace" into the heart takes place along the vertical axis: this constitutes the manifestation of the "Activity of Heaven".

In Le Symbolisme de la Croix, chapter VII: "The resolution of oppositions"

"When we find an image of duality in an emblematic tree, it seems correct to see in it an allusion to the 'Tree of Knowledge', while from other points of view, the symbol in question would unquestionably be a representation of the 'Tree of Life'. This is the case, for example, with the 'Sephirotic tree' of Hebrew Kabbalah, which is referred to as the 'Tree of Life', in which, however, the 'column on the right' and the 'column on the left' offer an image of duality; but between the two is the "middle column", where the two opposing tendencies are balanced and where the true unity of the "Tree of Life" is found again.

The dual nature of the 'Tree of Knowledge' is not revealed to Adam until the very moment of the 'fall', for it is at this moment that he becomes 'knowing good and evil'. It is also at this moment that he moves away from the centre, which is the place of the first unity corresponding to the 'Tree of Life'; and it is precisely "to guard the way to the Tree of Life" that the Cherubim (the "tetramorphs", who synthesise the quaternary of the elemental powers) have been placed at the entrance to Eden with flaming swords. This centre has become inaccessible to fallen man, who has lost the 'sense of eternity', which is also the "sense of unity"; to return to the centre, through the restoration of the "primordial state", and to reach the "Tree of Life", is to recover this "sense of eternity".

(...)

Let us now return to the representation of the 'Earthly Paradise': from its centre, that is, from the very foot of the 'Tree of Life', four rivers flow towards the four

cardinal points, thereby tracing the horizontal cross on the same surface of the earthly world, that is, on the plane corresponding to the domain of the human state. These four rivers, which we can relate to the quaternary of the elements⁶³ and which arise from a single source corresponding to the primordial ether, divide the circular enclosure of the 'earthly Paradise' into four parts, which can be related to the four phases of a cyclical development; this enclosure is none other than the horizontal section of the universal spherical form, which we have already discussed above.

(...)

The 'Tree of Life' is found again in the centre of the 'heavenly Jerusalem', which is easily explained when one understands the relationship between the latter and the 'Earthly Paradise': it is the reintegration of all things into the 'primordial state'.

In Le Symbolisme de la Croix: Chapter IX

- "The word 'nothing' (Ain) in Hebrew Kabbalah corresponds to 'non-action' (wu-wei) in the Far Eastern tradition.

In Le Symbolisme de la Croix: Chapter XXIV

- In this regard, we can refer in particular to the beginning of Genesis, I, 2: "... and the Divine Spirit was hovering over the face of the waters." This passage contains a very clear indication of the two complementary principles we are discussing here, for the Spirit corresponds to Purusha and the waters to Prakriti. From a different point of view, but nevertheless analogously related to the preceding one, the Ruahh Elohim of the Hebrew text is also assimilable to Hamsa, the symbolic swan vehicle of Brahmâ, which incubates the Brahmânda, the 'egg of the world' contained in the primordial waters; and it is important to note that Hamsa is also the "breath" (spiritus), which is the primary meaning of Ruahh in Hebrew. Finally, if we consider specifically the constitution of the corporeal world, Ruahh is air (Vâyu); and if it were not for the fact that this would lead us into overly lengthy considerations, we could demonstrate that there is a perfect concordance between the Bible and the Vêda concerning the order of development of the sensible elements. In any case, what we have just said indicates three superimposed meanings, which refer respectively to the three fundamental degrees of manifestation (informal, subtle and gross), which are designated as the "three worlds" (tribhuvana) in the tra-

⁶³ Kabbalah establishes a correspondence between these four rivers and the four letters that form the word PaRDeS.

Hindu edition. These three worlds also appear in the Hebrew Kabbalah with the names Beriah, Ietsirah and Asiah; above them is Atsiluth, which is the principal state of non-manifestation.

In L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védânta, chapter V

- "Also for Islamic esoterism, Unity, considered as containing all aspects of the Divinity (Asrâr Rabbâniyah or "dominical mysteries"), "is the reverberating surface of the Absolute in innumerable facets, which magnifies every creature that looks directly at it". This surface is also Mâyâ taken in its highest sense, as Shakti of Brahma, that is, the 'omnipotence' of the Supreme Principle. In a very similar way in Hebrew Kabbalah, Kether (the first of the ten sefirot) is the garment of Ain-Soph (The Infinite or Absolute).

In L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védânta, chapter X.

- According to Kabbalah, in order to manifest itself, the Absolute concentrated itself into an infinitely luminous point, leaving darkness around it; this light in the darkness, this point in the boundless metaphysical expanse, this nothingness that is everything in a whole that is nothing, if one can express it that way, is Being within Non-Being, active Perfection within passive Perfection. The luminous point is Unity, the affirmation of the metaphysical Zero represented by unlimited extension, the image of infinite universal Possibility. Unity, since it affirms itself, to become the centre from which the indefinite manifestations of Being will emanate like multiple rays, is united with the Zero that contained it in the beginning, in a state of non-manifestation; here the Denarius already appears in potential, which will be the perfect number, the complete development of the primordial Unity.

(...)

If the Ternary is the number representing the first manifestation of the principal Unity, the Quaternary represents its total expansion, symbolised by the cross whose four arms are formed by two indefinite rectangular lines; these extend definitively, oriented towards the four cardinal points of the indefinite pleromatic circumference of Being, points that Kabbalah represents by the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. The Quaternary is the number of the manifested Word, of Adam Kadmon, and it can be said that it is essentially the number of Emanation, since Emanation is the manifestation of the Word; from it derive the other degrees of the manifestation of Being, in logical succession, through the development of the numbers it contains within itself, and whose whole constitutes the Denary.

In Melanges: On the production of numbers

"It has sometimes been claimed that the name Jerusalem, because of its Greek form Hierosolyma, is a hybrid compound that also includes the word hieros, whereas in reality it is a purely Hebrew name, meaning 'dwelling place of peace' or, if a slightly different root is taken for its first part (yara instead of yarah), 'vision of peace'. This also reminds us of the interpretation of the symbol of the Royal Arch degree, which is a triple 'tau', as formed by the superimposition of the two letters T and H, which would then be the initials of the words Templum Hierosoli-mae; and, precisely, the hieros domos in question would also be, for those who have considered this hypothesis, the Temple of Jerusalem.

In Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie: Heredom

Another point we must consider is the following: most of the time, the "lost word" is assimilated to the Tetragrammaton, in accordance with Hebrew symbolism, which, if taken literally, would constitute an obvious anachronism, since it is easy to see that the pronunciation of the Name was not lost in the time of Solomon and the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, but rather after the final destruction of the Temple. However, this anachronism should not be considered a real difficulty, since we are not concerned here with the "historicity" of the facts as such, which, from our point of view, is of little importance in itself; the Tetragrammaton is mentioned purely and exclusively for the value it traditionally represents; even the Tetragrammaton itself could perfectly well have been in a sense a 'substitute word', since it belongs properly to the Mosaic revelation, and this, as such, like the Hebrew language, cannot really be traced back to the primordial tradition⁶⁴. We have alluded to this question above all to draw attention to a fact that is, in essence, much more important: in Hebrew exotericism, the word that replaces the Tetragrammaton, which, as we have said, can no longer be pronounced, is another divine name, Adonai, which is also formed by four letters, but which is considered less essential. There is in all this a kind of resignation in the face of a loss considered irreparable, which can only be remedied to the extent that present conditions still allow. In Masonic initiation, on the other hand, the 'substitute word' is a question that offers the possibility of rediscovering the 'lost word'.

⁶⁴ Regarding the "first Name of God" according to certain initiatory traditions, see *The Great Triad*, chap. XXV.

In Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie II: Parole perdue et Noms substitués

"This conception of the Demiurge, which we have previously discussed in another study, corresponds in Kabbalah to 'Adam Protoplastos' (first formative being), while the Great Architect is identical to 'Adam Kadmon', that is, the Universal Man."

In Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie II: A propos du Grand Architecte del Universe.

"The Sanskrit word mâtrâ is exactly equivalent to the Hebrew word middah; in Kabbalah, the middoth are assimilated to divine attributes, affirming that God created the worlds thanks to them, which is also precisely related to the symbolism of the central point and the directions of space⁶⁵. We could also recall in this regard the biblical phrase stating that God has 'arranged all things in measure, number and weight'⁶⁶. This enumeration, which clearly refers to the various modalities of quantity, cannot be applied textually as such except to the corporeal world; nevertheless, through an appropriate transposition, it can also be read as an expression of universal 'order'.

In Le Régne de la Quantité, chap. III

In Hebrew Kabbalah, the cubic form corresponds, among the Sephiroth, to Yesod, which is effectively the "foundation" (and, if in this regard it were objected that Yesod, is not the last Sephirah, we would have to reply that after it there is only Malkuth, which is precisely the final 'synthesis' in which all things are returned to a state which, at a different level, corresponds to the principal unity of Ket-her).

In Le Régne de la Quantité, chap. XX

We have stated that the arts or crafts involving an activity whose object is the mineral kingdom belong entirely to sedentary peoples and that, as such, they were prohibited by the traditional law of nomadic peoples, as demonstrated by Hebrew law, to cite one of the best-known examples. Indeed, it is evident that such arts tend directly towards the 'solidification' that reaches its highest degree in the mineral itself within the corporeal world as it presents itself to us. On the other hand, this mineral, in its most common form, which is stone, serves

⁶⁵ Cf. Le Symbolisme de la Croix, chap. IV.

⁶⁶ "Omnia in mensura, numero et pondere dispositi" (Wisdom, XI, 20).

fundamentally for the construction of stable buildings⁶⁷; due to the collection of buildings that comprise it, a city presents the appearance of an artificial agglomeration of minerals; thus, as we have already said, urban life responds to a sedentary lifestyle even more complete than that which governs agricultural life, just as minerals are more inert and 'solid' than plants. But there is also another aspect: the arts that have minerals as their object also include metallurgy in all its forms; now, if we observe that, in our time, minerals show an increasingly decisive tendency to replace stone in construction, analogous to the process in which stone once replaced wood, we are inclined to think that this must be the characteristic symptom of a more 'advanced' phase in the downward trend of the cycle; all this is confirmed by the fact that metal generally plays an increasingly important role in modern 'industrialised' and 'mechanised' civilisation, both from a destructive and a constructive point of view, since the consumption of metal caused by contemporary wars is truly prodigious.

(...)

On the other hand, this last observation fits perfectly with a particular feature of Hebrew tradition: from the beginning, when the use of stones was authorised in certain cases, such as the construction of an altar, it was usually specified that such stones had to be "whole" and "untouched by iron"⁶⁸; according to the terms used in this passage, the emphasis is less on the fact that the stone has not been worked than on the requirement that it has not been touched by metal in the literal sense; therefore, the prohibition regarding metal was more rigorous, especially for what was intended for a more specifically ritual use⁶⁹. Traces of this prohibition even survived when Israel ceased to be nomadic and built, or had built, permanent buildings: for example, when the Temple of Jerusalem was built, "the stones were brought as they should be, so that when

⁶⁷ Although it is true that in many villages the buildings belonging to the most ancient periods were made of wood, it is clear that such buildings were not as durable and, therefore, not as permanent as stone buildings; consequently, the use of stone in construction implies, in any case, a greater degree of 'solidity' in every sense of the word.

⁶⁸ Deuteronomy, XXVII, 5-6.

⁶⁹ This is also the reason for the persistent use of stone knives in the rite of circumcision.

When the building was constructed, no hammer, axe or any other iron tool was heard"⁽⁷⁰⁾
 (...)

It could be said that, in a case such as this, metals, apart from being able to effectively harm the transmission of 'spiritual influences', are taken as representatives of what the Hebrew Kabbalah calls 'barks' or 'shells' (qlipoth), that is, the lowest that exists in the subtle realm because they constitute, if we may use the expression, the "underworld" of our world.

In Le Regne de la Quantité, chap. XXII: The Meaning of Metallurgy

While the positive results of the cyclical manifestation remain 'crystallised' to be subsequently 'transmuted' into seeds of possibilities for the future cycle, thus constituting the final state of 'solidification' considered in its 'beneficial' aspect (which essentially implies 'sublimation' coinciding in turn with the final 'regression'), what cannot be used in this way, that is, ultimately everything that constitutes only a series of negative results of this same manifestation, 'precipitates' in the form of *caput mortuum*, in the alchemical sense of the word, into the lowest 'extensions' of our state of existence, or into that part of the subtle realm that can truly be described as 'subtle'. This is precisely what, as we have already said, the Hebrew Kabbalah designates as the 'world of the husks' (*ôlam qlipoth*); this is where the 'ancient kings of Edom' fall, insofar as they represent the unusable 'residues' of past Manvantaras.

In Le Regne de la Quantité, chap. XXIV

"Likewise, the special nature of Hebrew tradition may explain the disapproval associated with certain arts or trades particularly suited to sedentary life, especially when it comes to the construction of permanent dwellings; this occurred at least until the time when Israel ceased to be a nomadic nation for several centuries, that is, until the time of David and Solomon, for it must be remembered that, for the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, it was necessary to resort to the services of foreign workers. The settlement of the Hebrew people, on the other hand, depended

⁷⁰ I, Kings, VI, 7. However, the Temple of Jerusalem contained a large number of metal objects, although their use refers to the other aspect of the symbolism of metals which, as we shall see later, is effectively twofold; from another point of view, it seems that the prohibition may have become, shall we say, 'localised', especially with regard to the use of iron, which, of all metals, is precisely the one whose role is most important in modern times.

essentially from the very existence of the Temple of Jerusalem; from the moment it is destroyed, nomadism re-emerges, this time taking the special form of 'diaspora'.

In Le Régne de la Quantité, chap. XXI: 'Cain and Abel'

"Let us note in passing: why are the main representatives of the new trends, such as Einstein in physics, Bergson in philosophy, Freud in psychology and many others of even lesser importance, almost all of Jewish origin, if not because there is something there that corresponds exactly to the 'malevolent' and dissolving aspect of deviant nomadism, which necessarily predominates among Jews detached from their tradition".

In Le Régne de la Quantité, chapter XXXIV: "The excesses of psychoanalysis".

"In the April 1941 issue of Speculative Mason, it is worth noting a summary of ancient traditions concerning Atlantis, some geological considerations that would seem to confirm them, and a study on the relationship between Kabbalah and Freemasonry that continues in the July and October issues. The latter contains a number of curious indications, although certain points are quite debatable, and not all of the essays mentioned are equally convincing, nor are all of the sources cited equally valid. We believe that a true, more or less direct influence of Kabbalah should not be assumed except in those cases where very precise details are found, and not just similarities that normally occur among all initiatory traditions. It should also be noted that the science of numbers is far from being the exclusive domain of the Hebrew Kabbalah.

Review in Etudes Traditionnelles, December 1945. Reproduced in Etudes sur la Franc-Maçonnerie II.

This same point is also, in Hebrew Kabbalah, where the scales mentioned in the Siphra di-Tseniutha are suspended, for upon the pole rests the equilibrium of the world; and this point is designated as 'a place that does not exist', that is, as the 'unmanifested', which corresponds, in the Far Eastern tradition, to the assimilation of the North Star, as 'made of Heaven', to the place of the Principle itself; this is also related to what we said earlier about the scales in connection with the Big Dipper. The two pans of the scales, with their alternating upward and downward movement, naturally refer to the vicissitudes of yin and yang; the correspondence with yin on one side and yang on the other also applies, in general, to all double symbols that have axial symmetry.

In The Great Triad: "The City of Willows"

Letters

First, if the double triangle is called the "Seal of Solomon," it is because Solomon is said to have had a ring engraved with that sign, the possession of which gave him the power to command all the forces of nature; this tradition is common to both Jews and Muslims. The same sign has other names, notably the 'Shield of David' and the 'Shield of Michael'. The latter designation is particularly interesting because of the very special role attributed to Michael (Mikael), the solar archangel, in Hebrew angelology, through whom divine glory is manifested.

As for the triangle in which the name (YHWH) is inscribed: יְהָוָה, I do not believe that it can be said to be an emblem devoid of meaning in Christian churches; its significance remains valid. On the other hand, I do not think that this is the case in the liturgical prescriptions of the Bible, nor that it currently appears in synagogues, where the usual sign is the double triangle with the name (Shaddai = the Almighty): Moreover, you know that Jews are very reserved in their use of the tetragrammatic name (YHWH): יהָוָה, which they write as rarely as possible and never pronounce, replacing it with *Adonai* (The Lord) in the reading of the sacred text. It is said that in ancient times only the High Priest had the right to pronounce it once a year in the Holy of Holies. It is likely that the triangle containing this name was a reserved sign, which was not displayed publicly because it was particularly sacred; there is something similar in India, but the word inscribed in the triangle is *Aum*.

(...)

I do not recall seeing figures associating the cross with the pomegranate, but I am not surprised that they exist, since the pomegranate is a symbol totally analogous to the rose, which also has fertility among its various meanings. This symbol is not only Phoenician, it is also Hebrew, since pomegranates appear on the capitals of the columns of the temple in Jerusalem.

Excerpt from Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, 25 February 1925

"As for the relationship between Christ and Melchizedek, your understanding of it is entirely accurate; but, in fact, I do not think that things can be so simple.

clearly separated, as you say. Note, first of all, that Kabbalah establishes such a close relationship between the Messiah and the *Shekinah* that it sometimes reaches the point of identification; and what is also important in this regard is that, in the Christian tradition itself, many symbols are attributed to both Christ and the Virgin Mary (Mr Charbonneau-Lassay has shown me, in the documents he has gathered for the works he is preparing, some very characteristic examples of this point). On the other hand, you also know what the *Shekinah's* relationship is with Metatron, in whom there is also a plurality of aspects; moreover, Islamic tradition assimilates Metatron with *Er-Rûh*, that is, "the Spirit" in the "total" sense of the term, and also, in a more particular way, from whence all manifestations proceed.

Excerpt from Vasile Lovinescu, 9 November 1935. *In Symbolos*, Guatemala, 1999.

The subject of the <cornerstone> and its relationship to the <diamond> is quite important and worthy of interest, so much so that it deserves an article as you suggest. I also gladly accept your offer to send me a copy of the illustration mentioned by Prof. Panowfsky. Thank you for that as well! How can it be explained that the word 'Eckstein' in German also has the meaning of 'diamond'? I must point out a small inaccuracy (which I wonder, incidentally, if it is not simply due to a printing error) concerning the Hebrew words: the word meaning "angle" is "pinnah" in the singular and "pinnoth" in the plural; this word is related to "pnê", which means "face". For the matter at hand, the two expressions "eben pinah", "cornerstone", and "rosh pinnah", "corner head", are used as synonyms. It is surprising that the second has not prevented the confusion that commonly arises between this "cornerstone" and the "foundation stone", a confusion that is all the more curious in the Christian tradition, since it means nothing less than confusing Saint Peter with Christ!

Excerpt from a letter to Coomaraswamy dated 2 April 1939.

"For Skanda, there are certainly multiple aspects, but the relationship with Agni seems to give the fundamental meaning. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word that is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit <Kumâra> is applied by the Kabbalists to Metatron: he has the attribute of "everlasting youth", which is also the very meaning of the name Sanatkumâra".

Excerpt from 11 November 1938 to Ananda Coomaraswamy

"I have very recently verified something that I had never had occasion to point out until now, and which seems to me to be totally worthy of note: it concerns the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, which presents a striking parallel with the death

of Vritra by Indra. My attention was drawn to this by an anonymous article in a new magazine, *Dieu Vivant*. The author particularly emphasises the most significant points on this subject, which is all the more curious given that he probably knows nothing about Vedic symbolism and in any case makes no reference to it whatsoever.

Holofernes "keeps the waters in reserve" like Vritra (I quote the article verbatim), "in order to quench the thirst of Bethulia (a place 'situated on high'), Judith will have to cut off the head of the keeper of the waters and carry it in triumph to the city". Furthermore, the name Holofernes is a Persian name that means "the serpent"; and Holofernes, most often considered "the image of the Devil", is nevertheless considered by some (especially St. Francis de Sales) to be "the symbol of Divinity" (since the serpent is historically ambivalent); he is, therefore, exactly the Asura in his two opposing aspects. Now, one might wonder what relationship Judith might have with Indra, but that also seems quite clear to me: her name is a feminine form of Judah, the royal tribe whose emblem is the lion, representing the "Kshatra(?)" in the Hebrew tradition; in short, the only difference is therefore that Indra (or at least his equivalent) is represented here as acting through his Shakti, which obviously does not change the meaning of the "myth" in any way.

Excerpt from 2 October 1945 to Ananda Coomaraswamy

"... It is very true that Freemasonry is not linked to any particular exoteric form and that, consequently, it is not incompatible with any; but, on the other hand, it constitutes in itself a well-defined initiatory form into which elements belonging to other initiations cannot be introduced without denaturing it... It cannot be said that the Hebrew form is entirely foreign to Freemasonry, given the 'Solomonic' aspect of the latter; there is also a 'Pythagorean' aspect which, although less apparent, is perhaps no less important, especially as regards initiatory affiliation.

Excerpt with unknown recipient dated 10 November 1946. In *Rivista di Studi Tradizionali*, no. 54-55.

El-Khidr is not exactly the same as Melchizedek (Melki-Tsedek); although there is a fairly close relationship between them, the difference is that between the initiatory path that arises from the "Pole" and that of the *Afrād*, the latter being exceptional. In Kabbalah, there is something similar with the two brothers 'endowed with perpetual youth', Metatron and Sandalfon."

Excerpt from Cattiaux, 20 February 1950

ADDENDUM

"In the figure of the 'Sephirotic tree' of Kabbalah, the 'column on the right' and the 'column on the left' are those on the right and left respectively when looking at the figure."
 In *The Great Triad*: "Questions of Orientation."

"It is important to emphasise that we say (that the 'demiurgic' function is) 'formative' and not 'creative'; this distinction will take on its most precise meaning if we consider that the four terms of the Pythagorean quaternary can be placed in correspondence with the 'four worlds' of the Hebrew Kabbalah."

In *The Great Triad*: 'Spiritus, Anima, Corpus'.

"Let us emphasise in this regard that the Hebrew Tetragrammaton is considered to be grammatically constituted by the contraction of the three tenses of the verb 'to be'; In this way, it designates the Principle, that is, pure Being, which encompasses within itself the three terms of the 'universal ternary', according to Fabre d'Olivet's expression, just as the Eternity inherent in it encompasses within itself the 'triple tense'.

In *La Grande Triade*: 'The triple tense'.

We will conclude with an observation, which we believe has not yet been made anywhere, regarding the correspondence between the centres discussed here and the *Sephirot* of Kabbalah, which, like all things, must necessarily have their counterpart in human beings. It could be objected that there are ten *Sephirot*, while the six chakras and *sahashrāra* only make up a total of seven; but this objection is invalid if we observe that, in the arrangement of the "Sephirotic tree", there are three pairs symmetrically placed on the "columns" on the right and left, so that the *Sephirot* as a whole are distributed across only seven different levels; considering their projections on the central axis or "middle column", which corresponds to *sushumnā* (the two side columns being related to *idā* and *pingalā*), we are thus led back to the septenary¹.

¹ Note the similarity between the symbolism of the "Sephirotic tree" and that of the caduceus, as indicated above, as well as the different "channels" that connect the *Sephirot* to each other.

Starting at the top, there is initially no difficulty in assimilating *sahashrâra*, "located" at the crown of the head, to the supreme *Sep-hirah*, *Kether*, whose name means precisely "Crown". Next comes the combination of *Hokmah* and *Binah*, which must correspond to *âjnâ*, and whose duality could even be represented by the two petals of that "lotus"; on the other hand, both have *Daath*, that is, Knowledge, as their "result", and we have seen that the "location" of *âjnâ* also refers to the "eye of Knowledge"². The next pair, *Hesed* and *Geburah*, can, according to a very general symbolism concerning the attributes of "Mercy" and "Justice", be placed in man in relation to the two arms³; these two *Sephirot* will therefore be located on the two shoulders, and consequently at the level of the throat region, thus corresponding to *vishuddha*⁴; As for *Tiphereth*, its central position clearly refers to the heart, which immediately implies its correspondence with *anâhata*. The pair *Netsah* and *Hod* will be placed on the hips, the points of attachment of the lower limbs, just as *Hesed* and *Geburah* on the shoulders are the upper points of attachment; now, the hips are at the level of the umbilical region, then of *manipûra*. Finally, as for the last two *Sephirot*, it seems that they must be considered an inversion, since *Iesod*, according to the very meaning of its name, is the "foundation", which corresponds exactly to *mûlâdhâra*. *Malkuth* would then have to be assimilated to *swâdshtâna*, which the very meaning of the names seems to justify, since *Malkuth* is the "Kingdom", and *swadhishtâna* literally means the "own dwelling" of *EnShâde* *ur l'Hindouisme*: "Kundalini-yoga".

They are not without analogy with the *nâdis* (this, of course, insofar as their particular application to human beings is concerned).

²The duality of *Hokmah* and *Binah* can also be symbolically related to the right and left eyes, the "microcosmic" correspondence of the Sun and the Moon.

³See what we have said in *The King of the World* about the symbolism of the two hands, specifically in relation to the *Shekhinah* (whose connection to the Hindu *Shakti* we will mention in passing) and the "Sephirotic Tree".

⁴It is also on the two shoulders that the two angels responsible for recording man's good and bad deeds respectively are held, and who also represent the divine attributes of "Mercy" and "Justice". Let us note, in this regard, that the symbolic figure of the "scales" mentioned in the *Siphra di-Tseniutha* could also be "placed" in a similar way in the human being.

