

# Mystics Magazine

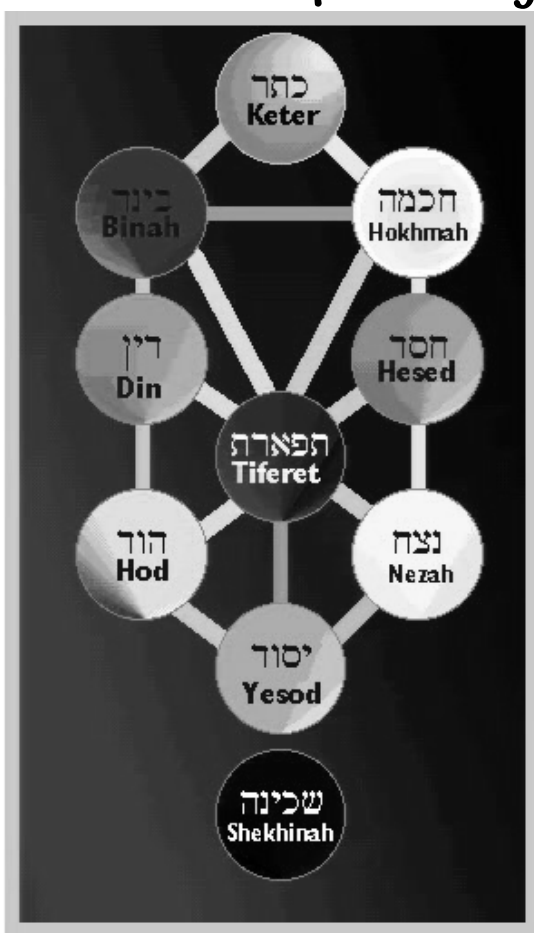
*Jewish Mystical Theology*

Conversations with Rabbi Simeon

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

[www.outofbodytravel.org](http://www.outofbodytravel.org)





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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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# *Mystics Magazine*

*Jewish Mystical Theology*  
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 By Marilyn Hughes

*Mystics Magazine ventures to take on the issues of Mystical Theology in Different Faiths and World Religions in a new and unique way. It is the purpose of each issue of the magazine to embrace the personal dialogue and teachings of a great Master of the Mystical Path within that religion and allow them to speak of their personal experience and conclusions based on their years of inquiry into the supersensual world.*

*We've utilized many texts which involve actual dialogue between the Great Mystics and others wherein they explain important aspects and understanding of the mystical theology (and sometimes moral theology) of their own unique religious path.*

*The Author does not necessarily agree with all views presented, but wishes to present the similarities and differences between some of the Great Mystics the world over. In doing so, we can see better where we agree and where we disagree. We can also pick up points from other paths that may enhance our own.*

*Look upon this journey into Mystics Magazine as an opportunity to discern for yourself as to how these things may be able to help you in your own spiritual journey.*

*This is an opportunity to have a conversation with some of the greatest mystical minds in history. So consider listening in . . .*

# Zohar: Bereshith to Lekh Lekha

*By Nurho de Manhar, 1900-1914*

## INTRODUCTION.

### THE LILY.

THE students of Rabbi Simeon were assembled together and sitting in silence, waiting for the master to begin his discourse. At length Rabbi Simeon spake, and said: "As a lily amongst the thorns." Cant. 2:2 This word lily, what doth it mean and symbolize? It symbolizes the congregation of Israel; and as lilies are either red or white in color, so the members of this congregation are divided into two classes, distinguished by their rigorous justice and uprightness, or by their gentleness, kindness and compassion. These are environed about with thirteen ways or degrees of mercy, as the lily has thirteen leaves surrounding it on all sides. Furthermore, intervening between the first and second Elohim or Alhim, mentioned in Genesis, are thirteen words corresponding to these thirteen leaves of the lily and the degrees of mercy surrounding the congregation of Israel. The divine name Alhim is mentioned again, and wherefore? In order to show the symbolic meaning of the five strong leaves which surround the lily, the occult meaning of which has reference to the

five ways of salvation, corresponding to five gates of mercy. Respecting this mystery of five, it is written: "I will take the cup of salvation," Ps. 116:13 which is the cup of blessing, and which must stand or repose upon five fingers only, similar to the lily supported and sustained by its five strong leaves. For this reason the lily symbolizes the cup of blessing, as there are five words between the second and the third Alhim mentioned in the Book of Genesis. One of these words is A U R, meaning light. This light was treated and became enclosed as an embryo in the *Berith*, or covenant, and, entering into the lily as a principle of life, made it fruitful, and this is what is called in Scripture "fruit tree, yielding fruit whose seed is in itself"; Gen. 1:29 and as this life principle, entering into the *Berith*, caused itself to become manifested in forty-two kinds of second matter, so has it produced the *Shemhamphorash*, the great and ineffable divine name of God, composed of forty-two letters, which operated in the creation of the world.

### **THE REDEMPTION OF HUMANITY.**

Rabbi Simeon spake again: "The Flowers appear on the earth." Cant. 2:12 By flowers is signified the appearance of created beings on the earth. When did they appear? On the third day, when it is written: "The earth first brought forth." Then the flowers appeared on that day. "The time of singing or of commingled voices and cries and noises is come," indicates the fourth day of creation, in which took place the excision of the Aretzim (the terrible one, or demons). For this reason the word Moroth (lights) is

found without V and written M A R Th, meaning curse, or malediction. "The voice of the turtle" refers to the fifth day, when it is written: "The waters brought forth abundantly, and etc.," for the generation of created beings. On the sixth day it was said: "Let us make man," who in after-time would say: "Let us hear, before let us do or make." "In our land" is meant the Sabbath, symbol or type of the land of life, the world of spirits or souls, the world of resurrections or rising up to a higher life. "The flowers" were the fathers or pitris whose souls pre-existed in the Divine Thought, and, entering into the world to come, became concealed and hidden therein. From thence they came forth, becoming incarnated in prophets of truth. When Joseph was born they were concealed and unrecognized in him, and when he entered into the holy land he presided over them and ruled there; so then they became known. When did this occur? To this question Scripture gives answer: when the Iris, or rainbow, first appeared in the world. Then was the time of the excision or cutting of the brutal and savage and sinful from the face of the earth. Why, then, did they not perish? Why were they preserved? Because the flowers then appeared on the earth. If they had not appeared, they, the brutal and sinful ones, would have become extinct and the world would have ceased its existence. Who, then, established the world and caused the fathers to appear? It was the voice or cry of the *little ones*, or students of the law, and it was owing to them that the world now subsists.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND REMARKS.**

In these two first sections of the introduction to the Zohar are abstruse intimations and references to the doctrine of Light, which enters so largely as an element in the systems of ancient Eastern philosophy, especially that of the Persians, with whom the Jews had at one time such intimate relations. Light is the primal emanation of the Divine, from which and by which all things visible and invisible have originated. From out of that Light have they all come forth, and into it will they return when the great drama of existence is completed and the tragedy of life comes to an end. Meanwhile the Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world to play each his or her part, is accessible to all, irrespective of artificial conditions or the distinctions of human society. Upon our own measure of receptivity of it depends our inner development and evolution to higher planes of life; of loftier, clearer and more accurate views of truth that free us from the influence of external contaminations by purifying and spiritualizing the animal or lower nature within us. It is the one heritage common alike to king or peasant, noble or ignoble, learned or illiterate, rich or poor, and he who is endowed with and knows most of it ranks higher in the scale of existence and approximates nearer and closer to the Divine, in whom we all live and move and have life, whether we use it for the good and happiness of others or trifle and fritter it away as foolish spendthrifts who are ignorant of the value and worth of money. It was this Light that the great

German, Goethe, in his last words, craved and desired: "Light! More Light!" And this is the Light that Rabbi Simeon refers to all through the pages of this remarkable book, in which we shall meet with many allusions to it of great interest, both to the general and the theosophic reader. Kabbalists affirm that there were thirty-two Alhim engaged in the work of creation as executors of the divine will. They correspond to the Dhyan Chohans in Hindu philosophy. By the lily, with thirteen leaves, is occultly meant the twelve avatars, or incarnations, of divine messengers, six of whom are Cabiri, ministers of karmic justice for the chastisement of nations; and six of them are Messiahs; their emblem is a lily, whose color is white, as seen in ancient paintings of The Annunciation, in which the Angel Gabriel holds a lily in his hand. The thirteenth is their great chief and lord, by whom they have been trained and commissioned and sent forth on the great work of spiritual enlightenment of the nations. In Eastern philosophy he is known as the "Great Sacrifice," the "Silent Watcher," who will not vacate his post until the last scion of humanity, agonizing and struggling with its weakness and infirmities to overcome self and accomplish its destiny, finds its way to him at last. We have also here hints of the state of mankind in its primary stages, when the cry of the Atzerim, the terrible or terrorizing ones, resounded on the earth, and which lasted until the *fathers*, or divine teachers, came and led humanity on to the upward track of light and civilization. Then the world became steadied or established, and students of the divine

law of the universe and of the divine government of humanity became numerous, their voices and teachings going out unto the ends of the world; and then, as it is written: "Great was the company of the preachers" of truth and righteousness.

By the "little ones" are meant student initiates, of which class St. Paul was one. Before his initiation his name was called Saul, but after his initiateship he became known as Paulus--the little one. There are various other expositions of these two sections by Kabbalists, but so abstrusely worded and expressed in metaphysical terms and language that none but those who have a wide and extended knowledge of Hebrew and its cognate language would be able to understand and appreciate them.

For greater elucidation and a clearer understanding of the Briatic or creative Alhim, we give them in their order as set forth in Kabbalistic writings:

(1) In the beginning Alhim created. (2) And the spirit of Alhim hovered or brooded. (3) And Alhim said: "Let there be light." (4) And Alhim saw the light. (5) And Alhim divided between the light. (6) And Alhim called the light *Day*. (7) And Alhim said: "Let there be a firmament." (8) And Alhim made the firmament. (9) And Alhim called the firmament *Heaven*. (10) Alhim said: "Let the waters he gathered together." (11) Alhim called the dry land *Earth*. (12) And Alhim saw it was good. (13) Alhim said: "Let the earth bring forth." (14) And Alhim saw it was good. (15) And Alhim said: "Let there be lights." (16) Alhim made two lights. (17)



And Alhim placed them in the firmament of the heavens. (18) And Alhim saw it was good. (19) Alhim said: "Let the waters bring forth." (20) Alhim created the whales. (21) And Alhim saw it was good. (22) And Alhim blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply." (23) Alhim said: "Let the earth bring forth." (24) Alhim made the beasts of the earth. (25) And Alhim saw it was good. (26) Alhim said: "Let us make man." (27) And Alhim created the man. (28) In the form or image of Alhim created he him. (29) Alhim blessed them. (30) Alhim said: "Be fruitful and multiply." (31) Alhim said: "Behold! I have given to you." (32) And Alhim saw all that he had made.

The English equivalents of the thirteen words intervening between the first and second Alhim are as follows: The heavens, the earth, earth was Tohu vabohu, darkness upon face, abyss (or great deep) Spirit. The five words between the second and third Alhim are: "Hovered, upon, face, waters, said."

The expression, "Congregation of Israel," in the first instance, refers to the first born sons of Light, or, as they are termed in the Book of Job, the morning stars, who, along with the Sons of Alhim, sang their song of praise at the creation of the world. In an extended sense, it includes the true children of light who have attained unto the Divine Life.

### **THE INITIATION OF RABBI HIYA.**

Bereshith, "In the beginning," said Rabbi Ionda, "what is the signification of this mystical word? It is

hochma--wisdom, that wisdom by which the world was formed and still subsists. Like a globe it includes the six directions of space, viz., north, south, east and west, high and low, from which emanate six streams of existence, all of which flow at last into the great ocean of primal life. Another occult signification of Bereshith is this, Bara sith (he created six) and who was he? Though not mentioned, it was the mysterious though ineffable, the great unknown."

Rabbi Hiya and Rabbi Jose were walking together in the country and when they reached their destination, said Rabbi Hiya: "This occult meaning of bereshith is undoubtedly correct, since we find in the Book of Genesis that the creation of all things occurred and took place in six days and not more. In an ancient occult work on Genesis we have found many references to this account. Thus, the holy one at first formed a point in which was included and concealed, as in a palace, the forms or prototypes of all created things. Now though the palace contains them, the key of it is the most essential thing which closes and opens it. This palace, the world, is the receptacle or casket in which are enclosed many wonderful and secret mysteries, it has fifty gateways, ten on each of its four sides, nine opening heavenward and one, of which nothing definite is known about it, and it is therefore termed '*The Mysterious Gate*.' There is also one kind of lock to all these gates and one key alone opens and closes them and gives entrance into the palace and the treasures therein. Bereshith, bara Alhim, these words are the palace, and Bereshith is

the key that conceals or opens up their mysterious meanings. It opens and shuts, it reveals or obscures. Bereshith contains an opening word, shith, and a closing word, bara."

Said Rabbi Jose: "Truly this is so, and I have myself heard the master, Rabbi Simeon, say that this occult word bara closes but does not open, and thus explained it. "Ere the world became fixed and established, it was wrapped and enshrouded in darkness and chaos reigned supreme and as long as it endured, the world was Tohu (without form and solidity). When this key opened the gates, it became adapted for the generation and production of living beings. When was this? When Abraham came, as it is written: '*These (Aleh) are the generations of the heavens and the earth, behibaram*' Gen. 2:4 (when they were created) which word is an anagram of beabraham (by Abraham). The creation was brought about by the transposing of the letters of the concealing word, bara, into Abar, the sacred principle on which the world was founded and continues to subsist. Mi was the first aspect of the mysterious unknown who, when bara was transposed into Abr, created Alh (these). To Abr he took and joined the letter H, forming Abrh, to Alh. He took and joined I, forming Alhi, then of the two component letters of Mi, he took and added M to each of them and thus were formed Alhim and Abraham. Another explanation of the forming of these names is as follows:

"The holy one took Mi and joined it to Alh and this formed Alhim. He also took Mah, and joining it to Abr, formed Abraham. Now the name Mi (50) has reference to the fifty gates of Binah, the third sephira, and in it is also I, the first letter in the Shem Hamphorah or holy name IHVH, and Mah has also reference to the divine name, for the H thereof is the second letter in it. So the two worlds were formed, by I the world to come through H the present world through Mi, the world on high, through Mah the world below. But until the name of Abraham was formed, there was no generation of living creatures and things, and this explains what is written, Aleh produced the generations of the heaven and the earth bi-Abraham; that is, when the name of Abraham was formed, as it is written '*In that day the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.*'"

Rabbi Hiya prostrated himself on the earth and kissing it, exclaimed: "Oh, earth, earth! how hard and unfeeling art thou! In thee lies buried everything delighting the eyes. All the lights of learning and wisdom thou causest to disappear and vanish from the world. How unfeeling thou art. The great master and teacher, the one shining light of the world, by which it was enlightened, has returned to the dust and now lies concealed in thee, even Rabbi Simeon thou hidest him and all things become subject to thee at last. Overwhelmed with emotion, for a moment he became speechless. Again he cried, earth! earth! Exult thou not, for now I see the great masters of light are not delivered into thy hands, for Rabbi Simeon yet

lives, and with eyes filled with tears of joy, Rabbi Hiya went on his way and Rabbi Jose was with him. For forty days he fasted that he might see Rabbi Simeon, but it was said to him: "It is not possible for thee to behold him." Then fasted he other forty days, at the end of which he saw as in a vision Rabbi Simeon, with Rabbi Eleazar his son, studying and meditating upon the words upon which Rabbi Jose had discoursed. They were surrounded by a multitude of listening and attentive students. Anon he observed mighty angelic beings, who descended from on high, taking Rabbi Simeon, and Eleazar, his son, with them, wended their way again upwards to the celestial school, where, when they arrived, they all became arrayed with garments of dazzling splendor, whiter and more glittering than the light of the sun.

Then spake Rabbi Simeon, and said: "Let Rabbi Hiya come up hither and behold how great joys the holy one hath prepared for the just and upright in the world to come. Blessed the lot of him who cometh hither with a pure heart and mind, blessed also are they who in the world abide steadfast and firm and unmoved as pillars of right and truth." Rabbi Hiya then ascended and after making obeisance to Rabbi Eleazar and the masters who were standing to receive and welcome him, went and sat down at the feet of Rabbi Simeon. A voice resounded and said: "Close thy eyes and bow thy head, so that thy mind may not be distracted or disturbed." He closed his eyes and there was, as it were, a great light shining afar off and another voice was heard saying: "Ye heavenly beings,

high and exalted ones, who unseen and invisible to mortal vision, visit the world, attend ye! Teachers of the mysteries who in your lonely hermitages are sleeping, awaken ye! attend, as also those who before coming hither, have turned darkness into light and made bitter to become sweet, waiting and longing for the dawning of the day when the king should visit his loved ones, in and by whom he shall be glorified and hailed as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Such only have the right and privilege to be present here."

Then Rabbi Hiya saw his fellow students standing around the, masters and they wended their way to the celestial school. Some were ascending and others descending thither, and at their head was the great winged angel of the presence (Metatron), who was saying he had heard in the palace on high that the king, visits everyday and does not forget his lone and loved ones who are struggling towards the higher life unnoticed and unregarded by the world. At that moment three hundred and ninety worlds trembled and shook as with an earthquake. Stars as of fire descended from on high and fell into the great sea, whose ruler then stood up and swore by him that lives forever, that he would dry up all the waters of creation if ever the world and its powers should gather themselves against the children of light to destroy them.

As he ceased speaking, Rabbi Hiya heard a voice from heaven exclaiming: "Fall back! make room for the King Messiah coming to the school of Rabbi Simeon,

whose students are all initiates and master teachers of the secret doctrine." Then came Messiah and visited all the celestial schools and confirmed the teachings and expositions of the mysteries given by their appointed instructors. As he entered the great assembly crowned with many crowns, all the great masters rose up and saluted. Turning to Rabbi Simeon, the emanation of whose light reached up to heaven, Messiah spake and said: "Blessed art thou, Rabbi Simeon, for thy mystic teachings are of the highest worth and valued and cherished by all. They only, along with those of Heseekiah, King of Judah, and Achiya, the Solonite, are marked and sealed with the approval of the holy one. I have come hither because I know that the angel of the presence visits no other school save yours."

As he ceased speaking, Rabbi Simeon raised his hand and repeated the vow of the angel of the great sea. Then spake Messiah words which made the heavens, the ocean and Great Leviathan tremble, fearing that the world was about to be destroyed and annihilated. Beholding Rabbi Hiya at the feet of Rabbi Simeon, "Who!" said he, "who has brought hither one clad in garments of the lower world?" "It is Rabbi Hiya," replied Rabbi Simeon, "a student skilled in the science of the mysteries." "Let him then, together with his son, be enrolled as members of thy school." "I pray thee," said Rabbi Simeon again, "that time may be granted for due preparation." The request was granted and Rabbi Hiya overwhelmed with feelings of joy, went forth exclaiming: "Blessed is the lot of the just in

heaven, blessed also the lot of Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, to whom the words of the scripture may be applied: *'I cause those that love me to be blest with substance, and I will fill their treasures.'*" Prov. 8:21

The following affecting and descriptive account of Rabbi Hiya's decease is not found in some of the early editions of the Zohar and is probably an interpolation from an ancient Kabbalistic work no longer extant.

Rabbi Hiya, perceiving the end of life approaching, exclaimed: "Return, my soul to thy home on high! Thou spark divine of heavenly flame, quit thou this mortal frame. Fearing, trembling, hoping the time has come for thee to mount up to the mansions of light and life. Sweet angelic voices are calling me. My strength is failing, my eyes grow dim; I cease to breathe; the earth is disappearing and heaven opens on my eyes. Me-thinks I hear the fluttering of angel wings. Ah! what do I see'? The tree of life radiating a perfume that fills the azure vault of heaven itself. I see descending the mystic heavenly dove. I recognize King Messiah, whom I saw in Rabbi Simeon's school. Oh! ye angelic beings, lend me your wings, that I may mount on high to meet him. Oh, my soul! can this be death'? How vain the fear and dread of the transports of ecstatic bliss and joys its presence brings! Oh, grave! where is thy victory? Oh, death! where is thy sting?"

A moment, and his soul had taken its flight--the life of Rabbi Hiya had ended.



## THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

Bereshith! Rabbi Simeon spake and said: "*I have put my words in thy month, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth.*" Is. 51:16 These words inculcate that man should study and acquaint himself with the mysteries of the secret doctrine by day and by night, and that the Holy One regards those whose delights are therein. Every new thought suggestive or explanatory of it is crowned by him, and by it he forms a new heaven. It is said that whenever a man gives expression to such a word it ascends at once into the divine presence, who taketh and embraceth it and adorneth it with seventy crowns, all engraveth with his holy name. This word of mystic wisdom then descends and visits the children of light, who are the life of the world. Then it flies through seventy thousand worlds and stands before the Ancient of Days, with whose words, enfolding the deepest mysteries, it then becomes united and together fly through eighteen worlds invisible to mortal eyes Is. 64:4 and known only to Alhim. Perfected and complete, it returns to the Ancient of Days and become to him a subject of delight as he takes and crowns it with three hundred and seventy thousand crowns, when at length it is transformed into and becomes a new world. So, with every such like word, it becomes a new world of hidden mysteries of heavenly wisdom, a new earth referred to in scripture. "*As the new heaven and the new earth which I make abiding before me.*" Is. 66:22 Not which I have created, as in the past, but which I create in the

present, by means of those holy words which preserve and renew the worlds, and this is the occult signification of these words. Observe, it is said, not the heavens, but new heavens."

Said Rabbi Eleazar: "What is the occult meaning of the words, 'In the shadow of mine hand have I hid thee?'"  
Is. 51:16

Rabbi Simeon replied: "When the secret doctrine and its hidden mysteries was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai myriads of angels endeavored, through jealousy, to consume him with their fiery breath. Then the Holy One covered him with his hand, so that they did him no hurt. Also, with the word of which we have just described proceeding from human lips, it also is covered and protected from the wrath and envy of angels, until it becomes a new heaven or a new earth; for then only become they uncovered and their meaning revealed. This is furthermore shown by the words, '*Say unto Sion Ammi Atha*' (*thou art my people*). They should rather be rendered, '*Immi Atha*' (*thou art with me*), *with* me as an associate, just as my word was with me when I created the world, as it is written: '*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.*' Ps. 33:6 And so it is with words containing mysteries of the secret doctrine uttered by us. We become creators, and happy- am! blessed are I hey who consecrate themselves to the study and teaching of this holy science and knowledge. If, however, you say that such a word may proceed from or be spoken by one who has no knowledge or understanding of

sacred mysteries, observe that, if this should happen, then the word spoken by one who is ignorant of the secret doctrine is seized hold of by a demon called *aishtahphucoth* (froward lips), who casts it into the great abyss when it becomes a false heaven, and know as *Tohu* (vanity). When this heaven of falsehood is formed, forthwith it becomes united with another demon named *esithzenonim* (or lady of seductions), who causeth the ruin and destruction of thousands and as long as this false heaven subsists and power and rule predominate. Therefore is it written: '*Woe unto you who draw iniquity (avon) with cords of vanity and sin (hatah), as with a cart rope.*' Isa 5:18 What is Hatah? It is this seductress who, proceeding from this world of vanity, destroyeth the children of man. The cause of all this is the student who has not attained to the wisdom and science of an initiate or master. God preserve us from becoming such! See to it, therefore, that ye let not a single word escape your lips concerning divine mysteries without understanding or before consulting with a master that ye may not be originators of *Hatah*, and thus cause the destruction and ruin of many souls."

With one accord exclaimed the students of Rabbi Simeon: "God keep and preserve us from this!"

Continuing his discourse, Rabbi Simeon said: "Mark this also. It was by means of the secret doctrine that the Holy One created the world. Holy scripture affirms that it was with him and was his delight daily. He examined it attentively and minutely, and then

uttered it, and thereby produced all his works in order to teach us to study occult science and sacred mysteries calmly and reverently, and thus avoid falling into error and causing many to stumble, to fall, to perish. It is written, "*Then did he see it and declare it. He prepared it; yea, searched it out.*" Job 28:27 in which verse are the words *yaha* (see), *yesaphrah* (declared), *kenah* (prepared), *hakar* (searched), showing what carefulness was exercised by the Holy One before creating the world. For ere doing so he formed the four words corresponding to those we have just particularized, viz.: *Bereshith*, *bara*, *Alhim*, *ath*, implying a fourfold examination of the secret doctrine ere he used it in Creation."

Rabbi Eleazar went one day to visit his uncle, Rabbi Jose, and Rabbi Abba was with him. A porter followed behind them.

Said Rabbi Abba: "As the time and opportunity are favorable, let us discourse and search a little into the secret doctrine."

Then spake Rabbi Eleazar, and said: "It is written, 'Ye shall keep my sabbaths.' Lev. 19:30 Observe that in six days the Holy One created the world that each day was distinguished by a special production. But on what day appeared the production that was fruitful? On the fourth; for those of the three first days were unmanifested and hidden, viz.: fire, water, and earth. If you say that the earth was clothed with vegetation on the third it was truly so. It was, however, really on the fourth day that the results became manifest and

distinctive in themselves, and thus it became the fourth pedestal of the heavenly throne. All the works of creation were finished certainly on the Sabbath, as it is written: '*And Alhim created on the seventh day,*' the Sabbath, which was the fourth day of the earth's fruitful production. But what meaneth 'Ye shall keep my Sabbaths,' as though there were two or more sabbaths? The scripture, by this plural word, designates the eve of the Sabbath and the day of the Sabbath, distinct yet not separate."

Then spake the porter who had followed them, and said: "But what is the signification of the following words: 'Ye shall reverence my sanctuary.'"

Rabbi Eleazar replied: "They refer to the holiness of the Sabbath."

"What do you mean by the holiness of the Sabbath?" asked the stranger.

"It is the heavenly holiness which cometh down upon the earth on that day," replied Rabbi Eleazar.

"If so, then you make not the Sabbath holy, but a something which is from above."

"That truly is so," said Rabbi Abba, "what Rabbi Eleazar has said, for it is written: '*Call the Sabbath a delight, and the Holy of the Lord honorable.*' Is. 58:13 Therefore there is a distinction between the Sabbath day and the Holy of the Lord."

"What, then, meaneth the Holy of the Lord?" asked the stranger again.

"It is," replied Rabbi Abba, "as has been just said, a heavenly holiness coming from above on that day."

"Then," answered the stranger, "in that ease the heavenly holiness is glorious and hallowed, but not the day of the Sabbath; and yet the scripture says, "Glorify the Sabbath day."

"Men," said Rabbi Eleazar to Rabbi Abba, "let this man speak on, for he seems to be endowed with a wisdom and knowledge we do not possess."

"They turned toward the stranger and said: "Give us your opinion on the subject."

"It is written," he said to them, "*Keep my Sabbaths,*" Lev. 19:30 words which show plainly that there are two sabbaths--one heavenly and one earthly--yet are they but one, both alike in their esoteric meaning. There is another Sabbath--a third one, not mentioned in scripture, and which was unhonored. This Sabbath said to the Holy One: 'Thou art my maker, and I am called Sabbath. Now, there is no day without a night. Let there a Sabbath night or eve, as well as a Sabbath day, be kept.' To which the Holy One replied: 'My child, Sabbath art thou, and Sabbath thou shalt he called. I will yet adorn thee with great honor and beauty.' Then made he proclamation, and said: 'Reverence my sanctuary.' That is to say, the Sabbath eve, which is also to be revered and kept; for the

name of the Holy One is found in the word. I will now inform you how my father explained this to me. 'Imagine,' said he, 'a square within a circle, symbolizing two divine forms, which, though distinct, are not separate; for there is not division or separation in the divine essence. An earthly resemblance to this divine union is that between Jacob and Joseph. There is also a resemblance in the repetition of the word peace, in that verse of scripture, "*Peace to those that are far off and peace to those that are near,*" Is. 57:19 those that are far off referring to Jacob and those that are near to Joseph, symbolical of the Sabbath and the Sabbath eve, distinguished by 'Keep the Sabbath' Deut. 5:12 Ex. 20:8 and 'remember the Sabbath day.' But the words, 'Reverence my sanctuary,' designate a point in the middle of the square and circle which is the most sacred of all--he who violates and breaks this commandment is punishable with death, as it is written, "*Whoso violates it shall be put to death*"; Ex 31:14 that is, who enters into the circle and square to the middle point and profanes it. Therefore is it said, 'Reverence ye,' for that middle point is called *Ani* (Me). which is but another term or name of the Great Unknown, the Divine Being."

After hearing these words from the unknown stranger, they embraced him, and said:

"Possessed of such knowledge of the secret doctrine, you must not follow behind, but go before us. What is thy name?"

"Ask me not," he replied. "But let us go forward discoursing on occult mysteries, each of us giving utterance to words of hidden wisdom which shall lighten the way."

Said they: "How came you to follow us'?"

"Yod," he replied, "made war against two other letters, Caph and Samech (ch and S), in order that they might become attached to me. Koph was unwilling to be joined to one without whose help it could not subsist a single moment, and Samech was equally unwilling to become bound to Koph, and thus he unable to help those who stumble and fall. Then Yod, coming to me, embraced me, caressed me, wept with me, and said: 'My child, what can I do for you? I aim about to ascend on high, and shall acquire amongst many good things secret letters. all capitals, and valuable. I will then come back to thee and help thee and give thee other letters, better and stronger than those who have forsaken and left thee, even Ysh (blessing), who will he to thee treasures filled with good things. Go, therefore, my child, and mount thy ass.' And this is why I am here."

Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba were greatly pleased, and said: "Go on before and we will follow after thee."

Replied the stranger: "have I not told you it was through the King's orders that I have come hither?"

They said: "But you have not told us your name. Where do you dwell?"



"My habitation is a fine and strong one, a high tower, in which the Holy One and myself only reside. Just now I am here riding on my ass."

Then Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba pondered awhile and meditated on these sayings and the meaning of them, which to them were as honey and manna. Then said they unto him: "Who is thy father? If thou wilt tell us we will make obeisance unto thee."

"Wherefore should I?" he answered. "It is not usual with me to impart occult science to anyone. However, my father lives in the great sea, and was a great fish. He was great and strong and full of years, so that he swallowed up all the other fishes of the sea and then sent them forth living and filled with all the good things of the world. His power is such he can run through the sea in a moment, and he sent me forth as an arrow from the bow of a skilled archer and concealed me in the place of which I have spoken; but he himself has returned, and remains hidden in the sea."

Rabbi Eleazar, after reflecting a moment, exclaimed: "Thou art the son of the great mystic teacher Rabbi Hammenuna, the Aged, the great initiate in the secret doctrine!"

Then they embraced him and went forward, saying: "Let it please thee, Oh, master, tell us thy name?"

"Then," said he, "it is written, '*Benaiah, Son of Jehoida.*' 2 Sam 23:20 We have already expounded the

signification of these words. It will, however, be profitable to consider the deeply occult meaning of them, which has reference to human life. To continue, 'Son of a living man'; that is, of the just one--the life of the world. 'Who wrought many great works,' meaning Lord of all workers and of the heavenly hosts, all of whom are marked and distinguished by the letters of the divine name, Yehoval Sabaoth, the greatest of all names. 'The Lord of great works'; that is, the Lord of 'Mequabsel,' a mighty and most lordly tree. Where is its locality, and in what consists its magnificence? The scripture refers to it as being on high, where '*Eye hath not seen it, save thine alone, Oh, Lord.*' Isa. 64:4 In it is contained the life and essence of all existing things and living creatures, angels, archangels, heavenly hierarchies, principalities and powers, the universe with its unnumbered systems of stars and constellations; yea! all things are contained therein as in a glorious and magnificent palace, and from it come forth all things visible and reflective of its glory and magnificence. 'He killed two lions of Moab,' referring to the first and second temple of Jerusalem, which subsisted until the heavenly light which enlightened them was withdrawn from them; then were they destroyed and the holy throne demolished. Thus it is written: '*I was in the captivity*'; Ezek. 1:1 that is to say, this divine glory or essence called Ani (I) was in captivity. Why does the scripture still proceed, saying: 'By the River Chebar?' Because Chebar is the mysterious river of the heavenly light which floweth forth, but became dried up and ceased to flow when I was in captivity, and this is the

meaning of the words, '*The river decayeth and drieth up,*' Job 14:11 referring to the two temples of Jerusalem. With respect to the words, 'He killed two lions of Moab,' this latter word should be rendered Meab--of the father in heaven, having the same occult meaning. Again it is said of Benaiah, '*He went down and slew a lion in the midst of the pit in time of snow.*' In former times, when the river of divine radiance and glory was flowing, the children of Israel flourished and lived in peace and offered up daily sacrifices for their sins, when a celestial being, with the emblematic form of a lion, was seen by them descending on the altar, consuming and devouring the offerings with the avidity of a hungry man, during which the demons of evil, like dogs, fled away and hid themselves. But, on account of the sins of the people, the Most High came down and killed the lion, if it may be so expressed. '*He killed it in a pit,*' meaning in presence of the dog-like demons, living in dark subterranean places, that they might see they could seize and devour now the sacrifices, as they were of no worth in his sight. Now, the name of the lion was *Ouriel*, because lion-like in form, and the name of the demons was *Baladan*, or not human but dog-like. 'In the time of snow'; that is, when the children of Israel sinned and were consumed by divine justice. Such also is the significance of the words, '*She feareth not for her house of snow.*' Prov. 31:21 Why? Because arrayed with purple, and thus able to resist the fiercest flame. To proceed further, 'And he killed an Egyptian, a goodly man,' teaching that whenever Israel sins it loses the blessing and light of the divine presence which it once

enjoyed. *'And he killed the Egyptian,'* referring to the light which illuminated Israel, viz.: Moses, who was called an Egyptian by the daughters of Jethro, when they said to him: *'An Egyptian hath helped us.'* Ex. 2:19 In Egypt he was born and reared, and there he became initiated in the secret doctrine. *'A goodly man,'* for he saw the Lord clearly Num. 12:8 and not in dark speeches. He was a divine man, a man of God, Deut. 33:1 a recipient of divine science as no other man had ever enjoyed before. *'And in hand of the Egyptian was a spear.'* This was the sceptre or rod of God that was handed to Moses, as mentioned by scripture: *'And the rod of the Alhim was in my hand,'* Ex. 17:9 the rod which was made when the sun rose for the first time, and on it was engraved the Shem Hamphorash, or most holy divine name. By it he smote the rock, as it is written: *'And he struck the rock with his rod twice.'* Num. 20:11 Then said the Holy One: *'Moses, my rod was not given to thee to be used thus. I swear, by thy life, from this moment thou shalt not retain it.'* Therefore we read: *'He descended with the rod,'* which proved a great affliction for Israel, for then the rod was taken away. *'And he wrested the spear from out of the hand of the Egyptian,'* meaning the rod, and it was never seen again. Then, furthermore, he read: *'He killed him with his spear for the sin committed by a wrong use of the rod. Moses died and was not allowed to enter into the promised land, and that light was taken from Israel. The scripture further relates that he, Benaiah, 'Was more honorable than the thirty, but he was not one of the three.'* 2 Sam. 23:23 *'More honorable than the thirty, referring to the thirty years*

he was separated from the heavenly powers on high, and who, at the end of life, took him to themselves again. '*But he became not one of the three, viz.: the Divine, under three hypostases or forms, and who gave him the desire of his heart. 'Nevertheless, David set him over his guard'*'; that is, David, being attached to him, retained his services, so that they might not be separated from one another, in the same way that the moon is attached to the sun, to which it addresses its song of praise as the center and source of its light."

Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba knelt and prostrated themselves before the stranger, and then--but where was he? He had suddenly disappeared. They looked around amazed, but he was not to be seen. They sat down and pondered, bewildered and speechless. At length Rabbi Abba spake, and said:

"True is it that whenever students of esoteric truths travel together, discoursing amongst themselves on the mysteries of the secret doctrine, then are they visited by spiritual masters and teachers from on high. This stranger was indeed none other than Rabbi Hammenuna, the Aged, who has taught us truths which have never been divulged and revealed to anyone before, and leaving us before we were able to recognize him."

Then rose they up to mount their asses, but were unable to do so. Again they tried, with no better success. Filled with a feeling of trepidation, they fled away and left their asses behind, and to this day that place is known and called *Assfield*.

## EXPOSITION OF BIBLE MYSTERIES.

"In the beginning," Rabbi Hiya spake and said: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah, a good understanding I have all they that do his commandments, his praise endureth forever" (Ps. cxi. 10). The beginning of wisdom has reference to the great object of wisdom, viz., to raise and elevate us into the higher and diviner life, as it is said: "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (Ps. cxviii. 19). This is the gate or way of the Lord through which everyone must pass in order to attain unto this life and live in the presence of the heavenly king. Ere this, however, there are several other gates on the upward course which must be passed through, each with their bolts and bars that have to be unloosed, and the last of which is that called "the fear of the Lord." It is the one only gate of access. There are in scripture two beginnings (bereshith) mentioned, and are united into one, viz., "the fear of the Lord" and "the beginning of Wisdom," both one and the same, and never found disjoined from each other. As it is written: "That men may know that thy name is Jehovah only." (Ps. lxxxiii. 18). Why is the first gate called the fear of the Lord? Because it is a tree of good or evil. When a man lives uprightly, it is a tree of good to him; if unjustly, a tree of evil. It is the gate or portal through which all blessing, spiritual or temporal, comes. The words: "A good understanding," refer to those gates which, as aforesaid, are one and the same.

Said Rabbi Jose: "A good understanding"; it is the tree of life without admixture or alloy of evil. "That do his

commandments" are they who are true and faithful students of esoteric science. "His praise endureth forever" signifies that the throne of God or, in other words, the action of the good law, pervades the universe and endures throughout all ages.

Rabbi Simeon was sitting engaged in meditation and study of the secret doctrine during the night when the celestial bride becomes united to her bridegroom, for then, it is enjoined upon all the members of her retinue they should especially be present to accompany her to the nuptial dais and rejoice with her. On the eve of the heavenly union they must devote themselves to the study of the Pentateuch, the prophetic books, and the other parts of scripture, to the explanation of verses, and their occult meaning in which the heavenly spouse takes great delight. These students, with their acquired knowledge resulting from their studies, are "the marriage guests." When she ascendeth and seateth herself on the nuptial dais, the Holy One salutes her and blesses her attendants and presents them with crowns and garlands. Happy and blessed is their lot! Rabbi Simeon, together with his students, spent the night in study and acquiring deeper knowledge of esoteric science. Then said Rabbi Simeon: Blessed are ye! inasmuch as having spent this eve in meditation and study, your names will be enrolled and written in the celestial book, and the Holy One will endow you with faculties and powers more enlarged and receptive for the comprehension and understanding of divine mysteries.

Rabbi Simeon again spake and said: "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Ps. xix. 2). These words have already been explained, but they possess a deeper mystical meaning. At the time that the heavenly spouse is adorned in order to ascend the nuptial dais surrounded with the masters or teachers who have rejoiced with her throughout the night, beholding her husband, then is it "the heavens declare the glory of God," the heavens meaning the bridegroom who enters the nuptial chamber. The word "declare" (mesapherim) signifies sending forth glittering rays from one end of the wood to the other like a brilliant sapphire. "The glory of God" is the glory of the bridegroom who is called El (God) as it is written: "El judgeth the righteous, El is angry with the wicked every day." (Ps. vii. 12). During the whole of the year up to the eve of the celestial union, He is called El, but when the marriage day is consummated, he takes the name of Kobad (glory). These two names are a source of reciprocal light, power and joy to each other.

"And the firmament showeth his handiwork." Ps. 19:1 His handiwork are the true and faithful followers of the holy law of whom it is said: "Let the beauty of the Lord, our God, lie upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of [our hands establish thou it" (Ps. xc. 17), signifying or referring to the work of circumcision, which is a sign marked on the human body. Rabbi Hammenuna, the aged, has said: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin" (Eccles. v. 5). Never allow thy lips to give



expression to evil words and thus sin against thy flesh which has been sanctified with the seal of the holy covenant, for by so doing thou incurrst the danger of being cast into the hell of evil and wrong-doing (Gehenna), the ruler of which is called *Duma* and is always attended with destroying angels, observing those who keep the covenant over whom they have then no power to injure or afflict. It is further written: "Neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; that is, speak nothing that will cause the angel *Duma* to prevail against and overcome thee. "The firmament showeth his handiwork." These are the companions of the heavenly spouse, whose names are marked and inscribed in the firmament. What firmament? The visible heaven in which are the sun and moon, stars and constellations, and is the true Book of God. In it are found and written the names of all who have kept themselves pure and undefiled.

"Day unto day uttereth speech." Ps. 19:2 This refers to the great holy day of the King who applauds his companions and commends the words of learning and wisdom uttered by each of them. "Night unto night showeth knowledge." That is, each night communicates to the following one the mystery of the esoteric knowledge which enlightens all intelligences. "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," meaning they discourse not of worldly matters and vanities in presence of the King, who taketh no delight in such. "Their line is gone out through all the earth" refers to the dimensional archetypes according to which the heavens and the

earth were measured and formed. If the question be asked who resides in them? Scripture declares: "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun," that is, the Holy One has fixed his mansion or tabernacle in the heavens wherein he is adorned and is then as a bridegroom Ps. 19:5 coming out of his chamber rejoicing to run on his course, which when finished, he mounteth on high and runneth another course elsewhere. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven and his circuit unto the ends of it." Ps. 19:6 that is, he descendeth from the higher to the lower world, which is expressed by the word *outhqonphatha* in which is included the idea of rotundity. For this reason the duration of a year is termed, *thqouphathashana*, for during that period the earth has travelled round the sun, and been the recipient of the whole of its rays of light and heat. "And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Every created thing, whether visible or not, is affected by the warming rays of the sun, which occultly represents the universality of the secret doctrine operating everywhere and is described as "the law of the Lord is perfect."

From the beginning of this Psalm (19th) the tetragrammaton or holy name I. H. V. H. is found six times, showing the mystery contained in the word *Brashith* (in the beginning), which has six letters. *Bra*-*shith*. (He created six) and these six letters correspond to the six first words of scripture which express the work of creation. *Bra*, *Alhim*, *eth*, *hassamayim*, *veath*, *aarets* (*Alhim* created the substance of the heaven

and the earth) or thus: Alhim created the substance of fire, water and earth.

At this moment Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba entered the assembly. On beholding them, Rabin Simeon exclaimed: Truly is the presence of the Schekinah with you and therefore I have called you Peniel, for ye have seen the Schekinah face to face, and now that I have explained the esoteric meaning of Benaiah, Son of Jehoida, I will explain to you the mystical meaning of yet another biblical verse: "And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature five cubits high" (I. Chron. xii. 23). The word Egyptian refers to Moses, of whom we said that he was very "great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and the people of the land" (Ex. xi. 3), the mystical meaning of which is that he was distinguished more by his intellectual endowments and gifts than by his stature, similar to Adam, the first man, of whom it is metaphorically said that his stature was of the number of cubits separating the east from the west of the world. So when it is said of Moses that he was five cubits in height, it means that he was an adept practised in the five virtues leading to spiritual perfection, viz., love to God, chastity, charity, humility and perseverance in meditation and study of the secret doctrine. "And in the hand of the Egyptian was a spear like a weaver's beam," meaning the rod of God on which was engraved the holy name of forty-two letters, as was the shuttle of Bezaleel since we read: "He hath filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge and in all

manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works, in gold, silver and brass--all manner of work of the engraver, of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer" (Ex. xxxv. 31-35). "Happy was the lot of Moses!" Come, therefore, dear friends; come and let us meditate and evolve new thoughts and ideas from out of the secret doctrine, for whoever on this night doeth thus shall be preserved from evil, and live in peace hereafter, "for the angel of the Lord campeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8-9).

Again, on another occasion, Rabbi Simeon spake and said: "Bereshith bara Alhim" (In the beginning created God). These words require great thought and consideration, for everyone that says there is another God is cut off from the world, as it is written: "Thus shall he say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" (Jer. x. 11), for there is other God beside the Holy One.

This verse is in the Chaldee tongue excepting the last word, Aleh (these) which is in Hebrew. Why? It might be said, in order that the holy angels should not comprehend its signification of the divine unity. The true reason is that they might not become envious of man and thus cause him to suffer, for in the words, "the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth" have reference to certain angels who fell from heaven and set themselves up as gods.

Now the word earth which in Hebrew is arqa, in the Chaldee is arca; why so? Because it is one of the seven lower worlds where reside the descendants of Cain. After his expulsion from the earth, he went thither and begat children. This arqa was partly lighted and partly enshrouded in darkness and governed by two chiefs who were constantly warring against each other. On the arrival of Cain, however, they entered into an alliance of friendship for they perceived that it was to him they owed their existence. They became one body with two heads, the name of the one was *Aphira*, and *Qastimon*, the name of the other; this ruled over the dark, that over the light parts of Arqa. Before becoming joined together, they were like angels with six wings, Aphira having the form of an ox, Qastimon that of an eagle. On their union, they took on them the human form and begat offspring like unto themselves. When they found themselves in darkness, they became changed into the form of a serpent with two heads, and crawling as a serpent they plunged into the great sea, the abode of demons, where they found the decadent angels Azar and Azael and expelled them from their lurking places. These then fled and hid themselves in dark mountains thinking that the Holy One was about to execute vengeance open them for their evil doings and conduct. After this, the two chiefs Aphira and Qastimon swam through the great sea and went to visit Naamah, the mother of the demons, and the first deceiver and seducer of holy angels, who after their fall took different human forms and in their turn became corruptors of mankind. After roaming through the

world they returned to Arqa, and now their great object is to corrupt the descendants of Cain and lead them into sin. Respecting this Arqa, the heaven with its various constellations and stars is altogether different from our visible heavens at night. The seasons for sowing and reaping are not the same as ours in their sequence and regularity, being separated by a considerable number of years; these two chiefs of Arqa are they to whom the Scripture refers, who posing as gods shall become exterminated from our Thebel or earth on which they shall not exercise any dominion, nor afflict the children of man during the night, but as saith the Scripture: "They shall be destroyed by Aleh, by whom the heavens and the earth have been created". This is why Aleh in this verse is written in Hebrew, designating the holy name untranslatable into the Chaldee language.

Then said Rabbi Eleazar to his father: What meaneth the words: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of nations?" (Jer. x., 7). Who is this King of Nations or Gentiles?

Said Rabbi Simeon: "This verse, my son, has been interpreted in various ways, but all alike erroneous, as is proved by the remaining portion of tine verse, "among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee," which closes the mouth of the ungodly who imagine that the Holy One knoweth not and is not acquainted with the thoughts of their hearts. We will now refute their error.

A Gentile philosopher came to me one day, saying: You say that your God rules in the heavens on high and that all the angelic hosts cannot approach him or form a conception of his being. The words of this verse add no dignity to his glory. What glory and eminence can be ascribed to a deity who cannot be found and located amongst mankind. Furthermore, you declare: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deuter. xxxiv. 10), from which it may be inferred that though no such prophet as he rose in Israel, yet it does not apply to the Gentiles, amongst whom I venture to maintain there have appeared many as great and equal to him. From these words of Jeremiah I conclude therefore that only amongst the wise men of the Gentiles there is none like unto God, but that in Israel there have been many like unto him; consequently, he could not be from this similarity their superior or master. Think well over my words and you will confess that I have reasoned logically and correctly.

My reply to him was thus: 'It is true what thou sayest, that in Israel there have been some sages like unto God. Who raiseth the dead to life again? Is it not God only? Yet both Elijah and Elisha brought the dead to life again. Who maketh the rain descend, but God only? Yet by his prayer Elijah caused it to cease and descend. Who is it but the Holy One that made the heavens and the earth? Yet Abraham came, and by him they were established. Who rules the course of the sun? Is it not the Holy One? Yet Joshua commanded it to stand still as it is written: "And the

sun stood still" (Josh. x., 13). The Holy One gave decrees, so also did Moses, and they were established and conformed. Again the Holy One decreed punishments, but the just men of Israel caused them to cease or be turned aside, as it is said: "The righteous man ruleth in the fear of God" (II. Sam. xxiii., 3). Moreover, he commanded the just to walk in his way and to become like him. On hearing these words the philosopher turned away and went to the village of Shehalim, where he became known as the Little Joshua. There he applied himself to the study of the secret doctrine and eventually became one of the sages and chief men in that place.

Let us now return to the exposition of the words: "All the nations before him are as nothing." Isa. 40:17 What do they mean? As also: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of the Gentiles." What is their signification? Is God then the King of the Gentiles and not of Israel? Yea, the Holy One everywhere wishes to be glorified and worshipped by Israel and his name to be attached to Israel only, as it is written: "The God of Israel, the God of the Hebrews" (Ex. v., 3). "The King of Israel" (Is. xliv., 6). But the other nations of the world say: "We have other protectors in heaven. Your king ruleth over you and our king ruleth over us. The Scriptures say: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of the Gentiles?" Now in heaven there are four great cosmokratores or rulers who derive their power and authority over the nations from the divine ruler and are unable to do anything except by his will and command. By the words: "Wise men of the nations," is



meant the celestial rulers of the Gentiles, from whom these receive all their wisdom. Also the words: "Amongst all their kingdoms," have reference to the dominions of these rulers with their attendant hosts, who control the affairs of the world as executors of the divine will. "There is none like unto thee, Oh Lord, the holy and hidden one, who hath made the heavens and the earth." Of this Holy One we learn: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but to the nations and their dominions may be applied: "And the earth was without form and void."

Children! exclaimed Rabbi Simeon, let each of you prepare or procure a jewel for the heavenly bride; and thou, Eleazar, my son, be ready when the bridegroom cometh, to offer thy present to-morrow, when he ascendeth the dais with hymns and praises of his retinue.

Then Rabbi Eleazar read aloud: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?" (Cant. III., 6). The two words "who" and "this" refer to two holy beings intimately associated and joined together by a tie which is termed olah (sacrifice). Though the literal meaning of this word is to ascend or come up, yet it occultly refers to the "Holy of Holies." Again "who" (Mi) is united to "this" (Zoth) in order that it, the Holy of Holies, may come from the wilderness. "Out of the wilderness" means mystically from or out of the word, and we are taught: "Thy word is comely" (Cant. IV., 3). Also by way of tradition has been imparted to us the signification of the words: "Who shall deliver

us out of the hand of this mighty God?" This is the God that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness" (I. Sam., iv., 8). Why in the wilderness, when we read it was in their own land of Egypt? Now the term bemidhar (in the wilderness) in its real meaning is "by the Word," and everything that was done unto them was done by the Word of the Lord. And this is true generally.

When man rises in the morning he should utter or pronounce a blessing as soon as he opens his eyes, as did the holy men of olden time. They used to place near themselves a vessel of water. When waking they washed their hands and then commenced the study of the secret doctrine. At the time of cock crow, whether it be at midnight or break of day, the Holy One is found in the Garden of Eden, during which the defiled and impure are forbidden to pray or bless. When a man sleeps and his soul quits his body, an impure spirit comes and attaches itself to it and pollutes it. This is why it is forbidden to bless God before first washing the hands and engaging in the study of occult science. This applies also during the day when a man is awake; for then the impure spirit is unable to defile him except he is in some improper place. Even then it is unlawful when leaving it to bless God or recite a single verse of scripture without first washing his hands, though he may not have touched any impure thing. Woe to those who neglect and regard not this rite! They know nothing of the glory of their Lord; nothing of the law or principle upon which the world is founded. In every impure

place there is an impure spirit whose delight is to dwell there and attach itself to man.

Then spake Rabbi Simeon and said: Whoever gives not to God a part of his works or substance is guilty of avarice. Satan hates him, becomes his accuser and takes him out of the world. Great and terrible are the afflictions he has to endure! We give to God when we give to the poor as far as we are able, in the time of their need and necessity. If in times of our rejoicing and feasting the Holy One observes them ignored and forgotten and uncared for he grieves over and sympathizes with them and ascends on high, thinking to destroy the world. Then the souls of just men made righteous gather before him, saying: "Lord of the universe! thy name is called gracious and merciful. Have pity upon thy erring, forgetful children." And the Holy One replies: "Is it not upon mercy that I have founded the world as it is written: "The world is builded up on mercy" (Ps. lxxxix., 2). Then spake the angels: "Ruler of the universe! behold such a man eats and drinks and is able to succor the poor, yet refrains his hand." Then goeth forth the accuser, after obtaining permission, and hurries him out of existence. Who in the world was so great as Abraham, who did good and was kind to all creatures? Yet we learn from tradition that when Isaac, his son, was weaned, Gen. 21:8 he made a great feast and invited thereto all the great men of the place to be present. At the festive gathering it is said that an accusing angel was there in the form of a poor unknown beggar, but no one recognized or took any notice of him.

Abraham busied himself in attending to and waiting upon his royal and noble guests, whilst Sarah suckled the infants of all those who did not believe that she had given birth to a child and said that Isaac was some foundling who had been picked up on the roadside and brought to Sarah. When, therefore, they brought their own infants Sarah suckled all of them in their presence as the scripture states: "Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck." Gen 21:7 The accusing angel happened to be entering the house when Sarah was uttering the words: "God has made me a subject of laughter." Forthwith he presented himself before the Holy One and said: "Lord of the universe, Thou callest Abraham thy friend. He has made a great feast, but has not remembered the poor and has not even offered a sacrifice of a single turtle dove. Sarah also says Thou hast caused her to become a subject of derisive laughter and jeers." Gen. 21:6 Then replied the Holy One: "Who is there amongst men, kinder and more charitable than Abraham?" The accuser, however, was dissatisfied until he learned that the feast would be followed by sorrow and trouble to Abraham, which came to pass when God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, and Sarah died through anguish of heart when she learned what God had commanded with respect to her son. All these misfortunes arose through neglect of the poor."

On another occasion Rabbi Simeon spoke and said: it is written: "And Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed unto the Lord" (Is. xxxviii., 2).

Observe how great the power and influence of a student of the secret doctrine. He is superior to all others, for he fears nothing, being in close touch with the tree of life, from which he receives counsel and instruction all his days. It teaches us in the way of truth and how to avoid evil that may assail us, and also how to direct our ways and walk before the Lord. Therefore, it is necessary we should study the secret doctrine day and night and observe its teachings and doctrines. By night, when reclining on our beds we ought to submit ourselves to the kingdom of heaven and make it our chief object to commend ourselves to the care and guardianship of the Almighty. Then become we freed from all evil influences and demoniacal powers have no sway over us. In the morning the student of esoteric science rises and gives thanks to his Lord and wends his way to the temple and there pours forth his soul in prayer and adoration. Afterwards he should take counsel from the holy patriarchs, as it is written: "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple" (Ps. v. 7). We are taught from tradition never to enter the house of prayer before being instructed by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who will inspire us with suitable prayers to be addressed to the Holy One, for the words: "In the multitude of thy mercy" designate Abraham; "I will worship in or toward thy holy temple," refer to Isaac; and "in thy fear," to Jacob. Then we render acceptable worship and of us it will be said: "Israel, thou art my servant in whom I will be glorified" (Is. xlix., 3).

Rabbi Pinchus used frequently to go and visit Rabbi Rechumi, whose dwelling was on the borders of the Sea of Genessareth. Rabbi Rechumi was very aged and had become blind. He spake and said to Rabbi Pinchus: I have heard that the son of Jochai, my fellow student in esoteric science, possesses a most precious stone, a pearl I have greatly desired to behold. It radiates rays of light like those of the sun and lightens up the world and will continue to do so until the Ancient of Days sits upon his throne. Thou art his grandson, therefore happy is thy lot. Go thou my son and search for this glittering and lustrous pearl, for now is the most propitious time for finding it.

Rabbi Pinchus with two others, went forth and embarked on a vessel. Observing two birds flying overhead, he cried aloud: Birds! birds! flying over the waters, have you seen the dwelling place of the son of Jochai? After a few moments again he cried: Birds! Birds! come and tell me. Then flew they away, but after a time returned and in the beak of one of them was a slip of paper on which was written: "The son of Jochai has quitted and left the cave in which he dwells with Rabbi Eleazar his son." Then he went and found Rabbi Simeon suffering from bodily sores. To his expressions of sorrow, finding him so ill and afflicted, Rabbi Simeon replied: I am glad, Rabbi Pinchus, thou hast found me thus. If it had been otherwise I should not be what I am. Suffering makes us wiser and better.

# *Mystics Magazine*

*Jewish Mystical Theology*

Conversations with Rabbi Simeon

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

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