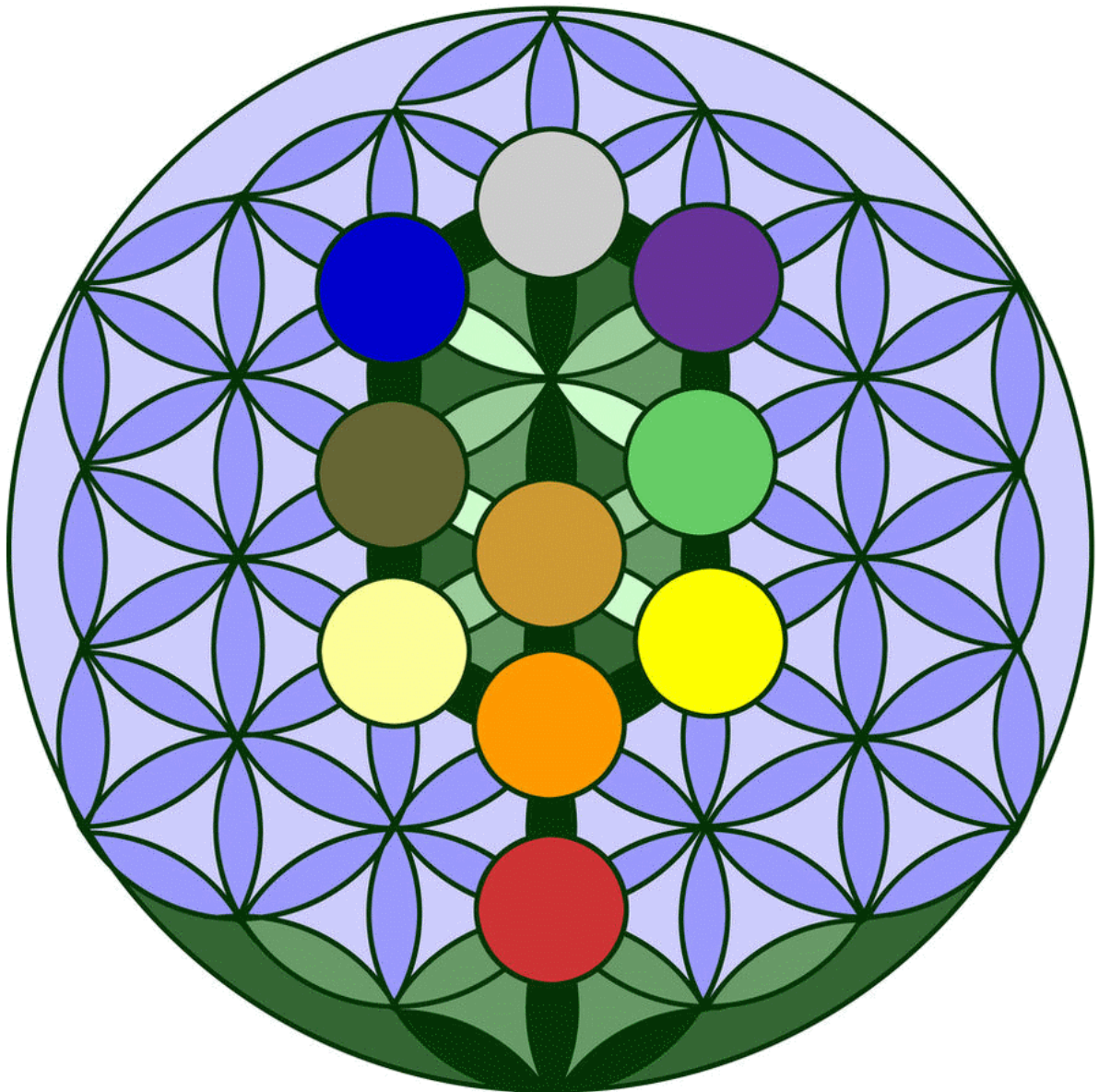


*Madame Blavatsky reviews
The Qabbalah of Isaac Myer*



Book review of *Qabbalah* by Isaac Myer, LL. B., Member of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, and La Société Royale de Numismatique de Belgique.

Qabbalah. The Philosophical Writings of Solomon Ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol or Avicbron, and their connection with the Hebrew Qabbalah and Sepher ha-Zohar, with remarks upon the antiquity and content of the latter, and translations of selected passages from the same. Also, "An ancient Lodge of Initiates," translated from the Zohar, and an abstract of an essay upon the Chinese Qabbalah contained in the book called the Yih King, a translation of part of the mystic theology of Dionysios the Areopagite, and an account of the construction of the ancient Akkadian and Chaldean Universe, etc. Accompanied by diagrams and illustrations.

Published by the Author in Philadelphia, 1888 (350 copies), and printed for the Author by MacCalla & Company, 237 and 239 Dock Street, Philadelphia. Reprinted in 1988 by Wizards Bookshelf, San Diego as part of their SECRET DOCTRINE REFERENCE SERIES.

The learned author vindicates the assertions first made in *Isis Unveiled* and subsequently elaborated in *The Secret Doctrine*: namely, that the source of all Kabbalistic ideas and doctrines, as embodied in the Zohar, are to be traced to Aryan rather than Semitic thought. In truth these ideas are neither Akkadian, Chaldean, nor yet Egyptian originals. They are universal property, common to all nations.

When we learned of the difficulties experienced by Isaac Myer in having his work published, we are not in the least surprised.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. III, No. 18, February 1889, pp. 505-12; republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (QABBALAH: THE PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS OF SOLOMON BEN YEHUDAH IBN GEBIROL) XI pp. 21-33.

Such is the title of an admirably thoughtful, learned, and very conscientious volume (for full title vide *infra* note), by Mr. Isaac Myer, LL.B., of Philadelphia, U.S.A.

As this new work is of an extreme importance to all students of the Kabala and the Hermetic Sciences in general, it is proposed to devote to it rather a lengthy review. In the present case "the labourer is (fully) worthy of his hire," and no passing notice could answer either the author's or our own object. Therefore, his *Qabbalah* has to be examined both from the standpoint of its own intrinsic value — which is very great and from that of the aim with which it was written. We will begin by the latter, basing our remarks on the declarations of the author himself. Says Mr. I. Myer in his "Introduction":

It is my desire to awaken a higher spiritual feeling towards the investigation of the Mysteries of Ancient Israë!l, in which, the Mysteries of the New Covenant lie hidden; which shall help to awaken in Christian Mysticism its fundamental elements . . . and establish the vast edifice of theology on deep philosophical principles and belief in the True, and not on man's alterable creeds and formulations: and by so doing; prepare a common centre for the reunion of all the, at present divided, religious sects.¹

Such an investigation of the mysteries would be more than beneficent to the world in general and to the rectification and purification of the conflicting creeds of Christendom especially. But, as it would lead to a dead certainty to the final unveiling of the heathen origins of Christianity and to the restitution of pagan Caesar's goods and chattels to Caesar, the readiness of the Christian Levite to avail himself of the opportunity is rather doubtful. But the Author was evidently of another opinion upon this subject, as his Dedication would prove; for he inscribes his valuable work to those who are the least calculated to appreciate its contents. How remarkable his honest optimism must be, may be inferred from these few lines which show that: —

The work is “respectfully dedicated by the author . . .

TO ALL EARNEST, UNPREJUDICED AND INDEPENDENT SEARCHERS FOR THE TRUTH,
THEOLOGIANS, PRIESTS, etc.”

The adjectives in the first portion of the dedicatory sentence tally rather too paradoxically with the second portion. The “Searchers for the Truth,” to whose favour the book is recommended, can hardly be “priests or theologians,” whose orthodoxy and advancement in the hierarchy of the Church depend generally on the degree of their crystallization in the dead-letter dogma and unswerving loyalty to the same. Truth can never be the aim of those whose predecessors gloried in the boast of *credo quia impossibile*,² and who themselves follow religiously the injunction.

Now, as no Christian theologian or priest has ever supported (not openly at any rate) either the Vedāntic Parabrahm or the Kabbalistic Ain-Soph, who are equivalent to each other in Occultism, and both an “absolute negation,” this “Epistle Dedicatory” becomes quite misleading. Forthwith the vision of a “*personal* Absolute,” such as the mediaeval YHVH has now become in the hands of some Christian Kabbalists, floats before the mind's eye of the Theosophist and Occultist, who are almost tempted to leave the work uncut. For this the “Dedication” alone is responsible. For what is it but an acknowledgment, a tacit assurance that the work is written *in a way to meet with clerical approbation*? And, as all know that now-a-days there are few priests or preachers, who, unless of the Elsmere type, would ever accept Ain-Soph or Para-

¹ [pp. ix-x]

² [Paraphrasing a line from Tertullian's *De Carne Christi*, “certum est, quia impossibile,” it is certain because it is impossible. The original quotation in context is as follows:

Crucifixus est dei filius; non pudet, quia pudendum est.
Et mortuus est dei filius; credibile prorsus est, quia ineptum est.
Et sepultus resurrexit; certum est, quia impossibile.

The Son of God was crucified: I am not ashamed — because it is shameful.

The Son of God died: it is immediately credible — because it is silly.

He was buried, and rose again: it is certain — because it is impossible.

— tr. Evans]

brahm as a substitute for Jehovah, the dismay of the student is but very natural. In our century the Kabala — or “Qabbalah” as the author spells it — has no worse opponent than the Rabbis themselves, they whose forefathers were the compilers and recorders of that glorious light shining in darkness called the *Zohar* of Shimon Ben Yochai, and other kindred works. Moreover, with a few exceptions of clergymen who are Freemasons, no Christian priest or theologian will ever allow that any good can come from that Kabbalistic Nazareth — the *Book of Splendour*, or *Zohar*. The student knows all this. And knowing it, as also that only a handful of priests and theologians (if any) would appreciate Mr. Myer’s great work for the above given reasons, he can hardly repress an involuntary feeling of distrust after learning who are the patrons to whom the work is inscribed. He suspects Mr. Myer’s *Qabbalah* of being a wholesale slaughter of the “Innocents” like those of certain German and English wiseacres, who knowing of the *Zohar* but the little they found in Rosenroth, have tried their best to misunderstand even that little.

But if, conquering this first impression, the student goes even superficially over the fine octavo volume, his fears will vanish like the grey mist before the rising sun. Out of the 500 pages of matter, there is scarcely one that does not bring us some new fact, or throw an additional light on the old teaching, offering here, a fresh standpoint for examination, there, an unexpected corroboration of some Eastern tenet. Read, on page xiii, *et seq.*, of the “Introduction,” the definition of the Qabbalistic Deity by the Author. As he tells us:

. . . from a want of knowledge of the Qabbalistic philosophy, the translations of many statements in both the Old and New Testaments are frequently erroneous;

and this is even more evident in the loose translation of Elohim (plural) by “God” in the singular, the “Lord God” or “Lord” simply for other and more significant Hebrew terms, than in what he calls “the asserted improvements in the revised versions.” Thus the author tells us:

The nearest approach that man can make to the unseen, is that inner communion which works silently in his soul but which cannot be expressed in absolute language nor by any words, which is beyond all formulations into word symbolism yet is on the confines of it and the unknown spiritual world. This is conceptualism. We experience these feelings only in our hearts and inner thoughts . . . Silence, meditation, intercommunion with self, this is the nearest approach to the invisible. They are sublimations. Many of our ideas are only negations, the Highest Deity is clothed, as to Its essence and appearance, in darkness to the finite thought. Yet even these negations are affirmations. . . . “There is a spiritual body and there is a natural body,” but this does not take us out of the material world, a spirit can only be conceived of as something vague, dim, in opposition to matter, yet the inner motor of us, is spirit. The Deity and Its attributes cannot be defined, they are to us an absolute negation of all our so-called absolute knowledge for all our absolute knowledge is based, raised upon, cantered and carried on, through our matter-world knowledge and symbolism, *e.g.*, Eternity is not the past, present, future, these are in Time, Eternity can be conceived of, only as an absolute negation of all thought of

Time, so only can spirituality by the absolute negation of all matter-world thought and matter-world existence. The Non Ego is the nearest approach to the invisible, the Ego is a manifestation.¹

This is an excellent description of the “Unknowable.” But, talk of such a deity — a “NON-EGO” — to the modern priest and theologian or even to the average Mason of General Pike’s school of masonic thought, and see whether the former does not forthwith proclaim you an infidel, and the latter a heretic from “the Grand Orient” of France. It is the “*Principe Créateur*” of the French Masons, and the same that led, some ten or twelve years ago, to a final split and feud between the only decent approximation on this globe to a “Universal Brotherhood” of Man — to wit, Masonry. The war whoop raised over and against this impersonal *Principe Créateur* — a far loftier position by-the-by than the personal “Father who art in Heaven” of the Scotch Masons — in the U.S. of America alone, must have awakened and filled with terror all the “skeletons” who slumber and crumble to dust in the cupboards of the Banquet Halls of the “Widow’s Sons.” Those most bitter and virulent in their denunciations were precisely the “priests and theologians” — to whom the excellent work under review is dedicated — and *most of whom were Masons*. Have the latter reformed during the last ten years?

The learned author of *Qabbalah*, himself a Mason, having observed that it is apparent that both the N. Testament and early Patristic literature.

. . . have had a common germ and origin in the esoteric teachings of the Israëlités shows moreover a common origin in all religions.

That is precisely what Theosophy does. From the start Mr. I. Myer bravely enters the arena of universal truths, and confesses that “the reader may be sometimes startled by my [his] statements, which may be at times contrary to his conventional religious ideas, as to this,” he adds, “I can only say, that I have stated the subject as I have found it, and, as this is not a polemical work, do not criticize it.”² Since the day of the learned and sincere Ragon, no Mason, with one exception, however, has dared to tackle so openly the modern Levites and Levitism. Yet there is a notable difference between the rendering of the eminent Belgian Mason and our no less eminent American Mason and author. The former asks fearlessly:

My learned Brethren, how comes it that the one and *only* Deity declared in the ancient mysteries, in the scholastic cathedrals of the new (to wit, Christian) faith and in the assemblies of “the Holy *Logos*,” as the source of peace, is proclaimed even by the “Elect” in heaven, as the terrible God of war, *Sabaoth*, the Lord of Hosts?

But in Mr. Myer’s *Qabbalah*, Jehovah is not even mentioned by name. Nevertheless, thanks are due to the author for the courage he has displayed in writing his work. For things have strangely changed on our earth since the day when the ancient Masonic verse “the world was vaulted by a Mason” — was chanted, and the Masonic Fraternity has changed with the rest. Nowadays the “Widow’s Son” fears to remove

¹ Introduction, pp. xii and xiii

² Introduction, p. xiii

the smallest stone from the original vault his craft has helped the theologian to conceal, as much as the latter does. The Mason of 1889 is wiser in his generation than the Trinosoph of 1818; for the average Mason fears with good cause, that by brushing away the cobwebs of the ages from the “Holy Arch,” the keystone will give way and the whole building, tumbling to the ground, will bury themselves and the Churches under its ruins.

Very luckily the author of *Qabbalah* is not an “average” Mason. He is one of the few — very few indeed — who has the courage to trace back the hitherto impenetrable mysteries of both religion and masonry, whose origin, as averred, was lost in the night of the ages: “its temple having time for duration, the Universe for space.” It is thus to be doubly regretted that he should publish his work almost without any commentaries, for it could only gain from them. However, merely the new facts given out are of immense value to those Kabbalists and Theosophists who may be ignorant of both the Eastern Āryan and the Semitic — Arabic and Hebrew — languages. To such Mr. Myer’s *Qabbalah* will be like a voice speaking to them from the depths of a remote antiquity and corroborating that which he is taught to believe in. For the author besides being a Mason is a well-known lawyer, a still more eminent antiquarian and a man of wide and varied learning, whose statements must be regarded as reliable.

The speculations of almost every known philosopher and metaphysician, embracing a long series of centuries during the Christian period, are found in the volume. Cosmogony and Anthropogenesis, Theogony and the Mysteries of the afterlife, are noticed in turn and presented in their chronological order. As in the Secret Doctrine of the East, both the material and the spiritual worlds are shown emanating from the ever-unknowable and (from us) concealed ABSOLUTE. Curiously enough, in view of the above-quoted passage with regard to the Deity, some reviewers in America have still misunderstood the point. They persist in making of that “Unknowable” or Ain-Soph a *male* deity! It is referred to, by the mere force of habit, or the metaphysical inaptness of the writers, as a “He,” *i.e.*, the *Absolute* and the *Limitless* is shown limited and conditioned! A first-class paper in Philadelphia (Penn.) while reviewing the work of Mr. Myer, carries the paradox so far as to utter in the same breath the following remarks:

“The doctrine (the Kabala) in many respects is clearly akin to that of the Buddhists — in fact to those of all the Eastern religions,” and yet it adds in the same paragraph that it (the doctrine) “is distinguished from most of the pantheistic systems in that it is an attempt to represent the spirit as above matter, and to reveal the Creator as greater than the created.” To speak of the similarity of the Kabbalistic system with Buddhism and the Pantheistic religions, and then to find in the former a personal Creator, or Spirit distinct from matter, is to credit both the *Zohar* and the author of the volume (even if the latter be “a compilation”) with an illogical fallacy. Ain-Soph is *not* the Creator in the *Zohar*. Ain-Soph, as the Absolute, can have neither the desire nor the will to create since no attributes can be postulated in the *Absolute*. Hence the system of periodical and unconscious *emanation* from Ain-Soph of Sephīrāh-Adam-Kadmon and the rest. As the ancient Pagan philosophers said “there are many gods but one deity,” so the Kabbalists show *ten* Sephīrōth but one Ain-Soph. To give up

the creative gods for *one* “Creator,” is to limit and condition the latter into — at best — a gigantic similitude of man; it is to dwarf and dishonour the deity; to try an absurdity; to cut out, to mutilate, so to say, the Absolute, and cause it to appear in a limitation. A “creator” cannot be infinite. Therefore, a “creator,” one of the *Cosmocra-tores* or “Fashioners” of the Universe, may be, with a stretch of imagination, viewed as greater than the world of forms, or the matter he shapes into a form or forms; but if we make him entirely distinct from the differentiated matter the Cosmic deity is to *fashion* and *build*, then he forthwith becomes an *extra-Cosmic* god, which is an absurdity. *Ain-Soph* is the omnipresent *infinitude*, the soul and spirit and the essence of the Universe. Such is precisely the idea we find expressed on page 175 of *Qabbalah* where the term “Elohim,” translated “God” in the English versions of the Bible, is referred to as “the lowest designation, or the Deity in Nature.” Thus the distinction between *Ain-Soph*, the sexless Principle, IT, and the Host of Creators or the *Sephirōth*, is strongly preserved throughout the volume.

Especially valuable are the passages given from the philosophy of R.S. Ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol, or as he was generally referred to, Avicbron — which echo unmistakably not only the Zoharic but likewise the Eastern esoteric teachings.¹ Ibn Gebirol, of Cordova, the first so-called Arabian philosopher in Europe who flourished in the XIth century, was also one of the most eminent among the Jewish poets of the Middle Ages. His philosophical works written in Arabic are plainly shown exonerating Moses de Leon (XIIIth century), accused of having forged the *Zohar* attributed to R. Shimon ben-Yochai.

As all scholars know, Ibn Gebirol was a Spanish Jew, mistaken by most writers in the subsequent centuries for an Arabian philosopher. Regarded as an Aristotelian, many of his works were condemned by the University of Paris, and his name remains to this day but very little known outside the circle of learned Kabbalists. Mr. Myer has undertaken to vindicate this mediaeval scholar, poet, and mystic, and has fully succeeded in doing so. Identifying the lore given out by this forgotten sage with the universal “Wisdom Religion,” our author thus points out that the mystical theosophy and the *disciplina arcana* of the Hebrew Tannaïm has been found by the latter in the schools of Babylon. Later this Wisdom was embodied by Shimon ben-Yohaï, the chief of the Tannaïm (the initiated), in the *Zohar* and other works, now lost. That which is the most important to Theosophists, however, is the fact that the author vindicates in his learned work the assertions made so long as twelve years ago in *Isis Unveiled* and now elaborated in *The Secret Doctrine*: namely that the source of all Kabbalistic ideas and doctrines, as embodied in the *Zohar*, are to be traced to Āryan rather than Semitic thought. In truth these ideas are neither Akkadian, Chaldean, nor yet Egyptian originals. They are universal property, common to all nations. The late author of *The Gnostics and their Remains* (King) defended the same idea, only more forcibly, inasmuch as he traced every Gnostic speculation — whether Semitic, Turanian or Western Āryan — to India. But Mr. Myer is more prudent; without allowing priority to any nation, he shows identical ideas in the universal symbols. Without denying their great antiquity among the *Jews* we are yet forced to say that as now embodied in the *Zohar* these doctrines are the latest of all. They can hardly antedate 400 or 500 years

¹ e.g., Chapter XX, p. 415. “Structure of the Universe. Stability of the oppositions,” etc., etc.

B.C. since the Israelites got them from Babylon. The Chinese *I Ching* and the Taoist books contain them all and are far older. They may be also found in the cuneiform inscriptions of Mesopotamia and Persia, in the *Upanishads* of the *Vedas*, in the Zend works of the Zoroastrians and in the Buddhist lore of Siam, Tibet, Japan, as also in the hieratic papyri of the Egyptians. They are the common property and the outcome, in short, of the most archaic thought that has reached us.

The author does not compliment the *Zohar*, however, when saying that “much of the mystery of the Practical Qabbalah will be undoubtedly discovered in the [Hindu] Tantras.”¹ It is evident that he has “not as yet had an opportunity of seeing any of the latter.” For, had he examined them he would have soon found out that the *Tantras*, as they now stand, are the embodiment of ceremonial *black magic* of the darkest dye. A “Tāntrika,” he who practices the *Tantras*, in their *dead letter*, is synonymous with “Sorcerer” in the phraseology of the Hindus. Blood — human and animal — corpses and ghosts have the most prominent place in the paraphernalia used for the practical necromancy and rites of Tāntrika worship. But it is quite true, that those Kabbalists who dabble in the ceremonial magic as described and taught by Éliphas Lévi, are as full blown *Tāntrikas* as those of Bengal.

Chapter III, wherein the author describes minutely the history of the rewriting of this valuable work by Moses de Leon, the intrigues of his enemies contemporary with him, and of his critics of more modern times, is alone worth the purchase of Mr. Myer’s *Qabbalah*. It is a hitherto unwritten page of the history of Kabbalistic literature, going far to show, at the same time, that verily “nothing is new under the sun”; not even the malicious policy of persecution, as it is the same today as it was then. Thus, as an enemy will call a Theosophist or an Occultist a forger and a plagiarist, in the XIXth century, because the enemy had gathered that the man had a quarrel half a century back with his mother-in-law, or that he smoked, or was alleged to use *profane* (read “Biblical”) language; so an enemy of Moses de Leon, Rabbi David Rafon of Corfu, in order to show the small value of his *Zohar*, says:

R.M. de Leon is a spendthrift, who earns a great deal of money from his writings, but makes up the *Zohar* out of his head, and he treats his wife and daughter badly.²

Others called Moses de Leon a profligate, a liar, a man of no learning, and what not, during the Middle Ages, as also in our modern day. Yet he is the reputed author of a dozen or so of scholarly works, among which the most prominent are *Ha-Nephesh hah-’hokhmah*, i.e., “The Soul of Wisdom,” and *Sēpher has-sodoth*, i.e., “Book of Secrets,” besides being the reputed author and *forger* of the *Zohar*, a fathomless well of philosophy. As Mr. I. Myer remarks:

These were written in Hebrew, but the *Zohar* and Zoharic books are mostly in the Aramaic. Here we have numerous books written by this alleged superficially learned man, and this ignoramus has also, it is said, the ability to write the immense and very learned book on the Secret Learning, the *Zohar*, and the oth-

¹ Introduction, p. xiii

² pp. 56-57

er books bound up with it . . . the opponents of the antiquity of the *Zohar* say, the author was living a reckless life, traveling from place to place. . . . They never wrote books at this time in Aramaic, but understood it as the language of the Talmudim. The *Zohar* is a voluminous work, larger than all the books admitted to be by M. de Leon put together, and they took nine years for their composition. . . .¹ The *Zohar* and the books bound up with it, were accepted by the Jewish learned men, almost immediately upon their publication in MSS., as a verity, if not by the Qabbalist, R. Shim-on ben Yo'haï, at least, as containing an accepted ancient secret tradition, part likely coming through him. Everything points to this, and denies the authorship and forgery imputed by many critics, to R. Moses ben Shem-Tob de Leon of Spain, who only claimed in his writings, to be a copyist and redactor of older Qabbalistic works, and not their author. These strange, wonderful, weird writings, required more than one intellect to produce them, and contain a mine of ancient Oriental philosophical thought. . . . The *Zohar* proper, is a running commentary on the Five Books or *Pentateuch*, touching at the same time, upon numerous problems of philosophical speculation of the deepest and most sacred import, and propounding many ideas and doctrines, with an acumen, worthy to proceed from the greatest intellects. . . . The *Zohar*, and the fragments contained in it, were not made public in MSS., for over 225 years after Gebirol's death. . . . Ibn Gebirol's writings are of great importance to Oriental scholars, from the assistance they render to the settlement of questions as to the authenticity, authorship, and authority of the Zoharic writings, the antiquity of the Qabbalistic philosophy, its earliest formulated ideas, and its origin.²

As an experienced lawyer, the author has made out a complete case for the Kabbalists. No one who reads carefully his plea can fail to see that he has settled the point and shown the account in *Yuhasin* and other works inimical both to the *Zohar* and Moses de Leon — untrustworthy. Nor has he left the exoteric New Testament, without breathing one word against it, a leg to stand on; for, he shows it, in company with other works mostly enumerated, such as the *Septuagint*, the *Targums*, the oldest of the *Sibylline Oracles*, etc., etc., to be all derived from the Qabbalah; and he proves the principal teachings of the latter, its symbols and ideas proceeding from and identical with those in the *Vedas*, the oldest Brāhmanical philosophies, the Egyptian, Greek, and Chaldean pagan systems.³

Every word and fact given therein, however, is no more than the truth, which anyone may ascertain by reading Mr. Myer's interesting volume. When we learn, therefore, from the author's Introduction, of the difficulties experienced by him in having his work published, we are not in the least surprised. The first edition of only 350 copies (at six dollars) and another, still smaller, but a finer one (at ten dollars) were published by the author himself. We gather that he was unable to find a publisher on account, as he himself states, "of the timidity of those engaged in the business of publishing resulting from their unfamiliarity with the subject, and fears for its finan-

¹ p. 60

² pp. 7-9

³ p. 324 et seq.

cial success.”¹ Even one of these two reasons when coming from an average small publisher with an eye only to business, would be amply sufficient. When given by great American publishers, however, the heads of whose firms, no less than those of the large Continental publishing houses, are generally well-read and enlightened men, the pretext is as transparent as it is absurd. It is simply once more the assertion of the prevailing and bigoted intolerance of this our so-called civilized age. In the face of the growing light cast by research and the study of ancient works and fragments of archaic religions, it makes desperate efforts to put its extinguisher upon truth and unwelcome facts. It manifests itself openly and secretly. It forces publishers to refuse to have anything to do with most of such works; it boycotts every attempt in this direction, from volumes full of the most valuable research such as the *Qabbalah* under notice, down to the comparatively innocent *Lucifer*. Even the latter is exiled in “free” England from every railway bookstall, only because these stalls are the exclusive monopoly throughout the United Kingdom, and the property of the pious and Right Honourable gentleman who is at present the leader of the House of Commons, but even better known to the travelling public as “Old Smith.”

Popular wisdom manifests itself in its proverbs; and provides, for explaining them in an age calling itself the “Enlightened,” such high-handed feats of “might is right” on the part of “timid” publishers and over pious M.P.’s. The fact that “when nearest to death the house-fly bites the hardest” may be a consolation to the victims in one direction; and the saying that “a building is very near collapsing if people once begin to see its foundations bare” — may be another. At this rate dogmatic and sectarian Christianity must indeed be very near its end. For in few other works are the said foundations made so visible and the mysteries of the exoteric religion laid so bare, as in the valuable work under notice. Numerous are the portions of the New Testament quoted, and as the *American Antiquarian* well observes, many are the

. . . interesting expositions of *the relation of this mystical philosophy to portions of the New Testament, showing quite plausibly that many sayings of Christ and expressions of the apostles bear reference to, and can only be understood by, this esoteric Hebraic theosophy.*

Nor must we fail to notice an important feature in the volume, one that renders good service to the student anxious to analyse thoroughly the similarity of ideas in the universal ideography and symbols. Some fifty valuable engravings are given, a few of which are familiar to the Kabbalist, some hitherto not extant. In every case a counterpart is pointed out to every Zoharic idea, as embodied in ancient Hindu, Babylonian, Egyptian, Mexican and even Chinese symbols. Every Pythagorean Number finds its place and classification, and we may recognize a striking identity of thought between nations that can have never come into contact with each other. The selection of these old engravings is most felicitous for the illustration of the points involved.

To close this rather too long review, Mr. Myer has produced a masterpiece of its kind. If — perhaps on account of his being a mason and a lawyer — the erudite author holding too closely to the kind of prudence which, Milton says, “is that virtue by which we discern what is proper to be done under the various circumstances of time

¹ [p. xiv]

and place,” does not argue, or say anything himself which is new, on the other hand most of his translated passages and quotations are either fresh matter to the reader unacquainted with the original languages the author translates from, or presented in an entirely new aspect even to most of the Western Kabbalists. Hence, he has produced and bestowed upon the reading public a unique work. If his dedication shows too much optimism as to the reconcilability of his adjectives with the nouns to which he attaches them, the contents of his work are a deathblow to the claims of “theologians and priests” even “unprejudiced and independent,” if such *rarae aves*¹ had any existence within the bosom of orthodoxy, and outside of the mythical.

Thus the *Qabbalah* is a real boon to our learned Theosophists and Kabbalists; and it ought to be such to every student of ancient lore. But, it is wormwood in the bitterness of its bare facts and proofs to every sectarian and dead-letter worshipper.



¹ [Plural of *rara avis*, from Juvenal’s *Satires* (6.165), “*Rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cycno*,” a bird as rare upon the earth as a black swan; *i.e.*, a person or thing of rare qualities.]