

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Secret Doctrine of Israel

What was the esoteric wisdom which Ezra taught to "those who could understand?" Its kernel, at least, has come down to us through collections of medieval works by kabbalistic writers, both Jewish and Christian, particularly through the Zohar. Although this book in its present form dates from the thirteenth century A. D., it embodies true esoteric traditions of the Restoration Period. The title Kabbalah means a doctrine of revelation received orally, and it supplements the Scriptures by presenting a philosophical basis for their Teachings. For example, the Old Testament says very little about the immortality of the soul; material life is stressed throughout, immortality and rebirth being taught only by implication and allegory. In the Kabbalah, however, immortality of the soul is axiomatic and the doctrine of rebirth is openly taught. It is claimed that kabbalistic doctrine descended from Adam in an unbroken succession via a line of prophets among whom are named Noah, Abraham, Moses and finally Ezra, the last having received the Teachings in the Field of Ardath at Babylon.

We now begin to comprehend the importance of the Field of Ardath. It was here that the Scriptures were collected and written down by that great scribe; it was here that the

Christ Mystery was revealed to prophets of the Exile. The teachings published are exoteric Scriptures: Books of the Hexateuch and of such prophets as had delivered their message to Israel before and during the Exile. The secret Teachings for the wise are the secret doctrine of Israel, whose great Hierophant was Elijah or Elias, Christ's forerunner. These secret tenets were preserved through the Hellenistic Period by the Essenes.

According to instruction of the Archangel Uriel, and the identity of this Archangel is preserved in Christian tradition, Esdras took with him five scribes and went to the Field of Ardath. For forty days he dictated day and night, producing in all two hundred and forty books. Of these "the last seventy were to be kept secret and shown only to the wise." "For," said Uriel, "in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom and the stream of knowledge."

The fourth chapter of II Esdras names the celestial Being who instructed Esdras as Uriel the Archangel. The description of Esdras' Initiation indicates that this Archangel inducted him into that high plane of consciousness that is the home world of the Christ, where cosmic records "from the beginning were shown to Esdras. These records are not to be found in either the Reflecting Ether or the Archetypal Region of the Mental World, but only in the world of Life

Spirit, where the beginnings of our solar evolution in the first Great Creative Day are recorded. Therein appears also the culmination of our evolutionary cycle in the last, or seventh, Great Creative Day.

Further corroboration is given by the Greek Church in a legend stating that when the Disciples walked the way of Emmaus, the Archangel Uriel walked with them. The Gospels say, however, that it was the Christ. It is clear that the Christ Archangel revealed Himself to His Initiates in the symbolical Field of Ardath many centuries before His descent upon Jesus at the time of the latter's baptism. Early Christian artists often portrayed the Christ as a winged Being, showing that they understood His Archangelic nature. Uriel is the Angel of Beauty who presides over earth during the midsummer season when nature attains to perfected beauty.

Ezra established a School and also a Brotherhood of sacred scribes to protect such Teachings as were committed to writing and to transmit by word of mouth the Teachings that could not be written.

If there were only legends in regard to this wealth of secret Teaching we might well question its existence. But certain historical records tend to corroborate the claims of esotericists that esoteric sects did exist during the Restoration Period; and that, far from being outlaw groups,

they were focal points of power in the new state. Further, history verifies the kabbalists' contention that great prophets and Teachers were members of these sects. Despite much misunderstanding on this point, there is some historical evidence.

Best known of these sects were the Essenes. Their monastic organization was described by Josephus, who studied among them for a time. It is true that history first mentions the Essenes in the second century B. C., the time of Jonathan the Maccabee; but many scholars accord them greater antiquity. Their name is supposed to derive from the town of Essa mentioned by Josephus, just as Christians were called Nazarenes as coming from the town of Nazara or Nazareth. Esotericists prefer to interpret the name as meaning the silent ones or the physicians. "They were the first society in the world to condemn slavery both in theory and practice," the Britannica states. This very exoteric work even admits that "they cultivated spiritual speculations far different from orthodox Judaism" (orthodox Judaism as it is today), and that their speculations reveal a sympathy for Greek and Oriental philosophy. The Britannica concedes that the Essenes may date from the Persian Period. Esotericists again prefer the Essenian tradition of their dating as a sect — though not, perhaps, under that name — from the time of Moses.

Tranquility pervaded Essenian communities. Only the most quiet conversation was allowed, so the fellowship dwelt in a spiritual calm which reflected the Light of Spirit, holiness made visible as in a glass. Their writings were kept inviolate; also the names of Angels used in their healing ministrations and in other occult activities. There can be no question about their receiving a new understanding of the Messianic Coming from Persian Hierophants; and they possessed Chaldean Teachings on the Tree of Life, Teachings — not contradictory but supplementary thereto. They retained much of the sacerdotal magic of the Chaldean priesthood, purified by a new philosophical understanding.

When Chaldea fell under the Persians her Wise Men were scattered far and wide over the ancient world. Most of their wisdom, however, became the inheritance of Israel, for Daniel and Ezekiel were numbered among the Wise. So thoroughly were the Jewish people indoctrinated that throughout the Roman Empire the name Jew was a synonym for magician. Hence, the frequent accusation of witchcraft against early Christians.

Then there was the sect of Mehestites, its existence dating from the Captivity. Members of this School carried into Palestine the doctrines of Zoroaster and the Magian sciences of astrology and angelology. The Misraimites were

also kabbalists in the simplest sense of the word; they specialized in studying the esoteric meanings of the Hebrew alphabet, now a dead language. For some time before the Captivity Aramaic made headway in Palestine as the language of commerce; after the Captivity Ezra made it official. Hebrew then became the language of the Hebrew Mysteries, and has remained so, to this day. Thus, in the Persian Period Aramaic became the official language for all provinces west of the Euphrates, Palestine being the last to be Aramaized — although even before the Captivity Jewish colonists in Egypt were using Aramaic and were designated as Aramaeans by the Egyptians.

The Restoration Period marks a most profound change in the race consciousness of the Palestinians. The Hebrews had been held captive in Chaldea, whence their ancestors had originally come, and they found it easy to amalgamate with a people so intimately akin to them physically. Under Persian rule and as a new people they returned and forged the bands of a new nation dedicated to a new purpose — the coming of the Messiah in the foreseeable future — and speaking a new language.

If the idea of foreign influences converging in Palestine arouses doubt in the mind of a student, it will be dispelled by reference to the Talmud. Eminent scholars have said that every type of philosophy known to men is introduced

therein, including the Magianism from which arose later Jewish mysticism. We learn, for example, that Mercury is called the Star; Venus, Splendor; Mars, redness; Jupiter, brightness, Saturn, the Sabbath Star. Again, it is written, "An eclipse of the Sun is an evil sign to the nations of the world; an eclipse of the Moon is an evil sign to Israel, for Israel reckons by the Moon; the nations of the world by the Sun" — words reminiscent of Abraham's origin in Ur of the Chaldees where the Moon God was worshipped. Esoteric studies reveal that the Moon God and the God of Saturn are ever closely associated as representative of Cancer and its opposite sign, Capricorn. In later periods of civilization Mercury, the planet of science and abstract reason, tended to supplant both, as we see in the history of alchemy. In ancient Egypt Saturn's metal, lead, was first thought to be the prima materia, but was supplanted by Mercury's metal, quicksilver.

Summary

The Abrahamic work was begun in the Taurean Age when the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes were in Taurus and Scorpio respectively; the Summer and Winter Solstices in Leo and Aquarius, respectively. This work culminated in Abraham's Initiation under Melchizedek on the threshold of the Arian Age, for which it was preparatory. Melchizedek is the prototype of the Christ.

The Mosaic Work comes under the influence of the Arian Age, when the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes were in Aries and Libra, while the Summer and Winter Solstices were in Cancer and Capricorn. We call Exodus "The Book of Aries." The purpose of the Mosaic Dispensation was the founding of a new nation and the establishment of a new Mystery School, in which Monotheism should be taught to the whole people and not to the priesthood alone. In this Mystery School it was purposed that Fire and Water should be blended forever. This blending was not accomplished. In this respect the Mosaic Work failed of consummation, as shown in the Masonic legend of Hiram Abiff's death at the hands of assassins. But the Mystery School endured, and flourished. The culmination of the Mosaic Work was the building of Solomon's Temple.

The Messianic Period had its inception in the Captivity, at the midpoint of the Arian Age, and continuing in the Restoration. Its chief prophet and divinely inspired Teacher was the holy Ezekiel, second only to Moses in power and prestige. The four leading spirits in bringing Ezekiel's plan to completion were the high priest Joshua, King Zerubbabel and the two great leaders of the Restoration, Ezra and Nehemiah. The culmination of this work was the Advent on earth of the Christ Jesus at the end of the Arian Age.

— ***Corinne Heline***