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THE SEPHER HA-ZOHAR OR THE BOOK OF LIGHT

NURHO DE MANHAR

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The Sepher Ha-Zohar Or The Book of Light by Nurho de Manhar.

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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