

THE KABBALAH: SECRET TRADITION OF THE WEST

Papus

Gérard Encausse, MD (1865-1916), better known by his mystical pseudonym, Papus, was one of the co-founders of the Martinist Order and the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix (1888). As noted in the article on page 41, the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix was structured around a hierarchy of three degrees acquired by examination – Bachelor of Kabbalah, Master of Kabbalah, and Doctor of Kabbalah.

The following text is an excerpt from the book written by Papus entitled The Kabbalah: Secret Tradition of the West. Translation by the staff of the Rosicrucian Digest.



Papus.

The Kabbalah

Now we come to the superior part of the tradition, to the Secret Doctrine or Kabbalah, the veritable soul of this tradition.

It can be seen from the table given (Table No. 1) that the theoretical part of the Kabbalah is the only section known to us, the practical or magic parts still being kept secret, or scarcely being touched upon in some rare manuscripts.

1 Theoretical Kabbalah

The theoretical part has been considered from quite different points of view by the authors who examine this question. Let us briefly examine the most important principles of their work.

The first group of researchers, the most numerous, follows the divisions given by the Kabbalists themselves. This is the plan followed by Mr. *Ad. Franck* in his fine work (1843), by *Eliphas Lévi* (1853), and

Papus: Epistemology of The Kabbalah

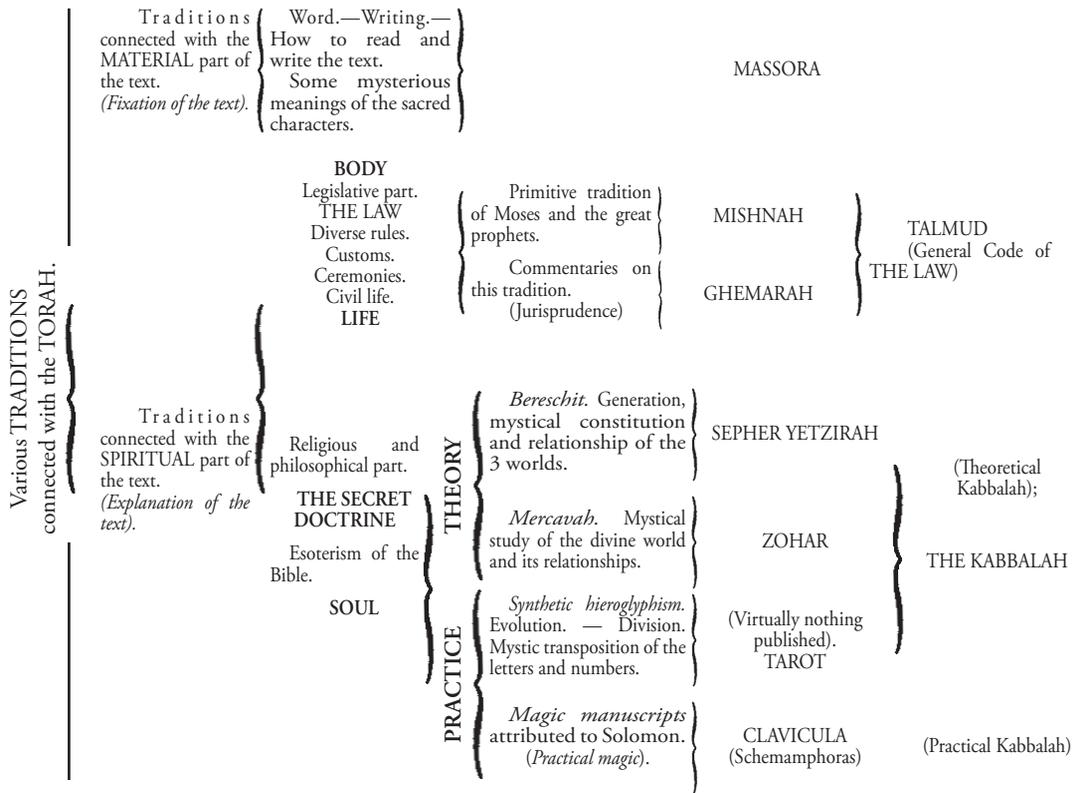


Table No. 1.

by Mr. *Isidore Loeb* (entry *Cabbale* in the *Grande Encyclopédie*).

The principal subjects of mystic speculation of the time are the *work of the chariot* (*maasse mercaba*), by allusion to Ezekiel's Chariot, and *work of creation* (*maasse bereschit*).

The work of the chariot, which is also the great work (*dabar gadol*), discusses the beings of the supernatural world, God, the powers, the fundamental ideas, the "heavenly family" as it is sometimes called; the work of creation discusses generation and the nature of the terrestrial world.

Here is this division:

KABBALAH:	Maasse Mercaba	ZOHAR (<i>work of the chariot</i>)
	Maasse Bereschit	SEPHER YETZIRAH (<i>work of creation</i>)

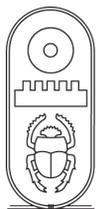
Other writers, such as Mr. *S. Munk* divide the Kabbalah in the following fashion:

KABBALAH

1. Symbolic	Mystic calculations Themurah Gematria Notarikon
2. Positive, Dogmatic	Angels and demons Divisions Transmigration of souls
3. Speculative and metaphysical	Sephiroth, etc.

As can be seen, Mr. *S. Munk* tends toward the old division adopted by certain Kabbalists, notably *Kircher*.

But the most complete division, in our opinion, of the Kabbalah is that of *Molitor*: this is the one which we ourselves have adopted in the general



KABBALAH

THEORETICAL	BERESCHIT Sepher Yetzirah.	First degree. Historical Legends. <i>Haggadah.</i>
	MERCABA Zohar.	Second degree. Practical morals.
PRACTICAL	Virtually nothing written	Third degree.
	MAGICAL MANUSCRIPTS (<i>Clavicula</i>)	Mystical doctrine. (<i>Practical magic.</i>)

table given previously, for it has the merit of conforming in a general way to the generally adopted divisions while going beyond them, complementing them as it were by the recognition of a practical part.

Traditional teaching, triune like human nature and human needs, was at the same time *historical*, *moral*, and *mystical*; thus the sacred writing contained a triple sense:

1. The literal, historical sense (*pashut*), which corresponds to the body and to the square of the temple;
2. Moral teachings (*drusch*), to the soul or the sacred;
3. And last, the mystical sense (*sod*), which represents the spirit and the holy of holies.

The first, composed of certain stories taken from the lives of the ancient patriarchs, was transmitted from generation to generation, like so many popular legends. It is found scattered here and there in the form of comments, in Biblical manuscripts and Chaldean paraphrases.

The moral sense looked at everything from a practical point of view, while the mystical, rising above the visible transitory world, hovered unceasingly in the sphere of the eternal.

The mystical sense thus required a secret discipline, exacting an uncommon piety of soul.

These two conditions call for the initiation of a disciple, regardless of age or status; it sometimes happened that a father would instruct his children while they were very young.

This high tradition is called *Kabbalah* (in Hebrew, KIBBEL, to join together). Within its exterior form the word conceals the aptitude of the soul to conceive supernatural ideas.

The Kabbalah was divided into two parts: the theoretical and the practical.

1. Patriarchal traditions on the sacred mystery of God and the divine persons;
2. On spiritual creation and the fall of the angels;
3. On the origin of chaos, matter, and the renovation of the world during the six days of creation;
4. On the creation of the visible person [humanity], his fall, and the divine ways leading to his reinstatement.

Otherwise stated, it treated:

- The work of creation (*Masse Bereschit*).
- The heavenly chariot (*Mercabah*)

The work of creation is contained in the *Sepher Yetzirah*.

We were responsible for the first French translation of this book (1887). Since then, a new translation has appeared, more developed, thanks to more complete originals, made by Mr. *Mayer-Lambert*.

We recommend this very serious work with great enthusiasm. Only one regret: the absence of a bibliography which would have been most useful for all concerned.

So that the reader may, in so far as possible, supplement our translation, which is to be found further on, we provide here a table below summarizing the supplementary developments of the *Sepher Yetzirah*. We have modified the relation of the planets and the days of the week, since the earlier relations seem to us to have been erroneously established due to a poor understanding of the connection between the order of the planets and the order of the days. The Egyptian clock given by Alliette (Etteila) clearly shows the source of this error.

The work of the heavenly chariot is contained in the *Zohar*. Since we do not

have space here to give a translation of this book (translations already exist in Latin and in English), let us be content with the excellent summary of Mr. *Isidore Loeb* in the *Grande Encyclopédie* (entry *Cabbale*).

The *Zohar* is a cabbalistic commentary on the Pentateuch; it is not certain that we possess it in its original form, and the form we do possess may be the work of several people. It is a vast compilation including, along with the ideas of the writer or writers, other more or less ancient works, such as the *Book of the Secret*, *The Great Assembly*, *The Lesser Assembly*, *The Book of Heavenly Tents*, *The Faithful Shepherd*, *The Discourse of a Young Man [Person]*, and others.

LETTER	UNIVERSE	YEAR	MAN	MORAL WORLD	
א	Alef AIR	Atmosphere	Temperate (spring or autumn)	Chest	Rule of Equilibrium
ב	Mem WATER	Earth	Winter	Stomach	Plane of Fault
ג	Shin EARTH	Heaven	Summer	Head	Plane of Worth
ד	Bet	Saturn	Saturday SATURDAY	Mouth	Life and Death
ה	Gimel	Jupiter	Sunday THURSDAY	Right eye	Peace and Misfortune
ו	Dalet	Mars	Monday TUESDAY	Left eye	Wisdom and Foolishness
ז	Kaf	Sun	Tuesday SUNDAY	Right nostril	Richness and Poverty
ח	Pay	Venus	Wednesday FRIDAY	Left nostril	Culture and Barrenness
ט	Resh	Mercury	Thursday WEDNESDAY	Right ear	Grace and Unsightliness
י	Tav	Moon	Friday MONDAY	Left ear	Domination and Servitude
יא	Hay	Aries	March	Liver	Sight and Blindness
יב	Vav	Taurus	April	Bladder	Hearing and Deafness
יג	Zayin	Gemini	May	Spleen	Smell and Absence of Smell
יד	Chet	Cancer	June	Loins	Speech and Muteness
טו	Tet	Leo	July	Right kidney	Fulness and Hunger
טז	Yud	Virgo	August	Left kidney	Coitus and Castration
יז	Lamed	Libra	September	Large intestine	Activity and Powerlessness
יח	Nun	Scorpio	October	Small intestine	Soundness of Step and Lameness
יט	Samekh	Sagittarius	November	Right hand	Anger and the Removal of the Liver
כ	Ayin	Capricorn	December	Left hand	Laughter and the Removal of the Spleen
כא	Tzaddi	Aquarius	January	Right foot	Thought and the Removal of the Heart
כב	Kuf	Pisces	February	Left foot	Sleep and Languor

