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"THE MESSAGE OF JUDAISM"

By C. Jinarajadasa, M. A.

And His Notes

Volume I.

Number 2

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Seattle, Wash., and published at the same address

Tidings

"A golden arrow shot to earth
With tidings from the sky;
Clear flashed the import of its gleam
'Behold, Spring draweth nigh.'
A new light fills the universe,
A swift wind rushes by,
Bearing this message far and wide
'New life is drawing nigh.'
The pools have heard the leap for joy
And dance with silver glee,
'Awake, awake to greet new life,"
They cry exultantly.
God opens a window in the sky:
'My little cherubs, go,
Spread through the world and from your wings
Let life and fragrance flow."
Whence comest thou, swifter than a shaft,
Oh! Shallow blithe and free!
That heraldest from some high roof
The world's festivity?"

CHAIM NACHMAN BIALIK (1903)

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The JEWISH THEOSOPHIST

*Devoted to the study of Judaism in the light of
Theosophy and Theosophy in the light of Judaism*



אני אהביה אהב ומשהרי ימצאנני:

"I love them that love me; and those that
seek me early shall find me.—Proverbs 8:17
(On Wisdom).



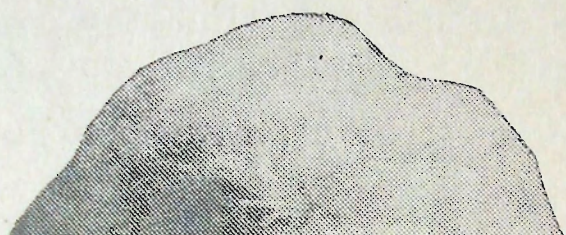
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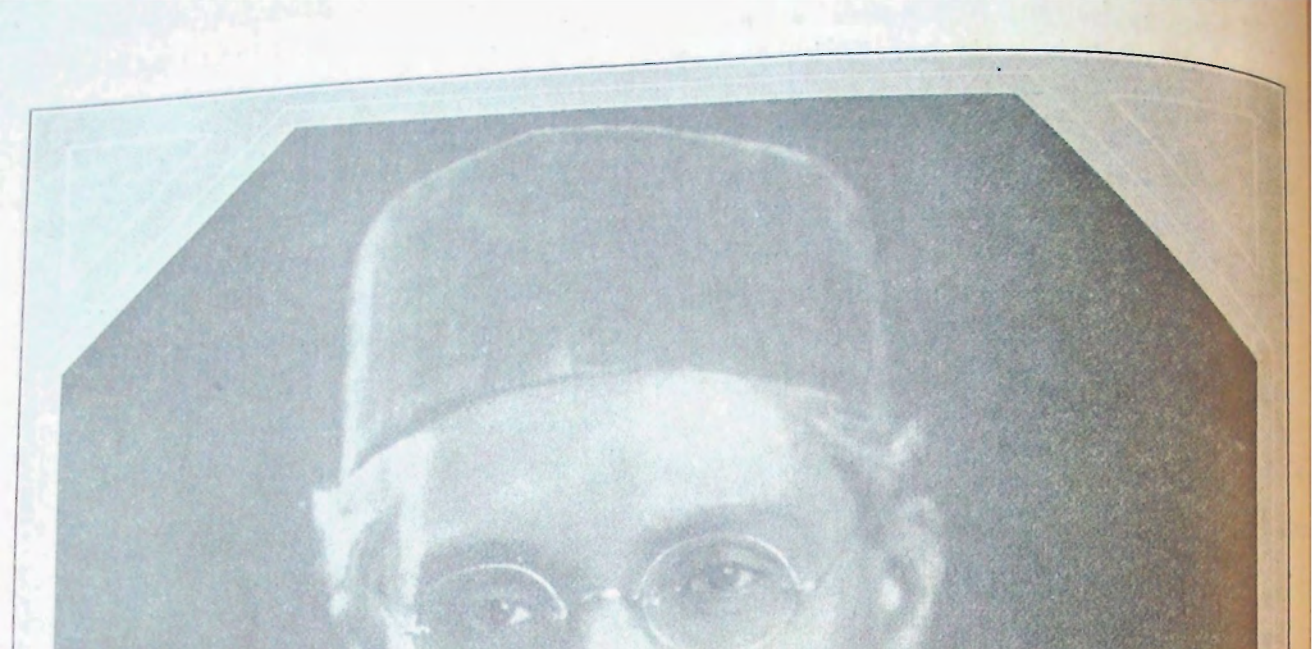
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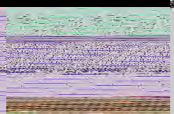
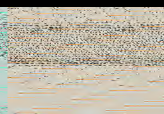
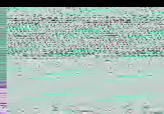
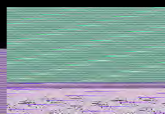
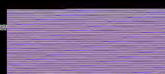
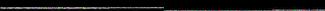
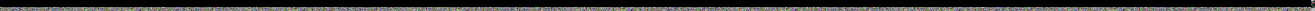
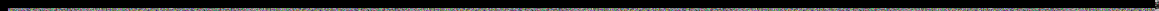
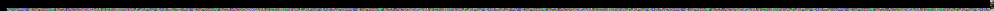
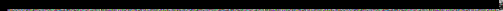
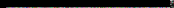
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President of the Theosophical Society
Author of "The First Principles of Theosophy" and other works



his soul, if he only resurrects the forgotten jewels of his own faith, and polishes their resplendent surface. They will reflect back to him a satisfactory answer to every question, a solution to every problem, and an explanation of all mysteries.

Take for example the Kabbalah, that almost forgotten store of learning, that flower of Hebrew spiritualism. All Jews know of its existence, but I find the prevailing knowledge concerning it a mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous. Many



BEZENA BRYDLOVA
(Mrs. W. B. Rubin)

Jews regard it as an insane practice that was indulged in ages ago, and one old Hebrew, hoary with Orthodoxy, assured me that it had entirely to do with the slaughtering of animals.

When an institution like the Kabbalah falls into such decay and disgrace, it is high time that someone resurrect its spirit and set it afloat over a cloudy-brained world.

The Kabbalah and its principles are applicable admirably to our own times, much in contradistinction to the Talmud, which in our modern days seems dreadfully useless and unpractical with its laws that were

established to govern conditions which we have long ago outgrown. It almost seems as if the Kabbalah had been purposely preserved to apply to an age long in advance of its compilation, and one can understand that it was far over the heads of the ancient Jews, many of whom regarded it with great disfavor at the time it took such a hold upon their Race.

The Jews were then entirely occupied with problems such as filthiness and disease in cramped quarters, primitive remedies for sickness, crude legal admonitions, the sacrifice of animals, and the drawing away of skirts from all Heathens (that meant everyone who was not a Jew).

Naturally such spiritual research as the Kabbalistic philosophy which taught them the equality of all men, the emptiness of a material life, and the doctrine of a God whom they need not fear, was rather incomprehensible to, and untimely for a Race who had almost all they could do to battle hard worldly conditions and keep body and soul together.

Nevertheless, the Kabbalah began to misplace orthodox Judaism, and all the intelligentsia eagerly embraced it, much to the consternation of the old Rabbis, who saw in its rapidly growing popularity the destruction of their power over a submissive and downtrodden people.

Through Kabbalistic influence and teaching, animal sacrifice was done away with in the Temples, and honest and fervent prayer was instituted in its stead, for the theory of Emanation which the Kabbalah taught carried with it the assurance that all sincere words and thoughts uttered in supplication to the Divine Source, immediately established a current between the Creator and Created. Also, the teachings of the Talmud assured a place in heaven only to those who on earth had led a saintly life. The Kabbalah, through its theory of reincarnation, made it possible for all souls through successive rebirths on this earth to attain a final perfection and reunion with their Maker.

Hence the Kabbalah made a strong ap-



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peal to the poor struggling creatures who were literally crawling along in the mud of despair under the yoke of oppression and sect tradition.

The Kabbalistic Theory of Emanation set forth in the *Sepher Yetzirah* was originally intended as a practical explanation of divine creation, but like all practical things it was put to other uses besides that for which it was primarily intended. It lent itself admirably to mathematical jugglery and hence became the source of a system

of magic which engrossed the minds of the scholars. Unfortunately, the abuse of this aspect of the Kabbalah resulted in its ill repute and eventually in its complete disregard.

That is why for ages the Jews have lost sight of the original lofty purpose of a mishandled Godsend to their Race, the Kabbalah.

"The chief thing is not knowledge, but the use to which it is put."—*Talmud*.

The Need for Mysticism

By ALEXANDER HORNE

(Excerpt from a forthcoming publication, "An Introduction to Esoteric Judaism," The Theosophical Press, 826 Oakdale Ave., Chicago, Illinois)

We now come to the final point to be raised in this booklet, and that is, the existence of an esoteric tradition today which, despite the vast amount of hitherto secret information which has in the course of time been made public, is still to this day a dark mystery. For it is evident that, of esotericism proper, nothing much can be said. Its existence in the past can be shown; its existence in the present can but be inferred, except by those in a position to know—those, that is, who have been initiated into its mysteries. For esotericism implies secrecy; and secrecy implies ignorance on the part of the uninitiated. "Rabbi Simeon ben-Jochai, the compiler of the *Zohar*," says H. P. Blavatsky, "never imparted the most important points of his doctrine otherwise than orally, and to a very limited number of disciples. Therefore, without the final initiation into the *Mercabah*, the study of the Kabbalah will ever be incomplete, and the *Mercabah* can be taught only 'in darkness, in a deserted place, and after many and terrific trials.' Since the death of that great Jewish Initi-

ate, this hidden doctrine has remained, for the outside world, an inviolate secret."*

A good deal of what was once esoteric is now becoming exoteric. The times have changed. Man has grown. More knowledge can be put into his hands than ever before; a deeper insight into the mysteries of existence can be vouchsafed him, if he will but tear away the veil that keeps him from fuller knowledge. Mystic wisdom is his for the asking, for it is more accessible than it has been in the past. Let him pluck of the Tree of Knowledge, for only then will his eyes become opened and he be "as one of us."

As to the reasons that should prompt him for taking up the study of mysticism, we have already had occasion to note the spiritualizing influence it has had on mystics of the past, and it can readily be shown that such a study will promptly lead to inner felicity and a satisfaction of both heart and mind. Personal happiness, of course (in the sense of material pleasures, and contentment, without regard to the happiness of others) is not to be sought for; but a spiritual satisfaction, an inner

* *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. III, p. 47.

peace, is legitimate, for it is only found when harmony with the rest of mankind is aimed at, and when service to others is made the rule of one's life. Such happiness finds its consummation in the mystic life, for an attunement with spiritual realities is experienced, a feeling of oneness with spiritual truths, spiritual powers, and the general current of spiritual life as a whole. This inevitably results in a profound satisfaction with all life's processes, a feeling of peace with all mankind, an understanding that all things tend to the good, an inner consciousness of personal well-being. The mystic looks below life's surface; he pries into life's mysteries, and peers behind the scene of life's struggles, with its bitterness, and disappointments. He sees, 'neath the myriads of forms—each struggling with its neighbor for supremacy—one endless and eternal Life seeking ever more and more perfect expression, quietly realizing Its majestic purpose. He sees It immanent in all hearts, ever-present in all things, actively influencing those who would understand something of Its meaning and cooperate with Its purposes. He sees It at the same time inescapably driving the millions of those who, heedless of any spiritual Power at the base of life's contact, learn in no other way than by painful experience, unconsciously treading the road to perfection. He sees 'neath the ever-recurring round of births and deaths this same eternal Life in Its ever-alternating aspects. The Life never ceases, though the forms die, disintegrate, and pass away; for It ever embodies Itself in other forms, more and more perfect as the progression continues. He sees that below life's turmoil and ceaseless disillusionments there is but the continual recasting of values, the separation of the real from the unreal, the permanent from the fleeting, the gold from the dross, the light of truth and understanding from the darkness of ignorance and spiritual blindness. Like the mighty orb of day that slowly and silently moves forward, in spite of the shadow it casts, so does the mystic see Life as an

eternal progression, constantly finding the realization of Its destiny, though many there be who—through heedlessness, or perhaps because their eyes have not been opened—see in life nothing but the blind play of chance, without meaning, without purpose, without hope and promise of joy.

Some thinkers are beginning to see that in a return to mysticism lies a solution of present-day religious difficulties; not necessarily the mysticism of the middle ages, with its extravagances, its extremes, its fanaticism—in fact, such a mysticism would be harmful. But a purified, and, may we say, a modernized application of the mystic attitude, made to fit into present-day conditions, and made to solve present-day difficulties and problems. And it is the absence of such mysticism (and by mysticism we only mean a deeply religious sentiment, a devotional instinct, an aspiration for greater attunement with Divine Life, and for greater understanding of life's purposes)—it is the absence of such mysticism, we repeat, that is seen as the disintegrating force in religion today. "The discipline of the ancient law," remarks Ralph Philip Boas, "has departed. Having outlived poverty and persecution, the well-to-do Jew is left in a state of good-natured and satisfied religious apathy. The Jew has always prided himself on his common-sense; his common-sense now does him the ill turn of banishing whatever mysticism Judaism may once have had. And without mysticism there can be no genuine religious enthusiasm; it takes more to see God than the ability to distinguish between profit and loss." Similarly Edwin Collins, in his introduction to a translation of Rabbi Bahya ben Joseph's *Duties of the Heart*, says: "The Semitic religions and the Aryan-oriental mystic intuitions seem to be the chlorophyll that draws, from the sunlight of spiritual being, elements essential to the healthy growth of the human race; and if Western humanity is to be saved from becoming a dry and sapless log, it must perennially renew that foliage which brings it into contact with the

ambient air, warmed by the glow of righteousness and love."

As has been said, it is a deeper devotion that is needed, an accentuation of the religious sentiment—greater inwardness—*Kawwana*. "*Kawwana*," Rabbi Benelow reminds us, "is a thoroughly Jewish doctrine. . . . It may mean intuition, concentration, devotion; it may mean purpose and the right spirit; it may mean pondering, meditation, and mystery. The word *kawwana* connotes all these things, for the reason that it kept on gathering significance from the religious experience of the Jewish people. . . . In the philosophic literature, *kawwana* came to signify pure devotion."

The mystic attitude would tend to be a corrective of the present prevalent attitude of *outwardness*—the attention paid to literal meanings, outward religious expression, outward religious observance, outward conformance to principles of one kind or another. All the while, *inwardness* (without which religion is not truly religion, but merely ethical culture and social service) is being neglected, and Judaism placed more and more in the danger of merely *surviving*, without really *living*, as a force and a potency. "Anything cut off from the moil and struggle of reality, from the clasp of interests and causes, of loves and hungers and hates that make up the courses of the common life (and we would add, anything that cuts off from the needs of heart and soul and intellect) can survive indefinitely. It can survive, but it cannot live."*

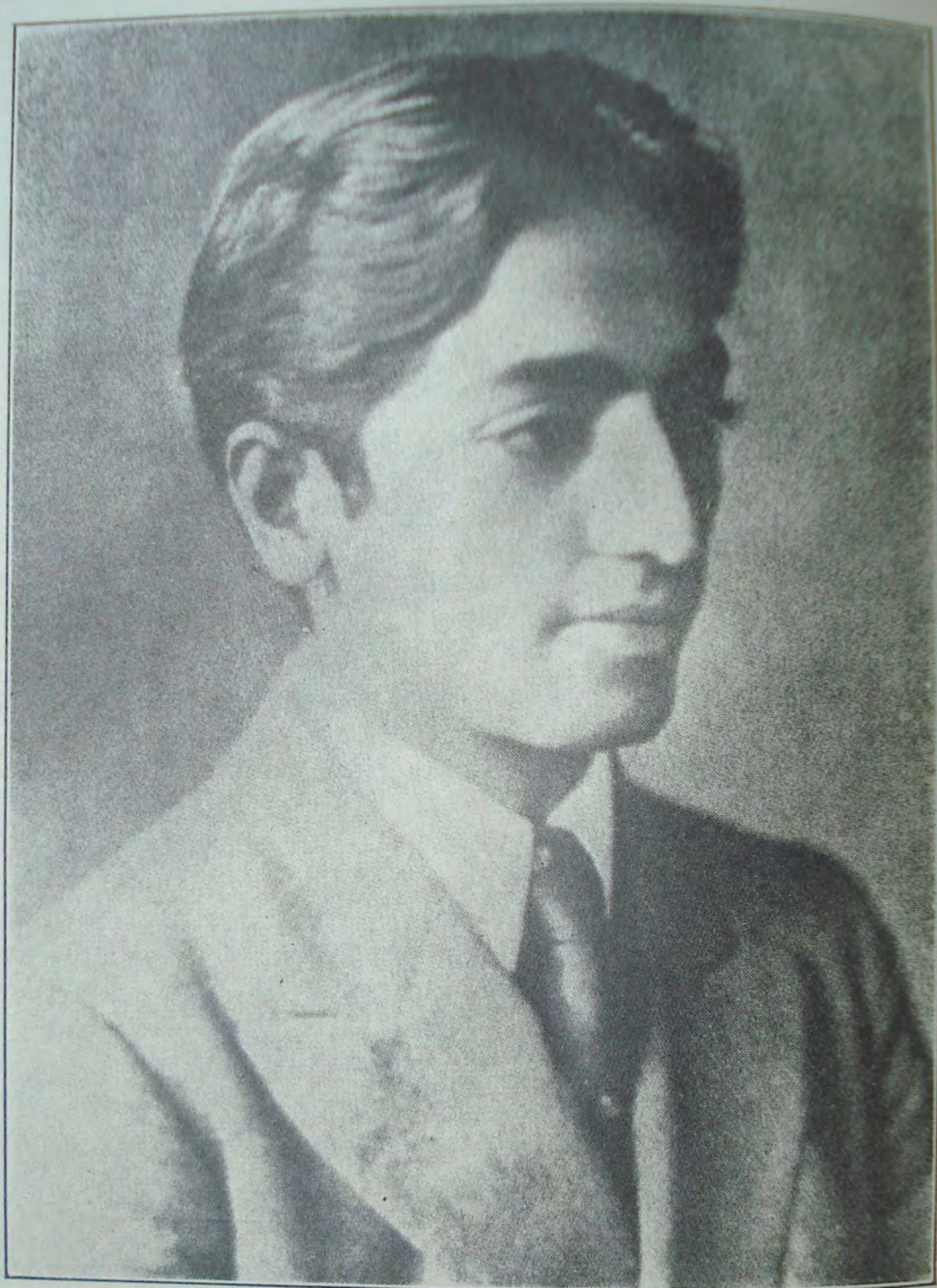
To truly live, religion must be felt as an inward experience, a personal relation between the man and the Divine Spirit, a relation that must constantly aim at becoming more and more intensified, and raised from the plane of mere physical observance to that of spiritual thought, feeling and aspiration. Just as the prophets of old were but little interested in outward expression, and devoted their lives to an intensification of the religious emotion, so must we today turn our powers inward,

directing them to a strengthening of our hold on true religion, aiming them at greater self-knowledge, greater introspection, deeper meditation, a more zealous questioning of life's mysteries, ever pressing forward towards an answer to the riddle of existence, the riddle of God, the riddle of our own soul. Such is the way of the mystic, the way of true piety, which, as Rabbi Luzzato remarks, in his *Path of the Righteous*, is not merely a matter of naive unenlightened ignorance. "Knowledge, study, inquiry, are prerequisites even to the planting within our hearts of the love of God. Every human being is predisposed towards goodness and piety. But while the seed is within us, the fruit will grow only when duly fostered and watched." Every human being is predisposed to seek spiritual communion, for it is a cry of like to like, the soul of man—a spark of the divine flame—seeking for a sense of comradeship with its divine source. But through heredity, or environment, or education, or sometimes through centuries of repression, that seed is sadly withered. We find it lying on arid ground, scorched by the sun of misunderstood science and ill-digested philosophy. Unwatered, because of the materialistic tendencies of the present age, it lies dormant within us, forsaken and forlorn. Turn the light of mystic thought on your own souls, brethren. You will then realize, perhaps for the first time, that you *have* a soul. And something of its glorious beauty, its awful mystery, and its majesty, may then touch your hearts, and turn your gaze again Godwards.

The important thing is the effect of our actions, thoughts and emotions, the course of our minds and emotions shall run so as to produce results which will make the world nobler, happier and more beautiful.
—J. Krishnamurti.

"Much have I learned from my teachers, more from my companions, most of all from my pupils."—*Talmud*.

* "Can Judaism survive in the United States?" by Horace M. Kallen, *Menorah Journal*, p. 544 (1926).



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