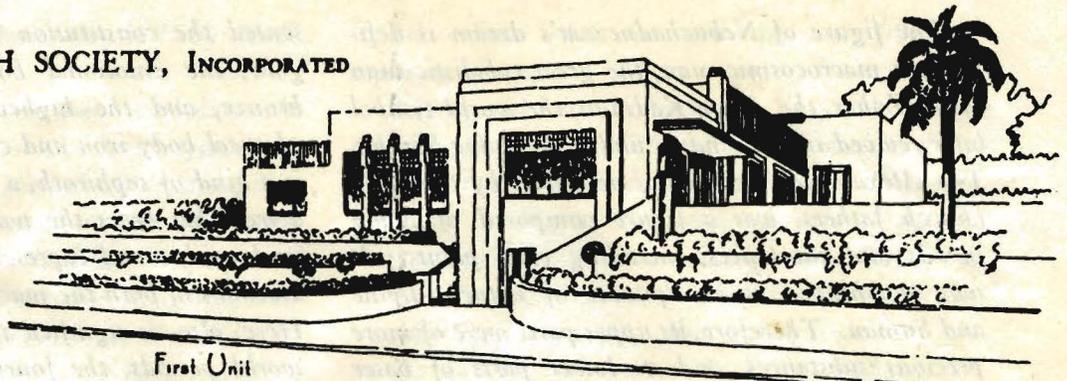


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BY MANLY P. HALL

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THE STUDENTS MONTHLY LETTER

Letter No. 6

THE SECRET DOCTRINE IN THE BIBLE

Dear Friend:

In connection with the previous letter, it is interesting to identify the Queen of Sheba according to the cabalistic system. The word SHEBA means seven. She is, therefore, the queen of the seven and represents the spinal fire in the human body. She is KUNDALINI, the serpent goddess of the seven chakras. The Queen of Sheba comes from Ethiopia, or the Land of Darkness. She journeys to Jerusalem bearing rich treasures for the Everlasting House. In occult anatomy, the Land of Darkness is at the base of the spine. It is from here that coiled KUNDALINI rises slowly to the brain, awakening the chakras. This ascent is frequently referred to as a journey. In the Bible, it is a visit to Jerusalem, which means not only the City of Peace, but also the city of stacks or heaps, an arcane reference to the convolutions of the brain.

THE GREAT MAN OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

In the second chapter of the Book of Daniel, beginning at verse 21 and continuing through verse 45, is the account of a strange dream that came to the King of Babylon. The King beheld a great image, the head of which was of fine gold, its

shoulders and arms of silver, its body of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet a mixture of iron and clay. As the great figure stood in all its glory, a cubic stone was mysteriously cut from a quarry and cast by invisible hands at the feet of the great image. As the stone struck the feet, the image was destroyed, changing into fine dust... The cube afterward grew greater in size until it became as vast as a mountain.

The explanation given by Daniel is definitely misleading. The prophet explains to Nebuchadnezzar that the golden head, the silver arms and shoulders, the brazen body, the iron legs, and the feet of iron and clay symbolize empires that shall fall one after the other... From this conceit has arisen much confusion in modern theology. Every nation of the ancient and modern world has been associated with the parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The second adventists have rejoiced at, and various Bible societies have announced the millennium as a result of calculations based upon the parts of this symbolic figure. These millennialists have been fixing dates for the "second coming" for nearly a thousand years, "but the end is not yet." This is a fair example of the general lack of research and scholarship evident among most groups of religious enthusiasts.

The figure of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is definitely a macrocosmic man, the great cabalistic man of the Zohar, the Adam Kadmon, the world symbol later revived in Alexandria under the name Serapis. The Alexandrian Serapis, as described by the early church fathers, was a figure composed of many metals and substances, including even plants. It was worshipped as an epitome of nature, divine and human. Therefore, its upper parts were of more precious substances, and its lower parts of baser materials.

Although the description given in Daniel is somewhat mutilated, nevertheless the symbolism is apparent. The head of the image is of gold, the upper body and arms of silver, the lower body of bronze, and the legs and feet of a substance composed of the minglings of iron and clay. Compare these with the four ages of the Greeks, the gold, the silver, the bronze, and the iron; also, with the four YUGAS of the Hindus, of which the lowest or fourth, the KALI YUGA, corresponds closely with the feet of iron and clay.

The ancient ZOHAR says that the four worlds were represented by four Adams, or the four parts of one colossal figure "whose body nature is, and God the soul." This great figure is always described by the cabalists with its face in profile without eyelids, and ornamented with a long beard ending in thirteen points. The head of this being is gold, symbolizing the pure nature of divinity, the head of all life. The silver arms and shoulders correspond to the active parts, the hierarchies, which emanate from the golden head. They are the builders, the angels, the archangels, the seraphim and the cherubim, the thrones and the dominations, and the principalities. The bronze body is the zodiac, the planets, the material cosmos, the forms of the hierarchies above. And, lastly, the fourth world of iron and clay represents the earth, which, according to the ancient philosophers, was girded by a wall of iron. Here the iron is the firmament and the clay the planet earth itself.

Nor do the analogies end here, for the figure represents the cycles of generation. The head is birth, the shoulders growth, the body maturity, the legs age, and the feet death. Here also is repre-

sented the constitution of man: the mental body gold, the emotional body silver, the vital body bronze, and the higher and lower parts of the physical body iron and clay. The figure, therefore, is a kind of sephiroth, a tree in the form of a man, a tree that bears the world and the heavens upon its branches and represents in its various parts the divisions of both the macrocosm and the microcosm. Here, also, is signified the five races and the four world periods, the fourth being divided into two parts, the Mars-Mercury halves of the earth period.

The cubic stone in the Christian Cabala has been exoterically interpreted as Christ. This is the stone the builders rejected, but which becomes the head of the corner. The theologians would have us believe that the ages and the law, the cycles and the worlds, the mechanism of the ancient Mysteries were all dissolved and destroyed by the Messianic dispensation. But consider the symbolism of the cube. It is the most perfect of the geometric solids, being equal in all its parts. It consists of six faces which represent the days of creation, and of twelve lines which symbolize the zodiac. If each of the faces be open to the core, the result will be a cruciform design consisting of six pyramids. Each of the separate pyramids will have four faces, which total twenty-four, the number of the elders before the throne in Revelation, and also the hours of the day. If the twenty-four be added to the six faces of the cube, the result will be thirty, the degrees of a zodiacal sign, and a twelfth part of a circle. It is written, therefore, that the perfect cube is symbolic of the New Jerusalem, the "city foursquare."

According to the Pythagoreans, the cube is a symbol of both matter and man, the opening of the cube being a symbol of the unfoldment of man and the releasing of geometric mysteries within himself. To the Christian, Christ is the perfect man; therefore, he becomes the embodiment of the perfect measure of a man, the cube. In Freemasonry, the perfect ashlar or trued stone is the proper figure of the perfect man, for he is square, upright, and true, which are the moral qualities of a cube. The perfect cube represents the personality that has had all the unevenness, roughness, and inequality polished away by experience. Such a stone is ready to become a

block in the Everlasting House not built by hands but eternal in the heavens.

If, then, Nebuchadnezzar's man symbolizes the universe and the world, and the stone symbolizes the adept, the perfect man, then we understand how worldliness is dissipated by wisdom, how the material universe is overcome by that which is square and true, and being overcome is entirely dissipated, leaving "not a rack behind." We now understand why this cube stone becomes larger and larger until it becomes a mountain. Wisdom itself is frequently symbolized by a mountain or hill. Truth, having overcome error, fills the whole world with itself, increasing greatly in size. It fills the life of him to whom it is revealed.

THE STORY OF SAMSON

The life of Samson is given in Judges 13-16, inclusive. Careful study will show that the entire account is a cleverly concealed myth which parallels very closely the Greek myth of Hercules. The name Hercules means the glory of Hera (who was the Queen of Heaven). In Hebrew, Samson means sunlike. Samson is a solar personification, and, like Hercules, performs certain labors consistent with his role.

The myth was devised evidently when the vernal equinox occurred in Taurus, or at least under the influence of such a concept. It is especially interesting to note that the strength of Samson lay in his seven locks of hair. In classical symbolism, the hair of the sun-god represents his rays or powers. For this reason, the infant sun-god, born at the winter solstice, is represented with one lock of hair. Its powers, or rays, increase as it moves from the winter solstice to the summer solstice. Under these conditions, it will reach the summer solstice in Leo with seven locks of hair.

One of the great labors of Hercules was the slaying of the Nemean lion and dressing in its skin. Samson likewise slew a lion and found honey in the carcass. The sun, reaching Leo, is robed in the sign of the celestial lion, its essential dignity according to astrology. By the same rule, the carrying away of the gates of Gaza would correspond with the

vernal equinox when the sun breaks away from the captivity of winter.

The sign of Leo is followed by Virgo, the virgin, which is Delilah. This is the sun's first sign of decreasing light. Delilah, therefore, after three unsuccessful attempts, discovers the secret of his strength, and, at the autumnal equinox, cuts off his hair or rays. Later he is blinded, further to emphasize his loss of power. But finally in death, the winter solstice, he destroys the house of the Philistines by bringing down the two central columns.

This is a grand astronomical myth, and has a certain Messianic significance. It should be remembered that all sun-gods are prototypes of the Christ, or phases of the Christ mythos. An early theological writing says that Christ by his death destroyed death and brought an end to evil in the world. This is perfectly prefigured by Samson tearing down the house of the Philistines and dying himself to destroy the wicked. As Samson's seven locks of hair were the secret of his strength, so the Lamb of God bled from seven wounds.

All sun-god myths are indicative not only of the sun in the sky, but the small sun or spirit in man which achieves emancipation by the performance of the twelve labors which make his zodiac of experience. Thus all of the world saviors are personifications of humanity's struggle for truth and final accomplishment of immortality.

THE VISION OF EZEKIEL

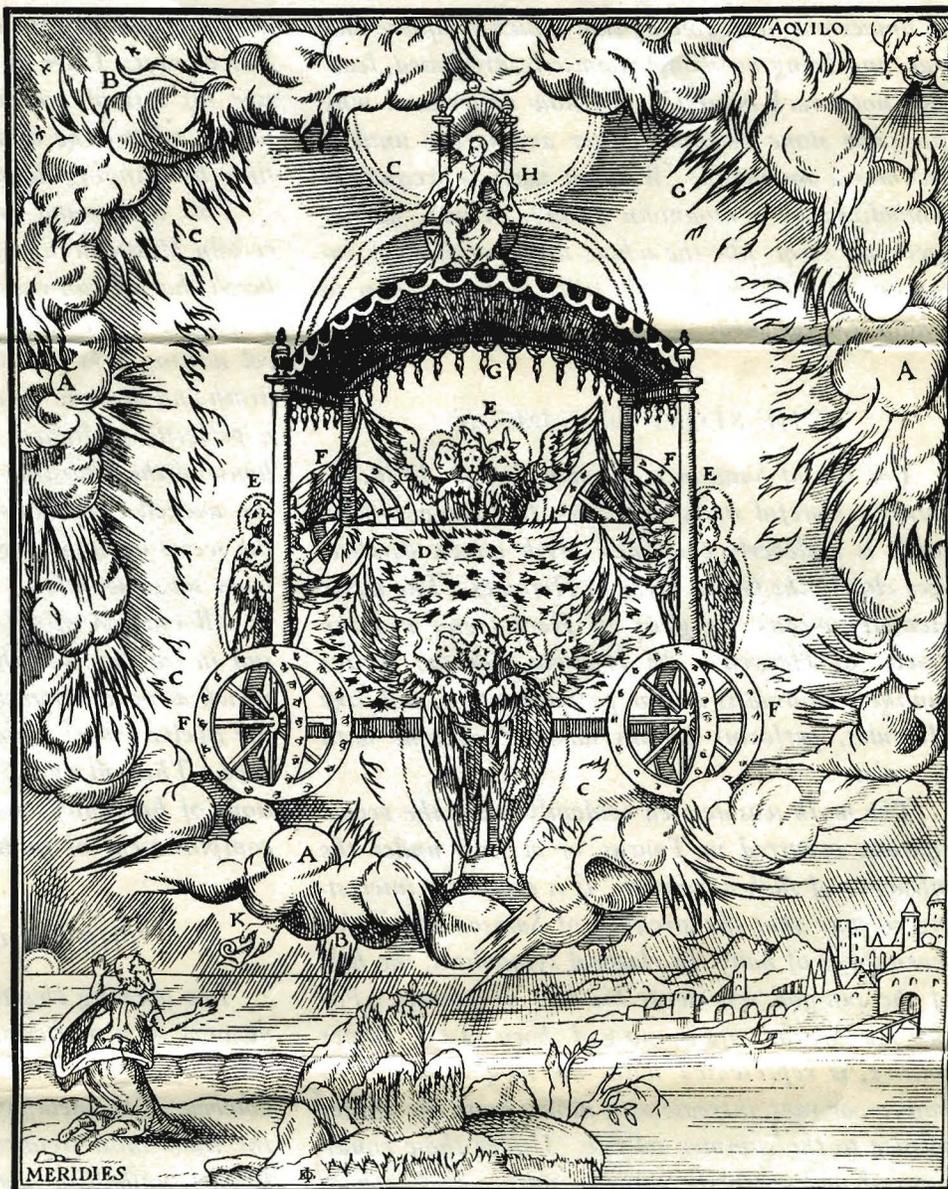
The opening chapters of the book of Ezekiel are devoted to a mysterious vision that occurred while the prophet was among the captives by the river of Chebar. The metaphysical experiences described in the Bible most frequently occur near water. In religious symbolism, water is a symbol of the etheric world that extends beyond the physical plane of life. The river Styx across which Charon rows the dead symbolizes the etheric interval between the physical and astral planes. Of similar significance is the river Jordan upon whose farther shore await the souls of the redeemed according to Christian religious enthusiasts. The Nile was sacred to Egypt, and the pious Brahmin hopes to die beside the

Ganges. Rivers are universally significant of transition.

Thus it occurs that Ezekiel receives his strange vision on the shores of the etheric consciousness. The river Chebar is that mystic stream which flows between the material and divine worlds. The account therefore, very definitely is indicative that the prophet Ezekiel received his vision while in a state between physical and superphysical consciousness. The occultist knows that it is ever thus that visions come.

Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind coming out of the north, a great cloud filled with fire, in the midst of which appeared the chariot of the Most High. The direction from which the vision came is of the greatest importance. In the teachings of the Egyptians, the north was regarded as the abode of the gods. In one secret metaphysical system, it is clearly set forth that a temple of the gods must have an eastern, a southern, and a western gate, but at the north there shall be no gate. The ancients devised this belief because to them the sun never appeared in the northern part of the heavens. The Egyptians' polar mountain was the abode of the old, dark gods, the fathers of the divine kings. The mysterious Meru of the Hindus, the mountain of the gods, is a polar mountain, as, likewise, Shamballah whose ridgepole is the polar axis. As the gods dwelt in the north, men might not travel there. In honor of the gods, the northern part of the temple was without gate or

opening, to signify the unapproachable majesty of divinity and the secret abode of the most holy spirits. Hence, it was from the north, from the axis mountain that the whirling vision of Ezekiel came. This indicates beyond any doubt that the prophet



THE VISION OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was wise in the learning of the Egyptians and had accepted their concepts of the northern mysteries.

Out of the whirlwind from the north, there appeared an extraordinary instrument of power. The Bible gives no name to the chariot of majesty, but

by the Hebrews it is called the *MERCAVAH*. The *Mercaveh* was so sacred to the old rabbins that it might be spoken of only with the greatest veneration and only in the presence of the elders and among the elders. The *Mercavah* is one of the deepest mysteries of cabalism.

The chariot of righteousness, the seat of the Most High, the mystery of the wheels that go all ways and are filled with eyes, is thus interpreted by the wisest of the cabalists: The chariot consists of four creatures called cherubs, each going a different way, each with four heads, six wings, and the hoofs of a calf. Each of the cherubs bore the face of a man, a bull, a lion, and an eagle, and their wings met at the corners of the *Mercavah*. These mysterious creatures rode on wheels filled with eyes, and above them was a throne chair, and upon the throne was an awful presence in white, surrounded by light and power and accompanied by a rainbow. So numerous and complicated are the interpretations of this vision that we can mention only a small part of them.

In simple statement, the *Mercavah* is the world or universe as the body or vehicle of the Creator. It is beneath his feet, for the earth is his footstool. The *Mercavah* is the footstool wherein God is manifest only in his lesser parts. We, therefore, shall discover an astronomical significance in the form and structure of the *Mercavah*. The cherubs are the symbols of the four cardinal angles, the equinoxes and the solstices. It must be remembered that at the time this vision was described, the equinoxes fell in Taurus and Scorpio, and the solstices in Aquarius and Leo. These four signs are the bull, the eagle, the man, and the lion, respectively. These four signs not only occur frequently in the ancient Jewish metaphysics, and the occult sciences of the Greeks and Egyptians, but reappear in the Christian mysteries in the forms of the symbols attributed to the four evangelists who, as St. Augustine observed, were witnesses unto the four corners of the world. The sarcophagi of princes and prelates are frequently adorned with the four creatures, and they re-occur consistently in religious architecture.

The cherubim or living creatures are the four great guardians of the four corners of the sky or

earth. We find them even in the mythology of the American Indians. Ancient astronomers on the plains of Chaldea established four great stars which appeared in the four constellations, Aquarius, Leo, Taurus, and Scorpio, calling them the guardian angels. Each of the four guardians had six wings, which together make the 24 hours of the day. They also represented the zodiacal galaxies of stars, for it is written in the cabalistic books that the stars are the eyes of the angels, and that the bodies of the angels are full of eyes. In the Apocalypse occur the four horsemen who are an aspect of the same symbolism. And among the North American Indians, there were giant chieftains guarding the homes of the four winds.

In the Greek theology, Phanes burst from the egg of chaos ornamented with the heads of birds and animals, and almost identical in description with the cherubim of Ezekiel. Thus each human body is itself a *Mercavah*, a chariot of the Law. The four bodies of man are represented by the four heads of the living creature. The physical body is the earth or Taurus, which is seated in the heart. Therefore, the heart is the head of the bull in man. The next is the watery sign of Scorpio represented by the eagle which has its seat in the human spleen. The third is the fiery or emotional body of man, ruled by Leo, with its seat in the liver. The fourth head, that of the human being belongs to Aquarius, the principle of mind which has its seat in the brain. Each of these beasts goes a different way, that is, has its own surfaces and temperaments, yet together they form the chariot or *Mercavah* of the spirit.

In the Paracelsian theory, the earth is composed of four elements, earth, water, fire, and air. These, in turn, correspond with the four heads of the cherubim. They are, therefore, the elements or substances from which all bodies, that is chariots, are made. The hierarchies of the four corners or fixed signs, are called the builders, or the form builders, because they have control over the formative processes of nature. To them are given the streams of the elements which pouring through these hierarchies are distributed to form all corporeal natures. The cherubim are the four rivers that flow out of Eden making fertile the material universe. From their co-

mixing are produced the vehicles for the manifestation of life. They are the four white horses that draw the chariot of Abraxas, the Gnostic Pantheos.

It is important to note that the four-headed creatures are represented in other religions with symbols of identical meaning. In India, the lord of the material universe, that is the world of the ancients personified, is Shiva, who is frequently represented with four heads. Brahma, manifested in the material universe through the Shivic principle, likewise, is depicted with four heads. He had a fifth head which was cut off during a battle in heaven. The story of the fifth head of Brahma is a delightful allegory concerning the fifth element, the azoth or *QUINTESENTIA* of alchemy—the universal mercury. In the Ezekiel account, the four creatures or elements carry in their midst the golden throne, the fifth element. Paracelsus says there is no greater mystery than the mystery of ether. Ether is truly the connective between the material and spiritual worlds, even as it is the connective by means of which every superphysical principle directs its material organisms.

The likeness of a man full of fire that rode upon the cherubim is, of course, spirit whether universal or individual which is supported and carried by the elements and their principles. The wheels full of eyes refer to the heavens, the planets, and constellations, particularly the great wheel of the zodiac which surrounds the earth and in which the cherubim turn. The universe itself is indeed the wheel within wheels. And in the midst of all the creatures sits the Ancient of Days, the Eternal One, the Axis of Law and Life, the Master of the Mysteries.

THE SUFFERINGS OF JOB

The book of Job may be called, without exaggeration, the finest and most significant book of the Bible. As literature it definitely excels any of the others. It is really a poem, although now presented in prose form in the King James version. There is a quality about the book of Job, a consistent excellence not to be found in any other of the Bible books. In theme, also, it transcends.

The book of Job is an initiation ritual, one of the finest expositions of the Mysteries to be found in the literature of the world. Unfortunately, its sublimity has been sensed by only a few of the most enlightened Bible students, and its inner meaning has been entirely ignored for centuries. All the average person knows about Job is that he had three perverse and worthless comforters who have become a byword for futile condolences.

The whole premise of the book of Job is exceedingly peculiar. Satan appearing before the footstool of God argues with the Creator concerning the piety of Job, a just, perfect, and upright man in whom there is no flaw. Satan insists that Job is pious only because of the plenty which he enjoys. The Lord then gives Satan the privilege of afflicting Job to prove that a good man in adversity still venerates his Lord. Whereupon, Satan, who has been walking up and down the earth, focuses his attention upon Job. Through the machinations of the evil one, Job is stripped of all his possessions, even his children being taken from him. But Job remains true, blessing the Lord that giveth and the Lord that taketh away. Another argument in heaven follows. Satan not discouraged, assures the Lord that if Job's flesh be corrupted, then surely the prophet will decry his maker. So Job is visited with boils, corruptions of the flesh, and the three comforters.

The greater part of the book of Job is devoted to bits of advice given by the three comforters, and Job's reactions thereto. In his agony and torment, Job prays for death and release, but in his heart he remains steadfast to his realization that the ways of God are mysterious, but that there is truth in all of them. At last, because Job preserved his faith throughout the sore afflictions that have been visited upon him, "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." Wealth and honor were restored to him. "After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations."

The roots of Goethe's *FAUST* are laid in the story of Job. It is a story of struggle and achievement. It is exceedingly difficult for even an orthodox Christian to explain why God should pick out the most perfect of his prophets and turn him over

to the tender mercies of Satan, to say nothing of Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. When understood as an esoteric fable setting forth acceptance into the Mysteries, the confusion is cleared away. Job is a neophyte, here depicted as a man of means and position. The Lord, in this case, is not God but the hierophant, the Master of the Secret House. Satan then assumes his correct position. He is the tester, the trier. In the ancient Mystery system there was always a character who represented destruction, who sought to lure the neophyte away from the path of righteousness. He was frequently called the adversary.

Job, entering into the mysteries of initiation, must first renounce possessions. It is said of the Pythagorean community that "they possessed all in common and that no man had any thing." Now a rich man being separated from his possessions usually suffers exceedingly. Furthermore, it was the duty of the Mystery School to discover that part of the neophyte's life which was the weakest and assail him in that quarter. The student will remember how Socrates chastised Alcibiades for his love of wealth. And in India, even to this day, teachers force their disciples to perform those tasks most repugnant to them that they may overcome all likes and dislikes and achieve detachment. So the initiator gave to Satan, the adversary, permission to strike Job in his weakest part, his wealth, to see whether the loss of things would destroy his vision or philosophy.

The seven sons and three daughters, like the seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels are entirely symbolical numbers. By the seven sons are signified his seven bodies or outward parts; and by the three daughters, his subjective or spiritual triad. But having been tested in his wealth, Job remained true. Thereupon, Satan is permitted to attack him in his honor, which is represented by the boils. Furthermore, he is tormented by three negative spirits who are sent to him in his hour of misery, even as in certain esoteric schools, the master is slain by three ruffians. The three are also the three degrees of the Mysteries which he must pass or rise above. By longing for death, Job infers that he repents of having attempted initiation at that time, but his spirit still survives and he continues on, passing

through one infirmity after the other, until at last, he conquers himself and rises triumphantly from the ashes of his own sorrow.

He is rewarded by the return many times over of all he had lost. The Mysteries do not demand poverty, but they demand the right use of that which is possessed. Therefore, having become wise in all matters, Job received back his fortune, and with that his children, who, though dead, are conveniently born again of the same number and sex. Also his cattle are multiplied. And he abode in peace the rest of his days. The reader is not informed as to what occurred to either Satan or the three comforters who disappear when their work is completed.

This is by no means all of the story, but definitely is the key to it. The testing of Job is the testing of all men. Possibly the most difficult thing to explain is why a just man should be the one chosen for this misery. It should be remembered that the Mystery Schools accepted only the wisest and the most perfect, and then subjected them to ordeals of further testing before the secrets of the spiritual world should be revealed. If we look about us in life, we shall perceive as Job did, that the wicked seem to flourish and it is the just man who is stricken. This is part of the Divine Plan. The just man, having consecrated himself to the highest of his principles, is immediately confronted with KARMA and deluged with what seems to be adversity. In reality, this is not adversity, but the speeding up of evolution as the result of consecration to the spiritual life. More is expected of a man who is wise than of the man who is foolish. The older we grow, the more strength we have, and the more strength we have, the more sternly we are tested to prove that strength. But no man is tested beyond his capacity. Therefore, the Lord says to Satan that he may afflict Job, but that he may not take his life.

Satan is not a spirit of destruction. There is no essential evil in the universe. Our present form of the devil is merely derived from the Greek nature god Pan. As Goethe says, Mephistopheles, or Satan, "is part of the power that still works for good while ever scheming ill." Satan is really KARMA, but he is more than that. He is that temptation from which arises strength. When the Mysteries were

celebrated in ancient Egypt, there was an evil spirit called Typhon or Set who brought about the death of the good Osiris. It is the red Set that has given us our concept of the devil, but Set was nothing but the material world, the ground of man's temptation, and also the environment in which he gains immortality through self-discipline. Therefore, Set or Satan, is the divine opportunity; the world into which we come in ignorance but from which we depart in wisdom. It is the obstacle that is ever building strength, it is that whole field of difficulty which, overcome, makes us master of our own life.

MELCHIZEDEK

The 18th verse of the 14th chapter of Genesis reads: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God."

The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek seems to be the first statement of the Eucharist. The word Melchizedek is believed to mean king of righteousness, but this translation is entirely exoteric. In the old Chaldean Hebrew, Melchizedek means the authority of Sedek, or Sedek is king. Therefore, Sedek is king of Salem which can mean either peace or a heaped-up place. The city of Jerusalem is built

upon a number of hills. The word Sedek comes from the Egyptian. The god Sedek was the father of the artificer-gods of Egypt. Faber in his great work on the Noahic cycle, THE CABIRI, says that in the Phoenician and Samothracian rites, the seven Cabiri, that is the seven planetary gods that turn or move about the sun, are the children of Sedek. So Melchizedek is father Sedek, the father of the planets and the Cabirian artificers. Thus Sedek is the sun. We have the same symbolism as with Moses, the letters of whose name, if rearranged, form the name of the sun, SAMACH. Moses, the red-haired man and Melchizedek the king, the first priest, are both sun-men.

Now we understand why Melchizedek was his own father and mother and why he is the founder of the eternal priesthood. We also understand why Christ is likened unto Melchizedek and why he is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The sun gives light to all the world, Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Therefore, Christ is a light symbol, and all light is derived from the great light, the sun whose temple is eternal in the heavens. The sons of the sun are the light-bringers, the prophets and teachers, for as the sun dispels the darkness of night, so the prophets dispel the darkness of ignorance and assume their legitimate place as servants of light.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall