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### Kabbalistic Visions: C. G. Jung and Jewish Mysticism. (2010). By Sanford L. Drob. New Orleans, LA: Spring

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## Book Reviews

KABBALISTIC VISIONS: C. G. JUNG  
 AND JEWISH MYSTICISM. (2010). BY  
 SANFORD L. DROB. NEW ORLEANS,  
 LA: SPRING.

*Reviewed by J. Marvin Spiegelman*

I myself was, so it seemed, in the Pardes Rimmonim, the garden of pomegranates, and the wedding of Tifereth with Malchuth was taking place. Or else I was Rabbi Simon ben Jochai, whose wedding in the after-life was being celebrated. It was the mystic marriage as it appears in the Cabalistic tradition. I cannot tell you how wonderful it was. I could only think continually, “Now this is the garden of pomegranates! Now this is the marriage of Malchuth with Tifereth!” I do not know exactly what part I played in it. At bottom it was I myself: I was the marriage. And my beatitude was that of blissful wedding. (p. 294)

—C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1965)

The Hasidic Rabbi Baer from Meseritz, whom they called the Great Maggid . . . anticipated my entire psy-

chology in the eighteenth century. (pp. 271–272)

—C. G. Jung, “An Eightieth Birthday Interview” from *C. G. Jung Speaking* (1977)

The foregoing are the epigraphs that Sanford Drob uses for his volume. They state, in a nutshell, the theme that C. G. Jung was deeply and increasingly influenced by Jewish mysticism as he grew older, culminating in the remarkable recognition of the profundity of this influence when he reached his eightieth birthday. This is indeed an important book in that it not only, in eight chapters, fully details and compares Jewish mysticism with Jung’s psychology, but in another long chapter, both originally and exhaustively covers the issue of Jung, anti-Semitism, and National Socialism in connection with this theme. As if that were not enough, the two remaining chapters take up Jung’s Kabbalistic visions and brilliantly discuss philosophical and theological issues arising from this work.

Drob’s argument, buttressed by many quotations, is that Jung used Kabbalistic ideas and themes throughout his life, partly unconsciously until his visions in 1944 (above) and then did so consciously but not fully integrated. He seemed to be only partly aware that many of the ideas from alchemy, beginning

with Maria Prophetissa, Khunrath, Dorn, and others, arose initially in Jewish mystical thought (e.g., *Zohar* in the 12th century) and continued to influence Christian Kabbalah via Isaac Luria in the 17th century and onwards in Chassidism. Many alchemists (as revealed in scholarship since Jung's time) were either Jewish or deeply influenced by Jewish themes.

Furthermore, there are many ideas in Kabbalah itself that bear remarkable likeness to some of Jung's ideas. For example, the Kabbalists understood the *Partzufim* to be aspects or partial personalities of the divine being, as follows: (1) *Antika Kaddisha* (Holy Ancient One) or *Arikh Anpin* (Long-Suffering One), (2) *Abba* (Father), (3) *Imma* (Mother), (4) *Zir Anpin* (Impatient One) or *Ben* (Son), (5) *Nukvah* (Female) or *Bot* (Daughter).

The above partial personalities can be compared to the Senex, the Father, the Mother, the Puer, and Puella or the Feminine as archetypal factors in Jung's psychology. These subparts undergo various relationships and unifications, with Mother and Father enjoying mutual friendship and support, with *Ben* and *Bot* unified as brother and sister in a passionate romance, bringing them together and apart. These last two *Partzufim* are "born" in the womb of the Mother. Also born in the womb of the Mother are the *Sefirot*, the ten aspects of the deity arranged as opposite and middle pillars on the Tree of Life.

According to Luria, the erotic relations of the *Partzufim* determine the fate of God, human, and world. It is the spiritual task of humankind to help raise the sparks of divine light that were entrapped in the evil husks of the "Other (dark) Side" when the divine vessels were shattered. This means that human beings must deal with the evil realm in order to realize the world's and humankind's redemption (*Tikkun ha-Olam*). As Drob quotes the *Zohar*:

*There is no true worship except it  
issue forth from darkness,  
And no true good except it proceed  
from evil.*

This means, according to Schneur Zalman, the first Lubavitcher *rebbe*, that it is for the lower worlds that creation was established and that the redemption of evil, including the evil impulse in the human being, comes about in the uniting of the fractured wholeness of the divine and mortal together. This is what the initial creation intended.

In addition to the above, Drob outlines, in comparative detail, how the archetypal perspective matches with the Tree of Life, the organization of the *Sefirot*, both in development and concept. He brilliantly elaborates this with a four-page table in a precise fashion.

In his introduction, Drob promises to spell out a number of the Kabbalistic symbols that were significant for Jung, including *Ein Sof* (Infinite God), *Tzimtzum* (Divine Contraction), *Adam Kad-*

*mon* (Primordial Man), the *Sefirot* (divine archetypes), *Shevirat ha-Kelim* (Breaking of the Vessels), *Kellipot* (Shells or Husks), the (separation–unification of the King and Queen), *Tikkun ha-Olam* (restoration or repair of the world), and, as noted above, the *Partzufim* (Divine “Faces” or “Visages”). This task Drob completes admirably, in full amplification.

Following this comparison, the author takes up the seemingly never-ending issue of Jung’s anti-Semitism. He shows clearly that the Jung of 1934 was indeed filled with such prejudice and, like the bulk of Europeans, did not even see it as such. It is safe to say, I think, that Jung was steeped in the “*volkisch*” myth of the German-speaking people and did not think that discussion of racial types and psychologies was at all out of line, despite this being the particular trend and misuse of Nazism. I am sure that he did not think of himself as anti-Semitic and could point to the evidence of all his Jewish followers. The Jung of the visions of 1944 was a different man, in consciousness; his vision (above) could surely not happen to an anti-Semitic person.

The final chapters provide an interesting *excursus* into philosophical issues. Dr. Drob is unusually well informed in psychological, philosophical, and religious areas.

This is such a good book that one is reluctant to present criti-

cisms, but I think it is necessary. Although the author rightly points out that Jung’s “apology” (his saying that he “slipped up”) was quite inadequate and he should have gone much further with a full confession of error, Drob goes too far in saying that Jung’s myth, as grounded in medieval Christianity and Greek philosophy, should also have been given up. True enough, his vision has him identifying with Simon ben Johai, but the other aspects of that vision, including the Christian marriage of the lamb, and the Greek *hieros gamos* of Zeus and Hera, were surely of great, if not equal, importance in Jung’s myth. Furthermore, there is no mention of Arabic contributions to alchemy, which have been of special interest to the von Franz center of Jungian studies.

Despite these lacks, Dr. Drob is to be congratulated for his excellent work, which indeed advances our knowledge—something not at all ordinary in our field.

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## FURTHER READING

Jung, C. G. (1965). *Memories dreams, reflections*. New York: Random House.

Jung, C. G. (1977). *C. G. Jung speaking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.