

**THE CABBALISTS  
AND OTHER ESSAYS**

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The cabbalists and other essays by S. A. Hirsch

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**S. A. HIRSCH**

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AND OTHER ESSAYS

by

S. A. HIRSCH, Ph.D.

AUTHOR OF "A BOOK OF ESSAYS," AND JOINT EDITOR  
OF "A GREEK GRAMMAR OF ROGER BACON AND A  
FRAGMENT OF HIS HEBREW GRAMMAR," ETC.



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LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY DEAR WIFE

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## PREFACE

THE essays in the present volume were composed at various times, mostly as lectures. It is difficult for me to say when they originated, as they are the results of life-long pondering on topics which obtruded themselves on my mind, in the same way as they have exercised the minds of many other reasoning men ; and I reproduce here the views to which an anxious and careful reflection has led me.

The first essay—on the Cabbalists—is the only one of the series that has seen the light before. It appeared, under the title of *Jewish Mystics—an Appreciation*, in 1907, in the October number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*.

The *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of the Jewish Religion* are not exhaustive even as prolegomena. Many more questions besides those propounded would require close treatment. For instance, the great subject of *Ethnical Psychology*, which has such a far-reaching bearing upon the philosophy of the Jewish Religion, is here no more than just hinted at.

That subject is, however, incidentally alluded to in the following essay on *A Universal Religion*. The views expressed there met with considerable dissension among some of my friends. They would have preferred their own particular persuasion to be the goal for universal adoption. I must, however, abide by the convictions which my own considerations have forced upon me.



Another friend, for whose reasoning powers I have the greatest respect, asked me, whether the universal acknowledgment of one only God, which I put as the possible maximum for general adoption, was not a *big assumption*? Of course it is, so is religion itself, so is universal religion, so are innumerable other conceptions which have obtained the nature of convictions. They are demanded by the *Categorical Imperative*; but some people of different mentality may perhaps reject them for all that. The same gentleman remarked that he found some parts of that essay very amusing. The passages he alluded to may amuse the reader, but I know the keen pain which they gave me when I penned them.

The incentive to write on the possibility of a Revelation, was a sentence of Mr. Claude Montefiore sufficiently indicated in the article itself.

The essays on *The Mishnah*, on *Rashi*, and on *Public Disputations in Spain*, explain themselves.

The last of the series, *Pfefferkorniana*, is complementary to essays on *Johann Reuchlin*, and on *Johann Pfefferkorn*, which are contained in my *Book of Essays*, which appeared in 1905.

I cannot conclude this preface without mentioning that the present volume might not have been issued at all but for the interest taken in its publication by my friend, Mr. Israel Zangwill. Mr. Zangwill took the matter in hand, and it is due to his energetic measures that I am enabled to offer it to the public. Needless to say that I am grateful to him, and I tender him herewith my sincere thanks.

S. A. H.

LONDON, 1922.

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