

Selected Article From The

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### From the PAUL CASE NOTEBOOK

#### THE SACRED TETRAGRAMMATON

The great name of the God of Israel occurs more than five thousand times in the Bible. Qabalists call it the Tetragrammaton, or quadri literal name. Other divine names, such as A D N I, Adonai, and A H I H, Eheyeh are written with four letters, but there is only one Tetragrammaton. It is spelt Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh, in English letters, I H V H. In Exodus 3:15 we read: "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. " Solomon's wisdom is said to have been based on his understanding of this name, Thus I Kings 10:1 says: "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions. " Solomon's temple was a house "built unto the name Jehovah" (IKings 5:5). We read also in Proverbs 18:10 "The name Jehovah is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Esoteric tradition ascribes peculiar power to this name and says that to pronounce it is to possess a key to all wisdom, and to exercise miraculous control over all the powers of nature. According to the Gospel of St. John, Jesus Himself shared the Hebrew belief in the great importance of the Tetragrammaton. In His prayer at the Last Supper, just before His crucifixion, His final words were: "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Long before the beginning of the Christian Era this name had assumed such sacredness in the minds of the Jews that they never pronounced it when they ( came upon it in the reading of the Scriptures. Instead they uttered the name v "Adonai," or else passed over the Tetragrammaton in silence. Once a year the high priest pronounced the Tetragrammaton in the Holy of Holies while the trumpets sounded loudly lest profane ears might hear. When the temple was destroyed and the sacrifice no longer made, the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton was lost. It is not known whether or not the traditional pronunciation was preserved in any inner circle of Judaism or Christianity. We do know that the English "Jehovah" is certainly not the correct pronunciation, but there is no indisputable evidence that either "Yahweh" or "Yahveh," the forms now favored by a great many Hebrew scholars, was the true pronunciation.

Strictly speaking, the Tetragrammaton is not a name at all. It is a form of the Hebrew verb meaning "to be," and its true significance is: "That which was, that which is, that which will be," The writer of the Apocalypse evidently understood this, for the eighth verse of the first chapter of that mysterious book says: "I am-Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. "Throughout the New Testament, wherever the Creek noun *kurios* refers to God, it is to be understood as meaning the Tetragrammaton, just as it does in the Greek version of the Old Testament where *kurios* is written in most places where the Hebrew text has I H V H.

We must not be confused by the fact that from the earliest times down to the present, the Hebrews supposed

the Tetragrammaton to be the personal name of God. Throughout the Bible there are many passages which make it evident that this popular opinion was an error. What it really designates is the Eternal Reality, without making any effort to define what it really designates. The immensity of that ONE defies all human endeavors to define it. No human intellect can comprehend it. No creed ever devised by human intellect can tell us what God is. Man can only come nearer to that Reality in feeling and in understanding. We feel that the affirmation "God is One," is nearer the truth than any form of poly-theism. We find a great number of notions about God in various parts of the Bible which contains a record of human endeavors to understand God, ranging all the way from the thoughts of savage nomads to the profound insight of St. Paul. Yet all conflicting notions rest upon the basis which is given us in the true meaning of the Tetragrammaton. Whatever man may think about the nature of the Supreme Being, God Himself, is "That which was, that which is, and that which will be."