

Philosophy and Kabala
In the Thought of Rabbi David Hachohen:

Studies on "Kol Hanevua" Book

by

Yehuda Bitty

under the supervision of **Prof. Ze'ev Gries**

Abstract

This extensive monograph on *Kol ha-Nevuah* by R. David Cohen (1887-1972) calls for a reexamination of the original thought of "*Ha-Nazir*" (the Nazirite), the outstanding pupil of R. Abraham Isaac ha-Cohen Kook. This thought combines philosophy and Kabala, reason and experience, knowledge and creativity. R. Cohen termed his work, that was written over the course of close to half a century, "the Hebrew auditory logic."

Very few studies have been written on the thought of *Ha-Nazir*, possibly because he formally left the academic world in the 1920s, even before he came to Eretz Israel, although he did not abandon the critical and scholarly tools that he had acquired during the course of his studies. In Israel, as well, he was active mainly in the "Central Universal Yeshiva" in Jerusalem (more commonly known as "Merkaz ha-Rav"), and published very few of his own writings, although he left a rich literary estate of manuscripts in different fields of Jewish studies. Dov Schwartz was one of the few scholars who examined R. Cohen's writings, and made a significant

contribution for those following him. A comprehensive discussion, however, of the entire book and its different sections has yet to be published. The current work seeks to rise to this challenge, even if only to lay the groundwork: Part One has a biographical focus, and presents the sources from which *Ha-Nazir* drew; Part Two, on *Kol ha-Nevuah* itself, examines its philosophical and Kabbalistic aspects. During the course of the research, I realized how the chapters of the book and the gradual stages of its composition are intimately bound up with R. Cohen's spiritual and personal development.

This study contributes to the discussion of R. David Cohen and his thought in two main areas:

1. Introducing the copious archival material in the personal diaries and the many drafts of R. Cohen's book provides a new understanding of what we know about the author and his book, and demonstrates how his public, and scholarly, image to now was very rudimentary.
2. Examining his teachings from a philosophical and Kabbalistic perspective makes them more understandable and coherent, and clarifies his argument concerning the nature of the Hebrew auditory logic.

This study adopted the methodology that advocates linking the personal and intellectual in R. David Cohen's life in order to understand his teachings. Obviously, the current work leaves the way open for the examination of additional aspects of *Ha-Nazir*'s thought and for the illumination of additional periods in his life.