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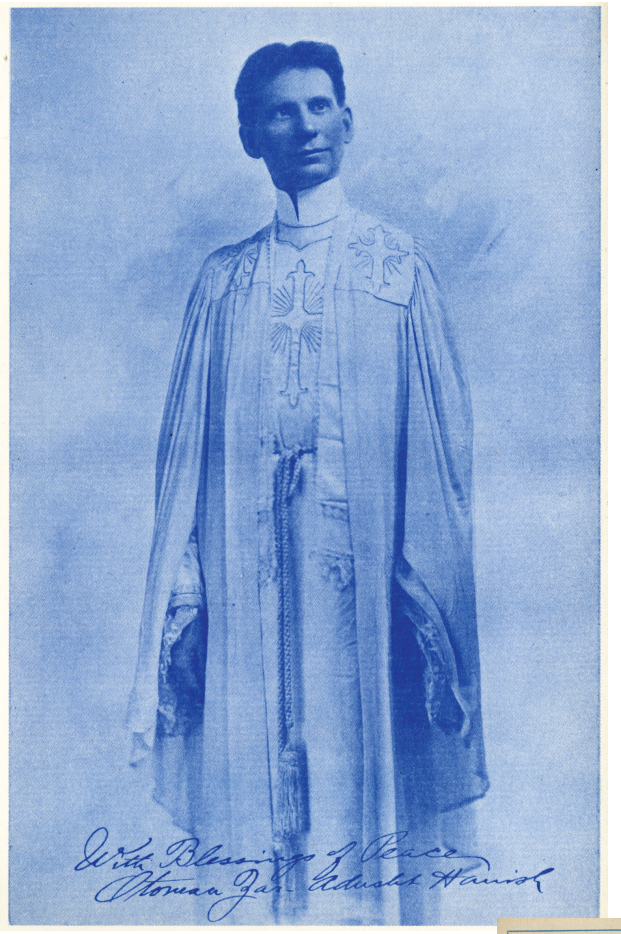
The Communal Societies Collection at Burke Library, Hamilton College, has recently acquired a large collection of materials from the Mazdaznan movement. This neo-Zoroastrian cult was founded by Otoman Zar-Adusht Ha'nish (born Otto Hanisch) at the end of the nineteenth century. Mazdaznan followers were vegetarian, worshipped the sun, practiced breathing and vowel-sound exercises, and attempted to preserve male sexual potency through *coitus reservatus*, employed as a part of tantric sex.

The movement was first centered in Chicago and New York, then in Los Angeles, where Ha'nish relocated in 1917. It became very popular in Germany, and also had followers in the United Kingdom.

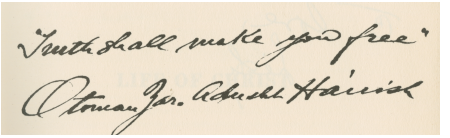
Ha'nish and his followers were involved in mutiple lawsuits that scandalized the movement from the 1910s through the 1940s. The Nazis banned the Mazdaznan movement in Germany, although it surged in popularity after World War II. Ha'nish died in 1936, but his movement lives on, and was recently revived by Canadian follower Peter deBoer.

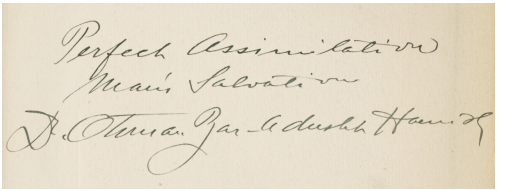
The Mazdaznan collection at Hamilton College comprises a substantial run of their serial *Mazdaznan*; many of the sect's publications, including cookbooks, health manuals, and devotional writings; and examples of photographic materials and ephemera.

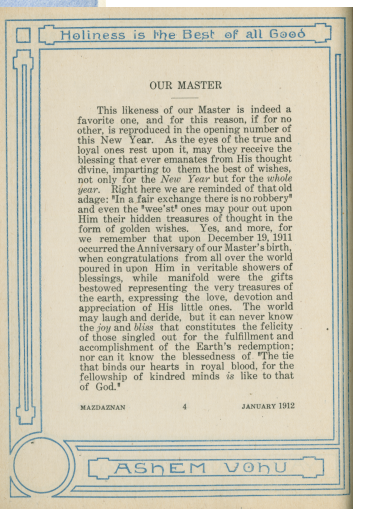




Otoman Zar-Adusht Ha'nish.






Holiness is the Best of all Goods

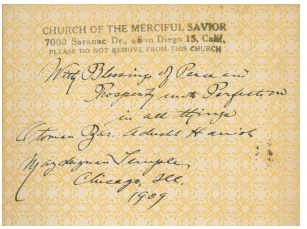
OUR MASTER

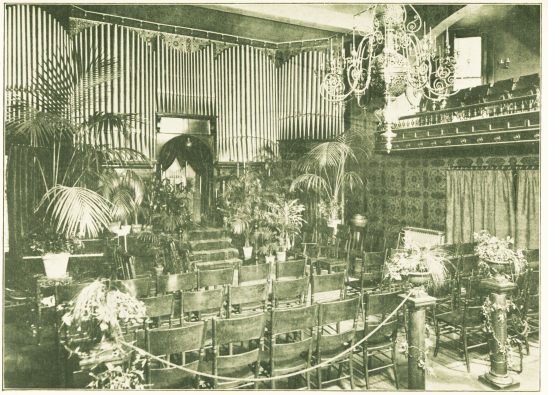
This likeness of our Master is indeed a favorite one, and for this reason, if for no other, is reproduced in the opening number of this New Year. As the eyes of the true and loyal ones rest upon it, may they receive the blessing that ever emanates from His thought divine, imparting to them the best of wishes, not only for the *New Year* but for the *whole year*. Right here we are reminded of that old adage: "In a fair exchange there is no robbery" and even the "wee'st" ones may pour out upon Him their hidden treasures of thought in the form of golden wishes. Yes, and more, for we remember that upon December 19, 1911 occurred the Anniversary of our Master's birth, when congratulations from all over the world poured in upon Him in veritable showers of blessings, while manifold were the gifts bestowed representing the very treasures of the earth, expressing the love, devotion and appreciation of His little ones. The world may laugh and deride, but it can never know the *joy* and *bliss* that constitutes the felicity of those singled out for the fulfillment and accomplishment of the Earth's redemption; nor can it know the blessedness of "The tie that binds our hearts in royal blood, for the fellowship of kindred minds *is* like to that of God."

MAZDAZNAN 4 JANUARY 1912

ASHEM VOHU







The Chicago Mazdaznan Temple, 3016 Lake Park Avenue, and the sanctuary there.

The flyleaf of Inner Studies, which taught tantric sex, inscribed by Mazdaznan founder Ha'nish in Chicago in 1909.



Press Photo
[text on reverse]
"Young Girl Sues Love Cult": Los Angeles, Calif. January 17, 1940.— Seduction of an 11 year old girl in weird rituals of a cult which preached that young girls of that age must be taught the "truths of womanhood" by young men of the cult, was charged today in a million dollar suit. The plaintiff, Irma Weber, now seventeen asserted that in 1934 she was "seduced, raped, and assaulted" by Henry Sorge, then 24, a member of the Mazdaznan Temple Association of Associates of God, all in accordance with the teachings of the cult. She names as defendants in the suit with Sorge officers of the cult and all of its 20,000 members. She was assaulted one night when she was told to come to the cult meeting for breathing exercises. Photo shows Mazdaznan Temple headquarters of the cult in Los Angeles.



Press Photo
[text on reverse]
"Girl Challenged in Million Dollar Suit": Los Angeles, Calif. July 22, 1941.—The reorganized Mazdaznan Temple Association of Associates of God, through the religious order's attorney, Louis Kleindienst, today challenged 17-year-old Irma Weber (left), former student of the cult, to prove that the cult teaches anything that the ordinary American does not teach in his home. The defy was thrown in an opening statement at the trial of Miss Weber's suit for $1,000,000 damages for an attack which she asserts took place during cult teachings when she was 11 years old. The girl's mother, Mrs. Ida Weber, is shown at the right at the trials' opening.

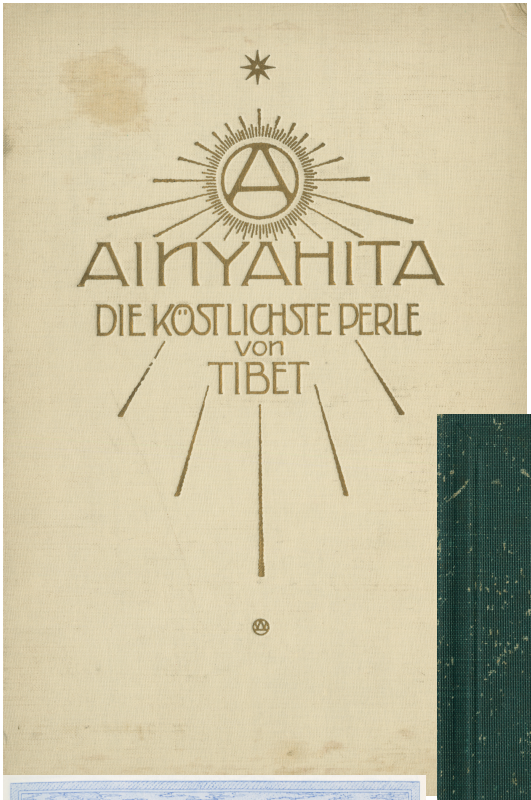


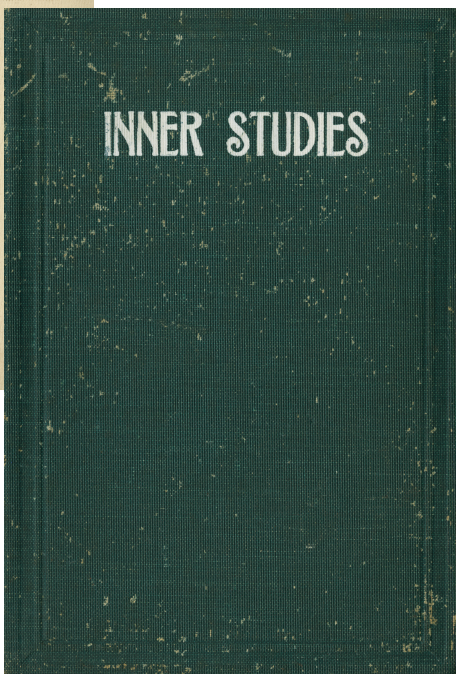


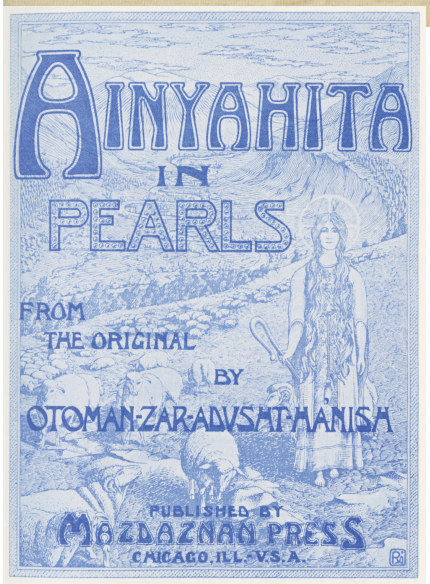
Mazdaznan followers

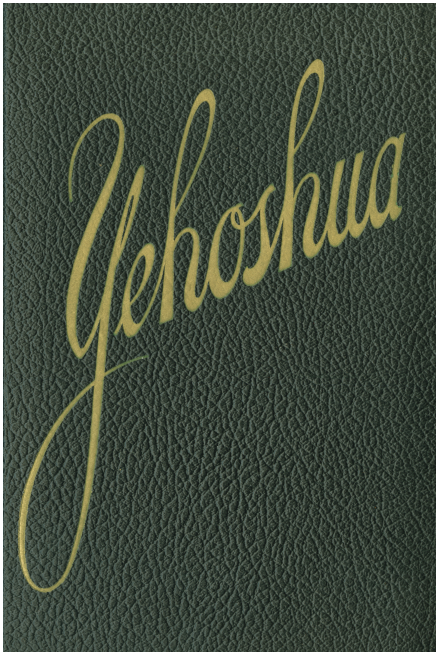


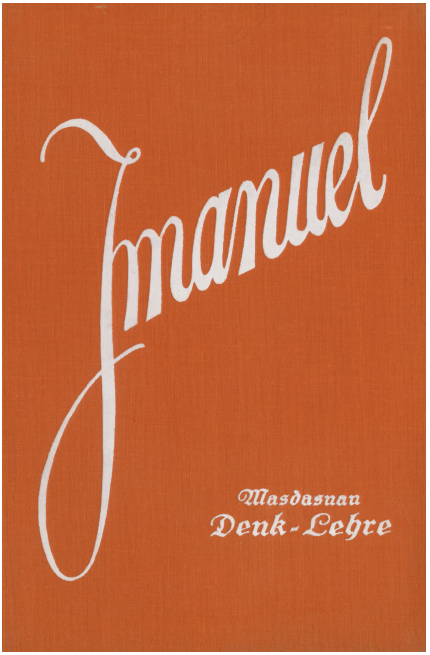
Mazdaznan publications

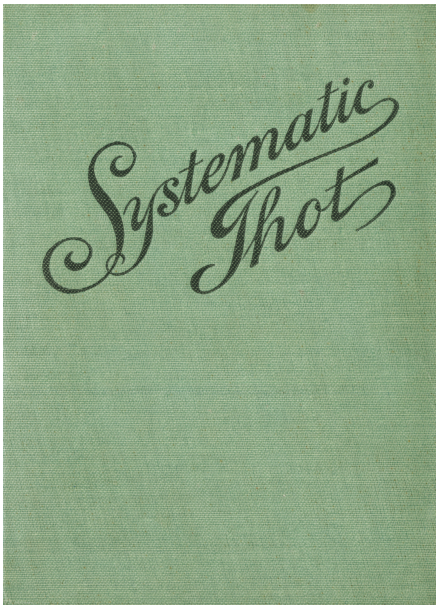


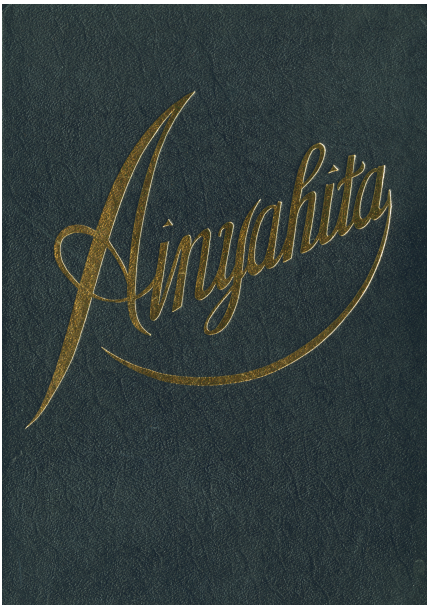


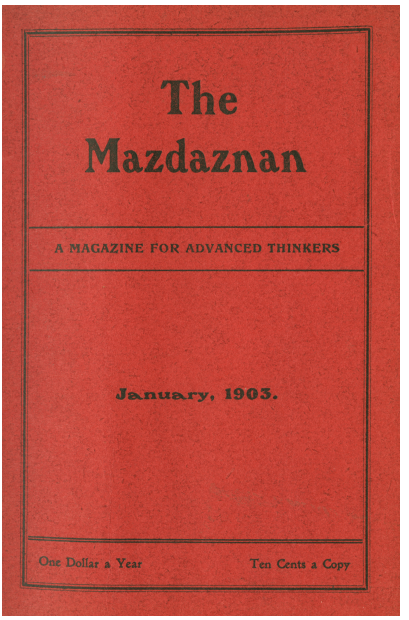


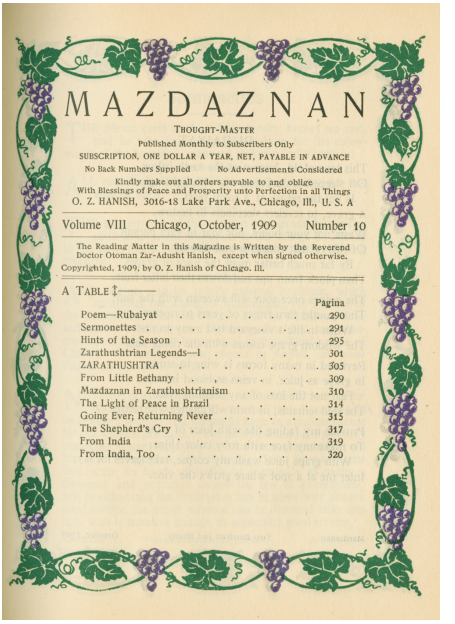

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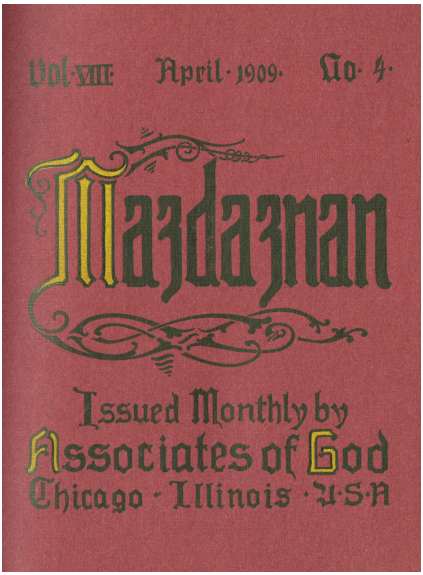

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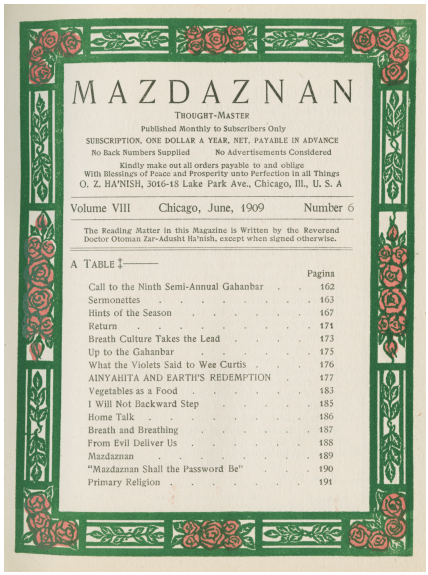

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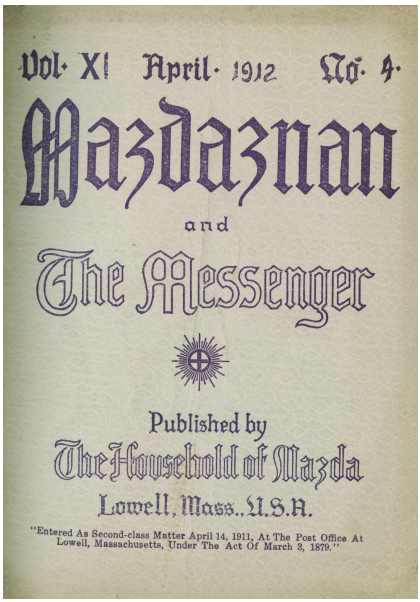

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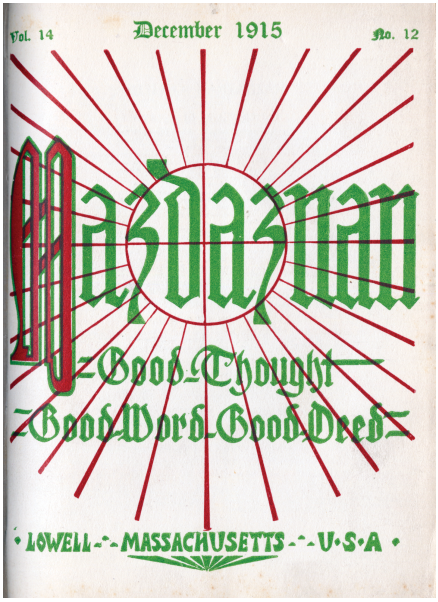

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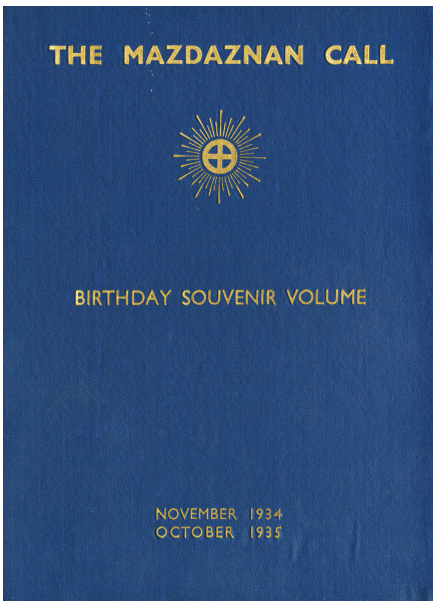

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Good Word Good Deed
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