

SEFER YETZIRAH 2.3



משנה ג': עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד חקקן בקול חצבן
ברוח קבען בפה בחמשה מקומות אחה"ע בגרון גיכ"ק בחיד
דטלנ"ת בלשון זסשר"ץ בשינים בומ"ף בשפתים:

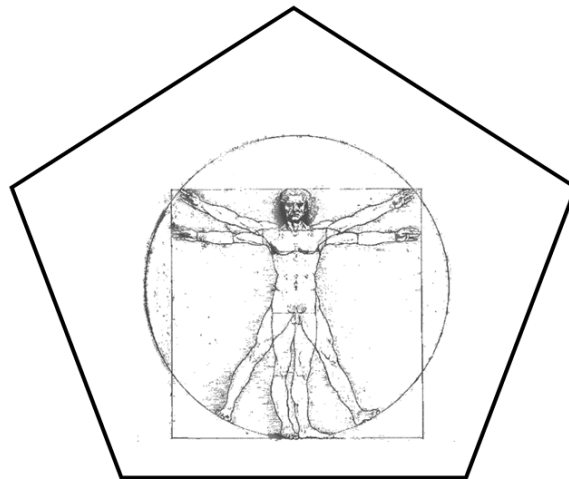
2.3: Twenty-two Foundation Letters: He engraved them with voice, He carved them with breath, He set them in the mouth in five places. Aleph, chet, heh, eyin in the throat; gimel, yud, kaf, kuf in the palate; dalet, tet, lamed, nun, tav in the tongue; zayin, samekh, shin, resh, tzadi in the teeth; bet, vav, mem, peh in the lips.
(*Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translation*)

2:3 Twenty-two letters of foundation. IT decreed them with voice, IT shaped them with spirit/breath, IT established them in the mouth in five places. Aleph-chet-hey-ayin in the throat, gimmel-yud-kaf-kuf in the palate, dalet-tet-lamed-nun-tav in the tongue, zayin-samech-shin-resch-tzaddi in the teeth, bet-vav-mem-peh in the lips.

(Doc Benton translation)

Once again the text reiterates both the power of *decreeing* and *shaping* and how the letters of the alphabet form the foundation for all we know. Furthermore, the text also makes frequent emphasis of the number five as a reminder of the five dimensions that were mentioned earlier. In this particular passage, five is highlighted as the number of places in the mouth through which distinct sounds are made.

Additionally, we should not fail to note that $2^5 = 32$, the number of paths mentioned in the very first passage of our text. To this we might also add that five is the number of man. The four limbs plus the head as a fifth delineate a pentagon as is suggested by Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*.



And finally, recall that the five dimensions are also described by polar opposites – beginning versus end, good versus evil, up versus down, east versus west, and north versus south. If we now choose one pole from each category, then mathematically speaking there are thirty-two possible choices overall that result from these five dimensions. For example, one such choice would be (beginning, good, up, west, south).