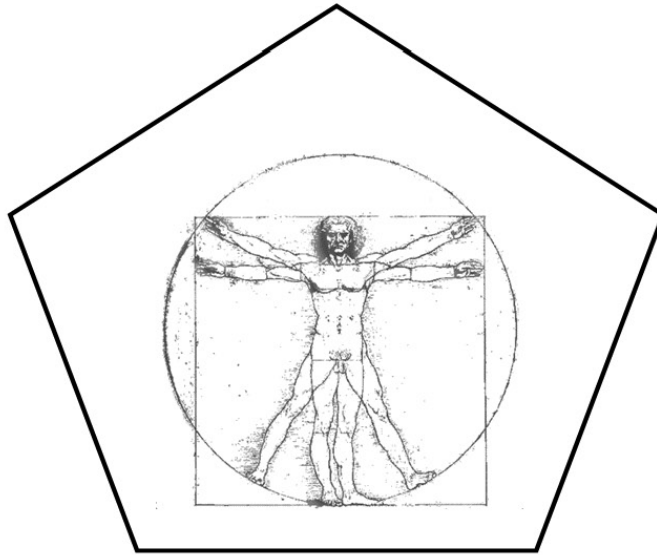


THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLER



A RETRANSLATION AND
REVISIONING OF THE *SEFER*
YETZIRAH, THE ANCIENT BOOK OF
FORMATION

BY

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**DEDICATED TO
MY BELOVED SUSAN**

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The Book of the Assembler

FIRST WORDS

The majority of what is contained in this book is a translation and commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the ancient *Book of Formation*, the earliest extant work of Jewish *Kabbalah*. However, as with many ancient texts, the original manuscript of the *Sefer Yetzirah* is no longer in existence. Instead, we have a variety of variant texts to work from. The four main versions are: (1) the *Saadia version* by Saadia Gaon that was published in 931 CE, (2) the *long version* that was published in 946 CE by Rabbi Shabbetai Donnolo, (3) the *short version* published circa 956 CE by Donash ibn Tamim, and (4) the redacted text known as the *GRA version* produced by Rabbi Eliahu, the Gaon of Vilna, in the 1700s. These four versions all agree with one another on the main points, but variations start to enter in as one progresses to the finer details. In many respects, however, the *GRA* version is the best version to work with because it was produced after the *Zohar* and the creation of the *Tree of Life* diagram, and, consequently, it tends to harmonize itself with these later *Kabbalistic* developments more so than the other versions do. Thus, ninety-five percent of what is presented here is a new translation of the *GRA* version. As for the remaining five percent, some of that represents passages from the other versions that I thought were better, but also contained within this percentage are a few places where I thought the text could be improved. Now both the historian and the true believer always focus on the past. The historian wants to preserve the integrity of the past for academic study, and the true believer reveres the past and considers it hallowed ground that should not be tampered with. My motives and point of view, however, are different. For me, the presence of the different versions of the *Sefer*

Yetzirah is a testament to the fact that it is still a work in progress. It is a fine document, but, nonetheless, it can still be improved. Consequently, there are one or two places where I have made what some will see as radical changes. Most notably, in the fifth section of the text, I replace the enumeration of body parts that one usually finds in the *Sefer Yetzirah* with a listing of the twelve acupuncture meridians. While this may seem like a huge departure from tradition, if you look at all the reasons I give in that section, then you will see that it isn't. The original texts list body parts that don't actually exist, and the overriding intent is to establish a connection between the twelve astrological constellations (space), the twelve months of the year (time), and twelve parts of the person. In this regard, the twelve acupuncture meridians fit the original intent of the text better than what has been passed down through the ages. Nonetheless, since I have departed slightly from the historical text, I have also departed from the name of the text in order to avoid confusion. Thus, instead of the *Sefer Yetzirah* or *Book of Creation* or *Book of Formation*, I call this work *The Book of the Assembler*. The title is drawn from the *Book of Ecclesiastes* where the name of the narrator, *Kohelet*, is derived from *hikahel*, the verb "to assemble." One way in which we can interpret this is that *Kohelet* assembled the teachings for the people and presented them in a way they could understand.

“And more so because Kohelet was wise, he also taught the people knowledge. Yea, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs (Ecclesiastes 9:12). He pondered the words of the Torah and investigated the meaning of the words of the Torah. He made handles to the Torah, making it easy for the people to grasp.”

(Song of Songs Rabbah I:8)

Additionally, in *Ecclesiastes* we find one verse in particular that is rather difficult to translate.

“He has also put an eternity/world/enigma into their minds so that man cannot comprehend what God has done from beginning to end.”

(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

All the difficulty in this verse is due to one word that we might translate as “world” or “eternity” or as some have, as “enigma.” The heart of the problem is the Hebrew phrase *ha-olam* which is normally translated as either “*the world*” or “*the eternity*.” However, to complicate matters this word is spelled unusually. It is missing a customary letter *vav*. Consequently, *ha-olam* could also be read as *heh-eh-lame* which means “*hidden*.” In other words, something hidden or an enigma in men’s hearts. However, in addition to these classical interpretations of the verse, one might also notice that if we replace each letter of the defectively spelled Hebrew word for “*world*” by its number equivalent, then *olam* (*ayin-lamed-mem*) has a numerical value of 140. This is the same as the numerical

value of *hikahel* (*hey-kuf-hey-lamed*), the verb “to assemble” from which the appellation *Kohelet* is derived. Thus, I like to think of this verse as saying that an “assembler” has been put in our hearts and minds that creates time and space for us. And this is exactly what the *Sefer Yetzirah* concerns itself with, and thus, I have decided to call this work *The Book of the Assembler*. I do recommend, however, looking at alternate translations and commentaries of the *Sefer Yetzirah* as well as the original Hebrew text in order to establish some comparison with the approach I’ve taken. In particular, the translation and commentary by the late Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan is excellent. Also, many translations of the various versions of the original text are readily available for free online. All it takes is a little searching. With that said, enjoy what I have done and be discriminating as you reach for your own conclusions.

THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLER

1:1 With thirty-two wondrous paths (netivot) of ITS own wisdom, IT, Yah, the Creator of Multiplicity, created ITS universe with three books (seferim), with story (sefer), with number (safar), and with communication (sippur).

This opening statement contains so very much! First, the thirty-two paths of wisdom are likely a reconciliation of the doctrine that *God* created the universe with the twenty-two letters of the alphabet with the doctrine that *God* created the universe with ten utterances.

“Rab Judah said in the name of Rav, ‘Bezalel knew how to combine the letters by which the heavens and earth were created.’”

(B. Berachot 55a)

“With ten utterances was the world created.”

(Pirkei Avot 5:1)

With regard to the former, the letters of an alphabet are to words just like prime numbers are to the rest of the counting numbers. In other words, you can construct every single word from letters. Also, don't overlook the extent to which our world is dependent upon language. At the very least, the way in which we view the world is shaped by language and our verbal beliefs, and some will, indeed, take a stronger position that there is nothing that is not created by words. This can be seen in the very structure of the Hebrew

language where the word *devar* means both “thing” and “word.” Words are things and things are words. We also see this doctrine appearing, too, in Christianity where at the beginning of the *Gospel of John* we read, “*In the beginning was the Word.*” Additionally, realize that in the Hebrew alphabet every letter is also a number. Thus, you could extend this to mean that the universe is created by mathematics. Interestingly, there are some physicists who have already come to this conclusion via the recognition that once physicists get beyond a certain point in their explorations, they no longer have any particles left to work with, only the math.

The ten utterances with which *God* created the world correspond to the number of times in *Genesis* that we read, “*And God said.*” However, at first there seems to be a problem because in the creation story we actually read this phrase only nine times. Nonetheless, *Psalms 33:6* explains that the opening words, “*In the beginning,*” are also a creative utterance, and this brings the total to ten, and since words are created from letters, you could also say that the statement that *God* created the world with ten utterances is just another way of looking at the doctrine that the world was created with the letters of the alphabet.

“Rabbi Johanan said, ‘The ten utterances with which the world was created. What are these? These are the expressions “And God said” in the first chapter of Genesis. But aren’t there only nine? The words “In the beginning” are also a creative utterance, since it is written, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth (Psalm 33:6).”’”

(B. Megilah 21b)

The word *netivot* that is used for “paths” in the passage above also requires some explanation. This word refers primarily to narrow paths that would be traversed by a single person as opposed to a broader, public path. The latter in Hebrew would usually be referenced by the word *derech*. Hence, there is a suggestion in this first passage that this work is not only about creation by *God*, but also creation by us on the individual level. And finally, *wisdom* is a reference to *Biblical* verses such as *Proverbs 24:3*, “*By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established.*”

Next in this passage is mention of *God (Yah)* as the *Creator of Multiplicity*. In several of the versions of *Sefer Yetzirah*, one finds at this point a list of various appellations for *God*. However, the appellations are not completely identical from one version to the next, and that suggests that they were added on later. Thus, I have decided to use a briefer description such as one finds in the short version of the *Sefer Yetzirah*. In that version we find *Yah*, the name for *God* used in *Isaiah*, as well as a phrase that is usually translated as *Lord of Hosts*. However, upon reflection one realizes that this translation is flawed. For instance, we say *Lord (adonai)* simply in place of the most sacred name for *God* that is

not pronounced and is written as *yud-hey-vav-hey*. A precise translation of *yud-hey-vav-hey* would be something like *the one who causes being*, or more simply, *the Creator*. Additionally, the word that is translated as *hosts* has the plain meaning of an *army* or a *host of soldiers*. However, the root meaning of the word *tzavah* is *a mass of things*. Thus, in the context of this mystical text, I believe the translation *Creator of Multiplicity* to be closer to the intent of the author. Furthermore, the name *Yah* (*yud-hey*) can be seen as suggesting this interpretation. The letter *yud* stands for *y'chidah*, unity, and the letter *hey* is also, in Hebrew, the number five, thus, suggesting the expansion of unity into a five dimensional universe as will be described later on in this text. Below, for comparison, are the appellations that you find in the traditional versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* along with my choice.

APPELLATIONS 1:1				
<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Yah	Yah	Yah	Yah	Yah
Creator of Multiplicity	Lord of Hosts	Lord of Hosts	Yaweh Lord of Hosts	Yaweh Lord of Hosts
	God of Israel		God of Israel	God of Israel
	The Living God		The Living God	The Living God
	King of the Universe		God Almighty	God Almighty
	God Almighty		High and Exalted	High and Exalted
	Merciful and Gracious		Dwelling in Eternity on High	Dwelling in Eternity
	High and Exalted		His Name is Holy	His Name is Holy
	Dwelling in Eternity			
	Whose Name is Holy			
	Lofty and Holy			

Additionally, in my translation, I generally refer to *God* as *IT*. This is to highlight the ultimate ineffableness of *God*, and by doing this, I am also following a precedent found in the *Zohar* where, noticing that the very first verse of *Genesis* has a singular verb (*bara*) followed by a plural noun (*Elohim*), it retranslates this verse so that the plural *Elohim* becomes the direct object instead of the subject. Thus, the *Zohar* changes the phrase “*In*

the beginning, God created,” to “In the beginning, IT created God.” And by doing this, it makes a distinction between the God we cannot know and the God that we describe with human attributes.

“It is written: And the intelligent shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:3). There was indeed a ‘brightness’ (Zohar). The Most Mysterious struck its void, and caused this point to shine. This ‘beginning’ then extended, and made for itself a palace for its honor and glory. There it sowed a sacred seed which was to generate for the benefit of the universe, and to which may be applied the Scriptural words ‘the holy seed is the stock thereof’ (Isaiah 6:13). Again there was Zohar, in that it sowed a seed for its glory, just as the silkworm encloses itself, as it were, in a palace of its own production which is both useful and beautiful. Thus by means of this ‘beginning’ the Mysterious Unknown made this palace. This palace is called Elohim, and this doctrine is contained in the words, ‘By means of a beginning IT created Elohim.’”

(Zohar 1:15a)

The last part of our passage says that *God* created the universe with three books (*seferim*) – story (*sefer*), number (*safar*), and communication (*sippur*). The most interesting thing about this is that all of these words have the same three letter Hebrew root, namely, *samach-peh-resh*. Consequently, this shows that while the basic pattern for creation is two opposing parts (story and number) with interaction between them, it is all

still really just one undifferentiated unity. This is also suggested by the following verse from the *Zohar* that states that if it weren't for our minds making distinctions between things, we would still perceive the ever present Oneness.

"We have been taught that all this differentiation of the Divine Personality is from our side and relative to our knowledge, and that, above, all is one, all is set in one balance, unvarying and eternal, as it is written: "I the Lord do not change." (Malachi 3:6)."

(Zohar III:176a)

Also in our passage, we may interpret the words "story" and "number" as referring to what we would understand today as the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Thus, we have the implication that it is consciousness that creates our world through manipulation of the brain. You might at this point say, "Yes, but the brain is a part of the world that it is supposed to create," and my reply would be, "Or is it?" There are some rather mainstream theories in physics today, in particular the *holographic principle*, that say that our 3-dimensional universe is just a projection of information encoded on some 2-dimensional surface. That being the case, then even our physical brain could be a projection of processes in some other reality. Furthermore, the *gematria* or numerical value of the root *samach-peh-resh* is 340, the same as *shin-mem* which in Hebrew spells "name" and is often used as a synonym for *God*. Thus, we arrive at the conclusion that the creation is nothing but the *name of God*. More specifically, it is the *God name* of *Elohim* that is most closely associated with the created universe. For

example, the *gematria* of *Elohim* is 86 which is the same as that of *hatevah*, a word for “nature.” And the icing on the cake is the passage quoted from the *Zohar* up above that gives a very eloquent description of the creation of the universe that is in harmony with the Big Bang and that refers to the universe as a “*palace (that) is called Elohim.*” And then, of course, it closes with the words, “*By means of a beginning IT created Elohim.*”¹

The bottom line of this first passage is that in order to create a universe such as the one we know, unity has to be broken up into three component parts – one part opposite another, and a third part that provides for interaction between the two. And as the text will note later on, this mirrors a statement found in *Ecclesiastes 7:14* that *God* has made one thing opposite another. However, since the Hebrew root is the same for each of the component parts mentioned above, this shows the illusory nature of this division. It is like taking a glass of water and trying to separate it into the above water, the below water, and the in between water. In the end, it’s all just water!

¹ We think of *Elohim* as representing the *God* of attributes and structure that can be known and that stands in contradistinction to that ineffable *God* of the mystics that is completely unknowable. However, a lesson we learn from modern mathematics is that the totality of all things (i.e. the set of all sets) is essentially unknowable. In other words, it is something that we think we can confine with structure, but we can’t. Likewise, even the *God* that appears to be knowable and that is referred to by names such as *Father* and *King* is still no different from the *God* that is completely beyond all perception and whose thoughts we cannot conceive.

1:2 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint (belimah) and twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers and seven doubles and twelve plain.

In this passage, we encounter for the first time a strange, new word, *sefirot*. Also, the fact that this is a manufactured word suggests that at times in reading this text, we should consider its words as coded and, thus, search for similar words with the same root in order to unlock the true connotation. In this case, the three letter Hebrew root of *sefirot* is *samach-peh-resh*, and several explanations have been given as to its meaning. On the one hand, it seems to definitely be related to *safar*, the word for “number,” and this makes sense because the number of *sefirot* is ten and they are supposed to mirror or be the ten creative utterances of *God*. Similarly, the term *sefirot* could simultaneously be linked to the three Hebrew words for story, number, and communication that are given in the first passage of this text. In this way, *sefirot* could represent the essential creative process. Others, however, also see a link between the word *sefirot* and the word *sapir* which means “sapphire,” specifically the sapphire of *God’s throne* in the vision of *Ezekiel*.

“Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim appeared over them something like a sapphire stone, in appearance like the shape of a throne.”

(Ezekiel 10:1)

However, I also think there is an important link between the words *sefirot* and *saprim* (declare). This makes good sense because the ten creative utterances by which *God* created the universe can also be thought of as declarations, and this is the point of view that is found in the *Bahir*.

“Why are they called Sefirot? Because it is written (Psalm 19:2), ‘The heavens declare (me-Saprim) the glory of God.’”

(Bahir 125)

The word *belimah* that I have translated in this passage as “constraint” is frequently translated as *nothingness*, literally *beli-mah* (without what). Nonetheless, *belimah* appears to also be related to the verb *balam*, to restrain. In the *Bible*, this word appears only once in *Job 26:7* where we usually read, in translation, that *God* “hangs the earth upon nothing.” However, this verse could also be translated as *God* “hangs the world upon restraint.” This interpretation is supported by the verses that follow that explicitly discuss the boundaries that *God* places upon creation. The bottom line is that in order for a finite world to exist, every component must be finite. This interpretation of *belimah* as meaning restraint is also suggested by the *Talmud*, and in context it is more than likely that the *sefirot* are meant to be restrictions upon the infinity of *God* so that a finite world can exist.

“He stretches out the north over the void, and hangs the earth upon nothing/restraint. He binds up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not

torn under them. He closes in the face of his throne, and spreads his cloud upon it. He has surrounded the waters with bounds, at the boundary between light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. He stirs up the sea with his power, and by his understanding he struck Rahab. By his wind he has made the heavens fair; his hand slew the fleeing serpent. Behold, these are but parts of his ways; but how terrifying is the thing that is heard of him! And who can understand the thunder of his power?"

(Job 26:7-14)

"R. Ila'a said, 'The world exists only on account of the merit of him who restrains himself in strife, for it is written, "He hangs the earth upon belimah (restraint)."'"

(B. Chullin 89a)

And finally in this passage, we get a preview of how later on in the text the Hebrew alphabet, as an agent of creation, is going to be decomposed into three primary mother letters, seven double letters, and twelve plain letters. These themes will be greatly expanded upon in the passages to come!

1:3 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint in number. Ten fingers, five against five, and a unifying alliance oriented in the middle in the cut of the tongue and in the cut of the flesh.

The fundamental pattern in the created universe is always that of two opposites connected by an intermediary that allows dynamic communication and interchange to occur. In the human body, a natural anatomical division is five fingers opposite five on the hands. As for the tongue, it can be thought of as either the intermediary between the left and right hemispheres of the brain (it expresses the result of the coordination of the two), or as the intermediary between the brain and the outside world. In the *Talmud* we read about the difficulties involved in controlling the tongue.

“Rabbi Johanan said in the name of Rabbi Joseph ben Zimra, ‘What is the meaning of, “What shall be given to you, and what shall be done more to you, you deceitful tongue (Psalm 120:3)!” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the tongue, “All members of the human body are standing, you are lying. All members of the human body are outside, you are guarded inside. Not only that, but I surrounded you with two walls, one of bone and one of flesh. What shall be given to you, what shall be done more to you, you deceitful tongue!”’”

(B. Arachin 15b)

Hence, circumcision of the tongue refers to the need for control and restraint in one’s speech. Similarly, one could think of the male sexual organ as physically being another “tongue,” and it serves as the intermediary between the opposites of male and female

during sexual union. Furthermore, the text suggests that the male organ also needs to be constrained and controlled. And what do we gain by such control? Freedom! Through regulation of our thoughts and desires, we gain the power to make our own decisions rather than becoming a slave to our immediate whims. Furthermore, the text suggests at this point that the intermediary between the two opposites is always to serve as a control or regulatory mechanism between the energies of the two poles.

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”

(Proverbs 16:32)

“Ben Zoma said, ‘Who is wise? He that learns from every man. ... Who is mighty? He who subdues his evil inclination. ... Who is rich? He that rejoices in his lot. ... Who is honored? He that honors every one of his fellows.’”

(Pirkei Avot 4:1)

1:4 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand with wisdom, and be wise with understanding. Examine with them and explore with them, and stand each word and thing on its wellspring, and return the Assembler to its base.

A few things are going on in this passage. First, we are reminded that the number of *sefirot* is ten and not nine or eleven. Just ten, and that's important because if there are only ten *sefirot* or utterances, then that corresponds to ten commandments, ten generations from *Adam* to *Noah*, ten generations from *Noah* to *Abraham*, ten fingers, and various other things that come in "ten" that are meaningful to us, and remember that at the beginning of *Torah*, *God* creates the world with ten utterances and not nine. Furthermore, if *God* made an additional eleventh utterance somewhere, then that would suggest that the *Torah* is incomplete, and that is a conclusion that we are not going to accept. Next, we read in the text that we need to understand with wisdom and be wise with understanding. As *Kabbalah* evolved, these words, *wisdom* and *understanding*, became synonymous, respectively, with the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain, and the result in *Kabbalah* of the coordination of these two brain functions is *knowledge*. Thus, use all the parts of your brain to explore and examine every facet of this reality.

In the *Bible*, we often encounter the image of *God* riding on a cloud or being carried by cherubs, but in many of these images it also becomes clear that *God* is not really moving. Instead, he is being carried around or is seated on a throne that is carried around.

Consequently, *God* can in this way present an image of activity while at the same also conforming to the dictum found in *Malachi 3:6* that *God* is always unchanging. In a similar manner, our consciousness appears to dart back and forth from one thing to another, but the text suggests that this movement of our consciousness is likewise illusory. Our awareness, instead of moving around, is always fixed and stationary, and in reality every perception points us back towards this silent observer. What this passage wants us to do is to become aware of that observer and make that the center of our universe. When we learn how to let every perception lead us back to this center, then we will understand what is meant by the phrase “*stand each word and thing on its wellspring.*” It is very important that as early as this fourth verse, the text essentially gives us a meditation technique. This suggests that this is a skill that must be mastered before any of the other techniques mentioned in this work can be successfully implemented. Further instructions on meditation are given in verse 1.8. Additionally, the word that I have rendered as *Assembler* is more commonly translated as *Creator*. However, the Hebrew word used in this context is based upon the verb *yatzar*, to form, and this refers generally to *something from something creation*. Consequently, I find it more accurate to refer to this as the *Assembler* within us that constructs the reality that we view. And when we establish this observer, this *Assembler*, in its proper place at the center of our awareness, then we will no longer be so caught up in the pursuit of things that lack real substance, and we will have successfully returned *the Assembler to its base*.

1:5 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Their measure is ten, and to them there is no end. A profound depth of beginning and a profound depth of end. A profound depth of good and a profound depth of evil. A profound depth of height and a profound depth of below. A profound depth of east and a profound depth of west. A profound depth of north and a profound depth of south. And a unifying Master, God King of Faith, ruler of them all, from a holy dwelling, until forever of forever.

In this passage we are presented with a vision of a 5-dimensional universe that incorporates three spatial dimensions, one temporal dimension, and one moral dimension. The number five is important in *Kabbalistic* theory in that we have five souls, five worlds, and in this passage, five dimensions. Each dimension, in turn, is characterized by two polar opposites, thus resulting in ten principles, and there is no end to the depths that may be explored along each of the five axes. The unifying principle that holds the dimensions together is *God*. Furthermore, the poles of the five axes define thirty-two specific points of 5-dimensional space. Each point could be represented by five coordinates where for each coordinate position you have two choices, thus yielding $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$ choices in all, the same as the number of paths mentioned at the beginning of this work. To give an example, one point could be designated by the coordinates (*beginning,good,height,east,north*) and a second point could have the coordinates (*end,good,height,east,north*). In all, thirty-two such coordinates can be defined. And finally, notice, too, that the traditional closing for a blessing, *amen*, is in Hebrew an acronym for *Adonai melech neheman, God King of Faith*. In a similar manner, our

consciousness, that part within us that is like *God*, is the king of the center that holds our universe of perception together.

1:6 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Observed like a flash in a mirror, their purpose has no end. And the words and things of IT are in them, running and returning, and to ITS utterances they rush like a whirlwind, and before ITS throne they bow. And behold, “Whatever you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One (Genesis Rabbah XII:1 & Job 26:14).”

Our world is in many respects a reflection of what arises in consciousness. If we are angry, we see anger in the world, and if we are happy, then we see happiness in the world. The world is a mirror for our thoughts and feelings. A few of us may be lucky enough to attain a high state of consciousness in which no thoughts at all are present and even the subject/object dichotomy has been transcended. This state of consciousness-without-an-object is absolute and cannot be transcended because there is nothing left to transcend. However, when one returns from one's meditation to more familiar states of consciousness, the first thing to reappear is the separation of oneness into an observer and an observed, and that ripples across one's vision like a bolt of lightning. Then thoughts pick up, and we engage once again in that game of thought that leads us away from the center and then back to it again as our thoughts vanish once more into the observer. Furthermore, whatever we turn our attention to, there our thoughts will run only to bow once again to the throne of awareness as they are observed. Over time one may even realize that there is no real “running and returning” since every observation is always inescapably bound with the observer. We may also realize that once we separate the universe into parts, we cannot perceive the whole, at least in the usual way of perception. As long as our minds insist upon separating the observed from the observer, there will

always be something of the whole left out of each perception. Of course, the bottom line is that all of this separation is really just an illusion.

Below is the verse from *Ezekiel* that is the inspiration for this particular passage.

“And the living creatures ran and returned like the appearance of a flash of lightning.”

(Ezekiel 1:14)

1:7 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Their end is contained in their beginning, and their beginning in their end. As a flame connected with a burning coal, the Master is unified, and there is not a second. And before the One, what is there to count?

The statement that the end is contained in the beginning and the beginning in the end says something about the simultaneity and, perhaps, the unreality of time. Not only do all things exist at once, but the beginning is the end and the end is the beginning. We just separate it out in our minds. An image is also given in this passage of a flame connected to a burning coal, and this is a very instructive image. The flame and the coal appear to be separate parts or components, but could the flame exist without the coal? And could the coal burn without fire? They appear as two, and yet like the Sun and its solar fire, they are inseparably one. You cannot have one without the other. Furthermore, the text goes on to inform us that there is really nothing but this one. There is nothing to count before this One, and there is nothing after the One. When you are in front of the One, there is neither you nor not you nor any other thing. All has merged into the One.

1:8 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Restrain your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking, and if your mouth runs to words or your heart to reflections, return them to their place. Thus, it is said, “And the living beings (chayot) ran and returned (Ezekiel 1:14),” and upon this word a covenant was cut.

This passage gives ancient instructions on meditation. Furthermore, it is interesting that the author begins his work with such a topic. The message appears to be that in order to exert some control over your life and the circumstances that surround you, you must first be able to control your mind. Controlling the self is a prerequisite for engaging in the work of creation. Thus, enter into silence, and restrain your mind from thinking. In *Biblical Hebrew*, by the way, the words for *mind* and *heart* are the same. Furthermore, as your thoughts begin to pick up and stray, simply return them to their place. That is, return to that silent place within you where all things are observed and understood. Additionally, note that a *covenant* is an agreement or contract between two parties, and in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the basic pattern of creation is always the presence of two opposites coupled with a mechanism for communication between them. This communication is the *covenant* between the two opposites, and the *covenant* is also a regulatory mechanism that binds each side to certain agreements. Furthermore, in the passage above, the *covenant* is that which joins thoughts and perceptions, the perceived world, to consciousness, the unperceived world. Of course, the ultimate enlightenment is to understand that there is no difference between the two worlds. The seen world and the unseen world are never ever separated from one another. When you can experience this,

then all will be joined in unity. Until then, however, this statement will remain a meaningless mystery.

1:9 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. One: Spirit/breath of the Living Elohim (God). Praised and blessed is ITS name, containing the Life of the Worlds, voice and breath and words, and the spirit of the holy.

In Hebrew, the word for *spirit* is the same as the word for *breath*, and in this passage we read that it all begins not with matter, but with spirit. Furthermore, this spirit is the life behind all that is created, and with voice and words the universe, the *name of God* (*Elohim*), is created. And additionally, this passage also starts an enumeration and identification of the ten *sefirot* that is ultimately quite different from what one finds in later *Kabbalah*.

1:10 Two: Spirit/breath from spirit/breath. With it, IT decreed and shaped twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers, and seven doubles, and twelve plain, and one spirit/breath within them

When we read *breath from breath*, we are being told two things. First, we are seeing the first pair of opposites come into being, and second, the separation is entirely fictitious, a mental creation, if you will. It is like one of us looking at a glass of water and saying that we separate the upper water from the lower water. There is no separation in reality. Furthermore, because it says *breath from breath*, this lets us know that the observed world is no different from the observer. In our minds we try to make the distinction between physical and spiritual, but ultimately there is only spirit. Thus, the first *breath* is that which creates, and the second *breath* (which really is no different from the first) is the so-called physical world that is created.

The word *decree* refers to *something from nothing creation*. It is an act of will such as when we will ourselves to solve a problem or compose a song on a particular day. On the other hand, *shape* refers to *something from something creation*. Shaping involves taking something that is already there and working it over and over again until it feels just right. In other versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Hebrew words that I've translated as *decreed* and *shaped* are often rendered instead as *engraved* and *carved*, but I feel that my translation more accurately captures the intent of the text. Furthermore, in ancient times the decree of the king was literally engraved in stone, so it is no surprise that a single Hebrew word can carry both meanings. However, even though I prefer the translation of

decreed to *engraved*, this latter translation does find meaning in later *Kabbalah* in the concept of *tzimtzum*, the notion that *God* had to contract his essence in order to create a space in which the world could exist. Similarly in *engraving* it is the space that is created that defines the letter. And finally, in the passage above, *decreeing* and *shaping* result in the twenty-two letters of the alphabet from which all else will be created. However, within everything there is still only the original *spirit*. All our separation into multiplicity is only an illusion.

1:11 Three: Water from spirit/breath. IT decreed and shaped with it twenty-two letters, from inconceivable chaos to conceivable disorder, formless mud and formed soil. Decreed and engraved as like a furrow, shaped as like a wall, covered as like a fortress. And snow is poured upon them and it becomes dust since it is said, “‘To snow,’ IT exclaims, ‘Be earth (Job 37:6).’”

As spirit begins to create, we first move from nothingness and no-perception to a state of perceived chaos which will in turn be superseded by more organized states of consciousness. Phrases such as *formless mud* refer to a disordered state without structure that is perceived first, while *formed soil* refers to the emergence of structure and order. Next, we see a brief outline of the steps involved in creation. It all begins with a *decree* which is equated to *engraving* and creating a space for something new. Following this we have *shaping* where we mold and refine our creation. And lastly, *covering like a fortress* symbolizes the establishment of those boundaries that are necessary for solidifying the objects physical existence, and a covering also creates an inside and an outside with respect to the object. And at the very end of this passage, we see *snow to earth* being used as a metaphor for this creation process. At the initial stage of creation our inspiration is like formless water. However, over time it acquires a more solid structure just as ice and snow can represent water that has been given form. And in the final stage we have an honest-to-goodness real world, physical object as symbolized by the words *dust* and *earth*.

An additional insight into this *snow* to *earth* transition comes from *Rav Huna* in *Genesis Rabbah*, the great rabbinical commentary on *Genesis*. *Rav Huna* makes the point that all creation originates on earth.

“Rav Huna said in Rabbi Joseph's name, “Whatever is in heaven and on earth was created from the earth alone, as it is written, “For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven (Isaiah 55:10).” Just as the rain's creation is from the earth, though it falls from heaven, so all that is in heaven and on earth was created from the earth alone.”

(Genesis Rabbah XII:11)

In *Genesis Rabbah*, *Rabbi Judan* goes on to say that the proof of this passage is found in *Ecclesiastes 3:20*, *“All are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.”* Furthermore, the intent here seems to be that it is intent, namely our intent here on Earth, that is the real beginning of the creative process. This view is supported by the following passage from the *Zohar* that says that just as it is the mist that rises from the ground that turns into rain, so does it take our intent from below to get the ball rolling in the heavenly realms.

“A MIST WENT UP FROM THE GROUND (Genesis 2:6), to repair the deficiency below, by “watering the whole face of the ground”. The rising of the mist signifies the yearning of the female for the male. According to another explanation, we supply the word “not” from the previous clause after “mist”, the

meaning being that God did not send rain because a mist had not gone up, it being necessary for the impulse from below to set in motion the power above.

(Zohar I:35a)

We can gain further insight into the connection between earth and creation by considering aspects of the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* (see Appendix II). The spheres on this tree are related to the letters of the most holy name of *God*, *yud-hey-vav-hey*, and, in particular, the *sefirot* of *Binah* and *Malchut* are both represented by the letter *hey*. Thus, these two *sefirot* are seen as intimately connected. Additionally, *Binah* represents the highest level of the rational, left hemisphere of the brain where all the structure we impose upon our world is created while *Malchut* is identified with the earth, and in modern *Kabbalah* it is seen as entirely receptive. That is, it receives the influences of all the other *sefirot*. However, once we understand the equivalence between *Binah* and *Malchut*, we can begin to understand that what is really being described here is a cycle of alternation between both creation and reception. In other words, think of *Binah/Malchut* as representing the conscious mind. Our conscious mind both creates our structured world and perceives our structured world, and in that way it engages in a continuous cycle of *running and returning*. Thus, all creation comes from the earth, and all creation returns to the earth.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and

the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

(Isaiah 55:8-11)

“All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; to the place from where the rivers come, there they return again.”

(Ecclesiastes 1:7)

1:12 Four: Fire from water. IT decreed and shaped with it the Throne of Glory, Seraphim, Ophanim, and the holy living creatures (Chayot), and the messenger/angels that serve, and from these three (air, water, and fire), IT established a dwelling since it is said, "IT makes his messenger/angles of spirit/breath, his servants of flaming fire (Psalm 104:4)."

Before creation there is only that which is unknowable and inconceivable. This is the level that is referred to as *spirit*. At the next stage of creation, perception comes into existence, but what is perceived is unordered and chaotic. It lacks form and structure. This level is called *water*. But finally, we succeed in imposing order on the unordered and structure upon chaos, and we call this level *fire*. Just as disorder is transformed into order, so does *fire* transform the elements. And this is what we see going on in this passage. Instead of disorder and *formless mud*, we see specific structures mentioned. In particular, the *Throne of Glory*, *Seraphim* (fiery angels), *Ophanim* (wheel angels that carry the *Throne of Glory*), and *Chayot* (the holy living creatures of *Ezekiel's* vision). We also have a reference from *Psalm 104:4* to messenger angels and servant angels, and this implies that a dwelling place for *God* has been created, a dwelling called the universe, and within the context of this dwelling we now have a *God* that has been objectified and that seems more conceivable². A world of finite objects has come into existence.

² The name *Elohim* refers to both the universe and to the *God* that has been objectified and given structure and attributes by our mind (see *Zohar 1:15a* in the commentary on *1:1*). It is identified with *Binah* on the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*, and it is the *God* that we see as separate from us and judging us. But beyond the objectified *God*, there are higher perceptions of divinity that are found on those paths that lead us first to love and then to oneness.

1:13 IT selected three letters from the plain ones, in mysterious counsel with the three mothers aleph-mem-shin, and IT placed them in ITS Great Name, and sealed/completed with them six extremes. Five: IT sealed/completed height and turned ITS attention to ascent and sealed/completed it with yud-hey-vav. Six: IT sealed/completed below and turned ITS attention to beneath and sealed/completed it with yud-vav-hey. Seven: IT sealed/completed east and turned ITS attention to front and sealed/completed it with hey-yud-vav. Eight: IT sealed/completed west and turned ITS attention to behind and sealed/completed it with hey-vav-yud. Nine: IT sealed/completed south and turned ITS attention to the right side and sealed/completed it with vav-yud-hey. Ten: IT sealed/completed north and turned ITS attention to the left side and sealed/completed it with vav-hey-yud.

As we will soon see, the letters *aleph*, *mem*, and *shin* are known as the three mother letters, and they correspond to air, water, and fire. This is because the Hebrew word for air is *avir* (*aleph-vav-yud-resh*), the Hebrew word for water is *myeem* (*mem-yud-mem*), and the Hebrew word for fire is *aish* (*aleph-shin*). Also, to follow our pattern of three, water and fire are opposites and air is the substance that mediates between the two.

The most sacred name for *God* in Hebrew is spelled *yud-hey-vav-hey*, and the letters *yud*, *hey*, and *vav* are called father letters. We have *aleph* corresponding to *yud*, *mem* corresponds to *hey*, and *shin* corresponds to *vav*. Furthermore, with three letters, such as *yud*, *hey*, and *vav*, six different permutations are possible, and these are used to define

and seal the six directions. And by sealing we mean completing and establishing a boundary that will define 3-dimensional space.

There are variations from one ancient text to another regarding the order in which the permutations are presented, but the arrangement given in the passage above, which I've taken from the *short version* of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, is, in my opinion, the best in that it represents a gradual transition from spirit to matter, from perceived holiness to concealed holiness. To understand the translation, you have to know that *God* is often referred to in mystical literature as the *King* (represented by *yud*, the first letter in *God's* name) and the creation is referred to as the *Daughter* (represented by *hey*, the second and last letter in *God's* name). Additionally, the letter *vav* is a connective that in Hebrew grammar is the word “*and*,” and thus, it represents joining or union. Hence, a permutation such as *yud-hey-vav* can now be interpreted as “*King-Daughter united*,” a union between opposites with nothing intervening. The complete list of interpretations and a table showing the permutations used in the other major versions of the text are given below.

THE SIX DIRECTIONS					
Direction	Assembler	GRA	Short	Long	Saadia
Up	YHV	YHV	YHV	HYV	YHV
Down	YVH	HYV	YVH	YVH	YVH
East	HYV	VYH	HYV	VYH	HVY
West	HVY	VHY	HVY	VHY	HYV
North	VYH	YVH	VYH	YVH	VYH
South	VHY	HVY	VHY	HVY	VHY

Yud-hey-vav: King-Daughter united. The *King* and the *Daughter* are one, and there is no separation between them. Maximum oneness and holiness. Above.

Yud-vav-hey: King and Daughter. The *vav* now creates separation between the *King* and the *Daughter*, but the permutation still begins with the *King*. One level down in holiness. Below.

Hey-yud-vav: Daughter-King-united. The *Daughter* and the *King* are together, but the *Daughter* appears first. The focus now is not on spirit, but on the creation as indicated by the first letter *hey*, and again, there has been a decrease in the perception of holiness. The *King* is partially obscured by the *Daughter*. One more level of decrease in the degree to which the *King* is revealed. East.

Hey-vav-yud: Daughter and King. The *vav* once again creates separation between the *Daughter* and the *King*, and the *King* appears last while the *Daughter* appears first. Holiness is even more concealed. Another decrease in holiness by one level. West.

Vav-yud-hey: United King-Daughter. This time neither the *yud* nor the *hey* appears first. The focus is on relationships between things as indicated by the leading letter *vav*³. Again, holiness has been obscured by one more level. South.

Vav-hey-yud: United Daughter-King. In our final direction, the *vav* appears first and the *yud* appears last. Thus, the *King* is hidden or obscured to the utmost as one would expect in the far north where life can be harsh and the bounty found in the south is no longer present. Minimum revealed holiness. North.

³ Since *vav* represents the word “and” in Hebrew, it establishes a connection or relationship between two objects, *A and B*.

The letter *yud* begins the permutations on the up-down axis, the letter *hey* begins those on the east-west axis, and the letter *vav* begins the permutations found on the north-south axis. Since these father letters correspond to *aleph*, *mem*, and *shin*, this also tells us that the up-down axis corresponds to *aleph*, the east-west axis corresponds to *mem*, and the north-south axis corresponds to *shin*. Thus, the three mother letters define 3-dimensional space. Also, don't forget that the up-down axis is the axis of spirit, the east-west axis is the axis of the earth or creation, and the north-south axis is the axis of relationship. Air, water, and fire.

1:14 *These are the ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Spirit/breath of the Living Elohim (God), spirit/breath from spirit/breath, water from spirit/breath, fire from water, ascent and beneath, east and west, north and south.*

In this passage, we get a sense of the original meaning of the word *sefirot*. They are declarations that define our 3-dimensional universe. The letter *aleph* corresponds to *spirit/breath*, the letter *mem* to water, and the letter *shin* to fire. Soon we will also talk about the seven double letters, seven letters in Hebrew that can take on either a hard or a soft sound. These are the letters *bet*, *gimmel*, *dalet*, *kaf*, *peh*, *resh*, and *tav*, and a later passage will identify these letters as corresponding to up, down, east, west, north, south, and center. The letter *tav*, which is the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet, corresponds to center, but in our passage above it also represents *breath from breath*. Recall also the earlier passage that said that the *end is contained in the beginning and the beginning in the end*. Likewise, with the first letter of the alphabet, *aleph (breath)*, and the last letter of the alphabet, *tav (breath from breath)*. Ultimately, the beginning and the end are inseparable from one another and are one and the same. Again, it is only the mind that creates the false distinction between the two. And lastly, we also see in this verse that the *ten sefirot* are none other than ten letters from the alphabet, the three mother letters plus the seven doubles that we'll discuss soon. Of course, in later *Kabbalah*, the *sefirot* were divorced from the letters and given entirely new meanings.

2:1 Twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers and seven doubles and twelve plain. Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. A scale of credit and a scale of debit, and a tongue of decree decides between them. Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. Mem is still, shin is a strident hiss, aleph is the air spirit/breath that decides between them.

In this passage we are presented with the image of a traditional balance scale with a pan on each side, one side representing credit and the other side debit. The tongue of the scale is the vertical shaft in the center, and it is interesting that it is called the *tongue of decree*. This is a reminder that it is our own decrees, our own choices, that result in us being on one side or the other. Also, we are starting to see illustrations of how the pattern of three manifests itself in different situations.

The letters *shin* and *mem* spell *shem* which means *name* and which is often used as a reference to *God, The Name*. Recall, too, that the letter *aleph* is a silent letter that represents air, and it is the unheard air that connects the *shin* with the *mem* when we say *name*. Furthermore, remember from our discussion of the first passage in our text that the *gematria* of *shem* is 340 which is the same as the three letter root *samach-peh-resh* that is used to form the words for story, number, and communication in this same passage. Thus, once again we are shown how the pattern of three shows up in creation, and we receive another hint that the creation is the *Name of God*.

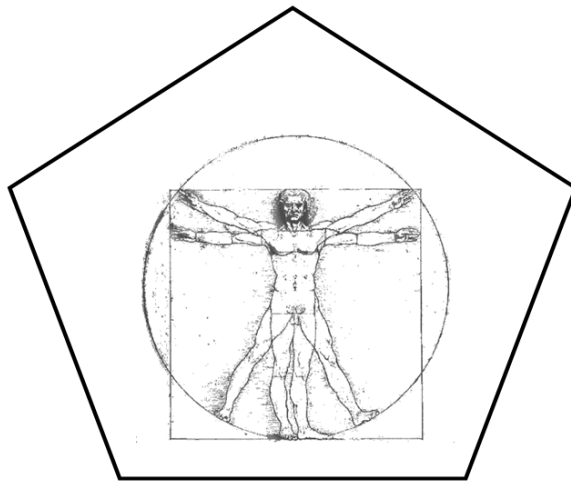
2:2 *Twenty-two letters of foundation. IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them all that was formed and all the multiplications to be formed.*

This passage is giving a succinct description of the process of creation from the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Remember that the first step is a decree, an act of will, and this represents *something from nothing creation*. The second step is shaping, refining our inspiration, and we call this *something from something creation*. Next, we combine letters, and remember, too, that letters form words and words create the structure of the reality we see. The third step is called weighing, and this refers to solidifying the characteristics of what we perceive. And the last step is exchanging or transforming, and this can be thought of as taking a successful pattern and using it as a template for another context. For example, if you identify yourself as a hard working individual, then this becomes a template or pattern which can be applied over and over to different situations in your life⁴. Notice also that since the *ten sefirot* correspond to ten letters of the alphabet, creation via the twenty-two letters contains within it creation through the ten utterances.

⁴ For those who have studied advanced mathematics, think of this also in terms of something like a group homomorphism that preserves algebraic structure as it transforms one group into another.

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.*

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 *Vetruvian 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 that result from these five dimensions.



2:4 Twenty-two letters of foundation. IT established them in a circle like a type of wall with 231 gates, and IT repeats the cycle front and back, and a sign for this thing is that there isn't in good anything more elevated than joy (oneg), and there isn't in evil anything beneath affliction (negah).

This passage is a hint at how we can create greater complexity and variety in our world through combinations, permutations, and substitutions. At the end of the passage what is important, though, is that the Hebrew words for joy and affliction use exactly the same letters. Thus, by merely permuting the letters, we can turn joy (*ayin-nun-gimmel*) into affliction (*nun-gimmel-ayin*). This is a form of *something-from-something creation*, and it is also a reminder of how we can transform sorrow into joy and disorder into order by merely rearranging things in our environment in either the right or wrong way. Also, we should point out that mathematically the number of combinations we can make from twenty-two letters if we pick two at a time is equal to 231. Additionally, since we are picking only two letters at a time, this can refer to a code or cipher being created, and this type of coding by substitution is also going to be found in the very next passage. And in conclusion, let us not forget that coding is a form of *transformation* in which the pattern of one word is carried forward into the coded word. Hence, the text also wants us to know that simple patterns can generate complexity by being repeated over and over again in a variety of different situations.

2:5 How? IT combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them. Aleph with all of them and all of them with aleph, bet with all of them and all of them with bet. Repeating in a cycle and existing in 231 gates and existence, all the formed and all the spoken, coming out from One Name.

In this passage we encounter again the process of creation by combining basic elements, weighing them (i.e. defining their characteristics), and exchanging them, transforming them from one thing into another. Furthermore, the coding process is once again described. We can exchange *aleph* with any other letter, and any other letter with *aleph*, and as we mentioned previously, there are 231 combinations that can be formed from twenty-two letters where we select two at a time. And finally, we are reminded at the end of this passage that everything comes from one single name. More specifically, from the unknowable *IT* come three mother letters (*aleph-mem-shin*) and from the three mother letters come the three father letters (*yud-hey-vav*) that are used in the name of *God* (*yud-hey-vav-hey*), and from these letters come the six directions and everything else in creation.

2:6 IT formed reality from formless amazement, and made ITS nonexistence existence, and IT shaped great pillars from air that cannot be caught, and this is a sign, aleph with all of them and all of them with aleph. IT observes and transforms, and makes all that is formed and all spoken things One Name, and a sign for this thing, twenty-two desires in a single body.

All that exists came out of nonexistence, but that nonexistence left behind traces of its identity. In particular, we have the letter *aleph* which is one of the mother letters and which represents air. If we now examine the glyph for *aleph*, , it can be decomposed into two *yuds* and a *vav*, , and the numerical value of *yud+yud+vav* is 26 which is the same as that of *yud-hey-vav-hey*, the most sacred name in Hebrew for *God*. Furthermore, *aleph* is a silent letter, and its silence represents the original nonexistence. Additionally, we experience the letter *aleph* in our daily lives as the silent observer where all knowing takes place. Now this is the really important thing. We tend to get so wrapped up in the things we are observing and in our own definition of ourselves that we mistake them for who we really are. Our real identity, however, is that which does the observing. Furthermore, there is no real separation between the observer and the observed. All that really exists is simply knowing. Our observer is infinite and unlimited and unrestricted by boundaries, and yet it creates knowledge of a finite, limited world and a personal identity, and we accept that as so. However, all that we know and all that we will ever know readily merges with the nothingness of that which does the observing, and that is the sign. All multiplicity goes back into and is never separated from the one.

3:1 Three mothers, aleph-mem-shin. Their foundation is a scale of credit and a scale of debit, and the tongue of decree decides between them.

In this chapter we explore the three mother letters, *aleph*, *mem*, and *shin*. And here we have once again a reminder that the basic pattern of creation is one thing opposite another with communication or interaction in between.

3:2 *Three mothers aleph-mem-shin, a great and wondrous secret, covered and sealed with six rings, and out of them air, water, fire, and from them originated fathers (yud-he-vav), and from fathers, consequences.*

From three objects you can make six permutations, and these permutations represent the six directions. These directions, in turn, define our 3-dimensional world, and the perception of this world covers and hides the true nature of reality. Note, too, that in previous times a ring was used to impress a wax seal upon a document. Thus, the rings mentioned in the passage above refer to the six seals defined by the six directions. Additionally, the three mother letters *aleph*, *mem*, and *shin* represent air, fire, and water, and from these come the three father letters of *yud*, *hey*, and *vav*, which are the letters of the most sacred name for *God*. Thus, that which is beyond perception creates a finite world through the pattern of three, through the process of two opposites and communication between them. And in this world we turn the inconceivable into the conceived concept of the *Father God* whose name is spelled out by using the father letters, and from this *God* image, we have consequences.

It is interesting to note that the mother letters precede the father letters, and so it is in many cultures where the universe is born of the mother and not the father. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the actual order seems to be that first there is the *Unknowable* state that is beyond the subject/object dichotomy, and this is followed by the mother letters which are then followed by the father letters. The precedence of the feminine over the masculine is also hinted at in the very spelling of the most sacred name for *God*, *yud-hey-vav-hey*.

This name ends in the letter *hey*, and in Hebrew this letter ending usually indicates a feminine word. However, to some this might seem to be a heretical doctrine that even hints at goddess worship, and thus, all the more reason to hide the authorship of the *Sefer Yetzira* and to limit its distribution. In later *Kabbalah*, however, on the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* we find this order reversed with the male principle preceding the female as we go from the formless top of the tree to the male right side and then to the female left side. By placing the male principle first, later *Kabbalah* seems to be following the pattern of *Genesis* where *Adam's* creation comes before *Eve's*. However, another argument for the feminine preceding the masculine, aside from the fact that women physically give birth, is the fact that the male has a penis, and as we learned in verse 1.3, the sexual organ of the male is symbolic of the connecting link or interaction between opposites. Thus, you cannot have the masculine and interaction without already having the feminine, and therefore, it is not possible for the masculine to come before the feminine (according to this argument).

In *Genesis Rabbah 1:15* there is an intriguing argument about which was created first, heaven or earth, and this argument can also be seen as symbolic of a discussion on whether the masculine preceded the feminine or vice-versa. The final conclusion is that both were created simultaneously, and this is true up to a point. In other words, opposites are always created in pairs without one coming before the other, and this is the case in both particle physics and in metaphysics. This is also yet another explanation of why the *Torah* begins with the letter *bet* which represents the number two. The created world appears with a minimum of two things, not one. However, even though opposites are

created simultaneously, interaction between opposites can happen later, and again, since the male sexual organ represents interaction occurring between opposites, the text wisely has the feminine coming before the interactive masculine.

All of the above is sometimes experienced by those who have progressed far with meditation. For those who have been fortunate enough to experience transcendence of the subject/object dichotomy, they may realize that as they come back to their base state of consciousness that the first thing to pick up again is the separation of *Oneness* into a subject observing a vast sea of nothingness as its object. At this point, there is still no movement or thoughts or interaction between the two. That is something that begins later. In other words, first there is the *One* followed by the *female/male* pair, and finally there is the interaction between the two.

3:3 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. IT decreed, shaped, combined, weighed, and exchanged and assembled with them. Three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the world, and three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the year, and three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the person, male and female.

We've already discussed the meanings of *decree*, *shape*, *combine*, *weigh*, and *exchange*. What we see now, though, and what we will continue to see in several other passages are references to how the universe is composed of space and time as opposites and how it is the consciousness of the person that is the connecting link. Furthermore, the pattern of three continues to subdivide each level so that we have a pattern of three in the world (space), a pattern of three in the year (time), and a pattern of three in the person.

3:4 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the world, air, water, fire. Heaven was created from fire, and earth was created from water, and air from spirit/breath decides between them.

The pattern of three is now extended to heaven and earth and the air in between. This arrangement will be seen again in an upcoming passage where we will find the same pattern in human beings with fire above and water below and air in between. We could also make sense of this pattern directly by noting that the majority of the earth is covered with water, above that is the atmosphere, and the light of the stars would suggest fire even to the ancients. And this completes, in this passage, the decomposition of space via the pattern of three.

3:5 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the year. Hot, cold, and moderate. Hot was created from fire, cold was created from water, and the time of moderation from spirit/breath decides between them.

In this passage, we encounter the decomposition of time by the pattern of three. The element of fire corresponds to the hot summer, water to the cold winter, and air to the temperate seasons in between.

3:6 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the person, male and female. Head and abdomen and chest. Head is created from fire, and abdomen is created from water, and the chest from spirit/breath decides between them.

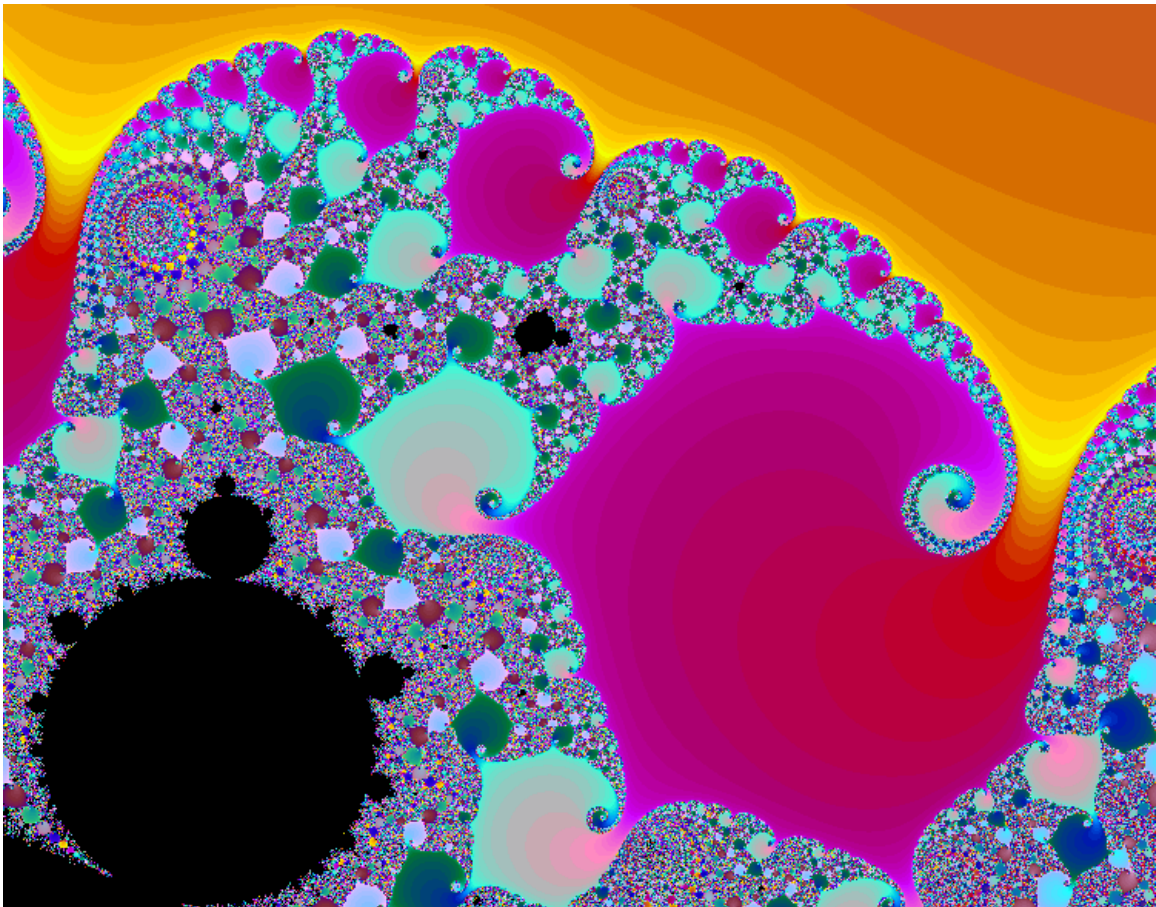
The rule of three also applies to the physiology of the person where we have electrical fire in the brain, water and fluid in the belly, and in between we have air in the lungs. And since human beings are mirrors of the cosmos, we likewise have fire assigned to the heavens, water to the earth, and air in the atmosphere between the two.

3:7 *IT made ruler the letter aleph in spirit/breath and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them air in the world and moderate in the year and chest in the person, male with aleph-mem-shin and female with aleph-shin-mem.*

The phrase *surrounding circle* is more frequently translated as *crown*. However, I like my translation better because it suggests that there is going to be a space delineated by this circle or sphere where the properties of *aleph* rule or dominate. In particular, *aleph* dominates with regard to the air in the atmosphere (space), the temperate seasons of the year (time), and the lungs of a person. Furthermore, in the later *Kabbalah* of the *Tree of Life*, water corresponds to the male and fire corresponds to the female. This is because water corresponds to giving and lack of structure, and during sexual relations it is the male that gives his fluids to the female, and fire corresponds to receiving and structure, and the aftermath of sexual relations is that the fetus develops structured limbs and a circulatory and nervous system as it grows within the female. Hence, knowing this, we can now decode the permutations *aleph-mem-shin* and *aleph-shin-mem*. Both begin with *aleph* since we are talking about the realm of air, but for the male the next letter is *mem* which represents water, and for the female the second letter is *shin* which represents fire. Thus, since in *Kabbalah* water is male and fire is female, these two permutations properly encode that information for the realm of *aleph*.

Also, at this point, we have now seen how the pattern of three repeats itself in a variety of settings such as space, time, and the person. This is one way in which the text shows how complexity can arise from simple origins. In other words, take a basic pattern and

use it over and over again by exchanging or transforming the surrounding circumstances. Mathematical instances of this sort of thing can be found in those images that we call *fractals*. In a *fractal*, there are also certain patterns that are repeated over and over again at different levels of scale in order to create a final image that is quite complex. For example, if you study the *elephant's head* below, you will see that it is composed of smaller and smaller *elephant's heads*. In a similar way, the *Sefer Yetzirah* shows us how repetition of simple patterns such as those formed by the three mother letters can lead to the richness and complexity of the world as we know it today.



3:8 *IT made ruler the letter mem in water and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them earth in the world and cold in the year and abdomen in the person, male with mem-aleph-shin and female with mem-shin-aleph.*

In spatial terms, the letter *mem* corresponds to the watery earth, in temporal terms it corresponds to the cold winter, and in the person it corresponds to the fluids in the belly. If we now encode this information into the mother letters, then we begin with *mem* since we are talking about the realm of things controlled by *mem*, and for the female we choose *shin* as the next letter since that is the letter that corresponds to that particular gender. As for the male, we can't put the male letter *mem* second since we are already using that as the first letter. However, if we put the female letter *shin* last, then that will make the permutation *mem-aleph-shin* less female (and hence, more male) than *mem-shin-aleph*.

3:9 *IT made ruler the letter shin in fire and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them heaven in the world and hot in the year and head in the person, male with shin-mem-aleph and female with shin-aleph-mem.*

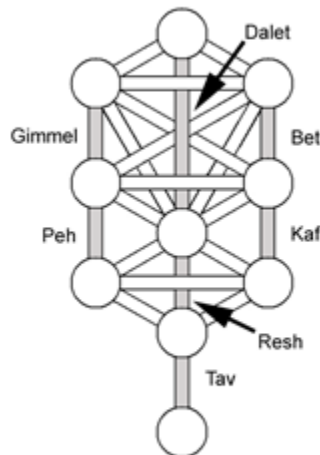
And finally, the letter *shin* rules the heavens (space), the summer season (time), and the head and brain in the person. Also, by now we should be able to easily understand the letter code. For both male and female, the first letter of the code is *shin*, and for males the second letter is *mem*. And that means that for females the letter *mem* should appear last.

I should point out that this is also one of those places where I have made a slight change in order to reconcile the text with later *Kabbalah*. In the other versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, there is almost uniform agreement regarding the permutations of the letters *aleph-mem-shin*, and they all designate *shin-mem-aleph* as female and *shin-aleph-mem* as male, just the opposite of what I have done. Nonetheless, I believe that my rendition makes more sense.

THE SIX PERMUTATIONS OF THE MOTHER LETTERS						
Mother Letter	Gender	Assembler	GRA	Short	Long	Saadia
Aleph	male	AMS	AMS	AMS	AMS	AMS
	female	ASM	ASM	ASM	ASM	ASM
Mem	male	MAS	MAS	MAS	MAS	MSA
	female	MSA	MSA	MSA	MSA	MAS
Shin	male	SMA	SAM	SAM	SAM	SAM
	female	SAM	SMA	SMA	SMA	SMA

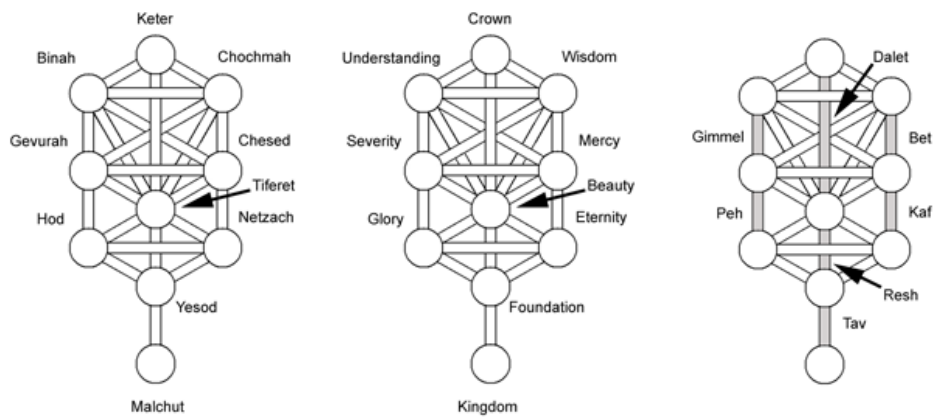
4:1 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. They conduct themselves with two tongues, bet-vet, gimmel-ghimmel, dalet-daleth, kaf-khaf, peh-pheh, resh-rhesh, tav-thav. A paradigm of soft and hard, strong and weak.

On the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* there are seven vertical paths that correspond to the seven double letters. The placement of the letters on the *tree* follows a pattern of right-left-center-right-left-center-center, and in this way it seems to reiterate the teaching that our finite world is brought into existence as a result of two opposites with a mediating principle in between. Also, because they are double letters, they represent qualities that can be expressed through either of two extremes such as wisdom and folly.



4:2 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resch-tav. Their foundation is wisdom, wealth, seed, life, dominance, peace, and grace.

This is one of those verses that appears in several variations in the different versions that exist of the original *Sefer Yetzirah*. However, the keyword assignments above fit in very well with the established *Sefirotic Tree of Life*.



For example, *bet* is the connecting path from *mercy* to *wisdom*, and furthermore, the letter *bet* stands for a *brachah*, a blessing. As we learn to be a blessing to others, we also open ourselves up to a higher *wisdom*.

The letter *gimmel* is the connecting path from *severity* to *understanding*, and *gimmel* stands for *gamal*, a camel. The camel is wealthy in that it can live off of its own stored resources. Likewise, when we learn how to be satisfied with our own fat and to drink water from our own well (*Proverbs 5:15*), then we, too, will be *wealthy*.

The letter *dalet* is the connecting path from *beauty* to *crown*, and it stands for *da'at*, knowledge. In *Kabbalah*, knowledge is the result of the combined functioning of *wisdom*

and *understanding*, the result of the coordination of our right brain with our left brain, and knowledge is the *seed* whose sprouting can transport us to the enlightenment represented by the highest *sefirah*, *crown*.

The letter *kaf* is the connecting path from *eternity* to *mercy*. It represents *kavannah*, intention or devotion. This word is also used to represent those spontaneous prayers, praises, and supplications that arise from the very soul of our being, and by engaging in these kinds of *kavannahs*, we can elevate our right brains to a higher level of love and mercy. And in this manner, we also enhance *life*.

The letter *peh* is the connecting path from *glory* to *severity*. It is on the left side of the tree which rules form and structure and the left hemisphere of the brain. *Peh* is also the Hebrew word for *mouth*. Hence, if we learn to *dominate* our mouth and control our thoughts, then our strength of will and intellect will become formidable. Otherwise, the consequences can be *severe*.

The letter *resh* is the connecting path from *foundation* to *beauty*. It stands for *rachamim*, compassion. When we have a good *foundation* it is easy for *compassion* for others to develop, and this in turn gives us *peace*.

And finally, the letter *tav* is the connecting path from *kingdom* to *foundation*. The letter *tav* stands for *Torah*, and it is written in the *Talmud* that when we study the *Torah*, a thread of *grace* extends into our lives (*B. Avodah Zarah 3b*).

And now, below is a table showing how the characteristics of the seven doubles are portrayed in the other versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah*.

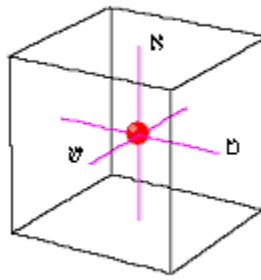
THE SEVEN DOUBLES					
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Bet	wisdom	wisdom	life	wisdom	life
Gimmel	wealth	wealth	peace	wealth	peace
Dalet	seed	seed	wisdom	seed	wisdom
Kaf	life	life	wealth	life	wealth
Peh	dominance	dominance	grace	dominance	seed
Resh	peace	peace	seed	peace	grace
Tav	grace	grace	dominance	grace	dominance

4:3 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav in speech and in substitution. The substitute of wisdom, foolishness. The substitute of wealth, poverty. The substitute of seed, ruin. The substitute of life, death. The substitute of dominion, slavery. The substitute of peace, conflict. The substitute of grace, ugliness.

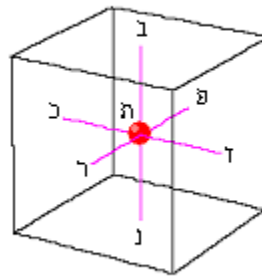
As mentioned before, the seven doubles represent things in life that can come in pairs of polar opposites. Additionally, the seven doubles represent choice. Will we choose *wisdom* or *foolishness*? *Wealth* or *poverty*? *Life* or *death*? Not everything in a life is a matter of choice, but several things are and the right choices can make all the difference.

4:4 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-reshtav. Ascent and beneath, east and west, north and south, and the Holy Temple dwelling in the middle, and it carries them all.

This passage completes the association of the ten *sefirot* with the three *mother letters* and the seven *double letters*. In a previous passage we read that the ten *sefirot* are *breath, breath from breath, water, fire, up, down, east, west, north, and south*. The letters *aleph, mem, and shin* correspond to *breath, water, and fire*, and the seven double letters, *bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-reshtav*, correspond to *up, down, east, west, north, south, and the Holy Temple*. The *Holy Temple* represented by *tav* also corresponds to the *breath from breath*. In a previous passage we also saw that the three mother letters represent the up-down axis, the east-west axis, and the north-south axis, and with the directional associations of the seven *double letters*, we are well on our way to delineating the fundamental boundaries of a cube known as the *cube of space*. This is a precursor to the more recent *Sefirotic Tree of Life*, and like the *tree*, this is also a diagram that represents the created universe. Furthermore, the statement that the “Holy Temple carries them all” tells us that all is contained in the center in the same way that a cup contains the water that it carries.



The three mother letters define axes for 3-dimensional space



The seven double letters define the six directions and the center

4:5 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. Seven and not six, seven and not eight. Examine with them and explore with them, and stand each word and thing on its wellspring, and return the Assembler to its base.

As we were told earlier regarding the *sefirot*, we should use the qualities represented by these letters to examine and explore reality with the goal of returning every perception to its source and establishing the *Assembler* on its base by realizing the true role of the observer in perception.

4:6 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav of foundation. IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them seven planets in the world, seven days in the year, seven gates in the person, male and female.

Once again, the text wants us to know that a successful pattern may be used over and over again in different contexts. In this case we find the pattern of seven appearing in space as the seven planets and in time as the seven days. It also appears in a person as the seven gates, and that is what will be described in detail by the next passage. Additionally, below is a table showing the planetary correspondences that I use versus those that are found in other texts. Again, my choices are made to make this text correspond more closely with what is found on the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. These correspondences will be explained in more detail in Appendix III. However, what is most important is simply the notion that a pattern is repeated in the triad of space, time, and person where space and time are seen as opposites and it is the consciousness of the person that mediates between the two.

THE SEVEN PLANETS					
Letters	Assembler	GRA	Short	Long	Saadia
Bet	Jupiter	Moon	Saturn	Saturn	Saturn
Gimmel	Mars	Mars	Jupiter	Jupiter	Jupiter
Dalet	Sun	Sun	Mars	Mars	Mars
Kaf	Venus	Venus	Sun	Sun	Sun
Peh	Mercury	Mercury	Venus	Venus	Venus
Resh	Moon	Saturn	Mercury	Mercury	Mercury
Tav	Saturn	Jupiter	Moon	Moon	Moon

*4:7 Seven planets in the world, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, and Saturn .
Seven days in the year, seven gates in the person, male and female, two eyes, two ears,
two tunnels of the nose, and the mouth.*

The seven gates in the person are identified as the two eyes, the two ears, the two tunnels of the nose, and the mouth. In the passages that follow, each of these will be assigned to a letter, and the pattern will be that the upper three paths found on the *Tree of Life* will be assigned to the right, and the lower paths to the left. This is nice because it associates the upper part of the *tree* also with giving and formlessness and the bottom part of the *tree* with receiving and physical structure. However, this is another one of those areas where there is disagreement between the major versions of the text. For the most part, I am following the pattern found in the *GRA*, but I am also making what I consider to be a few improvements. As will be seen in *Appendix II*, the seven double letters are assigned to the vertical paths of the *Tree of Life* in a pattern from top to bottom of right-left-center-right-left-center-center. If we follow this pattern with the seven gates, then we can argue that the sense of smell is the least structured of the senses while hearing, which in humans requires information to be assembled along a linear timeline, is the most structured of the senses. And sight which, by itself, provides geometric structure, but not the verbal analysis that is given by the conscious mind, is intermediate in structure between smelling and hearing. Thus, it makes the most sense to me to assign *bet*, the letter on the upper right, formless side of the tree, to the right tunnel, *gimmel*, the letter on the upper left, structured side of the tree, to the right ear, and *dalet*, the letter on the upper central column, to the right eye. Similarly, we'll assign *kaf* to the left tunnel, *peh* to the

left ear, and *resh* to the left eye. And finally, *tav* corresponds to the mouth. In terms of planetary correspondences, we now have *Jupiter* and *Venus* corresponding to the right and left tunnels of the nose, *Sun* and *Moon* corresponding to the right and left eyes, *Mars* and *Mercury* corresponding to the right and left ears, and *Saturn* corresponding to the mouth. Those who are familiar with astrology will know that this works out quite well!

THE GATES					
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Bet	right tunnel	right eye	right eye	mouth	mouth
Gimmel	right ear	right ear	left eye	right eye	right eye
Dalet	right eye	right tunnel	right ear	left eye	left eye
Kaf	left tunnel	left eye	left ear	right tunnel	right tunnel
Peh	left ear	left ear	right tunnel	left tunnel	left tunnel
Resh	left eye	left tunnel	left tunnel	right ear	right ear
Tav	mouth	mouth	mouth	left ear	left ear

4:8 IT made ruler the letter bet in wisdom and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Jupiter in the world, first day (Sunday) in the year, and right tunnel of the nose in the person, male and female.

The letter *bet* is a quality and mode of being that expresses itself in space, time, and in the individual. Additionally, *bet* represents a *bracha*, a blessing, and on Sundays, in particular, I want to both give thanks for my blessings and be a blessing. Astrologically, Jupiter symbolizes growth and expansion, and I try to engage in these sorts of activities, too, on Sunday.

4:9 IT made ruler the letter gimme in wealth and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Mars in the world, day two (Monday) in the year, and right ear in the person, male and female.

Astrologically, Mars is a planet that symbolizes action and physical activity, and I try to be very alert and active on Mondays. Also, *gimme* represents wealth, but true wealth comes from being satisfied with what you have and being able to drink from your own well and live off of your own resources. These also become goals for me on Mondays.

4:10 IT made ruler the letter dalet in seed and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Sun in the world, day three (Tuesday) in the year, and right eye in the person, male and female.

Astrologically, the Sun represents the self, our own ego, and I try to be secure in my true self on Tuesdays. Additionally, *dalet* also represents both *da'at*, knowledge, and seeds for the future, and on Tuesdays I want to be established in higher knowledge and plant seeds for the good days to come.

4:11 IT made ruler the letter kaf in life and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Venus in the world, day four (Wednesday) in the year, and left tunnel of the nose in the person, male and female.

In our modern world, Wednesday is known as “hump day” since once it is gone, we are over the “hump” of the work week. Hence, it is also treated as a brief day of rest, a time to get our breath and recollect ourselves, and this behavior is in line with the astrological meanings of Venus. The planet Venus is all about reducing stress and tension. And this in turn brings more life and mercy and kindness into our lives. Thus, on Wednesday I try to take it a little easier and enjoy myself and others a bit more.

4:12 IT made ruler the letter peh in dominance and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Mercury in the world, day five (Thursday) in the year, and left ear in the person, male and female.

The letter *peh* literally means “mouth” in Hebrew even though none of the standard versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* associate it with that body part. Nonetheless, it is well known in rabbinic literature that the mouth always needs to be controlled and disciplined, and that is what takes us to the next level. In astrology, Mercury rules the mind and communication, and in the context of this passage, the world of *peh* is connected with Mercury in space, Thursday in time, and the left ear in the person. Thus, for me, Thursday is a good time to refocus my efforts on mental activities.

4:13 IT made ruler the letter resh in peace and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Moon in the world, day six (Friday) in the year, and left eye in the person, male and female.

The letter *resh* stands for *rachamim*, compassion, and compassion leads to peace and wholeness. Astrologically, the Moon represents the physical body as our interface with the world. It is, thus, connected with the home environment, bodily feelings and emotions, and with interactions and relationships with others. Hence, on Fridays I like to give a little more focus to the relationship between me and the world I live in and the restoration of peace to those relationships.

4:14 IT made ruler the letter tav in grace and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Saturn in the world, day seven (Saturday) in the year, and mouth in the person, male and female.

In astrology, Saturn represents discipline and control, and when done properly it leads to freedom in the same way that the disciplined moves of a dancer or athlete give them a freedom beyond what the average person may possess. Furthermore, it says in the Talmud that when one studies Torah, a thread of grace is extended to that person (*B. Avodah Zarah 3b*). Thus, on Saturdays, in particular, I like to take on the yoke of Torah and the discipline of higher conduct and study either by myself or with a good group.

4:15 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resch-tav. With them were decreed seven worlds, seven firmaments, seven lands, seven seas, seven rivers, seven deserts, seven days, seven weeks, seven years, seven sabbaticals, seven jubilees, and the Holy Temple. Therefore, beloved are the sevenths beneath all the heavens.

In this passage, we are shown again how a successful construct such as the pattern of seven can be transformed and embedded in a variety of different milieus. Additionally, we are reminded of the role of seven in the *cube of space* and the holiness of the center point around which everything else is arranged.

4:16 Two stones build 2 houses, three stones build 6 houses, four stones build 24 houses, five stones build 120 houses, six stones build 720 houses, seven stones build 5040 houses. From here, henceforth, go and consider what the mouth is not able to speak and the ear is not able to hear.

Think of a “stone” in the above passage as a “letter,” and think of a “house” as a “word” that is built from letters. In this context, the passage correctly does the math in computing that 2 words can be constructed from 2 letters, 6 words may be constructed from 3 letters, and so on. In particular, our 7 double letters yield 5040 words or permutations, and through words we create the world that we can understand and think about. However, the very end of the passage tells us to also focus on that which can’t be put into words. Consider the observer, that which does the lookin’. It can’t be seen or heard, and yet it knows all that is to be objectively known. Don’t just focus on the outside world. Turn your focus inward, too, to the very core of your being.

5:1 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is conversation, reflection, walking, seeing, hearing, action, procreation, smelling, sleeping, anger, swallowing, laughter.

The twelve plain letters are presented above in the order in which they occur in the Hebrew alphabet, and the attributes given to each letter seem to refer to actions or sensations that help define our experience of the world. In the passage that follows, we will see these letters interpreted even more literally as boundaries. Hence, our boundaries are defined by what we perceive. Which of the characteristics above that goes with which letter is another one of those things, however, that varies from one version of the text to another. Below is a table of the assignments found in the different primary texts. Also, in the *Saadia* version, these characteristics are treated as double characteristics similar to what we saw with the seven double letters. In other words, seeing is perceived as the opposite of being blind and the sleep of the night is seen as being in opposition to the sleep of the dead.

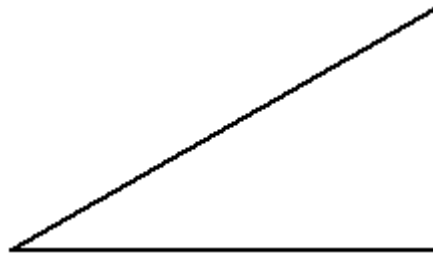
THE SENSATIONS					
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Hey	conversation	conversation	seeing	seeing	seeing
Vav	reflection	reflection	hearing	hearing	hearing
Zayin	walking	walking	smelling	smelling	smelling
Chet	seeing	seeing	conversation	conversation	conversation
Tet	hearing	hearing	swallowing	swallowing	swallowing
Yud	action	action	procreation	procreation	procreation
Lamed	procreation	procreation	action	walking	action
Nun	smelling	smelling	walking	anger	walking
Samach	sleeping	sleeping	anger	laughter	anger
Ayin	anger	anger	laughter	reflection	laughter
Tzaddi	swallowing	swallowing	reflection	joy	reflection
Kuf	laughter	laughter	sleeping	sleeping	sleep

Ultimately one has to ask why do we have these particular sensations associated with these particular letters? My best guess is that it is because there are related Hebrew words that begin with these letters. Below is a list of the words and correspondences that I have been able to find.

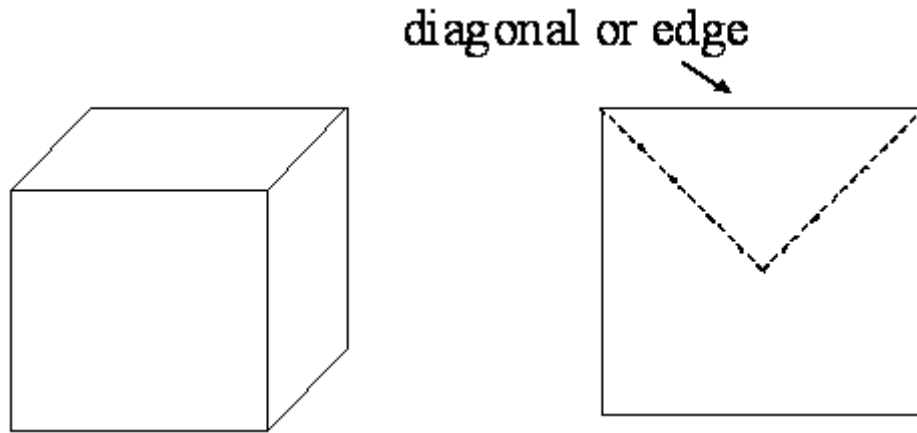
Hebrew Letter	Glyph	Assignment in <i>Sefer Yetzirah</i>	Related Hebrew Word	Translation
hey	ה	speech/conversation	הבטחה	utterance
vav	ו	thought/reflection	וכוח	debate
z ay in	ז	motion/walking	זבוח	flux, flow
			זח	to move
			זזוי	moveable
			זיעה	oscillation
chet	ח	sight/seeing	חזין	vision, prophecy
			חזיח	seeing
tet	ט	hearing	טרטור	noise
yud	י	action	ישמ	action
			ימעה	exertion
lamed	ל	coition/procreation	לבן	semen
			לבב	to attract
nun	נ	smelling	נחיר	nostril
samech	ס	sleeping	סגום	thick blanket
			סרורי	sleep walker
ay in	ע	anger	עברה	anger
			עשק	quarrel
tz addi	צ	taste/swallowing	צדך	to consume
kuf	ק	laughter	קפריסי	humorous
			קריז	funny incident

5:2 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is twelve diagonal boundaries. Boundary east north, boundary east ascent, boundary east below. Boundary north west, boundary north ascent, boundary north below. Boundary west south, boundary west ascent, boundary west below. Boundary south east, boundary south ascent, boundary south below. And they are permitted to go until forever, and behold, they are the boundaries of the world.

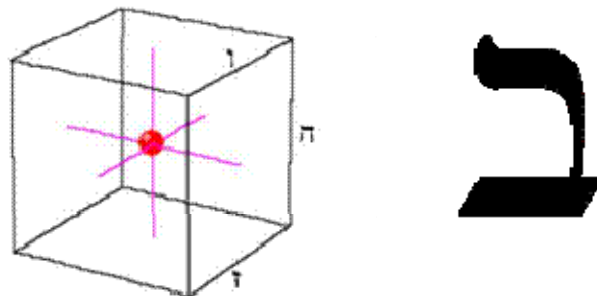
What is most important in this verse is the correspondence between the letters and the diagonal boundaries. However, what is meant by a “diagonal boundary” in this verse can easily be misunderstood. The Hebrew word that is employed is *alachson*, and this word actually means the longest side of a triangle. For example, in a right triangle this would be the hypotenuse which is usually oriented so that it looks like a diagonal line from the bottom to the top of the triangle.



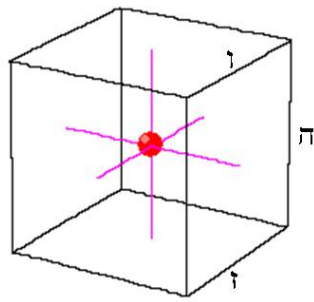
If we now imagine creating triangles by drawing lines from the center of a cube to its various corner points, then the longest side of each triangle will be an edge of the cube. Thus, the twelve diagonal boundaries are nothing more than the twelve edges found on a typical cube.



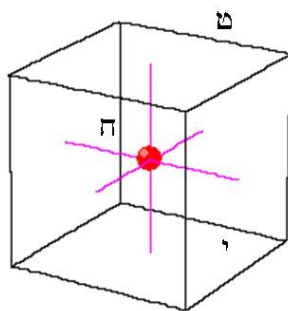
In this particular passage, by the way, I am following the *Saadia* version rather than the *GRA* version. The letter assignments are made to the twelve edges in such a way that each set of three tends to describe the letter *bet* which is closed on three sides and open on one, ב. The letter *bet* stands for a *bracha*, a blessing, and this conforms to the teaching in the *Zohar* that the world was created with the letter *bet* so that it would be a blessing. Furthermore, the letter *bet* consists of two opposite sides connected by a third, and this reiterates a basic teaching of the *Sefer Yetzirah* that creation depends upon one thing opposite another with a mediating principle in between.



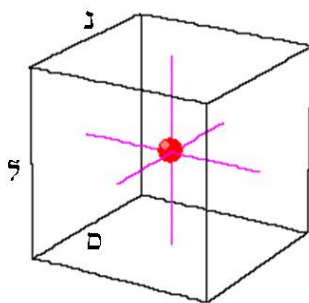
In the *Saadia* version, one finds a pattern of center, one side, and then the other side for the placement of the letters, and as *Appendix II* will show, this same pattern of center-side-side occurs with respect to the placement of the plain letters on the diagonal branches of the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. Furthermore, the counter-clockwise pattern found in the *Saadia* version seems to tell the story of humanity's fall from grace followed by eventual redemption. In other words, we begin our story in *Eden* which is symbolized by the east, the direction of connection with the light. This is followed by a fall and harsh times as symbolized by the bitter cold of the north. As a result of the fall, we have to work hard to plow the earth and grow our own food, and the earth is symbolized by the west, the direction of the setting sun. Finally, however, there is the promise that we will be redeemed and that life will become easier and more joyous again, and this is symbolized by the direction of the warm south where life is not constantly surrounded by the bitterness of the north. Below are the placements of the twelve letters along the edges of the *cube of space*.



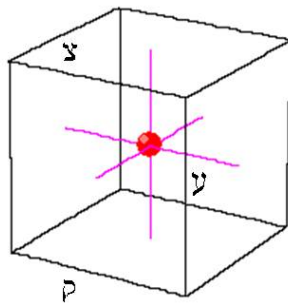
hey-vav-zayin



chet-tet-yud



lamed-nun-samach

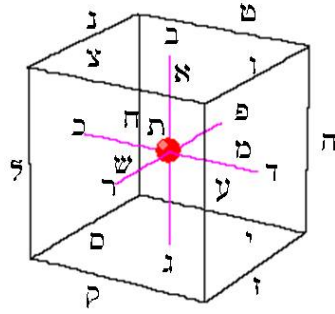


ayin-tzaddi-kuf

Below now is another table showing how this placement of the letters, which helps align the *Sefer Yetzirah* with later mystical Jewish literature, compares with what is found in the various other versions of the text.

THE EDGES OF THE CUBE					
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Hey	east north	east up	east north	east up	east north
Vav	east up	east north	south east	east north	east up
Zayin	east down	east down	east up	east down	east down
Chet	north west	south up	east down	south up	north west
Tet	north up	south east	north up	south east	north up
Yud	north down	south down	north down	south down	north down
Lamed	west south	west up	west south	west up	west south
Nun	west up	west south	north west	west south	west up
Samach	west down	west down	west up	west down	west down
Ayin	south east	north up	west down	north up	south east
Tzaddi	south up	north west	south up	north west	south up
Kuf	south down	north down	south down	north down	south down

In spite of which edges one might assign the twelve plain letters to, the final result is that we now have the letters serving as a model for physical 3-dimensional space. In particular, we have defined that cube that is often referred to as the *cube of space*, and this completes the argument that the universe was created with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The three mother letters correspond to three spatial axes, the seven double letters correspond to the six directions plus center, and the twelve plain letters complete the cube by corresponding to the twelve defining edges. Below is a diagram showing the correspondences of all twenty-two letters.



The twenty-two letters define the *cube of space*

5:3 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them twelve constellations in the world, twelve months in the year, twelve conductors in the person, male and female.

Once again we see that each letter is involved in the five fundamental steps of creation: will/decreed, shape, combine, weigh/define, and exchange/transform. Additionally, the influence of these letters, the pattern of twelve, will be found in the twelve constellations (space), the twelve months (time), and in the person who is the connecting link between space and time.

5:4 Twelve constellations in the world. Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces.

The twelve constellations are the usual ones that are used in astrology. This passage is, thus, also saying that we are linked with the larger universe. We don't exist in isolation from the rest of space.

5:5 *Twelve months in the year. April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March.*

In the Hebrew text of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, we would find the traditional names for the twelve Hebrew months. However, in the lunar calendar that is traditionally used in Judaism, these months drift somewhat around the calendar year, and occasionally a leap month has to be added. Thus, I have used above the more familiar months of the Gregorian calendar which match up better with the dates for the twelve astrological signs. Also, technically speaking, what I should have used above are the actual starting and stopping dates for the twelve astrological signs. For instance, March 21 – April 19 for *Aries*, April 20 – May 20 for *Taurus*, May 21 – June 21 for *Gemini*, and so on. However, as long as we understand this, it is simpler to list the months in the usual order as done above and then to remember that most of *April* corresponds to *Aries*, most of *May* to *Taurus*, and so on and so forth.

5:6 *Twelve conductors in the person, male and female. The circulation-sex meridian, triple warmer meridian, lung meridian, stomach meridian, heart meridian, small intestines meridian, kidney meridian, gall bladder meridian, liver meridian, large intestines meridian, spleen meridian, bladder meridian.*

It is in this passage that it will seem like we have made a radical departure from the original text of the *Sefer Yetzirah* by invoking the twelve acupuncture meridians, but the revision is not nearly as radical as one might think. For example, in the *GRA* version one finds the following parts of the person listed: two hands, two feet, two kidneys, the intestines, the liver, the *korkeban*, the *kivah*, and the spleen. Of these organs, the *korkeban* and the *kivah* don't exist in humans. The *korkeban* is the gizzard in a bird, and the *kivah* is the fourth stomach in a cow. Other versions mention *massas* which may mean stomach or intestines, but usually refers to the third stomach in cattle. Thus, the original text does not work very well, and so I have replaced it with the twelve acupuncture meridians. Keep in mind, though, that what is important is the statement that the person is the connecting link and the covenant between space and time, and that we have patterns that mirror one another in each realm. In this case, the twelve signs of the zodiac (space), the twelve months of the year (time), and the twelve acupuncture meridians (person) mirror each other quite well. Furthermore, I believe that one can make the following correspondences between the constellations and the meridians.

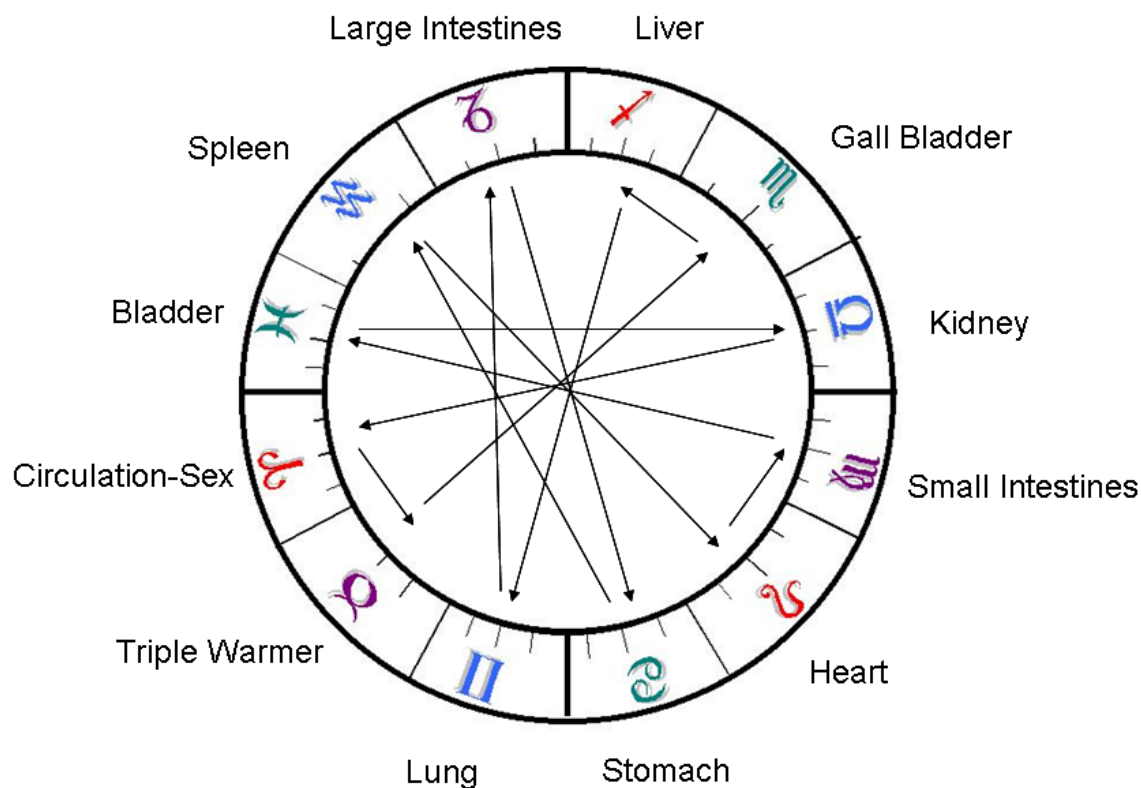
SIGN	GLYPH	MERIDIAN
Aries	♈	Circulation-Sex
Taurus	♉	Triple Warmer
Gemini	♊	Lungs
Cancer	♋	Stomach
Leo	♌	Heart
Virgo	♍	Small Intestines
Libra	♎	Kidneys
Scorpio	♏	Gall Bladder
Sagittarius	♐	Liver
Capricorn	♑	Large Intestines
Aquarius	♒	Spleen
Pisces	♓	Bladder

In traditional astrology, we already have Gemini corresponding to the lungs, Cancer to the stomach, Leo to the heart, Libra to the kidneys, and Sagittarius to the liver. We now just have to justify the other correspondences. In astrology, Aries is ruled by Mars which represents energy. Likewise, the Circulation-Sex meridian is connected with the distribution of energy throughout the body. In astrology, Taurus is a fixed sign that doesn't like to change a lot, and in acupuncture, the Triple Warmer meridian is responsible for maintaining homeostasis. Again in astrology, Virgo is connected with the intestines, and the pairing in acupuncture with the Small Intestines meridian, thus, seems quite natural. In astrology, Scorpio is known for its potential for anger, and in acupuncture, the Gall Bladder meridian is likewise associated with anger when it is out of balance. In astrology, Capricorn is ruled by Saturn which is connected with chronic diseases, and the Large Intestines meridian in acupuncture is also related to chronic diseases. Moving on to Aquarius, this sign is ruled by Uranus which is both the planet of

creativity and manic states of consciousness, and in acupuncture the Spleen meridian is associated with intellectual growth and creativity. And finally, in astrology, the sign Pisces is ruled by Neptune which is connected with infections, and in acupuncture, the Bladder meridian is so named because long term infections ultimately tend to affect the bladder.

Again, keep in mind that the most important principle here is that there is a correspondence between patterns found in space, time, and the person. It may in reality be the case that neither astrology nor acupuncture has any or much validity, but that is a secondary point. The primary point is that we live in connection with both space and time, and in terms of a theoretical framework, I much prefer the use of the twelve acupuncture meridians for the person over fictitious organs such as the *korkeban* and the *kivah*.

In acupuncture, there is a traditional 24 hour cycle involving the flow of energy through the meridians, and if we use the correspondences between the meridians and the astrological signs from my table above, then we see that at each step the flow is from one sign to an opposite sign and then to either an adjacent sign or opposite-adjacent sign (i.e. go to the opposite side of the zodiac and then move over one sign). Thus, these correspondences lead to a recognizable pattern involving the two systems.



Below, for comparison is a table showing how each of the major versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* deal with the identification of the twelve body parts.

THE BODY PARTS					
Letters	Assembler	GRA	Short	Long	Saadia
Hey	circulation-sex meridian	right foot	right hand	liver	liver
Vav	triple warmer meridian	right kidney	left hand	gall bladder	gall bladder
Zayin	lung meridian	left foot	right foot	spleen	spleen
Chet	stomach meridian	right hand	left foot	massas	massas
Tet	heart meridian	left kidney	right kidney	right kidney	right kidney
Yud	small intestines meridian	left hand	left kidney	left kidney	left kidney
Lamed	kidney meridian	gall bladder	liver	korkeban	korkeban
Nun	gall bladder meridian	intestines	spleen	kivah	kivah
Samach	liver meridian	kivah	gall bladder	right hand	right hand
Ayin	large intestines meridian	liver	massas	left hand	left hand
Tzaddi	spleen meridian	korkeban	kivah	right foot	right foot
Kuf	bladder meridian	spleen	korkeban	left foot	left foot

5:7 IT made ruler the letter hey in conversation and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Aries in the world, April in the year, and circulation-sex meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter vav in reflection and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Taurus in the world, May in the year, and triple warmer meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter zayin in walking and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Gemini in the world, June in the year, and lung meridian in the person, male and female.

With the groundwork that has been laid, we can now connect each of the twelve plain letters of the Hebrew alphabet with a constellation, a month, and an acupuncture meridian in the person. And, of course, each letter was previously connected, too, with a particular action or sensation that helps us define the boundaries of our world. In particular, *hey* is connected to Aries, April, and the circulation-sex meridian, and the activity of conversation or speaking. The letter *vav* is connected with Taurus, May, the triple warmer meridian, and the activity of reflective thought. The letter *zayin* is connected with Gemini, June, the lung meridian, and the activity of locomotion or walking.

5:8 IT made ruler the letter chet in seeing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Cancer in the world, July in the year, and stomach meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter tet in hearing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Leo in the world, August in the year, and heart meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter yud in action and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Virgo in the world, September in the year, and small intestines meridian in the person, male and female.

The letter *chet* is connected with Cancer, July, the stomach meridian, and the sensation of sight. The letter *tet* is connected with Leo, August, the heart meridian, and the sense of hearing. The letter *yud* is connected with Virgo, September, the small intestines meridian, and all energetic action in the world.

5:9 IT made ruler the letter lamed in procreation and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Libra in the world, October in the year, and kidney meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter nun in smelling and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Scorpio in the world, November in the year, and gall bladder meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter samech in sleeping and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Sagittarius in the world, December in the year, and liver meridian in the person, male and female.

The letter *lamed* is connected with Libra, October, the kidney meridian, and procreation in the world. The letter *nun* is connected with Scorpio, November, the gall bladder meridian, and the sense of smell in the world. The letter *samech* is connected with Sagittarius, December, the liver meridian, and the activity of sleeping.

5:10 IT made ruler the letter ayin in anger and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Capricorn in the world, January in the year, and large intestines meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter tzaddi in swallowing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Aquarius in the world, February in the year, and spleen meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter kuf in laughter and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Pisces in the world, March in the year, and bladder meridian in the person, male and female.

Made as like a furrow. Fixed as like a wall. Ordered as like in conflict.

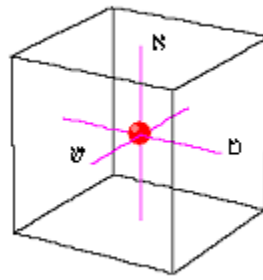
The letter *ayin* is connected with Capricorn, January, the large intestines meridian, and the activity of anger. The letter *tzaddi* is connected with Aquarius, February, the spleen meridian, and the activity of swallowing. The letter *kuf* is connected with Pisces, March, the bladder meridian, and a person's sense of humor.

A furrow refers to engraving, and recall that the Hebrew word for *engrave* also means *decree*. Thus, the furrow corresponds to the first step of the creative process, the declaration of our will regarding what we want to be. The next phrase, *fixed as a wall*, refers to the establishment of boundaries and the solidifying of our vision. This is the

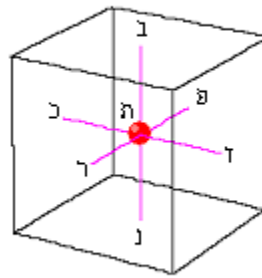
next step in the creative process. And finally, the last phrase, *ordered as like in conflict*, is a reminder that in creation we always have one thing opposite another, what something is in opposition to what it isn't. And by splitting the oneness of all things into parts, we reduce infinity to the finite.

6:1 These are they, three mothers aleph-mem-shin, and emerging out of them three fathers yud-hey-vav, and they (the mothers) are air, water, fire, and from the fathers, generations. Three fathers and their generations, and seven planets and their hosts, and twelve diagonal boundaries. A proof of this thing, trustworthy witnesses in world, year, and person, and a law of twelve and seven and three commanded in the axis and cycle and heart.

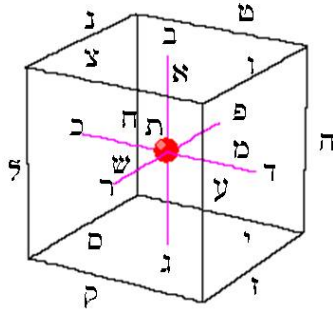
We have now entered the least section of the text, and what we are going to see is mainly a recapitulation and summary of all that has gone before. The world as we know it is based on the pattern of three, that is to say, one thing opposite another and a connecting principle in between. This pattern of three is represented by the letters *aleph-mem-shin* and the elements air, water, and fire. From the mother letters came the father letters *yud-hey-vav* that are used in Judaism's most sacred name for *God*, and from these came everything else. In particular, from these came the patterns of three, seven and twelve that complete the definition of the *cube of space*.



The three mother letters define axes for 3-dimensional space



The seven double letters define the six directions and the center



**The three mother letters, the seven double letters, and the twelve plain letters all
together define the *cube of space***

A witness for this pattern of three is the existence of space and time and the consciousness of the person that connects the two. The last statement in the passage above about *axis*, *cycle*, and *heart* is interesting. The Hebrew word *teli* that I've translated as *axis*, can also be translated as *dragon*. The connection between the two is perplexing until you realize that around 2700 BCE the pole star was *Thuban* which is in the constellation *Draco*, the dragon. Furthermore, what we now call the *Little Dipper* was originally viewed as the wings of the dragon. Hence, the plethora of stories and images we find around the world of winged serpents and dragons. In those days, however, the constellation *Draco* would rotate around the pole star *Thuban*, and an imaginary axis was defined by the pole star and the earth around which the rest of the universe would appear to revolve. Thus, the *axis* is the fixed point or heart of space, the *cycle* or change is the heart of time⁵, and in ancient Jewish times the heart was seen as the center of the person around which all other thoughts and activities would revolve.

A final interesting note on the mother and the father letters is that we can think of them as delineating a code. In other words, we can replace *yud* by *aleph*, *vav* by *mem*, and *hey* by *shin*. The father letters are used to write the most sacred name for *God* in Judaism, the *yud-hey-vav-hey*, and we often think of this as a masculine or *father name* for *God* as in *avinu malkeinu* (*our Father, our King*). If we replace these letters using our cipher, then we get *aleph-mem-shin-mem*. It would certainly be nice if we could find a hint that this is a *mother name* for *God*. Well, if we look closely, then we see that *aleph-mem* is ancient

⁵ This is another item that can also be related to mathematical group theory. Think of the *axis* as an *axis of symmetry*, and think of the *cycle* as the fundamental building block of a group of permutations. Thus, as a result of both symmetry and complex permutations created from the interactions of simpler cycles, space and time are created.

Hebrew for *mother* and *shin-mem* spells *name*. Hence, our cipher literally results in a *mother name*. Additionally, if we look at the *gematria* of this new name, we see that it is 381, the same as *v'ahsah* (vav-ayin-shin-hey) which can be translated as *he made*, or as I prefer to translate it, *IT made*. Hence, replacing the father letters in the name of *God* with the mother letters results not only in a *mother name*, but also in a reiteration that creation commenced with the mother letters. In other words, the beginning of creation is the separation of things into two opposites with a connecting link between them.

6:2 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin, air, water, fire. Fire to above and water to below, and air spirit/breath commands decisions between them, and a sign of this thing, the fire carries water. Mem is still, shin is a strident hiss, aleph is the air spirit/breath that commands decisions between them.

This verse, for the most part, repeats what we've seen before. In the human being, above we have the fire of the brain, below are the watery fluids of the abdomen, and between we have the air of the lungs. Fire represents form and water represents formlessness, and the bodily form is the vehicle for the formlessness of thought and consciousness. Fire carries water in that form is the vessel for the formless. Verbally, a reminder of this relationship is the word *shem* which means *name*. The hiss of the letter *shin* starts in the back of the mouth, and the still hum of the lips for *mem* is in the front of the mouth, and the silent air connects the two together. This word *shem* is also a reminder to us that the creation is what is meant by the *name of God*.

6:3 Axis in the world is as a ruler on its throne, cycle in the year is as a monarch in its country, heart in the person is as a ruler in conflict.

The *ruler on its throne* denotes *God* as unchanging just as the axis through the pole star is fixed while the constellations revolve around it. The *monarch in its country* denotes motion, and through the cycles of time, *God* is depicted as active and taking part in the affairs of the universe. Somewhat of a contradiction for an unchanging *God* to be so involved with change, but, as the philosopher *Zeno of Elea* would have said, at any given moment all is still and unchanging, and thus, all change is an illusion. And finally, the heart *as a ruler in conflict* is a reminder that the consciousness of the person is the connection between these two conflicting perceptions – static space and changing time. Furthermore, it is the consciousness of the person that creates our particular perceptions of *God*.

6:4 *“Also, this against this made Elohim (Ecclesiastes 7:14),” good against evil, evil against good, good from good, evil from evil, the good is the test of evil, and the evil is the test of good. Good is kept for the good ones, and evil is kept for the evil ones.*

This verse is also a reiteration of a fundamental point established previously. Namely, that the universe is the result of one thing being made an opposite of another by *God (Elohim)*, and the consciousness of the person as the connecting link between the opposites completes the triad. Furthermore, the name *Elohim* is connected in both *Kabbalah* and rabbinic literature with form and structure and, in particular, with the rational, left hemisphere of the brain. Thus, we could also say that it is this part of our brain that works to create our reality by separating infinite unity into finite pieces.

“Rav Huna said, ‘Whatever things you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, “Lo, these are but parts of His way,; and what blemish of aught is heard of Him?”

(Genesis Rabbah XII:1)

“We have been taught that all this differentiation of the Divine Personality is from our side and relative to our knowledge, and that, above, all is one, all is set in one balance, unvarying and eternal, as it is written: “I the Lord change not” (Malachi 3:6).’”

(Zohar II 176a)

6:5 *Three, each one stands alone. One exonerates and one convicts and one decides between them. Seven, three opposite three and one legislates a decision between them. Twelve stand in war*⁶. *Three love, three hate, three of life, and three of death. Three love, the heart and the ears. Three hate, the liver, the bile, and the tongue. Three of life, the two tunnels of the nose and the spleen. Three of death, two orifices and the mouth. And God King of Faith, ruler of them all from a holy dwelling until forever of forever. One on the back of three, three on the back of seven on the back of twelve, and all of them adhering to one another, this with this.*

In this passage, we are again shown the universality of the pattern of three. The pattern of seven, for instance, may be decomposed into two opposing patterns of three with a connecting principle between them. Similarly, the pattern of twelve may be decomposed into four patterns of three corresponding to *love*, *hate*, *life*, and *death*. The heart and the ears correspond to *love* because we love with the heart and we hear poetic words that set the heart afire. The liver, bile, and tongue correspond to *hate* because we spread rumors and lies with the tongue, *full of bile* is used to this day to denote someone who is full of hate, and even in Chinese acupuncture, for example, anger is seen as a result when the liver meridian is out of balance. The nostrils of the nose and the spleen give *life* because we breath through the nostrils, and today we understand quite well that a functioning spleen is an important part of a person's immune system. And finally, we read that the mouth and the two orifices correspond to *death*. In the *Talmud* we read not only that overeating is a primary cause of death, but if either of our excretory orifices are rendered nonfunctional, then we are in really big trouble!

⁶ Because perceptions involve opposites, we are constantly at war.

More people die from overeating than from hunger.

(B. Shabbat 33a)

Blessed is He who has formed man in wisdom and created in him many orifices and many cavities. It is fully known before the throne of Thy glory that if one of them should be improperly opened or one of them closed, it would be impossible for a man to stand before Thee.

(B. Berachot 60b)

And finally, notice the opening statement that “*each one stands alone.*” This is a reminder that even though we seem to be immersed in duality, we really have only one perception at a time, and like the flame and the coal, the observed and the observer can never be separated from one another. Thus, when is there any more than just the One? As we move up to higher levels, we begin to better understand that there is only the One, that everything we call reality is contained within the One, that we have never and can never be separate from the One, and that the One’s existence is more real than our own. It is paradoxical that our perception is generally focused on finiteness and limitation, but if this possibility were not contained within the One, then the One would not be everything. By definition, the totality of all things must contain, in a rather contradictory manner, even that which it is not. To quote Walt Whitman from *Song of Myself*, “*Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, (I am large, I contain multitudes.)*”

6:6 *These are they, twenty-two letters which with them IT decreed Keter, Chochmah, Binah, Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut , and IT made with them three books, and IT created with them all of ITS world, and IT formed with them all that was formed and all the multiplications to be formed.*

In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, this passage, like the beginning one, contains another list of names for *God*. However, to synchronize it better with later Jewish mysticism, I have replaced the *God names* with the names of the ten *sefirot* on the modern *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. The original appellations for each of the major versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* are found below:

APPELLATIONS 6:6				
<i>Assembler</i>	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Long</i>	<i>Saadia</i>
Keter	Ehyeh	(none)	Yah	(none)
Chokmah	Yah		Yaweh Lord of Hosts	
Binah	Yaweh Elohim		God of Israel	
Chesed	Yaweh		The Living God	
Gevurah	Yaweh Tzavaot		God Almighty	
Tiferet	Elohim Tzavaot		High and Exalted	
Netzach	El Shaddai		Dwelling in Eternity on High	
Hod	Yaweh Adonoy		His Name is Holy	
Yesod				
Malchut				

6:7 As an elder, Abraham, our father, looked and saw and understood and explored and decreed and shaped, and manually caused creation since it is said, “And the person that was made in Haran (Genesis 12:5).” And at once, IT became apparent to him, the Lord of All, blessed is His Name forever. And IT set him in his bosom and kissed him on his head and called Abraham ITS beloved, and IT cut a covenant with him and with his seed until eternity since it is said he relied on God, and IT reckoned it to him as righteousness. And IT cut a covenant with him between the ten fingers of his hands and it is the covenant of the tongue, and between the ten fingers of his feet, and this is the covenant of the flesh. And IT connected the twenty-two letters of the Instruction to his tongue and revealed to him their secrets. He settled them in water, made them glow with fire, vibrated them with spirit/breath, ignited them with seven planets, and conducted them with twelve constellations.

There are many that say, based upon this passage, that *Abraham* composed the *Sefer Yetzirah*, but that is not possible. The alphabet was not in existence in his time, and so he would not have been able to even engage in this discussion of creating the universe through the letters. Others believe that it was the famous *Talmudic* rabbi, *Rabbi Akiba*, who authored the work. Possible, but I have another theory as to its authorship. Based upon the grammatical style of the book, it was probably written, more or less, around the year 200 CE. This was about the time that a great *Talmudic* scholar, *Rav Huna*, was born. This is a name that is probably unfamiliar to most of you, but he is, nonetheless, my best guess as to the true author of the *Sefer Yetzirah*⁷. Here is my argument. If we look in the *Talmud*, we see that the theory that the universe was created with twenty-two letters is

⁷ To the best of my knowledge, no professional historian has yet hypothesized that Rav Huna is the author.

cited in the name of *Rav*. This in itself suggests that *Rav* was knowledgeable of mystical traditions.

“Rab Judah said in the name of Rav, ‘Bezalel knew how to combine the letters by which the heavens and earth were created.’”

(B. Berachot 55a)

Rav was born in the year 175 CE and lived in Babylonia where he started an academy at Sura, and this is the academy where the *Babylonian Talmud* was ultimately constructed. Also, *Rav*’s student and successor at the academy was *Rav Huna*, and teachings recorded in rabbinic literature indicate that *Rav Huna* also had a deep, mystical understanding of the universe. Hence, I suspect that *Rav Huna* is the true author of this ancient work.

“Lo, these are but parts of His ways, and what blemish of aught is heard of Him! But the thunder of His mighty deeds who can understand (Job 26:14)? Rav Huna said, ‘Whatever things you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, “Lo, these are but parts of His way,; and what blemish of aught is heard of Him? What defect is heard of Him? But the thunder of His mighty deeds who can understand?”’ Rav Huna said, ‘When thunder goes forth in its full force, no creature can understand it. It is not written, none understands, but “who can understand?” The intelligent know His hints and His thoughts.’ Said Rav Huna, ‘If you cannot comprehend the essential nature of thunder, can you comprehend the essence of the world?’”

(Genesis Rabbah XII:1)

“Solomon said, “For who knows what is good for man in his life, all the days of his vain life which he spends as a shadow (Ecclesiastes 6:12)?” As a shadow of what? If life is like the shadow cast by a wall, there is substance in it. If like the shadow cast by a date-palm, there is substance in it!’ David came and explained, ‘His days are as a shadow that passes away (Psalm 144:4).’ Rav Huna said in the name of R. Aha, ‘Life is like a bird which flies past and its shadow passes with it.’”

(Ecclesiastes Rabbah I:3)

There is but a single mention in the *Talmud* of the *Book of Formation* and its use for magical creation. The particular people involved are *Hanina*, *Oshaia*, *Rabbah*, and *Zera*,

and all of these are people that were involved one way or another with *Rav Huna*. *Oshaia*, *Zera*, and *Rabbah* (*Rabbah bar Nachmani*) were students of *Rav Huna*, and *Hanina* was *Oshaia's* brother⁸. Thus, all the principal players are one way or another linked to *Rav Huna*.

“Rabbah said: If the righteous desired it, they could [by living a life of absolute purity] be creators, for it is written, But your iniquities have distinguished between etc. Rabbah created a man, and sent him to R. Zera. R. Zera spoke to him, but received no answer. Thereupon he said unto him, ‘Thou art a creature of the magicians. Return to thy dust.’ R. Hanina and R. Oshaia spent every Sabbath eve in studying the ‘Book of Formation.’ by means of which they created a third-grown calf and ate it.”

(B. Sanhedrin 65b)

Nonetheless, I can certainly believe that *Abraham* understood the basic nature of the universe and the creative process, and additionally, once again we see above that the world is the result of one thing opposite another with a covenant or mediating agreement in between. Furthermore, the creative process can be summarized as beginning with formless inspiration (water), converting it to form (fire), and then animating it with spirit (breath). And in this way, we can create the world we desire. Additionally, the ending reference to planets and constellations suggests that one should make use of astrological timing when creating or, at the very least, that one's creations should be in harmony with the rest of the universe. However, a prerequisite for all of this is righteousness and

⁸ *Who's Who in the Talmud* by Shulamis Frieman

connection with *God* since it is written, “*He (Abraham) relied on God, and IT reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)*”

APPENDIX I

Gematria

Because we so frequently like to make use of *gematria* or Jewish numerology to uncover hidden connections between things, below is a table showing the name and shape of each Hebrew letter along with its numerical value.

NAME	LETTER	VALUE
<i>aleph</i>	א	1
<i>bet</i>	ב	2
<i>gimmel</i>	ג	3
<i>dalet</i>	ד	4
<i>hey</i>	ה	5
<i>vav</i>	ו	6
<i>zayin</i>	ז	7
<i>chet</i>	ח	8
<i>tet</i>	ט	9
<i>yud</i>	י	10
<i>kaf</i>	כ	20
<i>lamed</i>	ל	30
<i>mem</i>	מ	40
<i>nun</i>	נ	50
<i>samech</i>	ס	60
<i>ayin</i>	ע	70
<i>peh</i>	פ	80
<i>tzaddi</i>	צ	90
<i>kuf</i>	ק	100
<i>resh</i>	ר	200
<i>shin</i>	ש	300
<i>tav</i>	ת	400

APPENDIX II

The Sefirotic Tree of Life

The original geometric *Kabbalistic* model for the universe was the *cube of space*, but over time that model was superseded by the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. Additionally, over the centuries the meanings of the *sefirot* changed from their original intent as letters and directions into other formulations. The text we have been commenting on is early *Kabbalah* that focuses on the *cube of space* and the letters of the alphabet. However, in this appendix we want to give some introduction to the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* that is now the standard model for creation. What is presented below is also a summary of information that can be found in my previous Kindle book, *Kabbalah Class*.

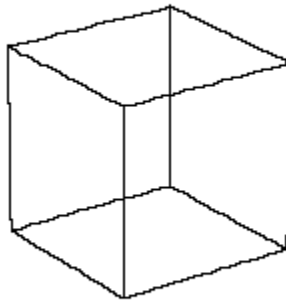
In the twelfth century work of Jewish mysticism known as the *Bahir* (*Book of Illumination*), we find an interesting reference to the *Tree of Life* being contained within the *cube of space*.

“The Blessed Holy One has a single Tree, and it has twelve diagonal boundaries. The northeast boundary, the southeast boundary, the upper east boundary, the lower east boundary, the southwest boundary, the northwest boundary, the upper west boundary, the lower west boundary, the upper south boundary, the lower south boundary, the upper north boundary, the lower north boundary. On the inside of them is the tree.”

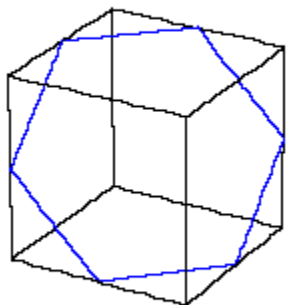
(Bahir 95)

What follows now are a series of diagrams that illustrate not only how one can find the modern *Sefirotic Tree of Life* within the *cube of space*, but also how the final version of this tree is based upon the symmetries of a hexagon and the *Star of David*.

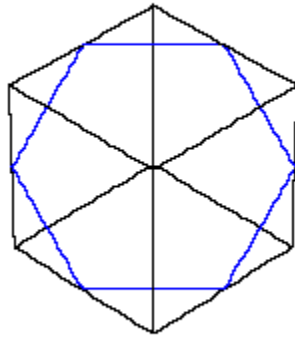
1. Start with a cube.



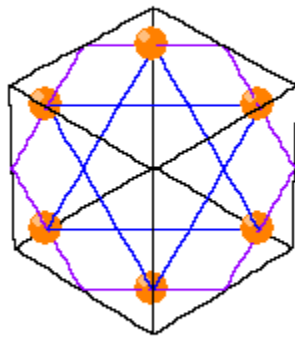
2. Connect the midpoints of six edges to make a *hexagon*.



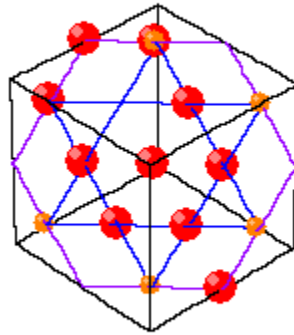
3. Rotate to more clearly see the *hexagon*.



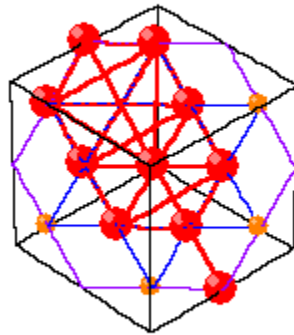
4. Inscribe a *Star of David* inside the *hexagon*.



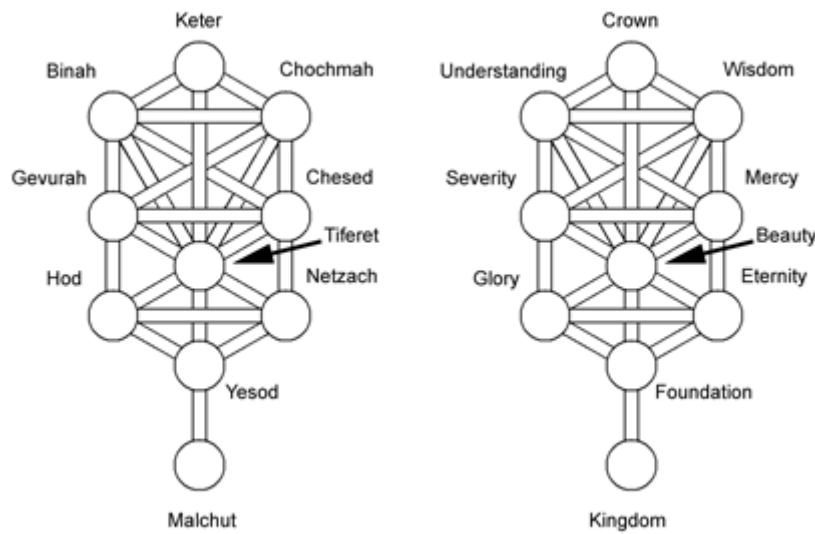
5. Mark the points on the star and the *hexagon* that define the *Tree of Life*.



6. Connect the dots and make a tree!



The *sefirot* are represented by 10 spheres in the *Tree of Life* diagram, and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet are assigned to paths that connect those spheres. The diagram with the names of the 10 *sefirot* in both Hebrew transliteration and English is as follows:



Part of the basic structure of this *tree* is the presence of two sets of polar opposites or dichotomies. We can think of the very bottom of the *tree* as pertaining to the physical world and the top of the *tree* pertains to the spiritual world. Thus, as we move up the *tree* we are moving from the physical to the non-physical. The right side of the *tree* represents formlessness, and the left side of the *tree* is structure. The right side of the *tree* also corresponds to the right hemisphere of the brain where perception is more holistic, and the left side corresponds to the left hemisphere where structure is created.

We'll start at the bottom with *Malchut*, the Kingdom. This is just the material world, hard core physical reality. Directly above *Malchut* is *Yesod*, Foundation. Think of this in terms of your physical body, your persona, and your habits or basic reactions to things. In other words, *Yesod* is your interface with the physical world. It is also the foundation on which the rest of your being rests. Thus, you want to have a healthy physical body

and to have good habits and a personality without guile. If your foundation is good, then it's easy to build on and move up to the next level.

To the right of *Yesod* is *Netzach*, Eternity. *Netzach* is our basic right brain mode of functioning. In the right hemisphere of the brain, things are apprehended in a more holistic manner without detailed analysis, and, consequently, there is no time. The memory of the good time we had one day when we were a child sits right alongside the great dinner we had today. They both make their psychological impact on us without reference to time. Because in the right brain perceptions are distinguished only by intensity and not by time, we refer to this realm as Eternity.

To the immediate left of *Yesod* is *Hod*, Glory. This *sefirah* refers to the analytical functions of the left hemisphere of our brain. Typically, we think of all these left brain functions as what distinguishes us from the other mammals on the planet. We can reason and solve problems and reach great intellectual heights, and as human beings that is our glory.

Directly above *Yesod*, is *Tiferet*, Beauty and Harmony. This *sefirah* corresponds to our ego, our sense of self, and our moral compass. It is the "I" within, the inner identity by which we describe ourselves. When we are little, our actions are more instinctive, and we have comparatively little or imperfect control over ourselves. Our consciousness at this point is centered at *Yesod*, and we are, in some respects, only slightly more evolved than the animals we might keep as pets. When we reach our teenage years, though, we

begin to develop more of a sense of self and individuality as well as awareness of others, and we begin to pull away from our parents. If we have established good habits, then we will blossom into a moral individual at this point and be able to take greater control and responsibility of our life. On the other hand, if we have not developed good habits, then we will still seek greater freedom, but we will be more controlled by our desires and impulses. Notice that on the *Tree of Life* that *Tiferet* is essentially in the middle and directly connected to all the other parts of the tree with the exception of *Malchut*. This is because *Tiferet* represents the balance point within our being. After we have experienced all the other parts of the *tree*, all the other parts of our being, this is where we should sit in order to keep everything else in balance and harmony. When our development is complete, we will be good, moral individuals with the ability to make choices without being a slave to either others or our own desires, and we will be able to focus our attention in any direction we wish. *Tiferet* is the point of harmony within our universe.

To the right of *Tiferet* and slightly above is *Chesed*, Mercy, Kindness, and Love. Think of *Chesed* as a higher function of the right hemisphere of the brain. Also, since love and mercy are not things with sharp boundaries, they belong on the formless side of the *tree*. But again, if we develop in a proper fashion, then we not only develop a healthy ego and good control over ourselves (*Tiferet*), we also become more giving individuals and develop a greater capacity for love and kindness (*Chesed*).

To the left and above *Tiferet* we find *Gevurah*, Strength and Severity. This *sefirah* is on the left side of the *tree*, so we naturally expect it to be connected with form and with left

brain functions. In its proper development, it represents moving from just having a brain (*Hod*) to being able to use that brain (*Gevurah*). As such, *Gevurah* represents a higher stage in our intellectual development. If we mature properly, then in our teen years we find ourselves also with greater intellectual capacity. We begin to appreciate our ability to do math and to read and comprehend great literature. Our minds become strong. On the other hand, if we don't have a proper development, then we only increase our capacity to plot and scheme and to be judgmental. We create severity both for ourselves and for others. Another term applied to *Gevurah* is *Din*, Judgement. We also sometimes think of *Gevurah* as tough love, that love that comes with caveats and restrictions as opposed to the unconditional love of *Chesed*.

Back on the right side of the *tree* and directly above *Chesed* is *Chochmah*, Wisdom. This *sefirah* represents the highest level of functioning of the right hemisphere of the brain, and it corresponds to what I call the "aha" moment. Whenever we are trying to solve some puzzle or problem, there is that moment where we say "aha," and we know we've got the answer. At that point, the answer is still formless. It hasn't been put into words, but we know we have it. We feel a tremendous rush of excitement and joy, and the bigger the problem, the bigger that "aha" moment is. That "aha" is our encounter with Wisdom.

Once we have our inspiration in *Chochmah*, the left side of the brain immediately begins to interpret it and give it structure. This is the function of *Binah*, Understanding. This *sefirah* lies to the left of *Tiferet* and directly above *Gevurah*. This is the highest level of

functioning of the left hemisphere of our brain. We can liken it to when we have completely mastered a subject and we take joy in seeing and understanding all the interconnections between the various parts of that topic. That is when our brain is like a Beethoven symphony reveling in the comprehension of a theme and its many variations. It is a very high level of intellectual functioning.

Directly above *Tiferet* at the top of the *tree* is *Keter*, the Crown. Just as *Yesod* is our interface with the physical world, *Keter* is our point of contact with whatever it is that lies beyond our being on non-physical planes. It corresponds to the crown of our head where we feel a spiritual light enter our body when we are in an exalted state. The *sefirah* of *Keter* is also the source for that inspiration we receive in *Chochmah*. Thus, *Keter* is our muse, our genius. This *sefirah* is additionally associated with will and intent. Intent is often where many of our actions begin. We will ourselves to get out of bed in the morning, and we have the intent to accomplish things throughout the day. But where does this intent come from? Who knows? That's as far back as we can trace it. Our journey from the top can only start with *Keter*. Beyond that, there is no me or you to talk about.

There are many patterns in the *Tree of Life* to discern and appreciate. One of the more obvious ones is that of the three vertical pillars that the tree defines. On the right we have the *pillar of mercy*, on the left the *pillar of justice*, and the third pillar is the *middle path* that balances the other two. We also associate the right pillar with expansion and giving and the left pillar with constriction, receiving, and the creation of form. And as we've

mentioned before, the presence of two opposites and a mediator in between is a central theme of the *Sefer Yetzirah*.

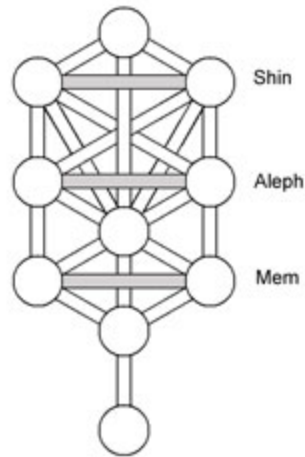
Another pattern of three we see is formed by the *sefirot Keter, Chochmah, and Binah*. We can think of this as the spiritual triad. If we are functioning at this level, then our intent or will reigns supreme and we can delight in the emergence of our inspirations and our understandings and then the dissolution of both back into oneness.

Below this we have the moral triad of *Tiferet, Chesed, and Gevurah*. At this level of functioning, if our development has been good, we are a moral being capable of making good choices and being responsible for them. We can direct our lives and use both sides of our brain, and we can find that proper balance between mercy and justice.

The lowest triad is the instinctual triad of *Yesod, Netzach, and Hod*. This is the level at which children function. They operate mostly out of instinct, and they need the guidance and control of a mature adult. From *Yesod* we learn that children need to develop good habits so that they will have a good foundation for when they are older. From *Hod* we learn that children need to begin developing their brains and learning the basic skills that will carry them successfully through the rest of life. And from *Netzach* we learn that children also need time to play and to dream.

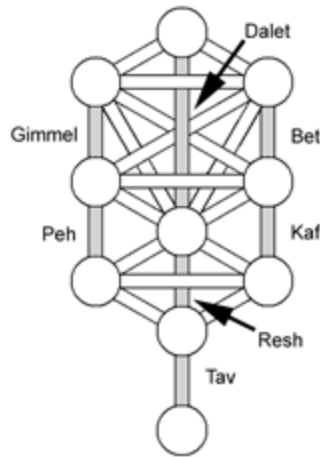
That takes us through the basic structure of the ten *sefirot*. Let's start looking now at the paths that connect them!

The Three Mother Letters



On the *Tree of Life* there are just three paths that connect the left and right sides of the *tree*, and these paths correspond to the three mother letters: *Aleph*, *Mem*, and *Shin*. The top connecting path is *Shin*, the middle path is *Aleph*, and the bottom connecting path is *Mem*. Elementally, these are fire, air, and water. Notice that this also corresponds to our physical anatomy. We have electrical fire in the brain, air in the lungs, and water and other fluids in the organs of the belly. Also, as connecting paths, these letters represent ways in which we can balance the two sides of our being by using activities involving fire, air, or water.

The Seven Doubles



There are seven letters in the Hebrew alphabet that can be pronounced with either a hard sound or a soft sound. It's these letters that are represented by the seven vertical paths that we find on the *Tree of Life*. As such, they represent activities that can elevate us from one level of the tree to another. Let's begin with the paths that travel up the central column of the tree.

The letter *Tav* connects *Malchut* and *Yesod*, and it stands for *Torah*. Recall, too, that the word "*Torah*" means "instruction." Thus, what elevates us above the level of the beasts and instills good habits within is following our original instructions. For me that means I will try to base my behavior on the commandments. This, in turn, puts me on a path that leads to that good foundation.

The letter *Resh* connects *Yesod* with *Tiferet*, and it stands for *rachamin*, compassion. The word *rachamin* is also related to the word *rechem*, womb. Thus, the love of a mother for her child in the womb is seen as the model for compassion. Through the development of such compassion, we become aware of others and their suffering, and we begin to see that there is a world beyond that of just me, me, me! At this point, we become moral individuals capable of making these good, responsible choices.

The letter *Dalet* connects *Tiferet* to *Keter*, and it stands for *da'at*, knowledge. *Dalet* also represents the Hebrew word for “door.” In *Kabbalah*, knowledge has a specific meaning just as do wisdom and understanding. In fact, knowledge is seen as the synthesis of these two. In other words, if our higher wisdom and understanding are functioning properly, then the result will be a depth of knowledge that will open the door to a higher realm of being.

Recall, too, that *Tiferet* is both the center of the *Tree of Life* and the center of our being. In every day life, we experience our center as our ego, our sense of “I.” The Hebrew word for “I” is *ani*. However, if we rearrange the letters, then this spells *ain* or *ai-een* which means “negation” or “nothingness.” Thus, when we become aware of the unseen observer that stands behind our sense of “I,” then we can ascend from ego consciousness to more cosmic consciousness. When we become firmly established in the true observer, then we ascend to *Keter*, but we can, nonetheless, also still be at the center of our *Tree of Life* because this unseen awareness has been described as having center everywhere and circumference nowhere.

On the left side of the tree, we have *Peh* on the path from *Hod* to *Gevurah* and *Gimmel* on the path connecting *Gevurah* to *Binah*. *Peh* is also the Hebrew word for mouth, and this suggests that the way to progress from ordinary left brain activities to the higher level of intellectual functioning of *Gevurah* is to control your mouth. In other words, learn to control both your tongue and your appetites! In the *Talmud*, *leshon hara*, gossip or the evil tongue, is considered equivalent to murder. Don't do it! Additionally, we have to chew on and digest the things we learn.

The letter *Gimmel*, from *Gevurah* to *Binah*, stands for *gamal*, a camel. As a camel crosses the desert, it has to live off of its own fat and water. Likewise, in our intellectual development, there comes a time when we have to live and work with what is inside of us in order to get to the next level. Furthermore, *Gimmel* also stands for *gomeil*, benefactor, i.e. giving to others. When we give an explanation to others of what we have learned, then, as all teachers know, our own understanding ascends to a higher level.

On the right side of the tree, the letter *Kaf* connects *Netzach* to *Chesed*, and *Bet* connects *Chesed* to *Chochmah*. *Kaf* stands for *kavannah*, intention or devotion. This word is often used to represent those spontaneous prayers, praises, and supplications that arise from the very soul of our being. By engaging in these *kavannahs*, we can elevate our right brains to a higher level of love and mercy. The letter *Kaf* also stands for *cohein*, a priest. Additionally, in the *Talmud* we read that a non-Jewish person who studies the *Torah* is equivalent in stature to the High Priest.

“Rabbi Meir used to say, ‘From where can we learn that even if a gentile occupies himself with the study of the Torah he is equal in status to the High Priest? We find it stated, ‘You shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them. (Leviticus 18:5)’ It does not say “priests, Levites and Israelites”, but “a man”, which shows that even if a gentile occupies himself with the study of the Torah he is as the High Priest.’”

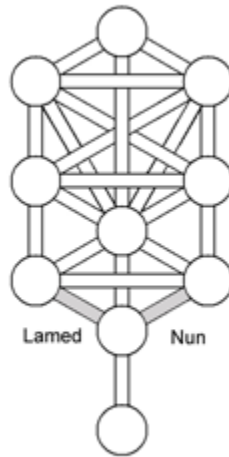
(B. Baba Kama 38a)

Thus, the study of *Torah* (and the rest of the *Bible*) is elevating for everyone. However, since the letter *Kaf* represents a pathway on the right side of the *Tree of Life*, this is a reminder that scriptures have an emotional/feeling component as well as a thinking/intellectual component. Detailed analysis of scripture in order to arrive at deeper spiritual truths belongs to the left, analytical side of the *Tree of Life*. For study related to the right side, pick a pleasing *Psalm* or other scripture whose very beauty and eloquence reveals to you a higher truth.

The letter *Bet*, among other things, stands for blessings. Furthermore, the Hebrew word for “blessing” can also be translated as “praising.” Once we have reached the level of love and mercy and kindness on our right side, we can travel still higher by giving blessings to things and also by giving praise. The letter *Bet* also stands for *bayit*, a house. In particular, when we exhibit kindness and mercy as represented by *Chesed*, then we create a house within us for higher wisdom.

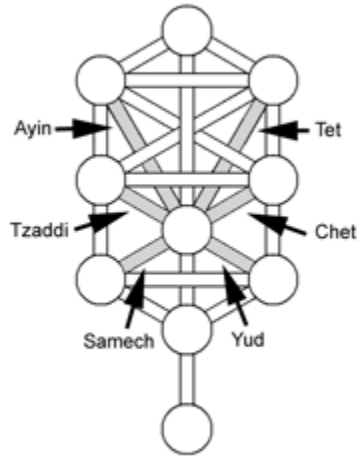
The Twelve Elementals

The remaining twelve letters of the Hebrew alphabet are assigned to the diagonal paths that go from one column to another. We think of these paths as not only moving us vertically, but also horizontally on the *Tree of Life*.



The first letter we'll look at is *Lamed* which connects *Yesod* to *Hod*. *Lamed* stands for *lamad* which means to learn. Through learning we stimulate the left side of our brain and begin our intellectual development.

Next we have *Nun* which connects *Yesod* to *Netzach*. *Nun* stands for *neheman*, faithful. When we listen to that still voice within and learn to accept on faith what we know to be true, then we begin to stimulate the more intuitive right side of the brain.



The next six letters we will look at all connect to *Tiferet* which represents the core of our self. Consequently, each path leading to *Tiferet* is a pathway to the essence of our being. We'll start with *Samech*. The letter *Samech* connects *Hod* to *Tiferet*, and one of the meanings of *Samech* is *samoch*, support. When we turn our attention from the mental activity we are engaged in to the consciousness that is supporting that activity, we move from *Hod* to *Tiferet*. The shape of the letter *Samech* is a circle, and this is a reminder of the cyclic nature of our thoughts. We often go round and round again with the issues that concern us. Additionally, our whole existence seems to be wrapped up in cycles. There is the cycle of day and night, the cycle of the seasons, and so on and so on. When we move in the direction from *Tiferet* back to *Hod*, we move from that which supports our existence back into the world of cycles.

The letter *Yud* connects *Netzach* to *Tiferet*. We are now starting in the right brain and moving toward the center. In this case, think of *Yud* as standing for *y'chidah*, unity. It is in the conscious awareness of *Tiferet* that all objects of perception are united. The letter

Yud also stands for *yad*, hand. With our hands we grasp things, and with our awareness, we also grasp. In *Netzach* we have a holistic, right brain perception of things, and when we turn our attention to the awareness that is grasping that apprehension, then we move from *Netzach* to *Tiferet*. The letter *Yud* also stands for the expression *yordei merkabah*, descent into the *merkabah*, the phrase that the practitioners of the *work of the chariot* used to describe the initial phase of their mystical journey which was then followed by an ascent into the various heavens. With regard to the *Tree of Life*, this means a descent from the balance point of *Tiferet* into the right brain mind represented by *Netzach* followed by an ascent up the right side of the *tree*.

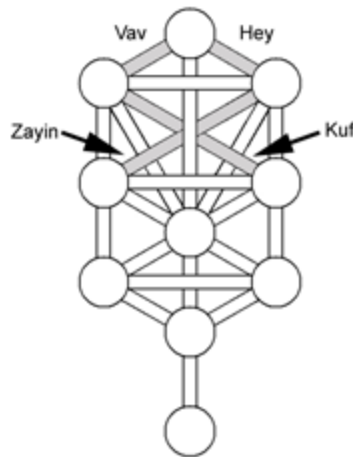
The letter *Tzaddi* connects *Gevurah* to *Tiferet*. In Hebrew, a *tzaddik* is a righteous person. Thus, through the practice of righteousness we are able to perceive our true essence more clearly and to become more centered. There is also the tradition that this world continues to exist because of the presence of a minimum of thirty-six righteous people.

The letter *Chet* is the link from *Chesed* to *Tiferet*. *Chet* stands for *chai*, live, and *chaim*, life. When we are in the loving state of *Chesed*, if we focus on the source of our life, then that will help center us in *Tiferet*. The letter *Chet* also represents *chein*, grace/favor, and *Chesed*, mercy/kindness. This informs us that when we extend grace and mercy and kindness to people, we also enhance life.

Connecting *Tiferet* and *Binah* is the letter *Ayin*. This letter has a numerical value of 70, and there is a rabbinic tradition that every verse of the *Torah* has seventy interpretations.

In my own experience I have found that whenever you are able to understand anything in several different ways, you automatically move up to a higher level of understanding. Understanding multiple points of view is always elevating. In Hebrew the word *ayin* means “eye.” Thus, when we turn our focus away from the lofty understandings we are having back to the essence of consciousness that sees those understandings, then we make that move back from *Binah* to *Tiferet*.

Connecting *Tiferet* to *Chochmah* is the letter *Tet*. This letter stands for *tov*, good. When we put our focus on doing good, we move from *Tiferet* to *Chochmah*, the place of higher wisdom. Additionally, in the *Talmud* it says that every man was formed with two inclinations, one good and one evil or self-serving.



We now look at the final four elemental letters beginning with *Kuf* which connects *Chesed* to *Binah*. The letter *Kuf* stands for *kadosh*, holy. To make the transition form

Chesed on the right side of the tree to *Binah* on the left side, focus on those feelings of holiness within, and let that transport you to a higher state. The letter *Kuf* also stands for *klippot*, shells. In *Kabbalah*, the *klippot* are the shells that hide the holiness that resides at the center of all things. Consequently, as we move from a higher part of the *Tree of Life* to a lower part, the light of this holiness becomes more obscured. The letter *Kuf* also stands for *kof*, monkey, and this is a reminder that human beings are a combination of both spirit and physical form, and that we can choose to go in either direction. We can either accentuate our spiritual side or we can descend to the level of beasts.

The letter *Zayin* connects *Gevurah* to *Chochmah*. This letter represents a sword, and the glyph for *Zayin*, ז, even looks like a sword. Remember that *Gevurah* is on the left side of the tree which deals with form and discrimination. In one sense, we create our reality by cutting the totality of all things into pieces and saying, “This goes here,” and “That goes there.” If we reverse the process, if we stop our hair splitting and quit creating separations and distinctions between things, then we can travel from *Gevurah* back to *Chochmah*. The numerical value of the letter *Zayin* is seven, and this also reminds us of the *Sabbath*, the seventh day of the week. This is the one day of the week when we want to rest. The one day when we want to stop our slicing and dicing method of creation and return to the higher wisdom of *Chochmah*. Furthermore, since *Chochmah* represents the “aha” moment, this is the type of thought we want to engage in on the *Sabbath*. The kind of mentation that is used to generate reports and other mundane learning and writing activities is tedious by comparison. On the other hand, the “aha” moment of *Chochmah*, Wisdom, renews and refreshes.

Just two letters left! And these are the two connecting *Binah* and *Chochmah* back to the crown, *Keter*. This means that if we are traveling these paths, then we are already at a very high level. The letter *Vav* connects *Binah* to *Keter*, and *Vav* represents the connective “and.” You can also think of *Vav* as representing “union.” However, this is a different type of union from what we experience in mathematics. In mathematics when we talk about the union of two sets, *A* and *B*, we are talking about two collections merely being combined to give us a larger collection. The union signified by *Vav*, though, is different. The *Vav* union is of the type where “the two become one.” In other words, instead of the union of two collections *A* and *B* simply resulting in a larger collection, we have *A* and *B* merging in such a way that they become indistinguishable from one another. This is the type of union that is indicated, for example, in the following verse from *Genesis*.

“Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.”

(Genesis 2:24)

When we are in *Binah* consciousness, if we can remove all distinctions between the objects of our perception and unite both the observer and the observed into a single whole, then we will attain *Keter* consciousness. When we are in *Binah* consciousness, all we have to do is simply ask ourselves where does understanding occur? At the moment when we know an object, where does that object go? If we can shift from the looking to that which does the looking, then we can unite our understanding with the very source of

awareness because it is into this awareness that all objects merge and disappear leaving only a wordless, objectless understanding.

The final path is the letter *Hey* which connects *Chochmah* to *Keter*. When moving in this direction, think of *Hey* as standing for the Hebrew word *hass*, silence. As we move from *Chochmah* to *Keter*, we enter the Great Silence into which all perceptions disappear. This state is suggested by the following verse from *Ecclesiastes*,

“All the rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. That place from where the rivers come, there they return again.”

(Ecclesiastes 1:7)

Think of the sea as representing our basic awareness or consciousness. All objects arise in consciousness and disappear into conscious awareness, and yet that awareness is never full. Similarly, all being extends from *Keter* and then returns again into that state of nothingness or *Ayin*, another name for *Keter*. When *Hey* is spelled as a word, *hey-aleph*, it has a numerical value of six, the same as *Vav*. Thus, the function of *Hey* is similar to that of *Vav*, and both paths represent the union of things, the six directions and the *cube of space*, back into awareness. When traveling the path from *Keter* to *Chochmah*, think of *Hey* as standing for *hayah*, the verb to be.

This concludes this brief introduction to the letters that form the connecting paths on the *Tree of Life*, and hopefully it has been very helpful. Before we finish, though, there are

just a couple of other patterns we would like to point out. First, remember always that the *Tree of Life* is a diagram that represents the structure of our being. What is beyond this structure is outside of what humans can know or put into words. Also, the most sacred name of *God* in Hebrew is spelled *Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey*, יהוה, and we find a reflection of this name in the *Tree of Life*. The very tip of the letter *Yud* represents *Keter*, and the rest of it corresponds to *Chochmah*. The first letter *Hey* represents *Binah* and the second letter *Hey* represents *Malchuth*. Since both of these *sefirot* are represented by *Hey*, this is another way in which we see that the physical world is a mental creation. This also says that to change things in this world, we have to go to a high level, i.e. to the level where the basic programming is done. For example, if you feel that you are a worthless person and have nothing but bad luck and rejection as a result, you have to go up to the level where that thought “I am a worthless person” is programmed in, and you have to change the program there before you will see a change in your life. The remaining six *sefirot* in the *Tree of Life* correspond to *Vav*, the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the glyph for the number 6. And finally, if we arrange the Hebrew letters of the most holy name for *God* vertically, then the image of a man emerges. In this way the *Tree of Life* teaches us that even though we are limited and finite, we are still made in *God's* image and can understand *God* through that link and connection.



Spiritual Practices

At this point, it might be appropriate to describe a few of my spiritual practices and how I use the *Tree of Life* as a tool for balance. As you should know by now, the left side of the tree corresponds to the left brain, the right side to the right brain, the upper part of the tree is related to that inspirational *something-from-nothing creation*, and the bottom part of the tree is associated with *something-from-something creation*. Hence, a few times each week I take stock of myself to see where I am and what my current position is on the *Tree of Life*. Since I am a mathematician and often involved with the precise structure of mathematics, my predilection is generally to be somewhere a little left of center on the tree. Thus, I will often make a conscious effort to engage in right brain activities for the

sake of balance. If I want the activity to be more earthbound, then I may simply take some time to play guitar and sing a few songs. If I want my activity to be at a little higher level, then I'll take my cue from the letter *kaf* and engage in *kavvanahs*, devotional meditations and prayers. And if I want to ascend to an even higher level, then I'll follow the blessing path of the letter *bet* and visualize people I know as I mentally send blessings to them. This should give you some idea of how to use the *Tree of Life* and its paths in order to help balance your being. Another mental check I do is to regularly determine what kinds of creative activities I've been engaging in. If it's been awhile since I've engaged in *something-from-nothing creation*, then I do an activity that can result in intense "*aha*" moments such the pondering of *Torah* or rabbinic literature or the creation of a piece of writing, and with each "*aha*" moment I have there is a tremendous expansion of joy and understanding that takes place within. At the other end of the spectrum, if it's been *something-from-something creation* that I've been neglecting, then it's time for me to do some yard work or straighten up my office! This type of positive rearrangement of the environment is also necessary for overall balance.

Ideally, the ultimate point of balance on the *Tree of Life* is the *sefirah* of *Tiferet*, beauty and harmony. It is located at the center of the tree, and it is connected to most of the other *sefirot*. When we are centered at *Tiferet*, we are responsible and no longer subject to every whim and desire that comes along. Instead, we have gained some mastery over our self. Beyond this, though, are the levels of *Dalet* and *Keter*. Recall that *Dalet* stands for *da'at* (knowledge), and as we move to levels of higher knowledge and oneness, we also become more aware that our description of ourselves is just another object that we

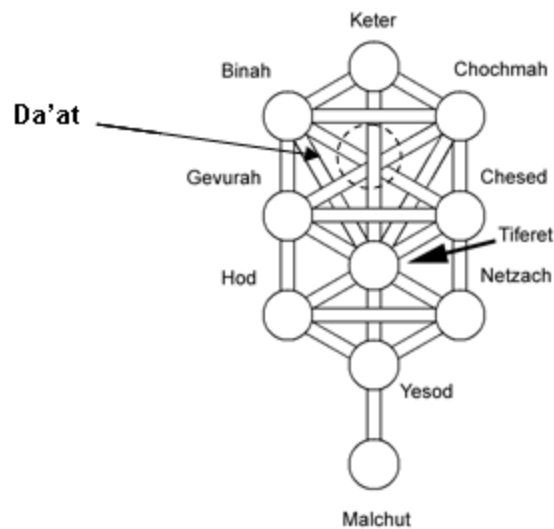
can let go of, and once we do that then it becomes very easy to merge everything with the source of our awareness and return the *Assembler* to its base. As we become more evolved, the mere intent to move our consciousness from one part of the tree to another is all that it takes to create the necessary shift.

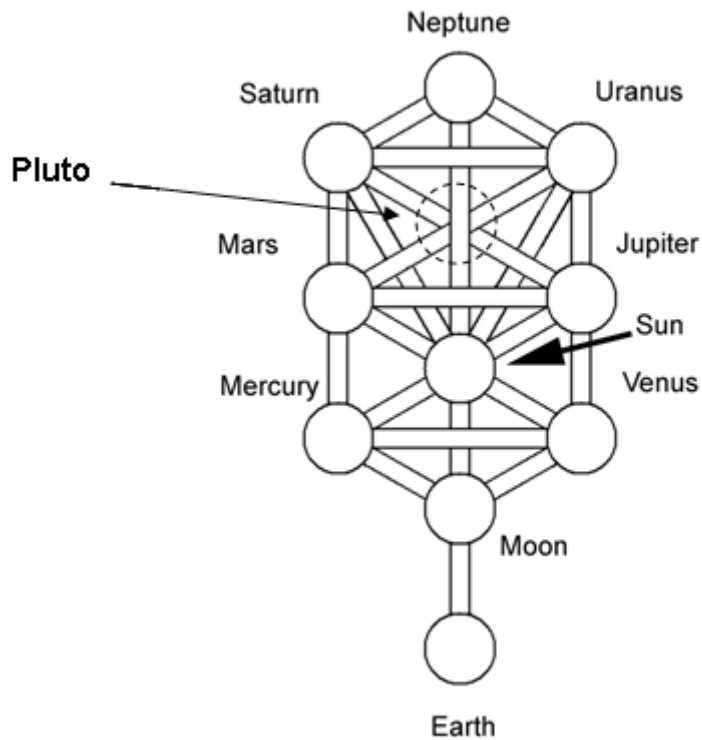
In addition to using the *Tree of Life* as a tool for balance, I also recite the *Shema* every morning and evening (*"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of the glorious kingdom for ever and ever."*). As the *Zohar* explains, when the *Shema* is said with the proper intent, you are helping to create unity in both the upper and lower worlds, and restoring unity to the universe is one of the most important creative acts you can engage in. Thus, when you say the first part, focus and really feel the oneness of *God*, and when you say the second part, say it with great intent so that you can feel this oneness and connectedness spreading throughout the world. Additionally, I have my own list of commandments and injunctions from *Torah* and rabbinic literature that I try to engage in on a daily basis. These can be as simple as greet everyone with a smile or just don't kill anyone today. Nonetheless, their performance can help keep me on an even keel. And finally, I go to *Torah* study on a regularly basis so that I can have the support of a spiritual community and be enriched by the insights of others. In summary, (1) use the *Tree of Life* as a roadmap for shifting and balancing your state of consciousness, (2) create an intention of unity in the world every morning and evening, (3) engage in commandments or behaviors that will help make you a righteous person, and (4) be part of a community that can help you grow spiritually. If you do all of these things, then your wisdom and understanding will evolve in a very safe and natural way.

APPENDIX III

Astrology

For what we are going to do here with *astrology* and in the next appendix on *tarot* it matters not whether these tools of prognostication work or not because we are going to treat them first and foremost as symbol systems and grand mythologies. Hence, our concern is more on the psychological level. We only want to concern ourselves with the meanings of the symbols in these different systems and see if we can relate them to the elements that comprise the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. To the extent that we can, we will ultimately be able to arrive at a larger understanding of our own *Kabbalistic* system by being able to view it through a larger perspective. Fortunately, both of these systems do match up well with our *tree*, and below is the standard representation of the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* and the correspondences for the planets employed in modern astrology.





Malchut, the kingdom, is clearly represented by the *Earth*. Furthermore, the path above *Malchut* corresponds to the letter *Tav*, and since *Malchut* is also connected with *Binah*, it makes sense to also connect both *Tav* and *Malchut* with *Saturn*, the planet of form and structure.

Yesod, foundation, is represented by the *Moon*. In *astrology*, the *Moon* rules our physical body, feelings and sensations, our persona, health, and personal habits, and as such, it is the *foundation* upon which we build the rest of our life. Additionally, the physical body is our interface with the universe, and in the *Tree of Life* we could say that *Yesod* is the interface with the physical plane since it is the only *sefirah* connected to *Malchut*. Also,

the path above *Yesod* corresponds to the letter *Resh* which stands for *rachamim*, compassion, and if we develop good habits, then we will naturally be a compassionate person.

Hod represents the base function of the analytical left hemisphere of the brain, and as such it corresponds quite well to the mental activities of *Mercury*. Additionally, the path above *Hod* is represented by the letter *Peh*, mouth, and it is obvious that the mouth is our instrument of communication, and communication is one of the principal attributes of *Mercury* in astrology.

Netzach can be translated as *eternity*, and it corresponds to *Venus* in *astrology*. The planet *Venus* is what Freud called the “pleasure principle,” the drive to reduce tension, and this leads us to seek a state of timeless pleasure where each moment is an unstructured eternity. Furthermore, the letter assigned to the path above *Netzach* is *Kaf*, and thus, we also associate the letter *Kaf* with both *Venus* and meditative states.

Tiferet is the center of our *tree*, and it represents the ego as the center of our being. In *astrology*, the *Sun* has the same meaning, and so it corresponds to *Tiferet*. Similarly, since the path above *Tiferet* is ruled by the letter *Dalet*, door, we connect *Dalet* with the *Sun*, and we see it, too, as the door to undifferentiated consciousness.

Chesed represents higher mercy and kindness within the *Tree of Life*, and in *astrology* the planet *Jupiter* represents expansion and growth. What they explicitly have in common is

the notion of giving. Both *Jupiter* and *Chesed* represent unconditional giving. Furthermore, the letter *Bet* corresponds to both blessings and to the path directly above *Chesed*. Hence, through blessings, both physical and non-physical, we can give to one another in a positive way.

Gevurah represents strife, struggle, severity, and valor on the *Tree of Life*, and in *astrology* the planet *Mars* represents the same. And since the path above *Gevurah* is assigned to *Gimmel*, it is this letter that we first connect with higher discipline of the mind. It is at this level that we learn to direct our thoughts and become the spiritual warrior that is represented by the potential of *Mars*.

Binah represents the highest, most evolved form of mental structure on the *tree*, and likewise, in *astrology*, the keyword for *Saturn* is structure.

Chochmah is spontaneous wisdom and enlightenment on the *Tree of Life*, and in *astrology*, this state of sudden illumination is ruled by *Uranus*.

Keter on the *Tree of Life* is a state in which all structure and boundaries disappear as we approach unbounded infinity, and *Neptune* has the same meaning in *astrology*.

Da'at means “knowledge” in Hebrew, and it is not really a *sefirah*. It is often referred to, however, as a *pseudo-sefirah*. What it really is is the standard word for the interaction of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, wisdom and understanding, the right brain and the left brain. The

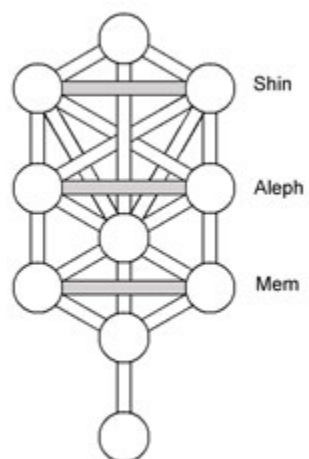
successful interaction of the two hemispheres of the brain results in a deep knowledge of ourselves and our universe, and this knowledge is what ultimately transforms us and takes us beyond our ego to a higher level. Similarly, in *astrology*, the planet *Pluto* represents deep transformations.

APPENDIX IV

Tarot

It is primarily Western occult and mystery schools such as the now defunct *Order of the Golden Dawn* that have pioneered the relationship between the twenty-two trump cards of the *tarot* and the twenty-two paths of the *Sefirotic Tree of Life*. However, the *tree* they use is not the same version used by most Jewish *Kabbalists*, and the letter assignments they make to the paths do not create the same correspondence between the *tree* and the *Sefer Yetzirah* that we've been exploiting. Consequently, their assignments for the *Tarot* trumps also do not fit our scheme. Thus, in this appendix I'm proposing what I believe the assignments ought to be for our particular *tree*. We'll begin with the three mother letters, *aleph-mem-shin*, and we'll follow with the seven double letters.

The three mother letters correspond to air, water, and fire, and fortunately, there are three trump cards that show a correspondence to these elements. The *Sun* card corresponds to fire, the *Moon* card to water, and the card known as the *Lovers* depicts clouds and the angel of air in their midst. Also, by showing male and female lovers, this card can represent the air element as the agent for mediation between the opposites. Hence, our first three paths on the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* are represented as follows:





Shin - fire

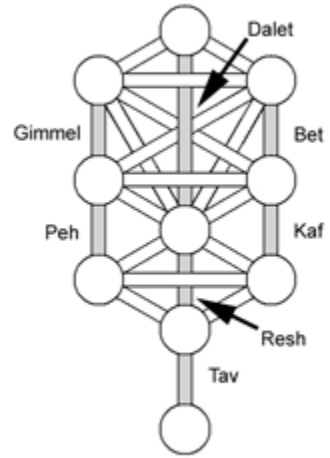


Aleph - *air*



Mem - *water*

Next, we have the seven double letters, *bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav*, that correspond to the vertical paths on the *Tree of Life*. The *tarot* cards that I assign to these letters are as follows:



Bet – The World

This assignment makes sense because of the tradition from the *Zohar* that the world was created with the letter *bet* which stands for a blessing.

Gimmel – The Hermit

Cards on the left side of the *tree* should correspond more to structure while those on the right side should correspond more to feelings and emotions. In this case, *gimmel* is on the left side corresponding to the left brain, and it connects to the highest level on this side. Hence, it is well represented by a seeker of intellectual enlightenment. Additionally, *gimmel* stands for *gamal*, a camel, and like a camel, the *Hermit* has to rely on his inner resources.

Dalet – Death

The path from *Tiferet* to *Keter* on the *Sefirotic Tree of Life* is one of transformation in which the individual ego has to die in order for a more cosmic level of consciousness to emerge. Similarly, *Death* is also a transformation for one state to another.

Kaf – High Priestess

The *High Priestess* is a spiritually attuned woman, and she belongs on the right side of the *tree* rather than the left side because her path is devotional and intuitive as opposed to intellectual and deductive. Hence, she corresponds quite

well to the *kavannahs*, the spontaneous devotions of the heart that are represented by the letter *kaf*.

Peh – Temperance

The letter *peh* is on the path from *Hod* to *Gevurah* on the left side of the *tree*, and it represents the discipline that one must undergo to hone the mind. This letter also represents the Hebrew word for “mouth,” and we’ve talked before about the necessity for controlling one’s tongue and appetites. Thus, the card *Temperance* fits in well with what is required on this path.

Resh – The Hanged Man

The path of *resh* connects *Yesod* to *Tiferet*, and it represents that transition from a consciousness that can only think about itself to one that is capable of compassion for others. This type of transition in consciousness begins in most people around puberty when they make that change from childhood to becoming a morally responsible adult. However, to make this transformation one’s world has to be completely turned upside down, and that is what the *Hanged Man* represents.

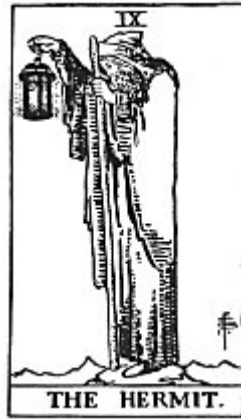
Tav – Strength

It is written in *Genesis Rabbah VIII:11* that man was created partly with characteristics of the beasts of the field and partly with characteristics of the angels, and how we fair in life all depends on which of these two natures we pay heed to. If we listen to our higher being, then we create a good foundation for

ourselves and we develop righteousness. The *tarot* card for *Strength* shows a divine being subduing a lion, and since *tav* connects the path from *Malchut*, the earthly kingdom, to *Yesod*, our foundation, this card is once again a very good fit for this path.



Bet – *creating the world for a blessing*



Gimmel – *guided by one's inner light*



Dalet – *transformation from self to beyond self*



Kaf – *devotional worship*



Peh – *disciplining one's thoughts*

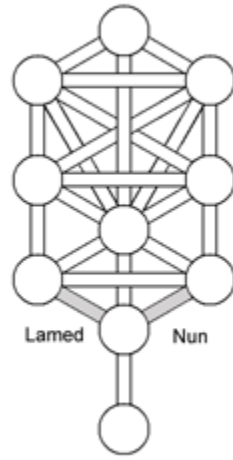


Resh – *reversing the focus from “me” to “you”*



Tav – *subduing the beast within*

We now begin our exploration of the remaining twelve plain letters, and we'll start with *lamed* and *nun*. Here are my *tarot* card assignments.



Lamed – The Magician

The letter *lamed* connects *Yesod*, foundation, to *Hod*, glory. The letter *lamed* stands for *lamad*, learning, and *Hod* represents the basic analytical function of the left hemisphere of the brain. Thus, this is where our cleverness resides and where the real magic of the mind takes place. Consequently, the appropriate card for this path is the *Magician*.

Nun – The Empress

The letter *nun* connects *Yesod* to *Netzach* which corresponds to our basic right brain functions such as timelessness and intuition. The image of the *Empress* is a woman seated on a throne surrounded by symbols of *Venus* and enjoying the moment. Hence, this a perfect match for the activities of the right hemisphere of the brain.

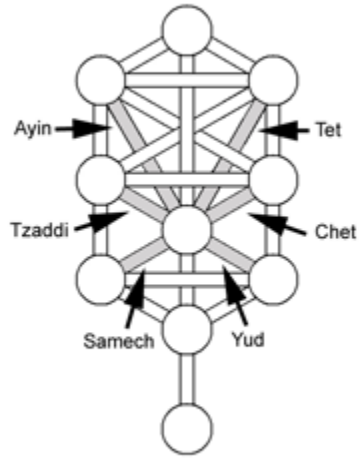


Lamed – the power of the mind



Nun – the beauty of the moment

Next, we'll look at the letters *samech-yud-tzaddi-chet-ayin-tet*. Here are the cards that I assign to these letters.



Samech – The Emperor

The letter *samech* stands for *samoch*, support, and the path for *samech* connects *Hod* to *Tiferet*, the very center of the *tree*. The center of the *tree* represents our ego, our sense of “I,” and sitting behind the eye is the silent observer. With respect to the other parts of our psyche, the ego is the king, the emperor of all, and it is the ego which must control and rule all the mental schemes of *Hod*. Thus, the *Emperor* is a good card for this path.

Yud – The Chariot

The early forms of mystical Jewish meditation and mental journeying were known as the *work of the chariot* after *Ezekiel's* vision of *God's* chariot. Traditionally, the start of this journey was described by the phrase *yordei merkabah*, descent into the chariot, and our *Tree of Life* diagram helps us make sense of this phrase. On the *tree* we see the letter *yud* on a path from *Tiferet* (our ego) that descends to *Netzach* (our right brain and subconscious). Hence, the *work of the chariot* begins with a descent into the less structured type of mentation represented by the right hemisphere of the brain, and from there we ascend to the more exalted states of consciousness that are represented by the *sefirot* on the right side of the *tree*.

Tzaddi – Justice

In Hebrew, the letter *tzaddi* stands for *tzaddik*, a righteous or just person, and so it is only appropriate that the *tarot* card for this letter be *Justice*.

Chet – Star

The letter *chet* stands for *chai* and *chaim*, life, and in the imagery of the *tarot* card *Star*, we see a pool of living water.

Ayin – The Devil

The numerical value of the letter *ayin* is seventy, and it says in *Jeremiah* 23:29 that the word of the *Lord* is like a hammer that breaks the rock. Rabbinic tradition says that the rock is broken into seventy pieces, the numerical value of *ayin*, and the mystical understanding is that this represents the transition from unity to multiplicity. And it is in this sense that the *Devil* card applies. When we enter the world of multiplicity and lose sight of *God's* unity, paradise is lost and we are enslaved by our mistaken perceptions. However, in the imagery of this card, the man and the woman are only loosely bound, and it is in their power to remove their chains at any moment.

Tet – Wheel of Fortune

The letter *tet* connects *Tiferet* with *Chochmah*, the higher wisdom of the right hemisphere of the brain. In particular, *Chochmah* represents an unstructured type of knowing and apprehension and the “aha” moment of sudden enlightenment. We can always prepare and hope for inspiration, but its appearance is always governed by chance rather than strict causality. And that is why the *Wheel of Fortune* is a good fit for this path.



Samech – the ego is the ruler of the mind



Yud – we descend into the subconscious before ascending to higher states



Tzaddi – the tzaddik pursues righteousness and justice



Chet – our minds must drink from the waters of life

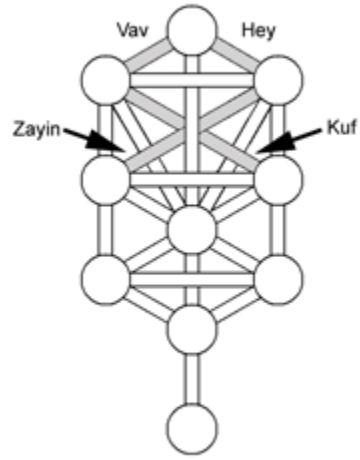


Ayin – when we lose sight of the One, illusion keeps us in bondage



Tet – at the highest level we find spontaneous illumination

And now we have just four letters left, *zayin-kuf-hey-vav*. Here are the cards that I assign to these letters.



Zayin – The Tower

This letter connects the path from *Gevurah*, representing a well-honed analytical brain, to *Chochmah*, the higher but unstructured enlightenment of the right hemisphere of the brain. The imagery of this card is that of a tower being blown apart by lightning, and that is what happens to all our structure when enlightenment occurs. Thus, the *Tower* is an excellent fit for this path.

Kuf – The Hierophant

This path starts at *Chesed* on the right side of the *tree* and takes us to *Binah* on the left side. This destination is the pinnacle of understanding that may be achieved through the activities of the left hemisphere of the brain. It is an intellectually enlightened state, but one that it is still surrounded by structure, and this is also what the *Hierophant* represents. The *Hierophant* denotes spiritual understanding within the context of the structure of a religious institution.

Hey – The Fool

We often think of the path of *hey* as representing the first step from the world of spirit to the physical plane. When we begin this journey, we are like a new born babe, we are simple and without guile, and this is the higher meaning of the *Fool*. The *Fool* is not necessarily a stupid person, but one who is without schemes and devious complexity. Their inside is like their outside. Thus, this card represents the purity of our first steps.

Vav – Judgment

If *hey* represents the beginning of our journey, then *vav* represents the end. We have developed our brains as much as possible and solved as many riddles of the universe as we could, and now it is time to rejoin with the Oneness. However, a step in that process is to review our lives and what we've done, both the good and the bad, and in that way we judge ourselves. This *Judgment* of self is the last step in our journey back to wholeness.



Zayin – the flash of enlightenment disrupts our old routines



Kuf – holiness is often found first within the structure of our own religious beliefs



Hey –simplicity is a virtue, not a fault



Vav – we are judged by our own thoughts

THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLER

1:1 With thirty-two wondrous paths (netivot) of ITS own wisdom, IT, Yah, the Creator of Multiplicity, created ITS universe with three books (seferim), with story (sefer), with number (safar), and with communication (sippur).

1:2 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint (belimah) and twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers and seven doubles and twelve plain.

1:3 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint in number. Ten fingers, five against five, and a unifying alliance oriented in the middle in the cut of the tongue and in the cut of the flesh.

1:4 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand with wisdom, and be wise with understanding. Examine with them and explore with them, and stand each word and thing on its wellspring, and return the Assembler to its base.

1:5 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Their measure is ten, and to them there is no end. A profound depth of beginning and a profound depth of end. A profound depth of good and a profound depth of evil. A profound depth of height and a profound depth of below. A profound depth of east and a profound depth of west. A profound depth of north and a profound depth of south. And a unifying Master, God King of Faith, ruler of them all, from a holy dwelling, until forever of forever.

1:6 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Observed like a flash in a mirror, their purpose has no end. And the words and things of IT are in them, running and returning, and to ITS utterances they rush like a whirlwind, and before ITS throne they bow. And behold, "Whatever you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One (Genesis Rabbah XII:1 & Job 26:14)."

1:7 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Their end is contained in their beginning, and their beginning in their end. As a flame connected with a burning coal, the Master is unified, and there is not a second. And before the One, what is there to count?

1:8 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Restrain your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking, and if your mouth runs to words or your heart to reflections, return them to their place. Thus, it is said, "And the living beings (chayot) ran and returned (Ezekiel 1:14)," and upon this word a covenant was cut.

1:9 Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. One: Spirit/breath of the Living Elohim (God). Praised and blessed is ITS name, containing the Life of the Worlds, voice and breath and words, and the spirit of the holy.

1:10 Two: Spirit/breath from spirit/breath. With it, IT decreed and shaped twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers, and seven doubles, and twelve plain, and one spirit/breath within them

1:11 Three: Water from spirit/breath. IT decreed and shaped with it twenty-two letters, from inconceivable chaos to conceivable disorder, formless mud and formed soil. Decreed and engraved as like a furrow, shaped as like a wall, covered as like a fortress. And snow is poured upon them and it becomes dust since it is said, “‘To snow,’ IT exclaims, ‘Be earth (Job 37:6).’”

1:12 Four: Fire from water. IT decreed and shaped with it the Throne of Glory, Seraphim, Ophanim, and the holy living creatures (Chayot), and the messenger/angels that serve, and from these three (air, water, and fire), IT established a dwelling since it is said, “IT makes his messenger/angles of spirit/breath, his servants of flaming fire (Psalm 104:4).”

1:13 IT selected three letters from the plain ones, in mysterious counsel with the three mothers aleph-mem-shin, and IT placed them in ITS Great Name, and sealed/completed with them six extremes. Five: IT sealed/completed height and turned ITS attention to ascent and sealed/completed it with yud-hey-vav. Six: IT sealed/completed below and turned ITS attention to beneath and sealed/completed it with yud-vav-hey. Seven: IT sealed/completed east and turned ITS attention to front and sealed/completed it with hey-yud-vav. Eight: IT sealed/completed west and turned ITS attention to behind and sealed/completed it with hey-vav-yud. Nine: IT sealed/completed south and turned ITS attention to the right side and sealed/completed it with vav-yud-hey. Ten: IT sealed/completed north and turned ITS attention to the left side and sealed/completed it with vav-hey-yud.

1:14 These are the ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Spirit/breath of the Living Elohim (God), spirit/breath from spirit/breath, water from spirit/breath, fire from water, ascent and beneath, east and west, north and south.

2:1 Twenty-two letters of foundation, three mothers and seven doubles and twelve plain. Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. A scale of credit and a scale of debit, and a tongue of decree decides between them. Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. Mem is still, shin is a strident hiss, aleph is the air spirit/breath that decides between them.

2:2 Twenty-two letters of foundation. IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them all that was formed and all the multiplications to be formed.

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.

2:4 Twenty-two letters of foundation. IT established them in a circle like a type of wall with 231 gates, and IT repeats the cycle front and back, and a sign for this thing is that there isn't in good anything more elevated than joy (oneg), and there isn't in evil anything beneath affliction (negah).

2:5 How? IT combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them. Aleph with all of them and all of them with aleph, bet with all of them and all of them with bet. Repeating in a cycle and existing in 231 gates and existence, all the formed and all the spoken, coming out from One Name.

2:6 IT formed reality from formless amazement, and made ITS nonexistence existence, and IT shaped great pillars from air that cannot be caught, and this is a sign, aleph with all of them and all of them with aleph. IT observes and transforms, and makes all that is formed and all spoken things One Name, and a sign for this thing, twenty-two desires in a single body.

3:1 Three mothers, aleph-mem-shin. Their foundation is a scale of credit and a scale of debit, and the tongue of decree decides between them.

3:2 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin, a great and wondrous secret, covered and sealed with six rings, and out of them air, water, fire, and from them originated fathers (yud-he-vav), and from fathers, consequences.

3:3 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin. IT decreed, shaped, combined, weighed, and exchanged and assembled with them. Three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the world, and three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the year, and three mothers, aleph-mem-shin in the person, male and female.

3:4 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the world, air, water, fire. Heaven was created from fire, and earth was created from water, and air from spirit/breath decides between them.

3:5 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the year. Hot, cold, and moderate. Hot was created from fire, cold was created from water, and the time of moderation from spirit/breath decides between them.

3:6 Three mothers aleph-mem-shin in the person, male and female. Head and abdomen and chest. Head is created from fire, and abdomen is created from water, and the chest from spirit/breath decides between them.

3:7 IT made ruler the letter aleph in spirit/breath and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them air in the world and moderate in the year and chest in the person, male with aleph-mem-shin and female with aleph-shin-mem.

3:8 IT made ruler the letter mem in water and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them earth in the world and cold in the year and abdomen in the person, male with mem-aleph-shin and female with mem-shin-aleph.

3:9 IT made ruler the letter shin in fire and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them heaven in the world and hot in the year and head in the person, male with shin-mem-aleph and female with shin-aleph-mem.

4:1 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. They conduct themselves with two tongues, bet-vet, gimmel-ghimmel, dalet-daleth, kaf-khaf, peh-pheh, resh-rhesh, tav-thav. A paradigm of soft and hard, strong and weak.

4:2 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. Their foundation is wisdom, wealth, seed, life, dominance, peace, and grace.

4:3 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav in speech and in substitution. The substitute of wisdom, foolishness. The substitute of wealth, poverty. The substitute of seed, ruin. The substitute of life, death. The substitute of dominion, slavery. The substitute of peace, conflict. The substitute of grace, ugliness.

4:4 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. Ascent and beneath, east and west, north and south, and the Holy Temple dwelling in the middle, and it carries them all.

4:5 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. Seven and not six, seven and not eight. Examine with them and explore with them, and stand each word and thing on its wellspring, and return the Assembler to its base.

4:6 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav of foundation. IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them seven planets in the world, seven days in the year, seven gates in the person, male and female.

4:7 Seven planets in the world, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, and Saturn . Seven days in the year, seven gates in the person, male and female, two eyes, two ears, two tunnels of the nose, and the mouth.

4:8 IT made ruler the letter bet in wisdom and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Jupiter in the world, first day (Sunday) in the year, and right tunnel of the nose in the person, male and female.

4:9 IT made ruler the letter gimmel in wealth and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Mars in the world, day two (Monday) in the year, and right ear in the person, male and female.

4:10 IT made ruler the letter dalet in seed and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Sun in the world, day three (Tuesday) in the year, and right eye in the person, male and female.

4:11 IT made ruler the letter kaf in life and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Venus in the world, day four (Wednesday) in the year, and left tunnel of the nose in the person, male and female.

4:12 IT made ruler the letter peh in dominance and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Mercury in the world, day five (Thursday) in the year, and left ear in the person, male and female.

4:13 IT made ruler the letter resh in peace and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Moon in the world, day six (Friday) in the year, and left eye in the person, male and female.

4:14 IT made ruler the letter tav in grace and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Saturn in the world, day seven (Saturday) in the year, and mouth in the person, male and female.

4:15 Seven doubles bet-gimmel-dalet-kaf-peh-resh-tav. With them were decreed seven worlds, seven firmaments, seven lands, seven seas, seven rivers, seven deserts, seven days, seven weeks, seven years, seven sabbaticals, seven jubilees, and the Holy Temple. Therefore, beloved are the sevenths beneath all the heavens.

4:16 Two stones build 2 houses, three stones build 6 houses, four stones build 24 houses, five stones build 120 houses, six stones build 720 houses, seven stones build 5040 houses. From here, henceforth, go and consider what the mouth is not able to speak and the ear is not able to hear.

5:1 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is conversation, reflection, walking, seeing, hearing, action, procreation, smelling, sleeping, anger, swallowing, laughter.

5:2 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is twelve diagonal boundaries. Boundary east north, boundary east ascent, boundary east below. Boundary north west, boundary north ascent, boundary north below. Boundary west south, boundary west ascent, boundary west below. Boundary south east, boundary south ascent, boundary south below. And they are permitted to go until forever, and behold, they are the boundaries of the world.

5:3 Twelve plain, hey-vav-zayin-chet-tet-yud-lamed-nun-samach-ayin-tzaddi-kuf. Their foundation is IT decreed them, shaped them, combined them, weighed them, and exchanged them, and IT formed with them twelve constellations in the world, twelve months in the year, twelve conductors in the person, male and female.

5:4 Twelve constellations in the world. Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces.

5:5 Twelve months in the year. April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March.

5:6 Twelve conductors in the person, male and female. The circulation-sex meridian, triple warmer meridian, lung meridian, stomach meridian, heart meridian, small intestines meridian, kidney meridian, gall bladder meridian, liver meridian, large intestines meridian, spleen meridian, bladder meridian.

5:7 IT made ruler the letter hey in conversation and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Aries in the world, April in the year, and circulation-sex meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter vav in reflection and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Taurus in the world, May in the year, and triple warmer meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter zayin in walking and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Gemini in the world, June in the year, and lung meridian in the person, male and female.

5:8 IT made ruler the letter chet in seeing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Cancer in the world, July in the year, and stomach meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter tet in hearing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Leo in the world, August in the year, and heart meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter yud in action and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Virgo in the world, September in the year, and small intestines meridian in the person, male and female.

5:9 IT made ruler the letter lamed in procreation and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Libra in the world, October in the year, and kidney meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter nun in smelling and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Scorpio in the world, November in the year, and gall bladder meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter samech in sleeping and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Sagittarius in the world, December in the year, and liver meridian in the person, male and female.

5:10 IT made ruler the letter ayin in anger and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Capricorn in the world, January in the year, and large intestines meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter tzaddi in swallowing and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Aquarius in the world, February in the year, and spleen meridian in the person, male and female.

IT made ruler the letter kuf in laughter and connected to it a surrounding circle and combined this with this and formed with them Pisces in the world, March in the year, and bladder meridian in the person, male and female.

Made as like a furrow. Fixed as like a wall. Ordered as like in conflict.

6:1 *These are they, three mothers aleph-mem-shin, and emerging out of them three fathers yud-hey-vav, and they (the mothers) are air, water, fire, and from the fathers, generations. Three fathers and their generations, and seven planets and their hosts, and twelve diagonal boundaries. A proof of this thing, trustworthy witnesses in world, year, and person, and a law of twelve and seven and three commanded in the axis and cycle and heart.*

6:2 *Three mothers aleph-mem-shin, air, water, fire. Fire to above and water to below, and air spirit/breath commands decisions between them, and a sign of this thing, the fire carries water. Mem is still, shin is a strident hiss, aleph is the air spirit/breath that commands decisions between them.*

6:3 *Axis in the world is as a ruler on its throne, cycle in the year is as a monarch in its country, heart in the person is as a ruler in conflict.*

6:4 *“Also, this against this made Elohim (Ecclesiastes 7:14),” good against evil, evil against good, good from good, evil from evil, the good is the test of evil, and the evil is the test of good. Good is kept for the good ones, and evil is kept for the evil ones.*

6:5 *Three, each one stands alone. One exonerates and one convicts and one decides between them. Seven, three opposite three and one legislates a decision between them. Twelve stand in war. Three love, three hate, three of life, and three of death. Three love, the heart and the ears. Three hate, the liver, the bile, and the tongue. Three of life, the two tunnels of the nose and the spleen. Three of death, two orifices and the mouth. And God King of Faith, ruler of them all from a holy dwelling until forever of forever. One on the back of three, three on the back of seven on the back of twelve, and all of them adhering to one another, this with this.*

6:6 *These are they, twenty-two letters which with them IT decreed Keter, Chochmah, Binah, Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut, and IT made with them three books, and IT created with them all of ITS world, and IT formed with them all that was formed and all the multiplications to be formed.*

6:7 *As an elder, Abraham, our father, looked and saw and understood and explored and decreed and shaped, and manually caused creation since it is said, “And the person that was made in Haran (Genesis 12:5).” And at once, IT became apparent to him, the Lord of All, blessed is His Name forever. And IT set him in his bosom and kissed him on his head and called Abraham ITS beloved, and IT cut a covenant with him and with his seed until eternity since it is said he relied on God, and IT reckoned it to him as righteousness. And IT cut a covenant with him between the ten fingers of his hands and it is the covenant of the tongue, and between the ten fingers of his feet, and this is the covenant of the flesh. And IT connected the twenty-two letters of the Instruction to his tongue and revealed to him their secrets. He settled them in water, made them glow with fire, vibrated them with spirit/breath, ignited them with seven planets, and conducted them with twelve constellations.*

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