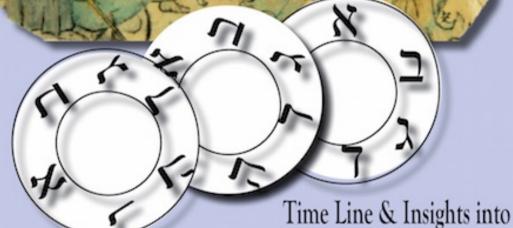
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ROM ROBERT ZUCKER



By Robert E. Zucker

& the Kabbalah Wheel

Jewish Mysticism

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Jewish Mysticism, the Ancient Kabbalah & the Book of Formation – Sepher Yetzirah

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KABBALAH'S SECRET CIRCLES: TIMELINE TO JEWISH MYSTICISM, THE ANCIENT KABBALAH & THE BOOK OF FORMATION (SEPHER YETZIRAH) By Robert E. Zucker

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This book contains Divine Names, please handle with care.

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"In order for science to study and force, It must be manifested into some objective form." ¹

¹ Quote by Robert E. Zucker from the introduction to HERMETICS: CONSCIOUSNESS & HYPER-PERCEPTIVITY (1976), a college research manuscript written for multi-course credit. In science and Jewish mysticism, once a force is able to be measured, its "form" is usually depicted in a symbolic or numerical value.

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Note: All Hebrew and non-English words are in *italics* and book titles are in CAPITAL LETTERS. Foreign language titles are in *ITALIC CAPITAL LETTERS*.

Opening the Kabbalah Circle

ewish mysticism often sparks the imagination with scenes of nefarious rituals and Medieval incantations. What once was a spiritual and deeply religious experience become distorted through generations of wives-tales, books, movies, television, and history.

There are many legends about biblical figures and famous rabbis with superhuman talents who could explore the hidden realms of the Heavens, conjure angels, and enliven artificial creatures. They claimed to possess a secret and sacred knowledge to manipulate nature and human consciousness.

For centuries, this knowledge was verbally shared among small circles of followers who studied the metaphysical ² aspects of the *TORAH* and related religious literature. Over time, many of these ancient Jewish oral teachings (*mishna*) and traditions (*aggadah*) were put into writing and became known collectively as the *Kabbalah*.

Rather than rehash the fundamentals of *Kabbalah*, this volume explores the development and practices of Jewish mysticism from history's most prominent religious leaders, including a comprehensive historical survey of the infamous BOOK OF FORMATION (*SEPHER YETZIRAH*).

Discover how these age-old traditions began and how to utilize some of the techniques once kept hidden from the public for millennium. Many of these principles are divulged in the words of famous Jewish authorities who shared their understanding of the cryptic, esoteric messages in Judaic literature. Based on their discussions, an ancient device has been uncovered—the *Kabbalah* Wheel. For someone unfamiliar with the *Kabbalah*, this volume presents an insight into a hidden side of Jewish culture. A person with knowledge of those practices will be able to optimize this

10

² Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that explores the basic nature of 'being' and the world that encompasses it.

information and further their path to enlightenment.

This book is actually three books in one. The first part covers more than 5,000 years of Jewish mysticism.

The second section presents the first two chapters from *SEPHER YETZIRAH* (also known as the BOOK OF CREATION)— the book that greatly influenced Jewish mystical thought over the centuries. The highlight of this volume are the instructions to assemble an ingenious, homemade, device called a *Kabbalah* Wheel. This unique gadget is revealed for the first time in eight centuries to decode the mysteries of the 231 Gates described in the first two chapters of the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*.

Included in this volume are copies of my some of my personal notes, art work and charts used over the past four decades to map this path across time. For further study, there are more than 700 footnotes that reference books and articles used in this research.

While these pages cannot cover the entire spectrum of Jewish mysticism, enough information is presented to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the *Kabbalah*.

Robert Zucker January 1, 2017

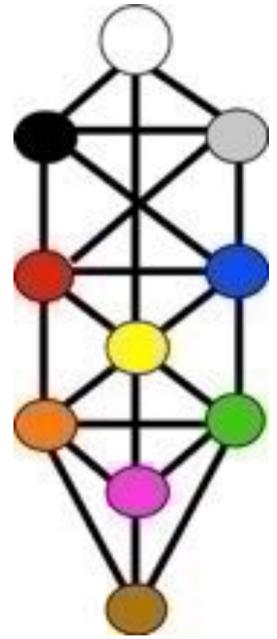
Jewish Mysticism and The Kabbalah

ewish mysticism bridges the connection between the material and the spiritual worlds in order to become closer to God. This practice, secretly shrouded with legends and traditions, is collectively called the *Kabbalah*.

The word '*Kabbalah*' (*Q-B-L-H* \overrightarrow{A} \overrightarrow{A} \overrightarrow{A} \overrightarrow{A}) is derived from the Hebrew "to receive, reception" or "tradition." The *Kabbalah* ⁵ is the collection of traditions received from our ancestors.

These traditions may have originated with the first man— Adam, who supposedly acquired a magical book from the angels that contained the secrets of the Universe.

Part of these "traditions" may have also been received by Moses on Mt. Sinai along with the written Ten Commandments. Legend says that Moses communicated these secret teachings to Joshua, his successor. This sacred knowledge was passed on through generations until it was written down about 2,000 years ago.



Graphic representation of the Tree of Life.

⁵ The Modern English spelling of *Kabbalah* is used in this volume instead of the more traditional *Qabalah*.

For centuries, only a few select rabbis and their followers kept this hidden from the general public, although the fundamental concepts of *Kabbalah* permeate all Jewish religious services and thought.

The Medieval term "cabal" is used described a clandestine circle of people who share similar interests at the exclusion of outsiders. *Kabbalists* were members of their own secret society. It was so secret that only those "in the know" were aware of its existence. However, the advent of the printing press over 500 years ago, and some prolific writers, made it possible for the masses to eventually have access to this occult knowledge.

There is no one authoritative book on the *Kabbalah*. Since these teachings were transmitted verbally over hundreds of generations there are numerous interpretations. By the time they were written down, much of the original intent was lost in time.

The ancient manuscripts of the SEPHER YETZIRAH, the BAHIR, the ZOHAR, the TANYA and SEPHER RAZIEL are some of the most popular handbooks on Kabbalah that still exist today to carry on these teachings. These works, including the TORAH, provide the cornerstones to understand this secretive, mystical practice.

There is an underlying theme common among all of these important texts. This is embodied in the concept of the Tree of Life— a symbolic representation of humans and their interaction with the Universe.

Some practitioners only focused on the religious aspects of the Tree of Life and its ten spheres (called *Sephirot* in Hebrew). Other groups employed practical applications such as meditation exercises, elaborate ceremonies, and cryptic letter permutations techniques. Either way, they depended on the basic principles of the *Kabbalah* to achieve their goals.

While the true knowledge is buried deep in the early Hebrew culture, these concepts were introduced into the general populous during the Middle Ages. Jewish *Kabbalists* followed the original traditions and Christian Cabalists interpreted the Semitic teachings through the veil of their own religious views.

But, *Kabbalah* is not a religion. The *Kabbalah* is based on elementary ideas and their interrelationships. It is used as a meditative gaze into one's soul. Understanding the deeper, symbolic meaning and relationships between each of the 22 Hebrew letters is the Key to understanding oneself and the universe around us.

The Angel Raziel's Secrets



"Each day the angel Raziel makes proclamations on Mount Horeb, from heaven, of the secrets of men to all that dwell upon the earth, and his voice resounds throughout the world." ⁹ 10

 $^{^{9}}$ From the $\it Targum$ on Ecclesiastes 10:20. A $\it Targum$ is a version or "a translation."

¹⁰ Image from Zedcor Graphics collection.

he archangel *Raziel* ¹¹ played a major role in early Jewish mystical tradition. His name is first mentioned in the BOOK OF ENOCH, composed sometime before the Common Era (C.E.). 12

Raziel sits among the highest class of archangels with Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel. The archangel Raziel was the transmitter of secrets and author of the legendary BOOK OF THE ANGEL RAZIEL.

In a rabbinical explanation (called a *Targum*) about the above passage, *Raziel* stands on the peak of Mount Horeb and shouts out the secrets of mankind for all to hear. To preserve this wisdom, Raziel collected all of the knowledge of the Universe into a book- the BOOK OF RAZIEL (SEPHER RAZIEL) or the BOOK OF SECRETS. According to some legends, this "book" was originally inscribed on a sapphire stone. ¹³

The Hebrew word raziel (Trin) means "Secret of God."

- *RAZ*–() is Hebrew for "secret."
- -AL(78) is the suffix used for the word "God."

The BOOK OF RAZIEL explained everything from the astrology of the planets to the creative life energy- birth, death, reincarnation of the soul, and other occult subjects. 14

The archangel explained that the contents of the book contained "all things worth knowing (that) can be learnt, and all mysteries, and it teaches also how to call upon the angels and make them appear before men, and answer all their questions."

This "book" contained the sacred 72 branches of wisdom and 670 sacred inscriptions. In the middle was a "secret writing explaining the thousand and five hundred (1,500) Keys which were not revealed even to the holy angels," according to the ZOHAR. 15 16

The ZOHAR is the compendium of Jewish mystical tradition compiled in the 13th century from

¹⁵ ZOHAR 1, 55a-b.

¹¹ Raziel is also spelled as Razeel, Reziel, Ratziel and Galizur.

¹² Raziel, by Crawford Howell, Ludwig Blau, from JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA. The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia.

¹³ "BOOK OF RAZIEL," from JEWISHENCYCLOPEDIA.com.

¹⁴ Davidson, Gustay, A DICTIONARY OF ANGELS, pages 242-243.

¹⁶ Gaster, Moses, Ph.D., THE SWORD OF MOSES, AN ANCIENT BOOK OF MAGIC, Samuel Weiser, Inc. 1973, page 15.

Moses Receives the Oral Tradition

Then Moses received the Ten Commandments— the "Written Law"— on Mt. Sinai, during the Exodus from Egypt about 1440 B.C.E., legend claims he also received another, more sacred, Wisdom that was not written in stone. This is the "Torah Shebe'al Peh," the unwritten Oral Tradition.



Jewish legend believes that Moses verbally transmitted this sacred knowledge to Joshua, who passed it on to the Elders.

The Elders shared these "traditions" with the Judges. From the Judges it was passed to the Prophets.

The Prophets then entrusted this knowledge with the most learned men in the synagogues, and they passed it on to other wise men. This collective knowledge eventually became part of today's *Kabbalah*.

Moses with the Ten Commandments graphics. Zedcor Graphics.

⁷⁷ Kaplan, Aryeh, *SEPHER YETZIRAH*: THEORY, by page 343. Moses studied the letters on Mt. Sinai, from *PIRKEY* RABBI ELEAZER OF WORMS, 48 (Warsaw, 1852), 116a.

⁷⁸ Nissan, Dovid Dubov. THE ORAL TRADITION, Chabad.org.

The Ancient 72 Triplet Names

ווסע מלאך האלהם ההלך לפני מחנה ישראל וילך מאחריהם ויסע עמוד העגן מפניהם ויעמד מאחריהם: 12 ויבא כין מחנה מצרים וכין מחנה ישראל ויהי הענן והחשך ויאר את הלילה 14 קרב זה אל זה כל הלילה: 15 ויט משה את ידו על הים ויולך יהוה את הים ברוח קדים עזה כל הלילה 16 וישם את הים לחרכה ויבקעו המים:

Exodus

14:19-21

19: And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them;

20: and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud, and darkness here, yet gave it light by the night there; and the one came not near the other all the night.

21: And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

he above three passages from Exodus (14:19-21) describes Moses' miracle when he departed the Red Sea. In early Jewish mysticism, these passages also hold a very mystical, and secret, meaning. A special arrangement of the 216 consecutive letters in the three passages reveals the hidden 72-triplet Names of God. Moses was said to have used this formula in order to spread the waters. Medieval magicians would use permutations of the three verses to construct angels' names. According to the *BAHIR*, ⁷⁹ the 72 Holy Names are comprised from each one of those three verses in Exodus.

⁷⁹ BAHIR III, page 43. "This was the explicit name (*Shem Ha-MeForesh*) which permission is given that it be permutated and spoken (according to Numbers 6:27).

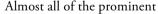
The Book of Formation-SEPHER YETZIRAH

ספר יצירה

he manuscript chiefly associated with the *Kabbalah* is the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* ¹³⁷ (translated as the BOOK OF FORMATION, also called the BOOK OF CREATION). ¹³⁸

Out of all of the Hebrew texts that have survived over the centuries, the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* continues to amaze and confound those who study its contents.

The SEPHER YETZIRAH is considered to be the first systematic treatise of Jewish mysticism and one of the oldest and most studied and commented works of Jewish esoteric lore.



Jewish leaders throughout history were well versed in the study of the SEPHER YETZIRAH according to legends, commentaries and historical records.



¹³⁷ Sepher Yetzirah is also spelled as Sepher Yetzira, Sepher Yetsirah, etc. In Hebrew, the word Sepher (שפר S Ph R) means "book." Many Hebrew books had the word Sepher in the title. The words Formation and Creation have been both used in translating the title, although the more accurate translation is Formation.

¹³⁸ Photo of the cover of a Medieval copy of the SEPHER YETZIRAH.

Creation of the Golem

"Thine eyes did see my unformed substance (גלמי), and in Thy book they were all written even the days that were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

ut of all of the persistent Jewish traditions, the ability of humans to create a *golem* (2 つ な) has permeated literature and religious discussions for centuries.

A *golem* is an apparent semi-living creature, brought to life by secret techniques described in the ancient magical and mysterious manuscript of the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*. The *golem* is activated by meditating on specific formulas that are revealed after studying and fully understanding the contents of the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*.

The word *golemi* (7 2 3 3) appears once in the OLD TESTAMENT to mean an "unformed substance," although the word is probably a derivative of *gelem*, meaning "raw material."

Adam was initially created as a *golem* when his dust was "kneaded into a shapeless husk, according to a passage in the Babylonian *TALMUD*." ¹⁶⁴ Adam was originally a "body without a soul." The topic of Adam as a *golem* was often discussed among the Gnostic rabbis. ¹⁶⁵

Tannatic sage R. Hananiah, who reportedly created a *golem* with Rabbi Oshaya, explained the 12 steps to form Adam: (1) his dust was gathered; (2) it was kneaded into a shapeless mass (*golem*); (3) his limbs were shaped, (4) a soul was infused into him, (5) he arose and stood on his feet, (6) he gave the animals their names, (7) Eve becomes his mate, etc. ¹⁶⁶

The creation of a golem was often discussed among the rabbis as being merely an image, similar to

¹⁶⁴ Babylonian *TALMUD TRACTATE SANHEDRIN* 38b.

¹⁶⁵ "God created Adam as a *golem*; he lay supine, reaching from one end of the world to the other, from the earth to the firmament (Ḥag. 12a; comp. Gen. R. viii., xiv., and xxiv.; JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA i. 175," from "*Golem*," Jewish Encyclopedia.

¹⁶⁶ SANHEDRIN 67b.

an apparition, which is an outline of a physical aura. Rabbi Hananel ben Hushiel, in the mid-11th century, commented on the *SANHEDRIN* passage about the creation of a *golem*. He believed it was actually a production of a phantasma, a mass hallucination— a "[technique of] illusion; [*ahizat 'enayim*]. The term *ahizat 'enayim* ("seizing the eyes" or creating an illusion) occurs in the *TALMUD* in the context of the creation of a man. ¹⁶⁷

In the late 13th century, a *Kabbalistic* passage used a similar meaning for the term *golem* and *tzelem*. The figures drawn of a man on a wall are called "*tzelamim*" ¹⁶⁸ which are, at the same time, known as "*gelamim*" being without form. Both words stand for the static, soul-less form. Some commentators claimed that the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* also holds the key to the creation of a *golem*, an artificial creature. Many say that it is both—a manual about how to manipulate nature and secretly gives the recipe to create a *golem* as proof.

Most of the major rabbis throughout history seemed familiar with the creation of a *golem* by use of the letter combination techniques. The *golem* was often a topic along-side of discussions about the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*. Preserved writings extensively discussed and argued about these details over the centuries.

The *golem* has its appearances in non-Jewish mysticism as well as Egyptian, Greek, and our own Americanized version of Frankenstein.

¹⁶⁷ Idel, Moshe, *GOLEM*: JEWISH MAGICAL, page 48.

¹⁶⁸ Tzelem (1743), as in "B'tzelem Elohim." "In God's Image."

The Wheel of 231 Gates

n his book *SEPHER HA-KUZARI*, ²⁷¹ ²⁷² ²⁷³ 12th century Spanish philosopher and poet Rabbi Yehuda Halevi ²⁷⁴ included a commentary on the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* where he elaborated on a technique to combine the Hebrew letters by means of a "wheel" to produce 231 Gates.

Each of the 231 Gates is an opening to a specific form of creative activity, the Rabbi explained. If one combines the letters properly (through specific permutation techniques), the creative process that God used in the formation of the world can be re-enacted by humans. This whole process can be imagined as a spinning wheel.

To create this imaginary "wheel" the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* explains how to combine, or "pair," each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet with all of the other letters of the alphabet. ²⁷⁵ This creates 462 combinations (22 letters x 21 letters).

Eliminate the mirror images (*AG*, *GA*) to get 231 combinations. These are the legendary 231 Gates described by R. Eleazar of Worms. By pairing these "combinations" one can make the non-existent exist and create something out of nothing, the rabbi believed. ²⁷⁶

These 231 Gates are placed on a circular wall with each two-letter combination, according to the SEPHER YETZIRAH. ²⁷⁷ The whole wall rotates as a wheel. It can spin in either direction. The combination could be forward or backward. All words arising from these combinations of these letters are then permutated with the four-letter Name of God, called the *Tetragrammaton*.

²⁷¹ Full Arabic title: The BOOK OF REFUTATION AND PROOF ON BEHALF OF THE MOST DESPISED RELIGION, commonly known as the BOOK OF THE *KUZARI*.

²⁷² Halevi, Judah, THE *KUZARI*, introduction by H. Slonimsky. Schocken Books. 1964. First published in 1905. Translated from the Arabic by Harwig Hirschfeld.

²⁷³ "Northern France Discussions," from *GOLEM*: JEWISH MAGICAL by Moshe Idel, page 87.

²⁷⁴ Rabbi Ha-Levi was born sometime in 1085 or 1086 during the conquest of Toledo (May 24, 1085) by Alfonso VI. He died in 1150. Source: JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, Judah Ha-Levi (Arabic: Abu al-Hasan al-Lawi).

²⁷⁵ the SEPHER YETZIRAH 2:5, "Aleph with all of them...and all of them with Aleph." They repeat in a cycle and exists in 231 Gates."

²⁷⁶ Halevi, Judah, THE *KUZARI*, introduction by H. Slonimsky. Schocken Books. 1964. Page 237.

²⁷⁷ SEPHER YETZIRAH 2:4: "22 Foundation letters, placed in a circle, like a wall with 231 Gates. The circle oscillates back and forth" just like a wheel.

Eleazar's Book of Secrets-Sodel RAZAYYA

he famous medieval magical manuscript *SODEI RAZAYA* (or *RAZIEL HAMALACH*)— the SECRETS OF MYSTICISM has been attributed to Rabbi Eleazar of Worms.

In SECRETS OF MYSTICISM, the author provides a comprehensive study on creation and quotes numerous *Merkabah* traditions, *Hechalot* literature and explained the characteristics of the angels, the Divine Throne, the Chariot, and Divine Voice.

The rest of the work features discussions on God's names, the fate of the soul after death, the meaning of dreams and a practical guide for creating a *golem*. He also took extracts from Sabbathai Donnolo's commentary on the *SEPHER YETZRIAH*.

The chapter titles to the *SEPHER RAZAYA HASHEM* (BOOK OF SECRETS OF THE HOLY NAME), by Rabbi Eleazar, ³⁰⁸ according to my translation from my library copy, includes:

- Ha'SkMT V'HaAyRT (Awakening Knowledge)
- Chapter 1: Sepher Aleph-Bayt (Book of the Letters of the Alphabet)
- Chapter 2: *Sod HaYChod* (Secrets of the Jews), *Ha'LKot Ha'KSa* (The Laws of Knowledge)
- Chapter 3: Sepher Ha'ZZShQ (76 Names of Metatron, listed with descriptions)
- Chapter 4: *PYRVSh AyL Sepher Y'TziRaH* (Commentary on *SEPHER YETZIRAH*) with charts and diagrams.
- Chapter 5: V'ZKMoT Ha-Nephesh

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³⁰⁸ SEPHER SODEI RAZAYA HASHEM, by Eleazar of Worms, was published in the 1889 Przemysl edition and reprinted in Hebrew in Israel, 2004.

13 למם ŋĐ m אב אב בנ נד דה הו וו זה חם מי יך כל לם כון גם סע עף פין צק קר רש שת תא לן מם נע סף עץ פק צר קש רת שא חב אנ כד נה דו הז ות זם חי מך יל כם אד כה נו דו החום זי חך מלים כן לם סע נף סץ עק פר צש קת רא שב תג לע מף נץ סק ער פש צת קא רב שג תד אה כו גו דח המוי זך חל מם ין כם לף מין נק סר עש פת צא קב רג שד תה אר כז נח דש היוד זל חם פן ים כע או בחינם די חך ול זם חן מם יע כף לין מק נר מש עת פא צב קנ רד שה תו לק פר נש סת עא פב צנ קד רה שו תז אח כם ני דך חל ום זן חם טע יף כין לר מש נת סא עב פנ צד קה רו שו תח אם כי גך דל הם ון זם חע שף יין כק לש מת נא מב ענ פד צה קו רו שח תמ אי כך גל דם הן ום זע חף שץ לת מא נכ סג עד פה צו קו רח שמ אך כל גם דן הם וע זה חין מק יר כש לא מב נג סד עה פו צו קח רם שי לב מנ נד סה עו פו צח קט רי לג כר נה כו עו פת צם קי רך אן בם גע דף הץ וק זר חש פת יא כב לר מה גו סו עח פט צי קך דל אם בע נף דץ הק ור זש הת שא יב כנ אע בף גין דק הר וש זת חא מב יג כד לה מו גו סח עם פי צך קל רם אף בץ נק דר השות וא חב מניד כה לו מזנח סמעי פך צל קם רן אין בקנר דש התואזב הג שד יה כו לז מחנם סי עך פלצם קן רם אק בר גש דת הא וב זג הד מה יו כז לח ממ ני כך על פס צן קס רע לש מי נך סל עם פן צם קע אר בשנת דא הב ונ זד חה מו יו כח לי מך גל סמ ען פס צע קף רץ שק תר אש בת נא דב חנ וד זה חו מז יח כם לך טל נם כן עם פע צף קין רק שר תש את כא נכ דג חד וה זו חז מח ים כי אא כב גג דד הה וו זו הה שם יי. כך לל כם גן סם עע פף צץ קק דר שש הת

Chart of 231 Holy Gates, according to Rabbi Eleazar of Worms. This same chart is produced in Shabbathai Donnolo's *HOCKMONI*. For over a thousand years, *Kabbalists* have relied on this chart devised by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms that depicts the ultimate arrangement of the 22 Hebrew letters into the 231 Gates. As described in the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*, these 22 columns are "engraved like a garden," and "carved like a wall. "This chart can also be reconstructed using a *Kabbalah* Wheel, as explained later in this volume.

Letter Permutation Techniques

"A permutator (tzeruf "\"\"\") for silver and the furnace for gold.

But, God tests the heart."

Proverbs 17:3

here are several secret methods of letter permutation (tzeruf) that divide the Hebrew letters into groups according to specific criteria.

These techniques were used to reveal the Wisdom of letter permutation. Through meditation, the continuous recitation of sounds, produced from the word combinations, eventually induces an altered state of consciousness and a spiritual experience. Some of these techniques were advocated by Rabbi Abraham Abulafia.

While there are dozens of different methods, some of the more popular permutation techniques include *ALBM*, *AYQBKR*, and *ATBASh*.

Abracadabara! "I create as I speak"

אברא כדברא



A medieval drawing of a magician teaching the basic principles of the occult using the *Abaracadabara* formula. Image from Zedcor Graphics.

Rabbi of Chelm's golem

olish Rabbi Eliyahu (1550-1583) was the Jewish leader of the community of Chelm in eastern Poland. He was known as "*Ba'al Shem"*— Master of the Divine Name– because of his knowledge of the Holy Names.

The young rabbi was familiar with the mystical techniques of letter combination and is credited to have created the 'Golem of Chelm.' This was supposedly how he earned the moniker.

A hundred years after his early death at age 33, his great-grandson Rabbi Zev *Ashkenazi*, a noted *Halakhist*, wrote that his ancestor (Rabbi Eliyahu) created a *golem*. Zevi passed on the story to his son, German Rabbi Jacob Emden who wrote about it a generation later. 431

Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697-1776) ⁴³² elaborated the story ⁴³³ in 1748. He wrote that the *golem* was created by the great "*Ba'al Shem*" after he inscribed the *Shem* (Name of God) on its forehead and recited certain letter combinations that were constructed from instruction in the *SEPHER YETZIRAH*. Emden wrote that the *golem* served the rabbi, but it grew larger and larger.

The rabbi became afraid it would get so large and dangerous it could destroy the world, so he decided to destroy it first. When the Rabbi removed one of the letters from its forehead, the *golem* returned to dust. In the process, the *golem* fell on the master and the rabbi escaped with only scratches and bruises. In some versions, he was crushed to death. After it was turned back into a lump of clay, the *golem's* remains were stored in the attic of the Old Synagogue and no one was allowed to enter, but everyone knew that the *golem* of *Ba'al Shem* laid there.

⁴³¹ Although Moshe Idel argues that Zevi was born in 1660 and it is doubtful that R. Elijah, who died in 1583, was his grandfather, but instead was the father of his grandfather. See Moshe Idel, *GOLEM*: JEWISH MAGICAL, page 229, footnote 21.

⁴³² Jacob Emden, also known as Ya'avetz. He might have also acquired this story from Rabbi H.Y.D. Azulai in Shem ha Gedolim, No. 163. See Isidore Singer in *Golem* of Hohe Rabbi Low, Jewish encyclopedia.

⁴³³ In his autobiography SEPHER MEGILLAT (Warsaw, 5656).

⁴³⁴ Jewish Life and Work in Chełm chapter of the COMMEMORATION BOOK OF CHEŁM (Poland) (*YISKER-BUKH CHEŁM*).

Rabbi Loew's golem

nother famous rabbi who lived at the time of Eliyahu of Chelm was Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague (1520-1609). During the reign of Emperor Rudolph II, Prague was the center for arts and sciences, alchemy and the occult.

Known as the *Maharal*, Rabbi Loew was a leading rabbi in Prague and a Jewish mystic. He was a great *TALMUDIC* scholar and a *Kabbalist* who was also credited to have created a *golem*. This famous legend became known as the *Golem* of Prague. But it shared many of the same plots as the *Golem* of Chelm. Over time, the story of Rabbi Eliyahu of Chelm's *golem* morphed into the *golem* of Rabbi Loew of Prague, leaving the Rabbi of Chelm in historical dust.

Loew wrote numerous books on Jewish law and philosophy. He was called to an audience with Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II ⁴³⁵ on February 23, 1592, but the details of this meeting are only in legend. According to the story, Rabbi Loew demonstrated to the Emperor the creation of a *golem* and revealed other *Kabbalistic* secrets ("nistarot"). ⁴³⁶ Other accounts say that the *Maharal* was able to secure protection of the Jews against the blood libel during this meeting.

Although Loew is credited to having inspired the *Golem* of Prague legend, its origin might actually have been with the Rabbi of Chelm. About the beginning of the 19th century, Loew's name started to appear in place of the Rabbi of Chelm who lived during the same period about 550 miles west of Prague. Through this visibility, Rabbi Loew became the symbol of the modernday *golem* legend. However, not until 20 years after Loew's death was there any mention of his involvement with the *golem*. 437

The story about the *Maharal's golem*, gathered from oral traditions, was written down in 1847 by Leopold Weisel in DER *GOLEM*, part of a collection of Jewish legends called *GALERIE DER SIPURIM* by Jewish Austrian publisher Wolf Pascheles. 438

⁴³⁵ Rudolph II was born on July 18, 1552 and died January 20, 1612.

 $^{^{436}}$ Peter Demetz, PRAGUE IN BLACK AND GOLD: SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF A EUROPEAN CITY, page 211.

⁴³⁷ Edan Dekel, and David Gannt Gurley, How the *Golem* Came to Prague, "The Jewish Quarterly Review," Vol. 103, No. 2 (Spring 2013), 241-258.

⁴³⁸ Pascheles was born in 1814 and died in 1857.

Goethe's "Sorcerer's Apprentice"

erman author and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe ⁵⁰⁵ wrote a poem called "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" in 1797. In it, he retold the old wives-tale about an autonomous creature that becomes uncontrollable.

In Goethe's story, the old sorcerer leaves his apprentice alone at his workshop. The lazy apprentice enchants a broom to fetch water for him, but it gets out of hand. The broom continues to bring buckets of water back to the house and the floor becomes flooded. The apprentice can't stop the magical broom, so he splits the broom in half with an axe.

But each piece becomes a whole new broom and grabs a pail of water at twice the speed. Each time he splits the broom in half, each half goes to collect more water. Later, the sorcerer returns and breaks the spell. The poem ends with the sorcerer warning that these powerful spirits should only be used by the sorcerer himself.

The ballad provided the inspiration for Mary Shelley's book FRANKENSTEIN two decades later. One hundred and forty years later, the 1940 Disney film "FANTASIA" brought this story to the big screen.

⁵⁰⁵ Goethe was born in 1749 and died in 1832.

SEPHER YETZIRAH Chapters

hile there are hundreds of

variations of the SEPHER YETZIRAH, the basic concepts remains constant.

These first two chapters are an abbreviated English version with a verse-by-verse commentary. The text is gleaned from both the long and short recensions and comments are based on interpretations from *Kabbalists* through history.



The translations are gleaned from Aryeh Kaplan, Scholem Gershom and other contemporary Jewish authors. The footnotes contain my own commentaries for the first few chapters and how they can be interpreted for today's culture and used in conjunction with the construction of a *Kabbalah* Wheel.

The first chapter explores the Universe and its structure, while the second chapter provides the instructions to permutate the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Based on the passages in Chapter 2, the instructions to create a personal *Kabbalah* Wheel follow this section. The concepts in these two chapters were discussed for centuries by Judaism's leading rabbinical authorities, as described previously in this volume.

This section is planned to be part of a more complete volume that explores each chapter, verse and word in detail based on my forty-year study of unpublished personal notes and charts.

Chapter One: The 10 Sephiroth

1:1 • The 32 Paths

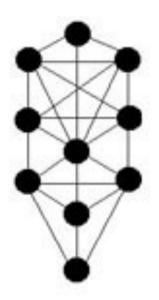
y means of 32 Mystical Paths, 692
There is a hidden Wisdom carved (engraved)
by the Holy Name, and

Engraved with three "books" (Sepharim):

Letters (sephar ספר),

Numbers (sephar つらし), and

Speech (sippur \in 50). 693



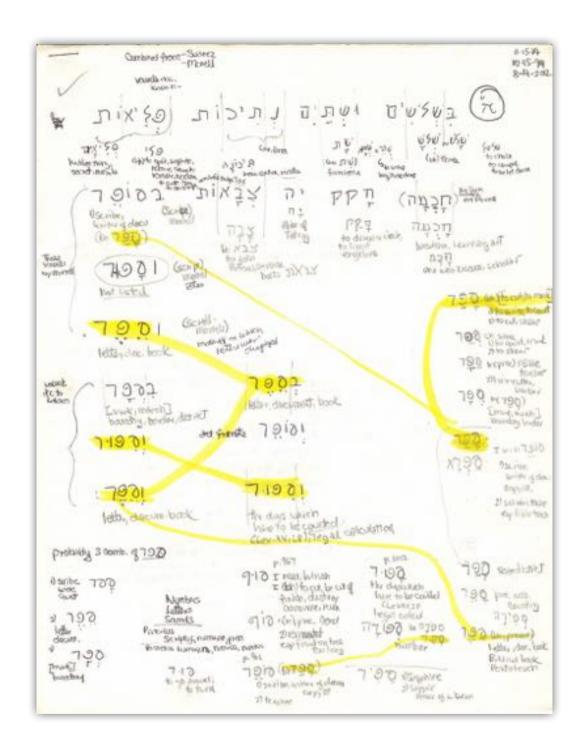
⁶⁹² The 32 paths are the sum of the 10 *Sephiroth* (the "spheres," represented as dots in the above diagram of the Tree of Life) and the 22 pathways (the intersecting lines) between each *Sephiroth*, as described by earlier rabbis. Wisdom is carved ("engraved," or spoken) with the voice.

⁶⁹³ The 3 Sepharim (themes or "books"):

^{1.} Letters: their meanings (the archetypal symbol, Universal).

^{2.} **Numbers:** numerical values of each letter (its order, placement and **Time**).

^{3.} **Sounds** of each letter through speech (communication from the **Soul**).



These are part of my personal notes from the 1980s with the first verse and a breakdown of the Hebrew word *Sepher*.

Chapter Two: Construct the Kabbalah Wheel

The second chapter of SEPHER YETZIRAH describes, in code, how to construct the 231 Gates, based on the explanation of the letters' roles in Chapter one. The second chapter also describes the steps to create a device like a Kabbalah Wheel to spin the 231 Gates in sequence.



While the SEPHER YETZIRAH does not provide specific instructions to create such a device, the second chapter does suggest how to combine the letters into the 231 Gates either by a chart or a wheel. The above image is a homemade Kabbalah Wheel.

Create a Kabbalah Wheel

n an attempt to better visualize the instructions to combine, weigh and permutate the letters, a more imaginative method has to be devised. The familiar 231 Gate chart constructed by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms in the 12th century was concise, but it's cumbersome to remember. And, his chart only reveals a portion of the complete method.

There is another way to visualize Eleazar's chart—as a Wheel or a cylinder.

The concept of a *Kabbalah* Wheel was revealed in the 12th century by Rabbi Judah Halevi in *SEPHER HA-KUZARI* ⁷³⁴ where he elaborated on the combinations of the Hebrew letters by means of a "wheel" to produce the 231 Gates.

To better conceptualize those rotating and spinning Gates, as described in the ancient *SEPHER YETZIRAH*, a more material model is needed. The ancient code can be recreated with a *Kabbalah* Wheel, a simple, hand-held mechanism, similar to an abacus, that provides letter permutations – that anyone can create.

The *Kabbalah* Wheel is an improvised method to create a mechanical Wheel of Gates. This Wheel conforms to the description in *SEPHER YETZIRAH* to "make them like a wall" with "231 Gates." Spin the columns forward and backward, rotate the vowels, and see the arrangements in your own hands. This Wheel can be used with these Keys to enhance your understanding of the formations. Spin the columns forward and backward, rotate the vowels, and see the arrangements in your own hands.

There are two clues to how to construct such a device. According to *SEPHER YETZIRAH* 1:11, "Engrave them like a **garden**. Carve them like a **wall**. Cover them like a **ceiling**." Build the letters in a garden (rows) and lay them out vertically (like columns) instead of horizontally (like plots). The verses in *SEPHER YETZIRAH* 2:4 and 2:5 can also be interpreted to create the Wheel in the form of a circle, or rather a tube (an elongated wheel).

This *Kabbalah* Wheel is easy to make and easy to use. It is used like an abacus. I was inspired to create a *Kabbalah* Wheel one evening in the early 2000's while trying to develop a prototype *Tzeruf* Key for a *Kabbalah* software program I was working on. Perhaps someone else in time came across this idea. I have yet to see this technique published or mentioned elsewhere in any manuscript or teaching at any time in history besides Rabbi Halevi's clues. But, it works!

⁷³⁴ Halevi, Judah, THE *KUZARI*, introduction by H. Slonimsky. Schocken Books. 1964. First published in 1905. Translated from the Arabic by Harwig Hirschfeld.

Author Biography



Author Robert E. Zucker, 2009.

Digging into the mystical past

or over forty years my interest in mysticism has matured into a lifelong study of the ancient Judaic mystical studies and practices. During this time, I have collected a multitude of information and built a tremendous library of some of the best books on *Kabbalah*.

This published work actually began while I was attending the University of Arizona from 1975-1977. Part of my University undergraduate time was spent producing several manuscripts about mysticism for university course credit.

To complete my course requirements, two manuscripts were produced (titled HERMETICS,

"Magic is a (psychological and physiological) mnemonic process so arranged as to result in the deliberate exhilaration of the Will and exaltation of the Imagination, the end result being the purification of the personality and attainment of a spiritual state of consciousness in which the conscious enters into union with the unconscious."

Israel Regardie, TREE OF LIFE, page 150

Index

his Index can be used as learning tool to look up key words, important phrases, people and sources to better understand the *SEPHER YETZIRAH* and its related teachings. Book titles are in CAPITAL LETTERS. Foreign words are in *italics*.

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