

THREE KABBALISTIC MEDITATIONS FROM THE *SEPHER YETZIRAH*

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In this article, Grand Master Julie Scott presents three Kabbalistic meditations, using techniques from the *Sepher Yetzirah*.



According to the Rosicrucian teachings, the *Sepher Yetzirah*, the oldest of all Kabbalistic texts, is a meditation manual. Dr. Isidor Kalisch, translator of the *Sepher Yetzirah* edition published by the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC,¹ describes it as a metaphysical essay. Aryeh Kaplan writes, “What we therefore have in *Sefer Yetzirah* appears to be an instructional manual, describing certain meditative exercises.”²

Some of the meditation techniques in the *Sepher Yetzirah* include combining the Hebrew letters in chants, gazing upon their form, and creating images of the letters in our minds and with our hands.

We will experiment with these techniques below.

The Hebrew Letters

The twenty-two Hebrew letters are believed to contain or exude the essential energy of what they represent. For example, Mem represents water and the essence or character of water. Dalet represents a door and the essential energy or power of a door. The purpose of certain Kabbalistic meditations is to manifest or activate the associated essential energy or power, within us and around us.

Also, the shape of each letter has significance and can speak to us on a more than intellectual level. Many Kabbalistic meditations include working with the shapes of the Hebrew letters.

Each Hebrew letter functions as a numeral as well as a letter. Alef is a letter and also the number one, Bet is a letter

and the number two, etc. When letters are combined to form a word, then each word has a numerical value too, based on the total of the numeral letters in that word.

A list with each Hebrew Letter, its Name, Meaning or essence/essential energy, and Number is presented in Chart No. 1.

Chart No. 1. Hebrew Alphabet.

Letter	Name	Meaning	Number
א	Alef	Ox	1
ב	Bet	House	2
ג	Gimel	Camel	3
ד	Dalet	Door	4
ה	Hay	Window	5
ו	Vav	Hook	6
ז	Zayin	Weapon	7
ח	Chet	Fence	8
ט	Tet	Snake	9
י	Yud	Hand	10
כ	Kaf	Palm of Hand	20
ל	Lamed	Ox Goad	30
מ	Mem	Water	40
נ	Nun	Fish	50
ס	Samekh	Prop	60
ע	Ayin	Eye	70
פ	Pay	Mouth	80
צ	Tzaddi	Fish Hook	90
ק	Kuf	Back of Head	100
ר	Resh	Head	200
ש	Shin	Tooth	300
ת	Tav	Cross	400

Combining the Hebrew letters

The 231 Gates Meditation

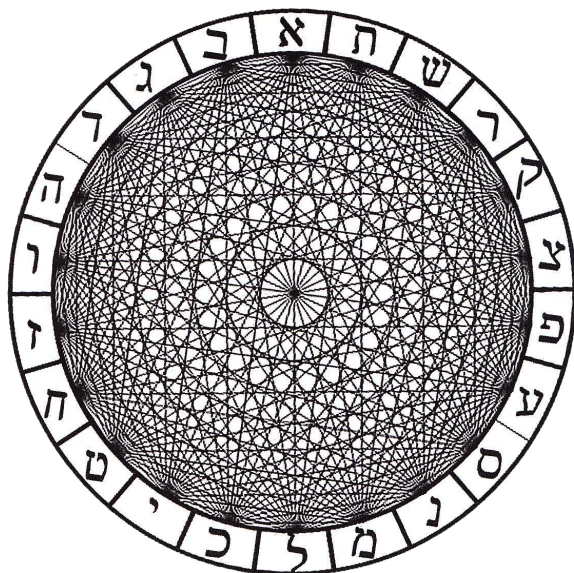
When we combine each of the twenty-two Hebrew letters with all the rest (for example, Alef Bet, Alef Gimel, Alef Dalet, etc.) we create the 231 Gates.

From the *Sepher Yetzirah*:

2:2 “Twenty-two fundamental letters were joined together by God in a Circle of 231 Gates, a Circle which sways to and fro.”

2:4 “God weighed and combined Alef with all the letters and all with Alef, Bet with all and all with Bet, and so on with each of them. Thus, all the letters arose from 231 Gates and emanated from one Name.”

Sometimes the 231 Gates are illustrated in the mandala below. If we place the Hebrew letters at equal points around a circle and connect each letter with every other letter, the lines connecting them create this design.



The 231 Gates.

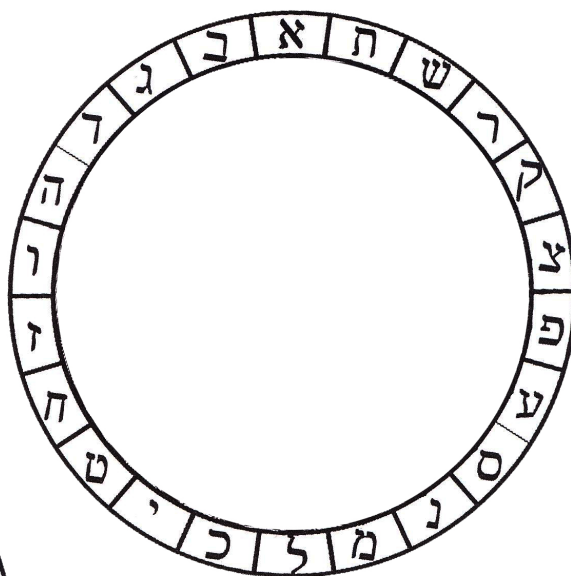
You will find a recording of the 231 Gates meditation online at <http://www.rosicrucian.org/publications/>.

To make it easy to follow along with this meditation, we have created Chart No. 2, which shows the letter combinations with the Hebrew letters written in English. For ease of reading, this chart is written

from left to right, although Hebrew is read from right to left. We have also included a pronunciation guide – Chart No. 3.

While listening to the recording of the 231 Gates meditation, chant along or just gaze upon the letters – each letter individually, as they are combined, or around the spherical mandala as they are spoken. Or chant them on your own.

You may also choose to draw the lines on the blank sphere below connecting each letter with the others, either in silence or while they are being chanted.



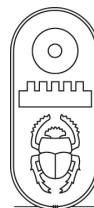
Allow plenty of time and privacy for this meditation.

While doing this open yourself to any impressions you may receive.

Creating images of the Hebrew letters – in our minds

Intense focus and visualization are important aspects of many meditation practices, including the Rosicrucian techniques of concentration and contemplation, and many Kabbalistic exercises.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* provides instructions on how to deeply focus and visualize the Hebrew letters, thus attuning with their power or energy.



THE 231 GATES

Read down each double column (pairs of letters), starting at the left.

Alef Bet
Alef Gimel Bet Gimel
Alef Dalet Bet Dalet Gimel Dalet
Alef Hay Bet Hay Gimel Hay Dalet Hay
Alef Vav Bet Vav Gimel Vav Dalet Vav Hay Vav
Alef Zayin Bet Zayin Gimel Zayin Dalet Zayin Hay Zayin Vav Zayin
Alef Chet Bet Chet Gimel Chet Dalet Chet Hay Chet Vav Chet Zayin Chet
Alef Tet Bet Tet Gimel Tet Dalet Tet Hay Tet Vav Tet Zayin Tet Chet Tet
Alef Yud Bet Yud Gimel Yud Dalet Yud Hay Yud Vav Yud Zayin Yud Chet Yud Tet Yud
Alef Kaf Bet Kaf Gimel Kaf Dalet Kaf Hay Kaf Vav Kaf Zayin Kaf Chet Kaf Tet Kaf Yud Kaf
Alef Lamed Bet Lamed Gimel Lamed Dalet Lamed Hay Lamed Vav Lamed Zayin Lamed Chet Lamed Tet Lamed Yud Lamed
Alef Mem Bet Mem Gimel Mem Dalet Mem Hay Mem Vav Mem Zayin Mem Chet Mem Tet Mem Yud Mem
Alef Nun Bet Nun Gimel Nun Dalet Nun Hay Nun Vav Nun Zayin Nun Chet Nun Tet Nun Yud Nun
Alef Samekh Bet Samekh Gimel Samekh Dalet Samekh Hay Samekh Vav Samekh Zayin Samekh Chet Samekh Tet Samekh Yud Samekh
Alef Ayin Bet Ayin Gimel Ayin Dalet Ayin Hay Ayin Vav Ayin Zayin Ayin Chet Ayin Tet Ayin Yud Ayin
Alef Pay Bet Pay Gimel Pay Dalet Pay Hay Pay Vav Pay Zayin Pay Chet Pay Tet Pay Yud Pay
Alef Tzaddi Bet Tzaddi Gimel Tzaddi Dalet Tzaddi Hay Tzaddi Vav Tzaddi Zayin Tzaddi Chet Tzaddi Tet Tzaddi Yud Tzaddi
Alef Kuf Bet Kuf Gimel Kuf Dalet Kuf Hay Kuf Vav Kuf Zayin Kuf Chet Kuf Tet Kuf Yud Kuf
Alef Resh Bet Resh Gimel Resh Dalet Resh Hay Resh Vav Resh Zayin Resh Chet Resh Tet Resh Yud Resh
Alef Shin Bet Shin Gimel Shin Dalet Shin Hay Shin Vav Shin Zayin Shin Chet Shin Tet Shin Yud Shin
Alef Tav Bet Tav Gimel Tav Dalet Tav Hay Tav Vav Tav Zayin Tav Chet Tav Tet Tav Yud Tav

Chart No. 2.

Kaf Lamed

Kaf Mem Lamed Mem

Kaf Nun Lamed Nun Mem Nun

Kaf Samekh Lamed Samekh Mem Samekh Nun Samekh

Kaf Ayin Lamed Ayin Mem Ayin Nun Ayin Samekh Ayin

Kaf Pay Lamed Pay Mem Pay Nun Pay Samekh Pay Ayin Pay

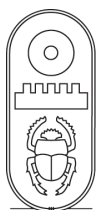
Kaf Tzaddi Lamed Tzaddi Mem Tzaddi Nun Tzaddi Samekh Tzaddi Ayin Tzaddi Pay Tzaddi

Kaf Kuf Lamed Kuf Mem Kuf Nun Kuf Samekh Kuf Ayin Kuf Pay Kuf Tzaddi Kuf

Kaf Resh Lamed Resh Mem Resh Nun Resh Samekh Resh Ayin Resh Pay Resh Tzaddi Resh Kuf Resh

Kaf Shin Lamed Shin Mem Shin Nun Shin Samekh Shin Ayin Shin Pay Shin Tzaddi Shin Kuf Shin Resh Shin

Kaf Tav Lamed Tav Mem Tav Nun Tav Samekh Tav Ayin Tav Pay Tav Tzaddi Tav Kuf Tav Resh Tav Shin Tav



2:3 “Twenty-two fundamental letters were carved by God, sculpted, weighed, and combined.”

This technique engraves the letters in our minds, then carves them – filling our entire consciousness.

Chart No. 4 (on page 26) shows each of the twenty-two Hebrew letters. Choose one and focus on its shape. Close your eyes and see it clearly in your mind’s eye.

See the letter carved out or ablaze with color and life against a contrasting background. Then see the background carved out or ablaze with color and life behind the empty image. Now choose another letter and do the same thing.

While doing this open yourself to any impressions you may receive.

Creating images of the Hebrew letters – with our hands

After doing the exercise above mentally, take color pencils or pens and do the same thing on the pages of this magazine (or make copies) – engrave, carve, permute, weigh, and transform the letters so that they fill your entire consciousness.

While doing this open yourself to any impressions you may receive.

Now bring the letters to life by creating a three dimensional work of art.

First choose one of the Hebrew letters and become thoroughly familiar with its corresponding numerical value, essence, pronunciation, and form. Various charts with this information are presented in this magazine for your reference.

Chart No. 3. Pronunciation Guide for Hebrew Letters.

א	Alef	AH-lef	ל	Lamed	LAH-med
ב	Bet	BET	מ	Mem	MEM
ג	Gimel	GIH-mel	נ	Nun*	NUN*
ד	Dalet	DAH-let	ס	Samekh*	SAH-mekh*
ה	Hay	HAY	ע	Ayin	AH-yin
ו	Vav	VAHV	פ	Pay	PAY
ז	Zayin	ZAH-yin	צ	Tzaddi	TSAH-dee
ח	Chet*	CHET*	ק	Kuf*	KUF*
ט	Tet	TET	ר	Resh	RAYSH
י	Yud*	YUD*	ש	Shin	SHIN
כ	Kaf	KAHF	ת	Tav	TAHV

*Note: “ch” and “kh” to be pronounced as the German “Bach” and the Scottish “loch.” “U” to be pronounced as the “oo” in “book” and “look.”

Then create a work of art based on your experience of this letter. Allow time for this creation to manifest. Make it as three dimensional as possible. Stand it up, hollow it out, carve it, engrave it, and add other qualities such as sound or smell.

While doing this open yourself to any impressions you may receive.

After you have completed this work of art, deconstruct it within twenty-two days of completion, returning as many of its parts back to nature as possible.

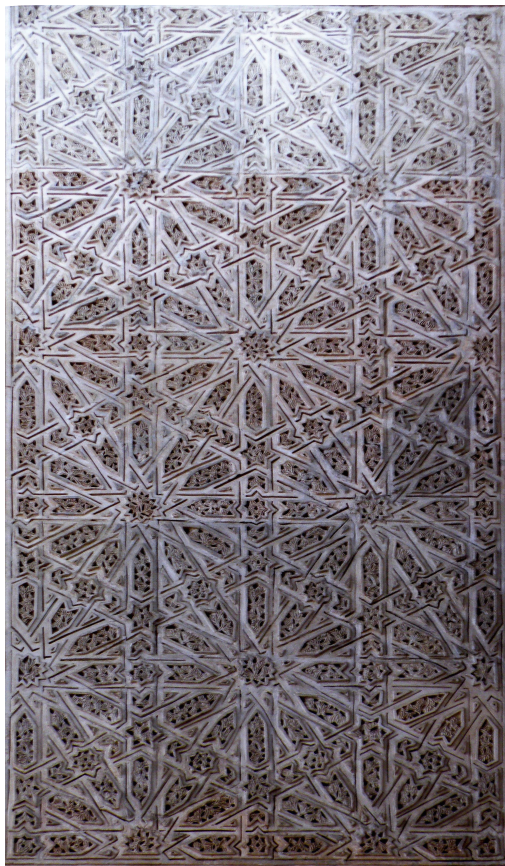
The Rosicrucian and Martinist teachings include many Kabbalistic lessons, meditations, and exercises. In fact, Kabbalah is one of the most important sources contributing to the Rosicrucian teachings and even more so to the Martinist teachings.

If you have found these meditations interesting, then you may find the Rosicrucian and Martinist lessons dealing with Kabbalah especially inspiring and beneficial.

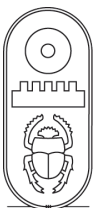
Author's Note: Many thanks to Lloyd Abrams, Ph.D., FRC for creating the original charts for this article and for serving as a most helpful advisor for this issue of the *Rosicrucian Digest*.

ENDNOTES

1. Isidor Kalisch, *Sepher Yetzirah, A Book on Creation*, (San Jose: Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, 2002).
 2. Aryeh Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation*, (Newburyport, MA and San Francisco, CA: Red Wheel/Weiser, 1997).
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Ten Sephirot on the Cordoba Synagogue's east wall. Spain. Photo Roy Lindman.



THE HEBREW ALPHABET

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