

The Sefer Yezirah

In this essay I discuss the *Sefer Yetzirah* in light of some fourth way ideas. The exposition here is by no means exhaustive, but represents an approach to the *Sefer Yetzirah*—an approach that I believe is productive.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* (meaning "Book of Formation" or "Book of Creation") is a text written down almost 2000 years ago that is generally considered the first of those texts that came from the pervasive influence known as Kaballah. Kaballah itself cannot be defined, as it surfaced in Jewish, Islamic, Christian, alchemical, astrological, and other traditions, always interpreted in light of the particular manifestation.

Because of the wide range of kaballistic texts, it is tempting to "return to the source"; tempting, but at least in the case of texts, not possible. The *Sefer Yetzirah* itself may be the oldest text, but even *it* exists in multiple, often contradictory versions. There is a short version, a long version, and others, although none are more than about ten pages. I was torn between using the shortest version, the "Short" version, and the oldest known version, the "Saadia" version. The shortest version because it seems to me that often ancient texts get added to over time so the short version may be the most accurate. That is not a certain thing because things can be taken out or lost as well. So the Saadia version tempts me, but seems sometimes too long, as if later commentary is being included. So I use the Short version, but refer to the Saadia version when the Short version seems garbled. (I'll point out those few cases when I take something from the Saadia version.) I'll occasionally use another translation of the Short version, that by Knut Stenring, when I feel it can throw light on a difficult passage.

As a general summary, the *Sefer Yetzirah* introduces the idea of "ten sefirot", and the term "sefirot" (plural sefirah) itself is variously translated as text, number, or none of the above.

Fundamental to the *Sefer Yetzirah* is number, and number in three particular groupings: three, seven, and twelve. Together these quantities sum to 22, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, which is used throughout the text to explain properties of the groupings. Hebrew, like other sacred languages, assigns numerical values to letters, so number and letter are intimately related. This inevitably leads to "numerology", where the numeric value of a word, for example a name, is considered significant. It also leads to complete lunacy if one is not careful, and I choose to use number values of letters very little in the way of explanation.

That Gurdjieff was knowledgeable about Kaballah is known. But as you already must realize, there is Kaballah and there is Kaballah, and getting to the heart of the matter is not trivial. The fourth way is not Kaballah, although it may be that at certain times Kaballah was an expression of the fourth way. If we recognize the fourth way as alive,

ancient texts that relate to it may be seen as signposts along the way, signposts that may be decipherable with fourth way knowledge and may, in turn, lead to new insights.

The Book of Creation

The versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* to be discussed here are the "Short Version" and, occasionally, the "Saadia" version. As non-identical copies of each of these versions exist, bracketed text [] indicates additional text from another copy of the same version. Text from the *Sefer Yetzirah* is in white text. My comments are placed throughout the book and displayed in turquoise text.

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Chapter 1

(The Ten Numbers)

1. With 32 wondrous paths of Wisdom engrave Yah, the Lord of Hosts, [God of Israel, the Living God, King of the Universe, Almighty God, merciful and gracious, High and Exalted, dwelling in eternity, whose name is Holy, and create His universe] with three books, with text (Sepher), with number (Sephar), and with communication (Sippur).
2. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness plus twenty two [foundations] letters: Three Mothers, Seven Doubles, and Twelve Elementals.

The discussion of "32" occurs only at the beginning of this book. Otherwise, this book speaks about the three, the seven, and the twelve, each one generating the next in turn from the original One which is "God, faithful King". Three, seven, and twelve combined equal 22, the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the alphabet used throughout the text in explanation of the properties of the three, seven, and twelve. So where does this 32 come from? Clearly $10 + 22$ as the second verse tells us. These are the basic 10 numerals and 22 letters used to form all numbers and words. But the nature of the 10 will not become clear until the 22 are further expounded.

3. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: The number of the ten fingers, five opposite five, with a single covenant precisely in the middle, like the circumcision of the tongue and the circumcision of the membrum.
4. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: Ten and not nine; ten and not eleven. Understand with Wisdom, and be wise with Understanding. Examine with them and probe them, make a thing stand on its essence, and make the Creator sit on his base.

Understanding and wisdom are emphasized to be distinct here, and the imperative of the translation seems to demand mental activity on our part, as opposed to passive acceptance.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* begins with number. In particular, ten numbers, one through ten. Thus we have here, at the foundation of Jewish mysticism, the same number theory deeply rooted in the Greek civilization, and it was these two great lines that were to merge into Western civilization.

5. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: Their measure is ten which have no end. A depth of beginning, a depth of end; a depth of good, a depth of evil; a depth of above, a depth below; a depth east, a depth west; a depth north, a depth south. The singular Master, God faithful King, dominates them all from His holy dwelling until eternity of eternities.
6. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: Their vision is like the "appearance of lightning", their limit has no end. His Word in them is "running and returning". They rush to his saying like a whirlwind, and before His throne they prostrate themselves.

7. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: Their end is embedded in their beginning, and their beginning in their end, like a flame in a burning coal. For the Master is singular, He has no second. And before One, what do you count?

It begins with One. Whether the Greek Monad or the singular Master, it begins with One. And, it ends with One, is all contained in One, because multiplicity is division, not multiplication—He has no second. The One divides to make two possible, which necessitates three, that creates four, and so the thing is set in motion.

8. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: Bridle your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking. And if your heart runs, return to the place, as it is written, "The Chayot running and returning" (Ezekiel 1:14). Regarding this a covenant was made.

This seems to refer to the control of behavior (speech and thought), and especially attention (running and returning). A useful reminder to be present, to control attention, to remember oneself while studying the ideas.

At this point in his commentary on the "Gra" version of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, Aryeh Kaplan says "According to some critical studies, this line is the end of the most ancient part of the text." While I don't have access to those critical studies, I find this very interesting because, in my interpretation, this point marks the fundamental division in the discussion. Thus far we have been discussing the 10 ineffable sefirot. From now on, we will discuss the Creation of the cosmos. The point we are at is given no special emphasis by the structuring of the text—it is simply near the end of a chapter. The significance of where we are now will be drawn out soon. But note that now we are going to begin to count, One, two, and so on...

9. Ten Sefirot of Nothingness: One is the Breath of the Living God, blessed and benedicted be the Name of the Life of worlds. Voice, Breath and Speech. This is the Holy Breath (Ruach HaKodesh).

We are now going to follow the descent of the ray of creation where One acts on two to create three and so on, or the triad carbon-oxygen-nitrogen which is the process of creation, or growth.

The mention of "Breath" seems odd here. As we will see when we study this text further, the ancient elements of Fire, Water, and Air (Breath), are used in a manner consistent with the fourth way terminology active, passive, neutral, respectively (or carbon, oxygen, nitrogen). Consistent except here. Here we are told that the neutral force (Breath or Air or "nitrogen") is initiating the triad of creation, when it should clearly be Fire (active force or "carbon"). While the

author (Kaplan) I am using translates this word as breath, another translation (Stenring) has the following text for this passage:

Ten ineffable Sephiroth: One—The Spirit of the Living Elohim, His Throne is erected in eternity...

Elsewhere, where Kaplan translates to "Breath", Stenring consistently uses "Air", which makes me suspect that Kaplan's use of Breath in this passage is incorrect. With Stenring's translation of "Spirit", we get an active force at the beginning of the triad we are now discussing, which must be correct, as the process of growth begins with the active force (1-2-3).

10. Two: Breath from Breath. With it engrave and carve twenty-two foundation letters - three, Mothers, seven Doubles, and twelve Elementals - and one Breath is from them.

Two in order of density, but three in order of creation. This is Air, between Water and Fire. This is neutralizing, the resultant. Collin's "Form". More on this after the next verse. (This is going to be very confusing for a moment!)

11. Three: Water from Breath. With it engrave and carve chaos and void, mire and clay. Engrave them like a garden plot, carve them like a wall, cover them like a ceiling.

This is Water, the fathomless void, passive force.

Thus the first triad has been created.

This first triad is World 3 in the ray of creation. Now the ray of creation proceeds by the process of creation or growth, in the order 1-2-3, or active-passive-neutral, or carbon-oxygen-nitrogen, or fire-water-air, or whatever terminology we use (and we are about to be introduced to still another terminology using letters of the Hebrew alphabet). Yet, in the discussion we have the sequence Spirit-Breath-Water, instead of Spirit-Water-Breath. The order used here, for the first triad, World 3, is *not* temporal sequence but rather order of density. This is quite correct because temporal sequence makes no sense in World 3 where there is no time. In World 6, which we will be discussing shortly, time is of the essence, but here the only distinction between forces is something more fundamental, its basic property or relative "density".

12. Four: Fire from water. With it engrave and carve the Throne of Glory, Seraphim, Ophanim, holy Chayot, and Ministering Angels. From the three establish His dwelling, as it is written, "He makes His angels of breaths, His ministers from flaming fire" (Psalms 104:4).

So the first triad is complete and now the next one begins. The first triad supplies the active principle (correctly labelled Fire now) to the world below. Now this next world, created by the first world (the first triad or World 3), is going to be World 6, and here we will see a whole new order of laws, because time and space enter in world 6.

Note: It would seem that this step should read "Four: Fire from Air", not "Four: Fire from Water". This relates to the following discussion in *In Search of the Miraculous*:

C, O, N retain their numbers 1, 2, 3. 'Carbon' is always 1, 'oxygen' is always 2, 'nitrogen' is always 3.

But being more active than 'oxygen', 'nitrogen' enters as the active principle in the next triad which it enters with a density of 2. In other words 'nitrogen' has a density of 2 and 'oxygen' a density of 3.

Since "nitrogen enters as the active principle in the next triad", the *Sefer Yetzirah* should read "Fire from Air", yet it reads "Fire from Water". It is unclear why this is so. It is possible that the names Air and Water have a different correspondence thus far than they will in the rest of text, specifically that Water is neutralizing and Air is passive. This would make the preceding discussion of Spirit-Air-Water identical to the sequence 1-2-3, which is the triad of creation, and my comments regarding density as being most important would be out of place. The trouble with this is, as I say, the rest of the document specifically equates the forces fire, water, and air as active, passive, and neutralizing respectively (see for example [Chapter 3 verse 3](#)).

One possibility is that there is something unusual, even illegitimate about this case in which the next triad is generated by water instead of air as it should be. This is evocative of many Gnostic traditions in which at precisely this point, Sophia, for example, begets creation in error, out of ignorance.

13. Five: With three of the simple letters seal "above". Choose three and place them in His great Name: YHV. With them seal the six extremities. Face upward and seal it with YHV.
 - Six: Seal "below". Face downward and seal it with YVH.
 - Seven: Seal "east". Face straight ahead and seal it with HYV.
 - Eight: Seal "west". Face backward and seal it with HVY
 - Nine: Seal "south". Face to the right and seal it with VYH.
 - Ten: Seal "north". Face to the left and seal it with VHY.

This is remarkable. Here, where the six processes should be, we see exactly the way the six processes are generated from the Three. Sequential ordering of the three forces in time create six possibilities:

YHV
YVH
HYV
HVY
VYH
VHY

If, for example, we take "Y" to represent active force, "H" to represent passive force, and "V" to represent neutral force, we have the six different possible orders of the three forces. These are the six laws of World 6.

It is probably unwise to pursue this even further at this point because of the many different versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah*: Later in this text, there will be an explicit assignment of each of the three forces to a letter of the process (Chapter 3, verse 8) and so we will be able to exactly associate each of the six processes with a letter sequence.

Despite the very economical presentation of this chapter so far, we have a far-reaching explication of the first three worlds of the ray of creation. Point four above, described as Fire (the "seventh" process), comes from the previous triad (World 3), and *then* the six processes are listed. As I've pointed out elsewhere, the so-called seventh process is the manifestation of world three in world six, or more generally the manifestation of a higher world in a lower one. In the planetary representation, for example, the higher world, the seventh "planet", is the Sun.

And we can now see how the original ten sefirot of Chapter 1 are generated: the first triad (1, 2, and 3) generates 4 which is "fire", or the highest part of the following world which includes the next six for a total of seven. The triad plus the seven is the ten.

14. These are the Ten Sefirot of Nothingness. One is the Breath of the Living God. Breath [from Breath], Fire [from water, and the extremities], up, down, east, west, north and south.

This seems garbled. It should be a summary at the end of the chapter but only accounts for 9 of the 10 sefirot.

Stenring's translation reads:

These are the ten ineffable Sephiroth: one—the Spirit of the living Elohim; two—Air form Spirit; three—Water from Air; four—Fire from Water; Height, Depth, East, West, North and South.

So not only are all ten Sephirot summarized, but "Spirit" is correctly translated where Kaplan uses "Breath".

(You may be wondering, at this point, why I just don't use Stenring's translation instead of Kaplan's. I may do so at some point but, disregarding for the moment the time required to replace it, in many ways the Kaplan translation is more "friendly", using for example "God" rather than "Elohim" etc.)

Chapter 2

(The Twenty-two Letters)

1. Twenty-two foundation letters: three Mothers, seven Doubles, and twelve Elementals. The three Mothers, A M Sh, their foundation is the pan of merit, the pan of liability, and the tongue of decree deciding between them.

The pans mentioned here are the two pans on a weighing scale.

2. Twenty-two letters: Engrave them, carve them, weigh them, permute them, and transform them, and with them depict the soul of all that was formed and all that will be formed in the future.
3. Twenty-two foundation letters: They are engraved with voice, carved with breath, and placed in the mouth in five places: AChHO, BVMP, GYKO, DTLNTh, ZSShRTz.
4. Twenty-two foundation letters: They are set in a circle as 231 Gates. And this is the sign: There is no good higher than delight (ONG), and there is no evil lower than plague (NGO).

If O=passive, N=neutralizing (this exact association with the O and N Oxygen and Nitrogen terminology of the fourth way is not accidental), and G=active, then the first trigram, ONG is the process of healing (here described as delight), and the second trigram, NGO, is the process of corruption, (here described as plague).

(Note that the G in Hebrew (as in Greek) is the third letter of the alphabet, our "C". This assignment of the same forces to the same letters also holds if, and this will be my only excursion into numerology here, we relate the higher numeric value of the letter assigned in Hebrew to a greater density where O=70, N=50, G=3.)

In his book, Kaplan at this point goes into a long discussion on the subject of creating a "golem", an artificial life form that the great Kabbalistic masters were said to be able to create. But the whole subject of creation of a Golem is nonsense, based on a misunderstanding of a biblical passage in which Abraham and some of those with him were said to take with them "the souls that they had made" (Genesis 12:5). Students of the fourth way should have no trouble understanding the idea of creating a soul and it has nothing to do with golems.

This idea of 22 letters, 231 gates, and transposing, transforming, permuting and so on, the letters has led to elaborate figures of circles of letters and much discussion and argument about their relative value. It may be a more simple permutation is meant here. It is the permuting of the three forces (three Mothers) that creates the six/seven processes (seven Doubles), as, for example, 2-3-1.

5. How? Weigh them and transpose them, Aleph with each one, and each one with Aleph; Bet with each one, and each one with Bet. They repeat in a cycle. Therefore, everything formed and everything spoken emanates in one name.

Stenring's translation of this verse is very different:

How did He combine, weigh, and exchange them? A with all and all with A; B with all and all with B; G with all and all with G; and all of them turned around. Hence they go forth through two hundred and thirty one gates, and thus it comes about that the whole creation and all language proceed from one combination of letters.

The idea being that a few fundamental elements can create the infinite variety of the world. But once again, three letters, in this case the first three letters of the Hebrew alphabet, are used as an example.

6. Form substance out of chaos and make nonexistence into existence. Carve great pillars out of air that cannot be grasped. This is the sign: One foresees, transposes, and makes all creation and all words with one Name. And a sign of this: Twenty-two objects in a single body.

This seems to refer to the idea of cosmos, any and every cosmos being constructed of the 22 elements represented here as letters of the Hebrew alphabet divided into groups of three, seven, and twelve. This is represented by the enneagram as the triangle, the web figure, and the 12 crossings they make. One gives rise to three which leads to all, represented by 22.

Chapter 3

(The Three and Six)

1. Three Mothers, A M Sh: Their foundation is the pan of liability, the pan of merit, and the tongue of decree deciding between them.

Here again we will deal with three forces, in this case designated as the Hebrew letters A, M, and Sh, representing neutralizing, passive, and active respectively (the triad of regeneration). These three forces were historically referred to as the "elements" air, water, and fire, again respectively. (I put "elements" in quotes because I once again ran across somebody's benighted understanding in an article I was reading the other day in which the author pitied the poor ignorant ancients who thought there were only four elements and today we know there are over 100! This is a good example of formatory thinking: In that case, the author equated the ancient elements with the modern elements because we use the same word for each.)

2. Three Mothers, A M Sh: A great, mystical, concealed secret, sealed with six rings. And from it emanate fire and water, separating themselves as male and female. Three Mothers, A M Sh, are their foundation, and from them are born the Fathers, from which everything was created.

The usage of "three Mothers" and "three Fathers" here is interesting, and would seem to contradict a statement a few chapters later that states "Three Mothers which are three Fathers". Both are true, depending on the point of view. In this case, they are called "Mothers" as opposed to their source, the Father, and as their offspring generate the rest of the world. The actual means of the creation is the six processes, that is the three laws of world 3 and the three additional laws of world 6. Once world 6 exists, creation can proceed mechanically. The six rings that conceal the three Mothers are the six processes.

Fire, associated with the male, is the active force and water, associated with the female, is the passive force.

3. Three Mothers, A M Sh, in the Universe are air, water, and fire. Heaven was created from fire, earth was created from water, and the air decides between the fire and the water.

Heaven is active, earth passive, air neutral.

4. Three Mothers A M Sh, in the year are fire, water, and breath. The hot is created from fire, the cold is created from water, and the temperate from breath decides between them.

Hot is active, cold passive, temperate neutral.

5. Three Mothers, A M Sh, in the Soul are fire, water, and breath. The head is created from fire, the belly is created from water, and the chest, created from breath, decides between them.

Head is active, belly passive, chest neutral.

6. Three Mothers, A M Sh: Engrave them, carve them, permute them, and with them seal three Mothers in the Universe, three Mothers in the Year, and three Mothers in the Soul, male and female.
7. Make Alef king over breath, bind a crown to it, and combine one with another. And with them seal air in the Universe, the temperate in the year, and the chest in the Soul, the male with A M Sh, and the female with A Sh M.

Alef (A) is associated with the neutral elements. When permuting the three letters, two sequences (A M Sh and A Sh M) begin with A.

8. Make Mem king over water, bind a crown to it, and combine one with another. And with them seal earth in the Universe, the cold in the Year, and the belly in the Soul, the male with M A Sh, and the female with M Sh A.

Mem (M) is associated with the passive elements. When permuting the three letters, two sequences (M A Sh and M Sh A) begin with M.

9. Make Shin king over fire, bind a crown to it, and combine one with another. And with them seal heaven in the Universe, the hot in the year, and the head in the Soul, the male [with Sh A M] and the female [Sh M A].

Shin (Sh) is associated with the active elements. When permuting the three letters, two sequences (Sh A M and Sh M A) begin with Sh.

This completes the introduction of the three forces and their association with the six processes. This is accomplished using a 3x2 matrix as such:

A M Sh	M A Sh	Sh A M
A Sh M	M Sh A	Sh M A

The order in which they are introduced is Alef, Mem, and Shin. That is, the two permutations beginning with Alef are given first, then the two that begin with Mem, then the two that begin with Shin. In addition, Alef is associated with Breath (Air), Mem with Water, and Shin with Fire. In fourth way terminology, this is the order Nitrogen, Oxygen, Carbon, or neutralizing, passive, active. This is

also the way the first triad given is ordered (A M Sh). This triad is the process of regeneration.

In addition, the triads of forces (processes) are related to "male" and "female" as in the statement "the male with A M Sh, and the female with A Sh M", in other words, keeping the same starting force and swapping the next two forces:

A M Sh - neutral, passive, active - male
A Sh M - neutral, active, passive - female

To summarize, we have:

A M Sh - neutral, passive, active - male (This is the process of regeneration, 3-2-1.)
A Sh M - neutral, active, passive - female (This is the process of corruption, 3-1-2.)
M A Sh - passive, neutral, active - male (This is the process of healing, 2-3-1.)
M Sh A - passive, active, neutral - female (This is the process of refinement, 2-1-3.)
Sh A M - active, neutral, passive - male (This is the process of destruction, 1-3-2.)
Sh M A - active, passive, neutral - female (This is the process of growth, 1-2-3.)

(For details on the nature of the different processes, refer to [The Six Processes.](#))

Chapter 4

(The Seven)

1. Seven Doubles, BGD KPRT: Their foundation is life, peace, wisdom, wealth, grace, seed, dominance. Each has two sounds: B-Bh, G-Gh, D-Dh, K-Kh, P-Ph, R-Rh, T-Th. A structure of soft and hard, a structure of strong and weak, double because they are transposes. The transpose of life is death, the transpose of peace is evil, the transpose of wisdom is folly, the transpose of wealth is poverty, the transpose of grace is ugliness, the transpose of seed is desolation, the transpose of dominance is subjugation.

The seven letters discussed here have two pronunciations, making each of them a "double".

2. Seven Doubles, BGD KPRT: Seven and not six, seven and not eight. Examine with them and probe from them, make each thing stand on its own essence, and make the Creator sit on His base.
3. Seven Doubles, BGD KPRT, parallel the seven extremities. These are the six extremities: up, down, east, west, north, south. And the Holy Palace precisely in the middle upholds them all.

Here we see the basic relationship of six and seven, or the six processes to the law of seven, where the seventh is indicated by a point in the middle of the six around it. This is the same arrangement as in many symbols including the tetractys, enneagram, Hopi altar, tree of life, and so on.

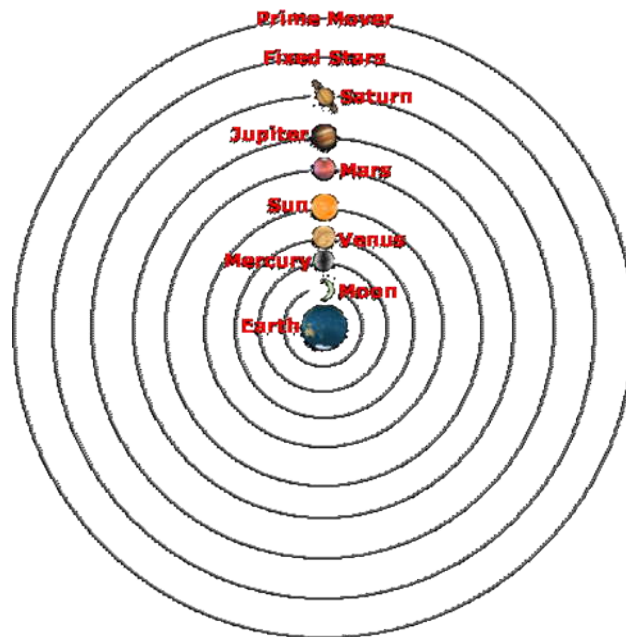
4. Seven Doubles, BGD KPRT: Engrave them, carve them, combine them, as planets in the Universe, days in the Year, and gates in the Soul. From them engrave seven firmaments, seven earths, seven weeks. Seven is therefore beloved under all heavens.

Examples of the seven "in the universe" are introduced here and specified in the next seven sentences.

5. [How? Make Bet king over life, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Saturn in the universe, Sunday in the Year, and the right eye in the Soul.

6. [Make Gimel king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Jupiter in the Universe, Monday in the Year, and the left eye in the Soul.
7. [Make Dalet king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Mars in the Universe, Tuesday in the Year, and the right ear in the Soul.
8. [Make Kaf king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict the Sun in the Universe, Wednesday in the Year, and the left ear in the Soul.
9. [Make Peh king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Venus in the Universe, Thursday in the Year, and the right nostril in the Soul.
10. [Make Resh king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Mercury in the Universe, Friday in the Year, and the left nostril in the Soul.
11. [Make Tav king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict the Moon in the Universe, the Sabbath in the Year, and the mouth in the Soul.]

Note that this does not correspond to the way we usually associate planets with days of the week. For example, our Saturday is associated with Saturn, our Sunday, with the Sun. It is hard to understand why the *Sefer Yetzirah* makes the associations between planets and days that are given here. But the order of the planets is traditional. It is the way the ancient planetary spheres were ordered (outermost to innermost) as shown here:



12. The Seven Doubles, how does one permute them? Two stones build two houses, three build six houses, four build 24 houses, five build 120 houses, six build 720 houses, and seven build 5040 houses. From there on go out and calculate that which the mouth cannot speak and the ear cannot hear.

Again, a few elements can be permuted to make many combinations.

Chapter 5

(The Twelve)

1. Twelve Elementals: HV ZCh TY LN SO TzQ. Their foundation is sight, hearing, smell, speech, taste, coition, action, motion, anger, laughter, thought, and sleep. Their measure is the twelve diagonal boundaries: the north-east boundary, the south-east boundary, the upper-east boundary, the lower-east boundary, the upper-north boundary, the lower-north boundary, the south-west boundary, the north-west boundary, the upper-west boundary, the lower-west boundary, the upper-south boundary, the lower-south boundary. They continually spread for ever and ever. They are the Arms of the Universe.
2. Twelve Elementals: HV ZCh TY LN SO TzQ. Engrave them, carve them weigh them, permute them, transpose them, and with them depict the twelve constellations in the Universe: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces; the twelve months in the Year: Nissan, Iyar, Sivan, Tamuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei, Mar-cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar; and the twelve directors of the Soul: two hands, two feet, two kidneys, the spleen, the liver, the gall bladder, the hemsess, the kiva, and the korkeban.
How does one permute them? Make Heh king, bind a crown in it, and with it depict Aries in the Universe, Nissan in the Year, and the right hand in the Soul.
Make Vav king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Taurus, Iyar in the Year, and the left hand in the Soul.
Make Zayin king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Gemini in the Universe, Sivan in the Year, and the right foot in the Soul.
Make Chet king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Cancer in the Universe, Tamuz in the Year, and the left foot in the Soul.
Make Tet king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Leo in the Universe, Av in the Year, and the right kidney in the Soul.
Make Yud king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Virgo in the Universe, Elul in the Year, and the left kidney in the Soul.
Make Lamed king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Libra in the Universe, Tishrei in the Year, and the liver in the Soul.
Make Nun king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Scorpio in the Universe, Mar-cheshvan in the Year, and the spleen in the Soul.
Make Samekh king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Sagittarius in the Universe, Kislev in the Year, and the gall bladder in the Soul.

Make Eyin king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Capricorn in the Universe, Tevet in the Year, and the hemsess in the Soul.

Make Tzadi king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Aquarius in the Universe, Shevat in the Year, and the kivah in the Soul.

Make Kuf king, bind a crown to it, and with it depict Pisces in the Universe, Adar in the Year, and the korkeban in the Soul.

I have not spent much time with the twelve. Here or elsewhere. It may be that a knowledge of the 12 months of the Jewish year and the 12 letters of the Hebrew alphabet here related to the astrological signs has some meaning but I have seen so much nonsense connected with zodiacal astrology that I skip it, at least for now. The main point to be made here is we are discussing world 12, which is as far as this book's descent of the ray of creation takes us.

3. Three Mothers which are three Fathers, from which emanate fire, breath and water. Three Mothers, seven Doubles, and twelve Elementals.

Here we see the basic difference between the three and seven:

- Three are indivisible, known to be three only by their results. It makes no more sense to call them Mothers than Fathers.
- Seven are doubles, that is they contain their opposites.
- Twelve—the term "elementals" is translated by Stenring as "Simple" and seems to imply they are fixed at whatever they are. It is not impossible they are the six (seven minus the one in the middle), split.

So we have: Three, which are simultaneously male and female as well as each other; Seven, which can be male or female; and Twelve, of which six are male, six female. This is expressed by the author using the Hebrew alphabet as follows:

- The twelve elementals are always paired as such: HV ZCh TY LN SO TzQ;
- The Seven each have two sounds: B-Bh, G-Gh, D-Dh, K-Kh, P-Ph, R-Rh, T-Th. "A structure of soft and hard, a structure of strong and weak, double because they are transposes."
- And the three, A M Sh.

Incidentally, this entire discussion of three, six/seven, and twelve illustrates the chief difference between worlds six and twelve. World six, created consciously, is directly influenced by the world above it (world 3), which acts as another law in it, so we have seven. But world twelve, generated mechanically from world six (as all further worlds will be generated), does not have the direct participation of the higher world in it, so it is twelve and not thirteen.

This text, with its "seven doubles" first alerted me to the dual nature of the seven, and I have since found it mentioned frequently in ancient texts. An example of

such references is in Macrobius's commentary on *The Dream of Scipio*, in which he describes how the soul being born descends downward through the seven (ancient) planetary spheres, acquiring each planet's characteristic for a positive seven; and at death the soul ascends in reverse fashion through the spheres, dropping each characteristic in turn, for a negative seven. In gnostic writings, we find frequent mention of both the positive and negative aspects of the planets - sometimes only one or the other. In the gnostic creation myth of the Corpus Hermeticum, we find first the creation of the seven essence types which is then followed by the division into two sexes. In architecture, for example at the Temple of Luxor in Egypt, we find seven pairs of pillars. This, like so much "pagan" knowledge, was adopted by the Christians, and the seven pairs of pillars in the cathedral were said to represent the fourteen stages of the cross.(1)

4. These are the twenty-two letters which are founded by the Blessed Holy One [Yah, YHVH of Hosts, God of Israel, the Living God, high and exalted] dwelling in eternity, whose name is Holy, exalted and Holy is He.

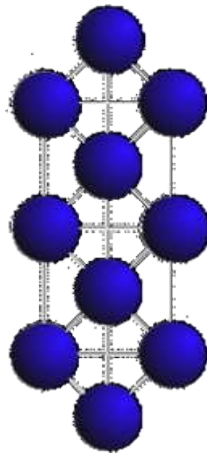
Chapter 6

(Summary)

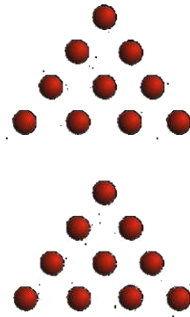
1. Three are the fathers and their offspring, seven are the planets and their hosts, and twelve are the diagonal boundaries. And the proof of this, true witnesses, are the Universe, the Year, and the Soul. He decreed Twelve, (Ten), Seven and Three and He appointed them in the Teli, the Cycle, and the Heart. The three are fire, water, and breath: fire above, water below, and breath, the decree that decides between them. A sign of this is that fire upholds water. Mem hums, Shin hiss es, and Alef is the decree that decides between them.

The twelve diagonals are said to be the 12 diagonal lines on the tree of life. Perhaps also the 12 diagonal lines formed when all the points of the tetractys are connected. And the twelve crossings of the enneagram's web with the triangle.

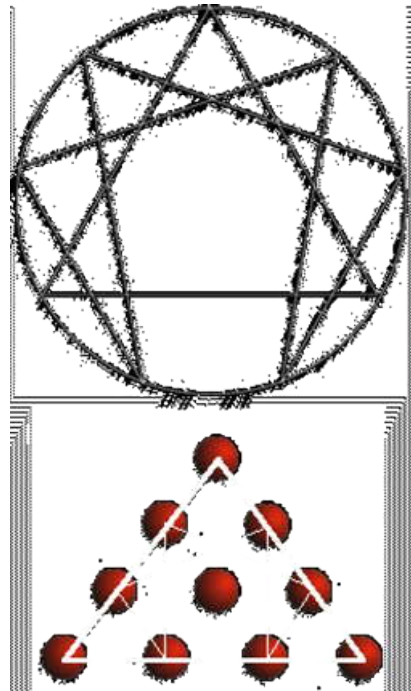
I'll insert one "tree of life" diagram here. This is from the Gra version and appeals to me because of its relative simplicity:



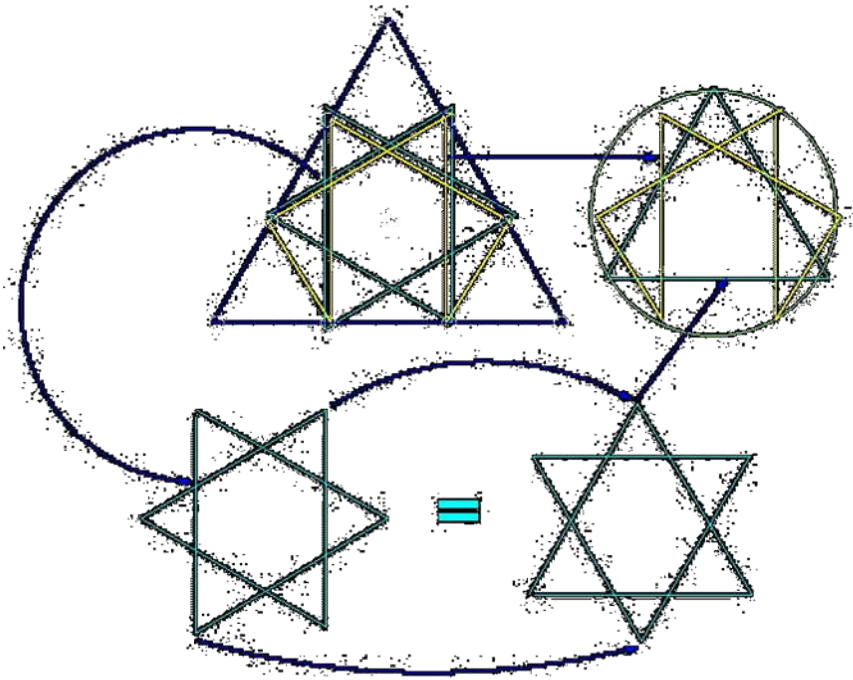
For reference, here is a tetractys (and one drawn with connecting lines)



and an enneagram and a tetractys with enneagram connections illustrated:

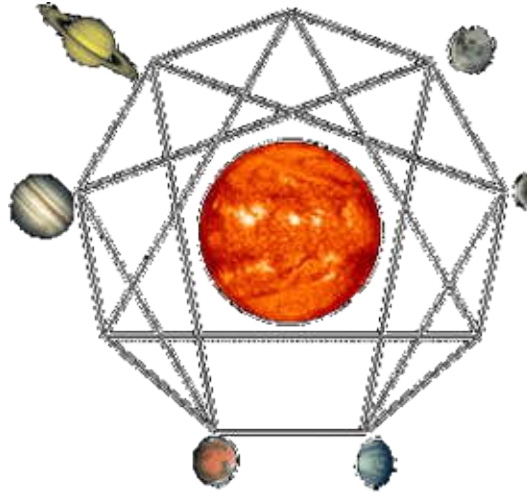


The following diagram shows some simple symbol transformations initiated by connecting the same six points of the tetractys in two different ways to generate a Star of David and an enneagram web. Again we see how the seventh point, although not shown in either the Star of David or the enneagram, would be in the center ("three opposite three, with a decree deciding between them" as we will soon read):



2. The Teli in the Universe is like a king on his throne, the cycle in the Year is like a king in the province, the Heart in the Soul is like a king in battle.
 "Also every desire, one opposite the other was made by God" (Ecclesiastes 7:14).
 Good opposite evil, good from good, evil from evil. Good makes evil recognizable, and evil makes good recognizable. Good is kept for the good, and evil is kept for the wicked.
3. Three: Each one stands alone. Seven are divided, three opposite three, with a decree deciding between them. Twelve stand in war: three who love, three who hate, three who give life, and three who kill. The three that love are the heart, the ears and the mouth; the three that hate are the liver, the gall bladder, and the tongue. And God, the faithful King dominates them all. One over three, three over seven, and seven over twelve, and all of them are bound, one to another.

"Three: each one stands alone"—the triangle. "Seven are divided, three opposite three, with a decree deciding between them"—this is the standard way the seven are illustrated in the enneagram, although the seventh is typically invisible. ("Three opposite three" is well illustrated by the theory of essence types where the maximum attractions, which do not combine, are opposite each other, left and right, and "a decree deciding between them" - the solar type in the middle, which may combine with any of the other six, on the enneagram.) So "One over three"—the circle over the triangle; "three over seven"—the triangle over the web and its center; seven over 12—the web crossing the triangle at 12 points (here shown on the scale of the solar system):

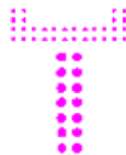


4. And when Abraham our father gazed, he looked, saw, delved, understood, engraved, carved, permuted and depicted, and he was successful. And the Master of all, Blessed be He, revealed Himself to him, and took him in His bosom, [kissed him on the head, and called him, "my Beloved"]. He made a covenant with him between the ten toes of his feet-this is the covenant of circumcision-and between the ten fingers of his hand-this is the covenant of the tongue. He bound the twenty-two letters to his tongue and revealed their foundation. He drew them in water, burned them in fire, agitated them with breath. He ignited them with seven planets, and directed them with twelve constellations.

And, finally, the point of the whole thing. This knowledge is intended to be used to grow in being, and so create higher understanding.

Note 1-

In the temple at Luxor the seven pairs of pillars are arranged like this:



That is, they form the base of a cross. The entrance of this temple is below the seven pairs of pillars, and the "holy of holies" far above the 12 pairs. If we would use the Greek terminology of the Christian Gnostics, the seven are the Hebdomad, and the twelve are the Dodecad. It is worthy of note that this is exactly the way the Gnostics visualized the base and crossbar of the cosmic Cross. Further, after crossing a space, one next encounters groups of eight pillars, corresponding to the Gnostic's Ogdoad, again in the proper order of Gnostic exposition.