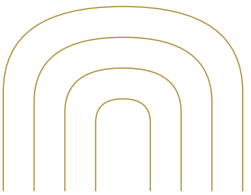
HEKHAL · READER'S EDITION



ספר יצירה

Sefer Yetzirah

The Book of Formation: all six chapters, Hebrew and English, with the full apparatus

Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)

PROVISIONAL EDITION · MACHINE-ASSISTED · NOT YET REVIEWED BY A CREDENTIALED EDITOR

6 parts · Edition of 2026-11-14 · hekhal.org

About this edition

This volume gathers every part of *Sefer Yetzirah* published on Hekhal as of 2026-11-14, in order. Each part keeps its own apparatus and notes.

Hebrew of Sefer Yetzirah as printed in the Warsaw 1884 edition with commentaries, taken from Sefaria (version 'Sefer Yetzirah, Warsaw 1884', public domain; source record at the National Library of Israel, NNL_ALEPH001310968), fetched 2026-11-10. This is the common printed text in six chapters and 48 mishnayot (1,699 Hebrew words by our count, the Warsaw editors' bracketed additions included). The ordinary printed editions follow the shorter of the two forms first printed at Mantua in 1562; the Warsaw text has not been collated against the manuscripts of that short recension, or against the long and Saadian recensions. The Warsaw editors' parentheses and square brackets (readings they would delete, their corrections, variant notes, and a supplement from the Mantua print at 2:3) are reproduced as printed. Sefaria also carries the Gra version (Warsaw 1884, public domain) and the text in Eisenstein's Otzar Midrashim (1915, public domain); they are not translated here. A collation against a scan of the Warsaw print and against Hayman's edition of the manuscripts (2004) is still an open editor item.

TRADITION	jewish-mysticism
LANGUAGE	Hebrew
PERIOD	c. 2nd-9th c. CE (date disputed)
ATTRIBUTION	Anonymous; pseudepigraphically ascribed to the patriarch Abraham
TRANSLATION	Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)
LICENCE	CC-BY-SA-4.0
ONLINE	https://hekhal.org/texts/sefer-yetzirah-complete/

> **Cite this edition:** Hekhal Targum Project, trans. "Sefer Yetzirah." Hekhal reader's edition, 2026-11-14. https://hekhal.org/texts/sefer-yetzirah-complete/

> What this is: a machine-assisted, provisional translation. Every rendering choice and every unresolved reading is recorded in the apparatus beside the text. If you read the original and something looks wrong, write to community@hekhal.org; corrections are credited.

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Sefer Yetzirah 1; the thirty-two paths and the ten sefirot

This edition presents the verbatim Hebrew text of the passage beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

The apparatus carries a running commentary, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, any doctrinally-live ambiguity preserved with both readings, and cross-references to the lexicon. The original-language text is reproduced verbatim from the digital source credited in the provenance line of this page; any modern English translation still under copyright is cited as a comparand only.



בשלשים ושתים נתיבות פליאות חכמה חקק יה יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל אלהים חיים ומלך עולם אל שדי רחום וחנון רם ונשא שוכן עד מרום וקדוש שמו וברא את עולמו בשלשה ספרים בספר וספר וספור:

עשר ספירות בלי מה ועשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד שלש אמות ושבע כפולות ושתים עשרה פשוטות:

עשר ספירות בלימה מספר עשר אצבעות חמש כנגד חמש וברית יחיד מכוונת באמצע כמלת הלשון וכמילת מעור:

עשר ספירות בלימה עשר ולא תשע, עשר ולא אחת עשרה, הבן בחכמה וחכם בבינה, בחון בהם וחקור מהם והעמד דבר על בוריו והשב יוצר על מכונו:

עשר ספירות בלי מה מדתן עשר שאין להם סוף עומק ראשית ועומק אחרית עומק טוב ועומק רע עומק רום ועומק תחת עומק מזרח ועומק מערב עומק צפון ועומק דרום אדון יחיד אל מלך נאמן מושל בכולם ממעון קדשו ועד עדי עד:

With thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom Yah engraved: YHVH Tzeva'ot, the God of Israel, Elohim Chayyim (the living God) and Melekh Olam (eternal King), El Shaddai, merciful and gracious, high and exalted, dwelling forever, on high and holy is His Name; and He created His world with three sefarim: with sefer, and sefar, and sippur.

Ten sefirot beli mah (without-what), and twenty-two foundation letters: three mothers, and seven doubles, and twelve simples.

Ten sefirot belimah: the number of the ten fingers, five over against five, and a covenant of the Unique One set exactly in the middle, like the circumcision of the tongue and like the circumcision of the member (ma'or, literally 'nakedness').

Ten sefirot belimah: ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand with Wisdom, and be wise with Understanding; examine with them and probe from them; set the matter upon its clarity, and restore the Former (Yotzer) to His base.

Ten sefirot beli mah: their measure is ten, which have no end: depth of beginning and depth of end, depth

of good and depth of evil, depth of above and depth of below, depth of east and depth of west, depth of north and depth of south. The singular Lord (Adon Yachid), El, faithful King, rules over them all from His holy dwelling, unto eternity of eternity.

עשר ספירות בלי מה צפייתן כמראה הבזק ותכליתן אין להן קץ ודברו בהן ברצוא ושוב ולמאמרו כסופה ירדופו ולפני כסאו הם משתחוים:

Ten sefirot beli mah: their appearance is like the sight of the lightning-flash, and their limit, there is no end to them. His word is in them in running and returning; at His utterance they pursue like a whirlwind, and before His throne they bow down.

עשר ספירות בלי מה נעוץ סופן בתחלתן ותחלתן בסופן כשלהבת קשורה בגחלת שאדון יחיד ואין לו שני ולפני אחד מה אתה סופר:

Ten sefirot beli mah: their end is embedded in their beginning and their beginning in their end, like a flame bound to a coal; for the Lord is singular and has no second, and before One, what do you count?

עשר ספירות בלימה בלום פיך מלדבר ולבך מלהרהר ואם רץ לבך שוב למקום שלכך נאמר והחיות רצוא ושוב. ועל דבר זה נכרת ברית:

Ten sefirot belimah: restrain your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking; and if your heart runs, return to the Place; therefore it is said: “And the living creatures ran and returned.” And concerning this matter a covenant was cut.

עשר ספירות בלימה, אחת רוח אלהים חיים ברוך ומבורך שמו של חי העולמים קול ורוח ודבור וזהו רוח הקדש:

Ten sefirot belimah: One: the breath (ruach) of Elohim Chayyim, blessed and blessed be the Name of the Life of the worlds:

שתים רוח מרוח חקק וחצב בה עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד שלש אמות ושבע כפולות ושתים עשרה פשוטות ורוח אחת מהן:

שלש מים מרוח חקק וחצב בהן תהו ובהו רפש וטיט חקקן כמין ערוגה הציבן כמין חומה סככם כמין מעזיבה:

ארבע אש ממים חקק וחצב בה כסא הכבוד שרפים ואופנים וחיות הקודש ומלאכי השרת ומשלשתן יסד מעונו שנאמר עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט:

(חמש שלש אותיות מן הפשוטות חתם רום ברר שלש וקבען בשמו הגדול יה"ו. וחתם בהם שש קצוות) [הנוסחא הנכונה: בירר ג' אותיות מן הפשוטות בסוד ג' אמות אמ"ש וקבען בשמו הגדול וחתם בהם ו' קצוות, חמש חתם רום] ופנה למעלה וחתמו ביה"ו. שש חתם תחת ופנה למטה וחתמו ביו"ה. שבע חתם מזרח ופנה לפניו וחתמו בהי"ו. שמנה חתם מערב ופנה לאחריו וחתמו בהו"י. תשע חתם דרום ופנה לימינו וחתמו בוי"ה. עשר חתם צפון ופנה לשמאלו וחתמו בוה"י:

אלו עשר ספירות בלימה אחת רוח אלהים חיים ורוח מרוח ומים מרוח ואש ממים ורום מעלה ותחת מזרח ומערב וצפון ודרום [בדפוס מנטובה (שכ"ב) הגי' כמ"ש באוצר ה' וברמ"ב]:

voice, and breath, and speech; and this is the holy breath (ruach ha-kodesh).

Two: breath (ruach) from breath. He engraved and hewed in it twenty-two foundation letters: three mothers, and seven doubles, and twelve simples; and one breath is from them.

Three: water from breath (ruach). He engraved and hewed in them tohu and bohu, mire and clay. He engraved them like a kind of garden-bed, He set them up like a kind of wall, He roofed them over like a kind of ceiling.

Four: fire from water. He engraved and hewed in it the Throne of Glory, seraphim and ofanim and the holy living creatures (chayyot ha-kodesh) and the ministering angels; and from the three of them He founded His dwelling, as it is said: "He makes His angels breaths, His ministers a flaming fire."

(Five: three letters from the simples. He sealed height; He chose three and fixed them in His great Name YHV, and sealed with them six extremities.) [The correct version: He chose three letters from the simples, in the secret of the three mothers AMSh, and fixed

them in His great Name, and sealed with them six extremities. Five: He sealed height,] and turned upward and sealed it with YHV. Six: He sealed below, and turned downward and sealed it with YVH. Seven: He sealed east, and turned to His front and sealed it with HYV. Eight: He sealed west, and turned to His back and sealed it with HVY. Nine: He sealed south, and turned to His right and sealed it with VYH. Ten: He sealed north, and turned to His left and sealed it with VHY.

These are the ten sefirot belimah: One, the breath (ruach) of Elohim Chayyim; and breath from breath; and water from breath; and fire from water; and height above and below, east and west, and north and south. [In the Mantua printing (5322, that is 1562) the reading is as written in Otzar H' and in ha-RMB.]

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

▽

An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim Hebrew beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

Controlled terms noted in this passage: **sefirot** (rendered as *the-ten*), **chokhmah** (rendered as *wisdom*), **binah** (rendered as *understanding*), **olamot** (rendered as *worlds*), **ein-sof** (rendered as *the-endless*), **sod** (rendered as *secret*), **beli mah / belimah (בלי מה / בלימה)** (rendered as *beli*

mah (without-what) / belimah (transliterated)). For each, the apparatus carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Frame applicability

Applicability of the later systems. This passage is Sefer Yetzirah 1, a cosmogonic-linguistic treatise that is centuries older than the Zoharic Idrot and the Lurianic Etz Chaim. Those systems are used here only as lenses of later reception. No partzufim (Atika Kadisha, Arikh Anpin, Ze'ir Anpin) are named, and no tzimtzum, kav, or chalal appears. Nothing from either system has been read back into the body. Where those systems later read this chapter forward, the reading is noted below and flagged as later.

Ten fingers covenant

The chapter's one dense bodily image is the ten fingers 'five over against five' with the covenant 'set exactly in the middle', likened to circumcision of the tongue (speech) and of the member (ma'or; literally 'nakedness', a euphemism). The body keeps the image concrete. Read figuratively, it maps the ten sefirot onto the human hand and body as a structural analogy (five against five, with a mediating covenant) and asserts no divine body. The Hebrew milah means both 'word' and 'circumcision', so milat ha-lashon is at once the circumcision of the tongue and the word of the tongue; the pun ties the covenant of speech to the covenant of the flesh. The correspondence of fingers, tongue and member is read differently by different lines of interpretation: readers who reject any bodily picture of God take it as a mere analogy for the structure of the ten, while readers in the imaginal line take the bodily image itself as the form in which the sefirot are envisioned, without claiming a literal divine body. *Wolfson, Elliot R. 1994*; *Kaplan, Aryeh 1990*

Mekhuvvenet exactly

In 'set exactly in the middle' the word 'exactly' is the translator's added gloss on mekhuvvenet, which literally means 'directed' or 'aligned'. The Hebrew says the covenant is aligned to the

middle; ‘exactly’ brings out that sense of precise placement but is not a separate word in the source.

Nautz sofan bitchilatan

Circle and line, later reception only. ‘Their end is embedded in their beginning and their beginning in their end, like a flame bound to a coal’ was read by later Kabbalah as a statement about circularity. Sefer Yetzirah itself states no circle geometry, no tzimtzum, and no line. The body keeps ‘embedded’ (na’utz, literally ‘fixed, stuck in’) and does not substitute a word like ‘circular’. *Idel, Moshe 1988*

Ein lahem sof

’Which have no end’ (she-ein lahem sof) and ‘their limit has no end’ (ein lahen ketz). These are lexical precursors of the later technical Ein Sof, but here they are predicates of the sefirot, not the name of a divine ground prior to them. Note the tension in the text itself: the sefirot have a measure (middatan eser), yet that measure has no end. The apophatic line from beli mah to ayin to Ein Sof follows the Hekhal editorial summary. *Hekhal Editorial 2026*; *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

Isa 57 15 departure

Scriptural citation departure. The divine-epithet string ‘ram ve-nisa shokhen ad marom ve-kadosh shemo’ draws on Isaiah 57:15. The Masoretic text reads ‘ram ve-nisa shokhen ad ve-kadosh shemo, marom ve-kadosh eshkon’. Sefer Yetzirah moves ‘marom’ (on high) forward, ahead of ‘ve-kadosh shemo’, and drops ‘eshkon’. The body follows the source’s wording (‘dwelling forever, on high and holy is His Name’), not the received verse. Other echoes in the epithet list: Exod 34:6 (‘rachum ve-chanun’, merciful and gracious) and Jer 10:10 (‘Elohim chayyim u-melekh olam’).

Ezek 1 14 run return

Derash moving into experiential sod. Ezekiel 1:14 ‘ve-ha-chayyot ratzo va-shov’ (the living creatures ran and returned) is quoted exactly as in the Masoretic text. It is applied twice: to the dynamics of the sefirot (‘His word is in them in running and returning’, 1:6) and to the contemplative’s heart, which runs and must return (1:8). The merkavah vision is thus redirected onto the heart of the adept and turned into a discipline of meditation. In 1:8 the heart is told to return ‘to the Place’ (la-makom); ha-Makom is a standard rabbinic name of God, so the return can be heard as a return to God as well as to one’s starting point. ‘Ke-mar’eh ha-bazak’ (like the sight of the lightning-flash, 1:6) also echoes Ezek 1:14. This is the hidden relation: the text

instructs restraint (‘belom pikha’) at the very point where it discloses, and the translation keeps that reserve.

Belimah belom

In 1:8 the text plays on its own term: ‘sefirot belimah: belom pikha’ (restrain your mouth). The command uses the root b-l-m, to close or rein in, so that belimah is heard both as ‘without-what’ and as ‘restraint’. The pun turns a description of the sefirot into an instruction to the one who contemplates them.

Ps 104 4

Ps 104:4 is cited exactly as in the Masoretic text, apart from two plene spellings (עושה for לוהט ,עשה for להט). In context it is a derash proof-text for the elemental derivation of breath and fire: the angels are made of ‘breaths’ (ruchot), the ministers of ‘flaming fire’. The word ruchot ties the verse back to the chain the chapter has just laid out, breath from breath, water from breath, fire from water, so that a single verse spans the first and last links of the chain. So the heavenly host and the Throne of Glory (seraphim, ofanim, chayyot) are carved from the fire-sefirah, and God’s dwelling (ma’on) is founded from the three, breath, water, fire. Merkavah imagery is present without the term merkavah.

Ruach breath

Running note on ruach. Throughout this chapter ruach is rendered ‘breath’, so that the voice, breath and speech triad, the sequence ‘breath from breath’, and the ‘breaths’ of Ps 104:4 stay linked in English. The same word can equally be rendered ‘spirit’, ‘wind’ or ‘air’ (air being the first element in the text’s own scheme); the reader should hear all of these behind ‘breath’.

Maazivah ceiling

’Like a kind of ceiling’ renders ke-min ma’azivah. The ma’azivah is the layer of mortar or plaster laid over the roof beams of a house, the plastered roofing. ‘Ceiling’ keeps the building image short; ‘roof-plaster’ is closer to the literal sense.

Sefer sefar sippur

’With three sefarim: sefer, sefar, sippur’. All three come from the root s-p-r, which also gives sefirah and sofer (one who counts). Common construals: text / number / speech; or writing / counting / telling. The body leaves them transliterated because the wordplay on the root, and its link to ‘sefirot’ and to ‘before One, what do you count (sofer)?’ in 1:7, is the point. No English triad keeps all of it. The vocalization sefer / sefar / sippur is traditional, not certain: the printed text is unpointed.

Gender number shifts

Gender and number marked by the source are preserved. ‘She-ein lahem sof’ (masc. pl. lahem) stands beside ‘ein lahen ketz’ (fem. pl. lahen) for the feminine sefirot. Ruach and esh are feminine (‘chakak ve-chatzav bah’, in it/her). In 1:11 the suffixes shift from feminine plural (chakkan, hitzivan) to masculine plural (sikhakham); English ‘them’ cannot show the shift, so it is recorded here rather than smoothed away. Here ‘it’ renders feminine bah for the inanimate elements, which are not personified.

Divine names

Specific Names preserved: Yah, YHVH Tzeva’ot, Elohei Yisrael, Elohim Chayyim, Melekh Olam, El Shaddai, Adon Yachid, El, chei ha-olamim. In 1:13 the triliteral YHV is permuted to seal the six directions. These are given as letter-strings, not glossed.

Editorial brackets

Textual crux in section 13: this passage is unstable. The Warsaw print has a parenthesized reading and a square-bracketed emendation that the source introduces only as ‘the correct version’. The body gives both layers, each marked by the source’s own parentheses and brackets and with no added labels: the parenthesized reading (‘Five: three letters from the simples.

He sealed height; He chose three and fixed them in His great Name YHV, and sealed with them six extremities'), and the bracketed correction ('The correct version: He chose three letters from the simples, in the secret of the three mothers AMSh, and fixed them in His great Name, and sealed with them six extremities. Five: He sealed height'). The correction reorders the passage, so that the choosing of three letters comes before 'Five: He sealed height', adds the correlation with AMSh, and drops the explicit YHV after 'His great Name'. The correction also contains an internal contradiction, kept as the source has it: it says the three letters are chosen 'from the simples', yet ties them to 'the three mothers AMSh', although in the book's own letter scheme the mothers and the simples are separate groups, and the letters actually used for the sealing (Yod, Heh, Vav) belong to neither the mothers nor, on the usual count, the simples alone. Neither layer should be read as settled. The closing bracket of section 14 records that the Mantua printing of 5322 reads 'as written in Otzar H' and in ha-RMB'; this note is given in the body, in square brackets, as the source prints it. The Hebrew year 5322 ran from autumn 1561 to autumn 1562, so the date corresponds to 1561/62; the Mantua print is conventionally dated 1562, which is the figure given in the body. Neither siglum is identified with certainty: Otzar H' is probably Otzar Hashem, and ha-RMB is possibly the commentary of R.

Moses Botarel; both expansions are likely meanings only and still have to be checked against the edition.

Peshat derash mode

Peshat and derash, layered. The chapter is anonymous: no tannaitic citation chain, though tradition ascribes the book to Abraham (see 6:4). The rabbinic mode shows in the formula ‘she-ne’emar’ (as it is said), which introduces the Ezek 1:14 and Ps 104:4 proof-texts, and in the halakhic-sounding fence ‘ten and not nine, ten and not eleven’. The derash is aggadic-cosmological, not halakhic. The peshat sense of the elemental sequence (breath, then water, then fire) is kept in the body as the base for the later sefirotic readings.

Editorial decisions

- **sefirot.** Transliterated ‘sefirot’ instead of the glossary default ‘emanations’, which is anachronistic for Sefer Yetzirah; the forbidden ‘numbers’ etc. are avoided.
- **ruach.** Rendered ‘breath’ consistently, keeping ‘ruach ha-kodesh’ transliterated.
- In section 13 the body gives two marked layers: the printed reading in parentheses and the editors’ ‘correct version’ in square brackets, so that neither is silently preferred. The closing Mantua note in section 14 is rendered in the body in

square brackets, as the source prints it, and discussed in the notes.

- The later Zoharic and Lurianic systems are treated only as later reception; no partzuf or tzimtzum vocabulary is introduced into the body.

Manuscript variants

- **Editorial emendation in source (section 13, 'ha-nusḥa ha-nekhonah', the correct version)**: בירר ג' אותיות מן הפשוטות בסוד ג' אמות אמ"ש וקבען בשמו הגדול וחתם בהם ו' קצוות, חמש חתם רום (vs. parenthesized: חמש שלש אותיות מן הפשוטות חתם רום ברר שלש וקבען בשמו הגדול יה"ו וחתם בהם שש קצוות): Reorders the passage and adds the AMSh correlation; drops the explicit YHV after 'His great Name'. The body gives both the parenthesized reading and this emendation, each marked separately; the passage is a crux.
- **Mantua 1562 (per closing bracket)**: Reading reported as agreeing with 'Otzar H" (probably Otzar Hashem) and 'ha-RMB' (possibly R. Moses Botarel); exact wording not supplied in this passage.: Collation owed; sigla unverified, and both expansions still to be checked against the edition. The year 5322 corresponds to 1561/62. The bracketed note is rendered in the body, in square brackets, as printed.

Sefer Yetzirah 2; the twenty-two letters and the 231 gates

This edition presents the verbatim Hebrew text of the passage beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

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עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד שלש אמות שבע כפולות ושתים עשרה פשוטות. שלש אמות אמ"ש יסודן כף זכות וכף חובה ולשון חק מכריע בינתים:

Twenty-two foundation letters: three mothers, seven doubles, and twelve simples. Three mothers, AMSh (א מ ש): their foundation is a pan of merit and a pan of guilt, and a tongue of statute deciding between them.

עשרים ושתים אותיות חקקן חצבן שקלן והמירן צרפן וצר בהם נפש כל כל היצור ונפש כל העתיד לצור:

Twenty-two letters: He engraved them, He hewed them, He weighed them and exchanged them, He combined them, and with them He formed the soul (nefesh) of all [all] that is formed and the soul of all that is destined to be formed.

עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד חקוקות בקול חצובות ברוח קבועות בפה בחמשה מקומות אחה"ע בומ"ף גיכ"ק דטלנ"ת זסשר"ץ [בדפוס מנטובה נוסף במשנה זו: קשורות בלשון כשהלבת בגחלת, אחה"ע משמשת בסוף הלשון ובבית הבליעה, בומ"ף בין השפתים ובראש הלשון, גיכ"ק על שלישיתה של לשון נכרתת, דטלנ"ת בראש הלשון משמשת עם הקול, וסצר"ש בין השינים ולשון שכובה ושטותה. וע"ז קאי פי' הרמ"ב:]:

Twenty-two foundation letters, engraved in the voice, hewn in the breath (ruach), set in the mouth in five places: AChH‘ (א ח ה ע), BVMF (ב ו מ ף), GYKQ (ג י כ ק), DTLNT (ד ט ל נ ת), ZSShRTz (ז ס ש ר ץ). [Editorial insertion, not running text: in the Mantua printing there is added in this mishnah: bound to the tongue as the flame to the coal. AChH‘ serve at the end of the tongue and in the house of swallowing; BVMF between the lips and at the tip of the tongue; GYKQ upon the third of the tongue, cut; DTLNT at the tip of the tongue, serving with the voice; and STzRSh [so the print; the main list has ZSShRTz] between the teeth, with the tongue lying flat and spread. And upon

עשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד קבועות בגלגל ברל"א שערים וחוזר הגלגל פנים ואחור וזהו סימן לדבר אין בטובה למעלה מענג ואין ברעה למטה מנגע:

this the commentary of ha-RMB rests.]

Twenty-two foundation letters, set in the wheel (galgal) in two hundred and thirty-one gates; and the wheel turns face and back. And this is a sign for the matter: there is nothing in good higher than ʿoneg (ענג, delight), and nothing in evil lower than negaʿ (נגע, plague).

How did He weigh them and exchange them? Alef with all of them and all of them with Alef; Bet with all of them and all of them with Bet; and it turns back round and round. So all that is formed and all speech are found going forth by one Name.

He formed substance out of tohu, and made what is not into what is, and hewed great pillars out of air that cannot be grasped. And this is a sign: He foresees and exchanges, making all that is formed and all the words one Name. And a sign for the matter: twenty-two (numberings) [objects] in one body.

כיצד שקלן והמירן אל"ף עם כלם וכלם עם אל"ף, בי"ת עם כלם וכלם עם בי"ת וחוזרת חלילה נמצא כל היצור וכל הדבור יוצא בשם אחד:

יצר מתהו ממש ועשה אינו ישנו וחצב עמודים גדולים מאויר שאינו נתפש וזה סימן צופה וממיר עושה כל היצור ואת כל הדברים שם אחד וסימן לדבר עשרים ושתים (מניינים) [חפצים] בגוף אחד:

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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Controlled terms noted in this passage: **otiyot-yesod** (rendered as *foundation letters*), **immot** (rendered as *mothers*), **kaf zekhut / kaf chovah / lashon chok (כף**

זכות / כף חובה / לשון חק) (rendered as *a pan of merit / a pan of guilt / a tongue of statute*), **galgal** (rendered as *wheel*), **tzeraf / tziruf (צרפן)** (rendered as *He combined them*), **avir she-eino nitpas (אויר שאינו נתפש)** (rendered as *air that cannot be grasped*), **tohu** (rendered as *tohu (transliterated)*), **shem-echad** (rendered as *one Name*). For each, the apparatus carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Later tradition

Sefer Yetzirah is centuries older than the Zohar and than Lurianic Kabbalah. Nothing from either is read into the translation; where later tradition reads this chapter forward, the notes say so.

Balance image

The balance image (a parallel from later tradition, not a reading of the text). The three mothers are laid out as a scale: a pan of merit (kaf zekhut), a pan of guilt (kaf chovah), and a tongue (lashon) that decides between them. Chapter 3 pairs mem and shin with water and fire and alef with air. The pattern of two opposed forces and a deciding middle is structurally parallel to the metkala (balance) of Sifra di-Tzeniuta, where the balance orders forces that would otherwise not stand. This is a structural parallel only; showing a historical dependence would need dated scholarship. The body in mishnah 3 is the human articulating mouth (throat, lips, palate, tongue, teeth), not a divine countenance, and it must not be read as a tikkun of a divine face. *Yehuda Liebes 2000*

Lurianic air not void

Caution against reading later doctrine back into the text. ‘Air that cannot be grasped’ (avir she-eino nitpas) and ‘out of tohu’ must not be merged with the later Lurianic avir reikani / chalal (the vacated space left by the tzimtzum). Here the air is a material out of which pillars are hewn; nothing is withdrawn and no void is opened. Likewise the galgal, a turning wheel, is not the static nested igulim of Derush Igulim ve-Yosher. *Lawrence Fine 2003*

Pardes sod of letters

On the hidden level. Sefer Yetzirah works at the level of sod by way of the letters themselves: creation through engraving, hewing, weighing, exchanging and combining (tziruf) the twenty-two letters. The peshat is a linguistic-phonetic and combinatoric description: letter-classes, places of articulation, the 231 pairs. The sod reading takes the combinations as the process by which the world goes forth 'by one Name'. The body keeps the restrained, terse register. The mishnah's own term for its mnemonic devices is 'sign' (siman), not open sod. *Gershom Scholem 1987*

Peshat derash siman

Plain sense and interpretation. The text is in mishnaic register: numbered lists, the question formula 'kitzad' (how?), and the formula 've-zehu siman la-davar' ('and this is a sign for the matter'). A siman is a mnemonic or confirming token, not a proof-text, and no verse is cited in this chapter. The 'oneg/nega' siman works by showing the letter-wheel turned 'face and back': the same three letters ע-נ-ג read forward give the highest good and read in reverse give the lowest evil. The peshat (letter permutation) stays the substrate of the moral-cosmological point.

Oneg nega anagram

The pair עגנ (‘delight’) and נגע (‘plague’) is the source’s own sign (siman) for the turning wheel: the same three letters, ע, נ and ג, are arranged so that one order names the highest good and another names the lowest evil. The mishnah itself offers the anagram as its proof that the wheel turns ‘face and back’; it is not an exegetical move added by the translator. The English is left unchanged, and the Hebrew words are printed beside the English so the reader can see the letters.

231 gates

Two hundred and thirty-one gates (רל”א written as a number: 231 = 1=א + 30=ל + 200=ר) is the number of unordered pairs that can be made from 22 letters (22×21/2). ‘Face and back’ would double this to 462 ordered pairs. *A. Peter Hayman 2004*

Mantua insertion

The bracketed passage in mishnah 3 is an editorial insertion in the digital source. It reports a longer phonetic description added ‘in the Mantua printing’ (editio princeps, 1562) and ends ‘and upon this the commentary of ha-RMB rests’. The Mantua 1562 edition printed the text with commentaries attributed to Abraham ben David, Nahmanides and Moses Botarel; ha-RMB may be Botarel, which is not confirmed. The insertion is

translated in brackets and marked as not running text. Two words in it are read with an emendation: כשהלבת is read as כשלהבת (‘as the flame’), and שטותה is read as שטוחה (‘spread’); as printed, neither word makes clear sense. Its letter-list for the sibilants (וסצר”ש) differs from the main text (זסשר”ץ); the English reads its first letter as the word ‘and’ and marks the difference in brackets. ‘Upon the third of the tongue, cut’ (על שלישיתה של לשון נכרתת) is obscure: it may mean the forward third of the tongue, or the point where the tongue is ‘cut’, i.e. where it is attached; the word order favours taking ‘cut’ with the tongue.

Five places

The five places of articulation are gutturals AChH‘ (throat), labials BVMF (lips), palatals GYKQ, linguals/dentals DTLNT, and sibilants ZSShRTz (teeth). This is a phonetic classification. The triad ‘engraved in the voice, hewn in the breath, set in the mouth’ uses the chapter’s craft-verbs (engrave, hew). Ruach (breath) also carries the ‘spirit’ and ‘air’ senses tied to the first sefirah of ch. 1 and to alef; the body keeps ‘breath’.

Tzaraf smelting

The series engrave (ח-ק-ק), hew (ח-צ-ב), weigh (ש-ק-ל), exchange (מ-י-ר), combine (צ-ר-ף) describes stone-cutting, weighing and

metalwork; tzaraf also means ‘to smelt/refine’. Mishnah 5 glosses only ‘weighed and exchanged’, as the pairing of each letter with every other.

Einu yeshno

’Made what is not into what is’ (ועשה אינו ישנו, literally ‘made his-not [into] his-is’). It is not the later technical Ayin (the divine Nothing) of theosophical Kabbalah: here ‘einu’ is plain negation and is not used as a divine name. *Daniel C. Matt 1995*

Minyanim chafatzim

In the final siman the digital source marks (מניינים) ‘numberings’ as deleted and [חפצים] ‘objects/things’ as its replacement. Both are kept in the body, with the source’s own parentheses and brackets. Collation is owed.

Editorial decisions

- **galgal.** Rendered ‘wheel (galgal)’. The igul ban on ‘wheel’ does not apply, because galgal is a different term and the source explicitly has it turn.
- Editorial bracketed material is translated inside brackets and labelled as an insertion, not as running mishnah text.

- The letter-group mnemonics (AMSh, AChH‘, etc.) are transliterated, with the Hebrew letters in parentheses, so that the reader can check them.

Manuscript variants

- **Mantua printing (1562)**: Adds to mishnah 3: ‘bound to the tongue as the flame to the coal’ and an articulatory place for each group (throat, lips/tip of tongue, third of tongue, tip of tongue with voice, between teeth with the tongue flat).: A later expansion tied to the commentary of ha-RMB. The Mantua 1562 edition printed the text with commentaries attributed to Abraham ben David, Nahmanides and Moses Botarel; ha-RMB may be Botarel, which is not confirmed. Shown in brackets as an editorial insertion.
- **Sefaria digital text of the Warsaw 1884 print**: נפש כל כל היצור (כל doubled): Probable dittography. Kept in brackets in the body.
- **Sefaria digital text of the Warsaw 1884 print**: (מניינים) [חפצים]: Correction marked in the source: ‘numberings’ deleted, ‘objects’ substituted.

Sefer Yetzirah 3; the three mothers: alef, mem, shin

This edition presents the verbatim Hebrew text of the passage beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

The apparatus carries a running commentary, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, any doctrinally-live ambiguity preserved with both readings, and cross-references to the lexicon. The original-language text is reproduced verbatim from the digital source credited in the provenance line of this page; any modern English translation still under copyright is cited as a comparand only.



שלֹשׁ אמות אמ"ש יסודן כף חובה וכף זכות ולשון חק מכריע	Three mothers, AMSh: their foundation is a pan of guilt and a pan of merit, and a tongue of

statute deciding between them.

Three mothers, AMSh: a great secret, wondrous and covered, and sealed with six rings; and from it go forth fire and water, dividing themselves male and female. Three mothers, AMSh, are their foundation, and from them were born fathers, from which all was created.

Three mothers, AMSh, in the world: air, water, fire. The heavens were created first, from fire; and the earth was created from water; and the air decides between the fire and the water.

Three mothers, AMSh, in the year: fire and water and wind (ruach). Heat was created from fire, cold from water, and moistness from wind, deciding between them. Three mothers, AMSh, in the soul (nefesh): fire and water and wind. The head was created from fire, and the belly was created from water, and the trunk was created from wind, deciding between them.

Three mothers, AMSh: He engraved them, and hewed them, and combined them, and sealed with them three mothers in the world, and three mothers in the year, and three mothers in the soul

בינתים:

שלש אמות אמ"ש סוד גדול
מופלא ומכוסה וחתום בשש
טבעות וממנו יוצאים אש ומים
מתחלקים זכר ונקבה: שלש אמות
אמ"ש יסודן ומהן נולדו אבות
שמהם נברא הכל:

שלש אמות אמ"ש בעולם אויר
מים אש שמים נבראו תחלה מאש
וארץ נבראת ממים והאויר מכריע
בין האש ובין המים:

שלש אמות אמ"ש בשנה אש
ומים ורוח חום נברא מאש קור
ממים ורויה מרוח מכריע בינתים.
שלש אמות אמ"ש בנפש אש ומים
ורוח ראש נברא מאש ובטן נברא
ממים וגויה נברא מרוח מכריע
בינתים:

שלש אמות אמ"ש חקקן וחצבן
וצרפן וחתם בהן שלש אמות
בעולם ושלש אמות בשנה ושלש
אמות בנפש זכר ונקבה:

המליך אות אל"ף ברוח וקשר לו
כתר וצרפן זה עם זה וחתם בהן
אויר בעולם ורויה בשנה וגויה
בנפש זכר באמ"ש ונקבה
באש"ם:

(nefesh), male and female.

He made the letter Alef king over wind, and bound a crown to it, and combined them one with another, and sealed with them air in the world, and moistness in the year, and the trunk in the soul (nefesh): male with AMSh and female with AShM.

He made the letter Mem king over water, and bound a crown to it, and combined them one with another, and sealed with them earth in the world, and cold in the year, and the belly in the soul (nefesh), male and female: male with MASh and female with MShA.

He made the letter Shin king over fire, and bound a crown to it, and combined them one with another, and sealed with them the heavens in the world, and heat in the year, and the head in the soul (nefesh), male and female [male with ShAM and female with ShMA (so it is in n"y)].

המליך אות מ"ם במים וקשר לו כתר וצרפן זה עם זה וחתם בהן ארץ בעולם וקור בשנה ובטן בנפש זכר ונקבה זכר במא"ש ונקבה במש"א:

המליך אות שי"ן באש וקשר לו כתר וצרפן זה עם זה וחתם בהן שמים בעולם וחום בשנה וראש בנפש זכר ונקבה [זכר בשא"מ ונקבה בשמ"א, (כ"ה בנ"י)]:

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Controlled terms noted in this passage: **sod** (rendered as *secret*), **keter** (rendered as *crown*). For each, the apparatus

carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Scope of reading

Scope of reading. Sefer Yetzirah is a letter-cosmogonic text, not Zoharic Idra discourse and not Lurianic cosmogony. Its dating is disputed (2nd-9th c.), but every proposed date is centuries before both. Readings drawn from the Idra literature and from Lurianic cosmogony appear here only as later reception, and only in the notes. No partzuf names (Atika, Arikh Anpin, Ze'ir Anpin, Abba, Imma) and no tzimtzum vocabulary appear in this passage, and none have been imported into the translation. The readings that matter here are the plain sense with its interpretation (the letter-element correspondences) and the

allusive and hidden senses (remez and sod) that later tradition finds in the mothers.

Kaf chovah kaf zekhut

Later reception only. The opening is a weighing image: a pan of guilt, a pan of merit, and the tongue (pointer) that decides between them. Shin/fire and Mem/water are the two pans, and Alef/air is the tongue. This triadic structure of two opposed extremes and a mediating decider anticipates the metkala of Sifra di-Tzeniuta, the balance before which 'they did not gaze face to face'. The scale image is plausibly one of the metkala's antecedents. That link is a hypothesis and has not been established. The caution against reading such images as bodily or physical applies here in a weaker form: the scale is a figure for ordering opposed forces, not a physical instrument, and the body keeps the concrete scale-pan and tongue.

Imot mothers

Peshat-derash. The letters Alef, Mem and Shin are called 'imot', mothers, a feminine plural that the body keeps. They then 'give birth' to fathers (avot), so the gendered generative language is load-bearing. The text also distributes each letter-element into 'male and female' through letter-order: AMSh vs AShM, and so on. Reception caution: mothers and fathers here are classes of

letters, not the later Imma and Abba configurations (partzufim). The later identification of the mothers with Imma/Binah is a reception reading and is not imported into the body. *Elliot R. Wolfson 2005*

Shamayim esh mayim

Pardes, remez. 'The heavens were created first, from fire; and the earth from water' resonates with the rabbinic etymology of shamayim (heavens) as esh + mayim, fire and water (b. Hagigah 12a; Gen. Rabbah 4:7). Sefer Yetzirah does not state the wordplay here, but the Shin-Mem letters of shamayim are themselves two of the three mothers. The allusion is recorded as remez and is not unpacked in the body.

Olam shanah nefesh

Peshat-derash. This passage first sets out the triad of world (space), year (time) and soul (nefesh, here the human body), which structures the whole of Sefer Yetzirah. Each mother is 'sealed' into all three registers: Alef = air / moistness (revayah, the temperate season) / trunk (geviyah); Mem = earth / cold / belly; Shin = heavens / heat / head. 'Nefesh' is rendered 'soul', with the transliteration beside it at its first occurrence in each paragraph, but its referent throughout this chapter is the human

person as bodily microcosm (head, belly, trunk), not a spiritual soul as distinct from the body.

Chakkan chatzvan tzarfan

Later reception only. The verbs chakak (engrave), chatzav (hew), tzaraf (combine) and chatam (seal) are the letter-cosmogonic operations of Sefer Yetzirah. None of the later tzimtzum/kav geometry is present here, and none is introduced. *Moshe Idel 1988*; *Lawrence Fine 2003*

Himlikh ot

Pardes. ‘He made the letter X king over (lit. in) the element’ is the coronation formula of SY chapters 3-5: the letter is enthroned, crowned (keter) and then combined. The body keeps ‘crown’ in lower case. The Kabbalistic reading of keter as the sefirah Keter is recorded as sod-reception (see the note on the crown among the ambiguities). *Gershom Scholem 1941*

Shesh tabaot

’Sealed with six rings’: in context these are probably the six seals of the six directions of SY 1:13 (height, depth, east, west, south, north), sealed with permutations of YHV. Some read them as the six permutations of AMSh themselves, which the text then lists. Both readings are recorded here.

Shin other version

In the paragraph on the letter Shin, the bracketed words ‘male with ShAM and female with ShMA’ are a variant reading. The Warsaw editor marks the clause with כ"ה בנ"י, ‘so it is in n”y’; the abbreviation is unresolved here (perhaps nusach yashan, an old version). The clause is not part of the base text. The translation keeps it in brackets, and it should not be read as running text.

Editorial decisions

- **אמ"ש.** The letter strings are written without gershayim, as in chapters 1 and 2: AMSh, AShM, MASh, MShA, ShAM, ShMA. They are not expanded into words, because the letter-order IS the male/female distinction.
- **nefesh.** ‘Soul (nefesh)’ at its first occurrence in each paragraph, then ‘soul’. The microcosmic-body referent is explained in the apparatus, not by substituting ‘body’ in the body text.

Manuscript variants

- **Base text, bracketed note (כ"ה בנ"י)**: [זכר בשא"מ ונקבה בשמ"א], marked by the Warsaw editor with כ"ה בנ"י: The base text lacks the male/female permutations for Shin. The

Warsaw editor marks the clause with כ"ה בנ"י, 'so it is in n"y'; the abbreviation is unresolved here (perhaps nusach yashan, an old version). The clause is not part of the base text, and the body brackets it accordingly.

- **Base text, Alef vs Mem/Shin paragraphs**: Alef: 'וגויה בנפש זכר באמ"ש' (no doubled 'זכר ונקבה'); Mem: 'ובטן בנפש זכר ונקבה זכר במא"ש': There is formulaic inconsistency between the parallel paragraphs. Collation is owed.

Sefer Yetzirah 4; the seven doubles

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שבע כפולות בג"ד כפר"ת
(מתנהגות בשתי לשונות), יסודן

Seven doubles: B-G-D K-P-R-T (they conduct themselves in two tongues). Their foundation: life

and peace and wisdom and wealth, grace and seed and dominion. And they conduct themselves in two tongues: bh/b, gh/g, dh/d, kh/k, ph/p, r/rr, th/t: a pattern of soft and hard, a pattern of strong and weak. Doubles, for they are exchanges. The exchange of life: death. The exchange of peace: evil. The exchange of wisdom: folly. The exchange of wealth: poverty. The exchange of grace: ugliness. The exchange of seed: desolation. The exchange of dominion: servitude.

Seven doubles: B-G-D K-P-R-T. Seven and not six, seven and not eight. Examine with them and probe from them (and form and reckon), and set the matter upon its clarity, and restore the Former to His base.

Seven doubles: B-G-D K-P-R-T, corresponding to seven extremities. Of them, six extremities: above and below, east and west, north and south; and the Holy Palace is aligned in the middle, and it bears them all.

Seven doubles: B-G-D K-P-R-T. He engraved them, hewed them, combined them, and formed with them stars in the world, and days in the year, and gates in the soul (nefesh). And from them He

חיים ושלום וחכמה ועושר חן וזרע וממשלה, ומתנהגות בשתי לשונות ב"ב ג"ג ד"ד כ"כ פ"פ ר"ר ת"ת תבנית רך וקשה תבנית גבור וחלש כפולות שהן תמורות. תמורת חיים מות תמורת שלום רע תמורת חכמה אולת תמורת עושר עוני תמורת חן כיעור תמורת זרע שממה תמורת ממשלה עבדות:

שבע כפולות בג"ד כפר"ת שבע ולא שש שבע ולא שמונה בחון בהן וחקור מהן (וצור וחשוב) והעמד דבר על בוריו והשב יוצר על מכונו:

שבע כפולות בג"ד כפר"ת כנגד ז' קצוות מהם ו' קצוות מעלה ומטה מזרח ומערב צפון ודרום והיכל הקדש מכוון באמצע והוא נושא את כולן:

שבע כפולות בג"ד כפר"ת חקקן חצבן צרפן וצר בהם כוכבים בעולם וימים בשנה ושערים בנפש ומהן חקק שבעה רקיעים ושבע אדמות ושבע שבתות לפיכך חבב שביעי תחת כל השמים:

כיצד המליך אות ב' בחיים וקשר לו כתר וצר בו שבתי בעולם ויום

ראשון בשנה ועין ימין בנפש:

המליך אות ג׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו צדק בעולם יום שני בשנה ועין שמאל בנפש:

המליך אות ד׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו מאדים בעולם ויום ג׳ בשנה ואוזן ימין בנפש:

המליך אות כ׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו חמה בעולם ויום ד׳ בשנה ואזן שמאל בנפש:

המליך אות פ׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו נוגה בעולם ויום ה׳ בשנה ונחיר ימין בנפש:

המליך אות ר׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו כוכב בעולם ויום ששי בשנה ונחיר שמאל בנפש:

המליך אות ת׳ וקשר לו כתר וצר בו לבנה בעולם ויום שבת בשנה ופה בנפש:

שבע כפולות כיצד צרפן. שתי אבנים בונות שני בתים. שלש בונות ששה בתים. ארבע בונות ארבעה ועשרים בתים. חמש בונות מאה ועשרים בתים. שש בונות שבע מאות ועשרים בתים. שבע בונות חמשת אלפים

engraved seven firmaments and seven earths and seven sabbaths. Therefore He has held the seventh beloved under all the heavens.

How? He made the letter Bet king over life, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Shabbetai (Saturn) in the world, and the first day in the year, and the right eye in the soul (nefesh).

He made the letter Gimel king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Tzedek (Jupiter) in the world, the second day in the year, and the left eye in the soul (nefesh).

He made the letter Dalet king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Ma'adim (Mars) in the world, and the third day in the year, and the right ear in the soul (nefesh).

He made the letter Kaf king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Chamah (the Sun) in the world, and the fourth day in the year, and the left ear in the soul (nefesh).

He made the letter Pe king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Nogah (Venus) in the world, and the fifth day in the year, and the right nostril in the soul

(nefesh).

He made the letter Resh king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Kokhav (Mercury) in the world, and the sixth day in the year, and the left nostril in the soul (nefesh).

He made the letter Tav king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Levanah (the Moon) in the world, and the Sabbath day in the year, and the mouth in the soul (nefesh).

Seven doubles: how did He combine them? Two stones build two houses. Three build six houses. Four build twenty-four houses. Five build one hundred and twenty houses. Six build seven hundred and twenty houses. Seven build five thousand and forty houses. From here on, go out and reckon what the mouth cannot speak and the ear cannot hear. And these are the seven stars in the world: Chamah (the Sun), Nogah (Venus), Kokhav (Mercury), Levanah (the Moon), Shabbetai (Saturn), Tzedek (Jupiter), Ma'adim (Mars). And these are the seven days in the year: the seven days of Creation. And the seven gates in the soul (nefesh): two eyes, two ears, and the two openings of the nose, and the mouth. And

וארבעים בתים. מכאן ואילך צא וחשוב מה שאין הפה יכול לדבר ואין האוזן יכולה לשמוע. ואלו הן שבעה כוכבים בעולם חמה נוגה כוכב לבנה שבתאי צדק מאדים. ואלו הן ז' ימים בשנה שבעה ימי בראשית. ושבעה שערים בנפש שתי עינים שתי אזנים ושני נקבי האף והפה. ובהן נחקקו שבעה רקיעים ושבע ארצות ושבע שעות. לפיכך חבב שביעי לכל חפץ תחת השמים:

with them were engraved seven firmaments and seven lands and seven hours. Therefore He has held the seventh beloved for every matter under the heavens.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim Hebrew beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled

vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

Controlled terms noted in this passage: **keter** (rendered as *crown*), **chokhmah** (rendered as *wisdom*), **tzedek** (rendered as *righteousness*), **olam (עולם; cf. glossary olamot)** (rendered as *world*). For each, the apparatus carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Frame scope note

This is Sefer Yetzirah, a pre-Kabbalistic cosmogony of letters, not a Zoharic Idra passage or a Lurianic Etz Chaim passage. No

partzuf, tzimtzum, kav, or language of circle and line appears in the source. Nothing from the Idra or Lurianic systems has been put into the English; they are mentioned only in the notes below, as later reception.

Idra theosophy reception

The seven ‘gates in the soul’ (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth) are a facial inventory. In Sefer Yetzirah these are the openings of the human nefesh, not features of a divine face. This text does not read the human face as a figure of the divine face. *Elliot R. Wolfson 1994*

Lurianic cosmogony reception

The six extremities, ‘with the Holy Palace aligned in the middle and bearing them all’, is a centred spatial model. In Sefer Yetzirah the ‘middle’ is the centre of a three-dimensional cube of directions. It is not the chalal of the tzimtzum, and it should not be equated with the vacated space. *Lawrence Fine 2003*

Pardes layering

Levels of reading. Peshat: a phonological description (the six begadkefat letters, plus resh, have hard and soft pronunciations) tied to a cosmological correspondence (each letter to a planet, a weekday and a facial opening). Remez: the phonetic doubling is

read as the moral doubling of each good with its privation, so the grammar of speech carries the grammar of fate. The English keeps the plain sense (‘a crown’), and any sefirotic reading stays in the notes.

Peshat derash midrash

’Therefore He has held the seventh beloved’ (chibbev shevi’i) echoes the midrashic dictum ‘all sevenths are beloved’ (kol ha-shevi’iyim chavivim; Vayikra Rabbah 29:11): the seventh generation (Enoch), the seventh patriarch (Moses), the seventh day, the seventh year, and so on. Sefer Yetzirah gives that aggadah a structural basis in the seven double letters. The closing ‘for every matter under the heavens’ (le-khol chefetz tachat ha-shamayim) quotes words of Ecclesiastes 3:1 and is kept as given. The source’s two endings (‘under all the heavens’ vs ‘for every matter under the heavens’) are both kept.

Resh dagesh

r/rr: the source marks Resh as one of the doubles, with a dagesh form (רּ). Standard Tiberian pronunciation has six letters with a hard and a soft form; the text counts Resh as a seventh. How it was pronounced is left open. The body renders it ‘r/rr’ and does not explain it away. *A. Peter Hayman 2004*

Two tongues transcription

Transcription convention: the source writes each pair as the plain letter followed by the dagesh form (ב"בּ). The body uses bh/b, gh/g, and so on: the first member is the soft (rafe) form and the second the hard (dagesh) form. This follows the source's pairing order, not the alphabetical order of a modern grammar.

factorials

The 'stones build houses' passage computes factorials: 2! = 2, 3! = 6, 4! = 24, 5! = 120, 6! = 720, 7! = 5040. 'Stones' are letters and 'houses' are the words (permutations) they can form. All six figures in the source are arithmetically correct. 'From here on, go out and reckon what the mouth cannot speak' marks the move to the inexpressible: combinatorial excess as a figure of the unspeakable. This is letter combination (tziruf).

Hekhal ha kodesh

'The Holy Palace aligned (mekhuvan) in the middle, and it bears them all': the seventh, central point is what supports the six directions. The adjective mekhuvan (aligned or set in place) echoes the closing words of the previous section, 'restore the Former to His base (mekhono)'.

Sabbaths hours

’Seven sabbaths’ (shabbatot) in the section on engraving and ‘seven hours’ (sha’ot) in the closing paragraph come from different versions of the text that this composite has placed side by side. They are not harmonized here: each is translated as it stands. In the same way, ‘earths’ renders adamot in the earlier section and ‘lands’ renders aratzot in the closing paragraph, so that readers can see the two different Hebrew words.

Closing planet order

The list of the seven stars in the closing paragraph (Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars) does not follow the order of the letter-by-letter assignments in the seven preceding sections (Saturn with Bet, Jupiter with Gimel, Mars with Dalet, the Sun with Kaf, Venus with Pe, Mercury with Resh, the Moon with Tav). The closing list cannot be read as a restatement of those assignments. Both orders are translated as the source gives them. This recension pairs letters, planets and days in its own order (for example Bet with Shabbetai and the first day), which differs from other recensions.

Editorial decisions

- **planet names.** Hebrew planet names are transliterated with an English gloss in parentheses, so that Tzedek (Jupiter)

keeps its specific name and its homonymy stays visible.

- **המליך ... בחיים.** Rendered ‘made the letter Bet king over life’. Only Bet carries the ‘over X’ clause in this text; it is not supplied for the other six letters, where the source omits it.

Manuscript variants

- **internal (this composite text, opening clause)**: ‘(מתנהגות בשתי לשונות)’ appears in parentheses in the first sentence and is then repeated without parentheses: ‘ומתנהגות בשתי לשונות’.: Probably a doublet conflated from two recensions. Kept as bracketed in the body.
- **internal (this composite text, §2)**: ‘(וצור וחשוב)’: ‘and form and reckon’, in parentheses.: The Warsaw editors print these words in parentheses, marking them as a variant reading; kept in parentheses in the body.
- **internal (§4 vs closing paragraph)**: ‘seven earths (אדמות) … seven sabbaths (שבתות)’ vs ‘seven lands (ארצות) … seven hours (שעות)’; ‘under all the heavens’ vs ‘for every matter under the heavens’.: Two recensional traditions are juxtaposed. Both are kept.

Sefer Yetzirah 5; the twelve simples

This edition presents the verbatim Hebrew text of the passage beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

The apparatus carries a running commentary, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, any doctrinally-live ambiguity preserved with both readings, and cross-references to the lexicon. The original-language text is reproduced verbatim from the digital source credited in the provenance line of this page; any modern English translation still under copyright is cited as a comparand only.

שתים עשרה פשוטות ה"ו ז"ח
ט"י ל"נ ס"ע צ"ק יסודן ראיה,

Twelve simple letters: He Vav, Zayin Chet, Tet Yod, Lamed Nun, Samekh Ayin, Tzadi Qof. Their

foundation: sight, hearing, smell, speech, swallowing, intercourse, action, walking, anger, laughter, thought, sleep. Their measure: twelve boundaries along their diagonals. The eastern-northern boundary, the eastern-southern boundary, the eastern-upper boundary, the eastern-lower boundary, the northern-upper boundary, the northern-lower boundary, the western-southern boundary, the western-northern boundary, the western-upper boundary, the western-lower boundary, the southern-upper boundary, the southern-lower boundary. And they go on widening to eternity of eternity, and they are the arms of the world.

Twelve simple letters: He Vav, Zayin Chet, Tet Yod, Lamed Nun, Samekh Ayin, Tzadi Qof. He engraved them, hewed them, weighed them, combined them, exchanged them, and formed with them twelve constellations (mazalot) in the world; mnemonic: TShT SAB M'Q GDD. And these are the twelve months in the year: Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei, Marcheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Shevat, Adar. And these are the twelve guides in the soul (nefesh): two hands and two feet, two kidneys, spleen, liver, gall, omasum, stomach, gizzard [two

שמיעה, ריחה, שיחה, לעיטה, תשמיש, מעשה, הלוך, רוגז, שחוק, הרהור, שינה. מדתן שתים עשרה גבולים באלכסונן. גבול מזרחית צפונית, גבול מזרחית דרומית, גבול מזרחית רומית, גבול מזרחית תחתית, גבול צפונית רומית, גבול צפונית תחתית, גבול מערבית דרומית, גבול מערבית צפונית, גבול מערבית רומית, גבול מערבית תחתית, גבול דרומית רומית, גבול דרומית תחתית. ומרחיבין והולכין עד עדי עד והם זרועות עולם:

שתים עשרה פשוטות ה"ו ז"ח ט"י ל"נ ס"ע צ"ק חקקן חצבן שקלן צרפן המירן וצר בהם שנים עשר מזלות בעולם סימן טש"ת סא"ב מע"ק גד"ד. ואלו הן שנים עשר חדשים בשנה ניסן אייר סיון תמוז אב אלול תשרי מרחשון כסלו טבת שבט אדר. ואלו הן שנים עשר מנהיגין בנפש שתי ידים ושתי רגלים שתי כליות טחול כבד מרה המסס קיבה קרקבן [שתי לועזים ושתי עליזים שתי יועצים ושתי יעוצים שתי טורפין ושתי ציידים]. עשאן כמין (מדינה) [מריבה] וערכן כמין מלחמה גם את זה לעומת זה עשה האלהים: כיצד צרפן. המליך אות

that babble and two that exult, two that counsel and two that are counseled, two that tear prey and two that hunt]. He made them like a kind of (province) [contention] and arrayed them like a kind of battle: "Also the one opposite the other did ha-Elohim make." How did He combine them? He made the letter He king, and bound a crown (keter) to it, and formed with it Taleh (the Lamb) in the world, and Nisan in the year, and the right hand in the soul, male and female. He made the letter Vav king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Shor (the Ox) in the world, and Iyar in the year, and the left hand in the soul. He made the letter Zayin king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Te'omim (the Twins) in the world, and Sivan in the year, and the right foot in the soul. He made the letter Chet king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Sartan (the Crab) in the world, and Tammuz in the year, and the left foot in the soul. He made the letter Tet king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Aryeh (the Lion) in the world, and Av in the year, and the right kidney in the soul. He made the letter Yod king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Betulah (the Virgin) in the world, and Elul in the year, and the left kidney in the soul. He made

ה' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו טלה בעולם וניסן בשנה ויד ימין בנפש זכר ונקבה. המליך אות ו' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו שור בעולם ואייר בשנה ויד שמאל בנפש. המליך אות ז' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו תאומים בעולם וסיון בשנה ורגל ימין בנפש. המליך אות ח' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו סרטן בעולם ותמוז בשנה ורגל שמאל בנפש. המליך אות ט' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו אריה בעולם ואב בשנה וכוליא ימין בנפש. המליך אות י' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו בתולה בעולם ואלול בשנה וכוליא שמאל בנפש. המליך אות ל' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו מאזנים בעולם ותשרי בשנה וכבד בנפש. המליך אות נ' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו עקרב בעולם ומרחשוון בשנה וטחול בנפש. המליך אות ס' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו קשת בעולם וכסלו בשנה ומרה בנפש. המליך אות ע' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו גדי בעולם וטבת בשנה והמסס בנפש. המליך אות צ' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו דלי בעולם ושבט בשנה וקיבה בנפש. המליך אות ק' וקשר לו כתר וצר בו דגים בעולם ואדר בשנה וקרקבן בנפש:

שלש אמות שהם שלשה אבות שמהם יצא אש ורוח ומים, שלש

אמות ושבע כפולות ושנים עשר פשוטות:

אלו עשרים ושתים אותיות שבהם יסד הקב"ה יה יהוה צבאות אלהים חיים אלהי ישראל רם ונשא שוכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום וקדוש הוא:

the letter Lamed king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Moznayim (the Scales) in the world, and Tishrei in the year, and the liver in the soul. He made the letter Nun king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Akrav (the Scorpion) in the world, and Marcheshvan in the year, and the spleen in the soul. He made the letter Samekh king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Qeshet (the Bow) in the world, and Kislev in the year, and the gall in the soul. He made the letter Ayin king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Gedi (the Kid) in the world, and Tevet in the year, and the omasum in the soul. He made the letter Tzadi king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Deli (the Bucket) in the world, and Shevat in the year, and the stomach in the soul. He made the letter Qof king, and bound a crown to it, and formed with it Dagim (the Fishes) in the world, and Adar in the year, and the gizzard in the soul.

Three mothers, which are three fathers, from which went forth fire and wind (ruach) and water: three mothers, and seven doubles, and twelve simples.

These are the twenty-two letters with which the Holy One, blessed

be He, founded: Yah, YHVH Tzeva'ot, Elohim Chayyim, the God of Israel, high and exalted, dwelling forever, and holy is His name; exalted and holy is He.

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An orientation

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vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

Controlled terms noted in this passage: **keter** (rendered as *crown*), **pshutot** (rendered as *simple letters*), **mazalot** (rendered as *constellations*), **immot** (rendered as *mothers (the mother-letters Alef, Mem, Shin)*), **nefesh** (rendered as *soul*), **gevulei alakhson** (rendered as *boundaries along the diagonals*). For each, the apparatus carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Frame status

Note on interpretive frames. This passage is Sefer Yetzirah, a cosmological-linguistic text far older than both the Zoharic Idrot and the Lurianic cosmogony. Neither of those frameworks is native here: no partzufim, tzimtzum, kav or igulim appear in the source. Wherever those frameworks come up in this apparatus they are later lenses of reception, flagged as anachronistic. None of their terminology has been put into the body.

Idra theosophy anatomy

Anatomy and the body. The anatomy here (hands, feet, kidneys, liver, spleen, gall, the three stomachs) belongs to the HUMAN nefesh as microcosm. It is not a divine body, and the list is rendered concretely. The text itself asserts no divine corporeality. Its correspondences are structural (letter, constellation, month, organ). Nothing here needs to be read figuratively on the divine side, because the organs are human ones. *Giller, Pinchas 2001*

Keter coronation

'He made the letter X king and bound a crown to it' (himlikh … ve-qashar lo keter). This is a royal coronation formula: each letter is enthroned over one constellation, one month and one organ. In the body keter is the plain word 'crown'. Reading

keter here as the first of the sefirot would be a sod overlay, not the peshat of this text.

Lurianic diagonals

The twelve diagonal boundaries are formed by pairing the six directions: east, west, north, south, height (rum) and depth. Together they give the twelve edges of a cube that 'go on widening to eternity of eternity'. This is spatial geometry in the text's own register, and the body keeps it concrete. The spatial figure is neither physical cartography nor a disposable metaphor. *Kaplan, Aryeh 1990*

Zeroot olam

'The arms of the world' (zero'ot olam) echoes Deut 33:27, u-mitachat zero'ot olam, 'and underneath are the everlasting arms'. The phrase is re-read: olam shifts from 'everlasting' to 'world', so the diagonals become the world's supporting arms. This is a derash-type bending of the verse by allusion (pardes: remez). The source gives no explicit citation formula.

Eccl 7 14

Scriptural anchoring. 'Also the one opposite the other did ha-Elohim make' = Eccl 7:14 (גַּם אֶת־זֶה לְעֻמַּת־זֶה עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים). The source spells it plene (לעומת), with no substantive departure. In

Ecclesiastes the verse sets the day of good fortune against the day of adversity; here it is turned to the organs, ranged against one another ‘like a battle’, and serves as the proof-text for their paired, opposed arrangement. The Name is preserved as ha-Elohim.

Isa 57 15

Scriptural citation departure. Isa 57:15 reads: כִּי כֹה אָמַר רָם וְנִשָּׂא שֹׁכֵן עַד וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ מָרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֶשְׁכֹּון (‘the high and exalted One who dwells forever, holy is His name: I dwell in the high and holy place’). The source ends instead with מרום וקדוש הוא, ‘exalted and holy is He’. This converts the verse’s first-person locative (‘in the height and holiness I dwell’) into a third-person predicate of the Name-bearer. The body keeps the source’s wording.

Divine names

Specific divine Names are preserved in transliteration: Yah, YHVH Tzeva’ot, Elohim Chayyim (living God); Elohei Yisra’el is rendered ‘the God of Israel’. The list closely parallels SY 1:1, where the same Names engrave the thirty-two paths. The book thus closes its letter-account under the same Names it opened with (an inclusio).

Five verbs

The five verbs of formation: chaqqan (engraved), chatzvan (hewed), shqalan (weighed), tzarfan (combined; the root also means to smelt), hemiran (exchanged). These are the book's technical sequence for working the letters. Tzeruf (combination, literally refining metal) gives the later term tziruf (pardes: sod through letter-combination). 'Weighed' (shqalan) is a balance image, but it is not the Idra's metkala.

Mothers fathers

'Three mothers, which are three fathers.' Here Alef, Mem and Shin are called both immot and avot, a deliberate gender-doubling that the body preserves. These are letter-classes, the elemental sources of wind (ruach), water and fire. They are NOT the Idra configurations Imma and Abba, and Sefer Yetzirah knows no partzufim. Hearing Abba and Imma here would be a later reading, and it belongs only in the apparatus.

Organ terms

Hemsess (המסס) = the omasum, a ruminant's third stomach. Qivah = the abomasum / stomach. Qurqeban = the gizzard. The three-stomach list follows rabbinic animal-anatomy usage. 'Guides' (manhigin) renders the organs as governors of the person. Note that the 'guides' list gives spleen before liver, while

the coronation list assigns liver to Lamed and spleen to Nun. Both orders are kept as the source gives them.

Bracketed supplement

The bracketed sequence [two that babble … two that hunt] and the corrected (medinah) [merivah] are the Warsaw editors' brackets. They are reproduced as such and not merged into a single running text. The six paired functions (those that babble and those that exult, those that counsel and those that are counseled, those that tear prey and those that hunt) should be read as a probable recensional interpolation, probably drawn from material belonging to chapter 6, rather than as part of the base list of twelve organs. *Hayman, A. Peter 2004*; *Gruenwald, Ithamar 1971*

Zodiac names

The Hebrew constellation names are given in transliteration with literal glosses. Their conventional Latin equivalents: Taleh = Aries, Shor = Taurus, Te'omim = Gemini, Sartan = Cancer, Aryeh = Leo, Betulah = Virgo, Moznayim = Libra, Akrav = Scorpio, Qeshet = Sagittarius, Gedi = Capricorn, Deli = Aquarius, Dagim = Pisces. 'Moznayim (the Scales)' is a different word from the Idra's metkala.

Pardes layering

Layers of reading. The peshat is a cosmological table: twelve letters, set against twelve faculties, twelve directional edges, twelve constellations, twelve months and twelve organs. Its remez is the book's governing triad of world / year / soul (space, time, person). The sod lies in the letter-operations themselves: the coronation of letters and combination as the means of creation. The source performs this without commentary.

Peshat derash mode

Scriptural use. The text is not midrash in the formal sense: it names no tannaim and applies no middot. Its two scriptural uses, Eccl 7:14 explicitly and Deut 33:27 by allusion, show the rabbinic proof-text mode at work. Isa 57:15 is reshaped as a closing doxology. The peshat is kept in the body throughout.

Editorial decisions

- **mothers / fathers.** Rendered 'mothers' and 'fathers' (letter-classes, in lower case as the house style has them), although the glossary forbids 'mother'/'father' for Imma/Abba. Those prohibitions govern the Idra configuration terms אמא/אבא. The source term here is אמות/אבות, the letter-classes of Sefer Yetzirah.

Manuscript variants

- **Sefaria digital text of the Warsaw 1884 print**: (מדינה) [מריבה]: the parenthesis marks the reading deleted, the bracket the reading supplied: Province vs contention. The English reproduces both marks; read continuously, it follows the bracketed correction, ‘contention’. See the ambiguity note on ‘[מריבה] (מדינה) עשאן כמין’.
- **Sefaria digital text of the Warsaw 1884 print**: [שתי לועזים ושתי עליזים שתי יועצים ושתי יעוצים שתי טורפין ושתי ציידים] bracketed supplement: An extra paired list of twelve ‘guides’. Its relation to the twelve faculties is uncertain.
- **Gra version (Sefaria)**: Chapter 6 opens: These are the three mothers AMSh, and from them went forth three fathers: The mothers-and-fathers sentence stands at the head of the last chapter there, not at the end of chapter 5.

Sefer Yetzirah 6; the faithful witnesses, the Teli, and the covenant of Abraham

This edition presents the verbatim Hebrew text of the passage beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

The apparatus carries a running commentary, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, any doctrinally-live ambiguity preserved with both readings, and cross-references to the lexicon. The original-language text is reproduced verbatim from the digital source credited in the provenance line of this page; any modern English translation still under copyright is cited as a comparand only.



שלשה אבות ותולדותיהן ושבעה כוכבים [נ"א כובשין] וצבאותיהן ושנים עשר גבולי אלכסונין וראיה לדבר עדים נאמנין עולם שנה נפש חק שנים עשר [נ"א עשרה] ושבעה ושלשה ופקידן בתלי וגלגל ולב. שלשה אש ומים ורוח אש למעלה ומים למטה ורוח חק מכריע בינתים וסימן לדבר האש נושא את המים. מ"ם דוממת שי"ן שורקת אל"ף חוק מכריע בינתים:

Three fathers and their offspring; and seven stars [another version: conquerors] and their hosts; and twelve diagonal boundaries. And proof of the matter: faithful witnesses: world, year, soul. A statute of twelve [another version: ten], and seven, and three; and He appointed them in the Teli, and the Galgal, and the heart. Three: fire and water and wind (ruach). Fire above, and water below, and wind, a statute deciding between them. And a sign of the matter: the fire bears the water. Mem is silent, Shin hisses, Alef, a statute deciding between them.

תלי בעולם כמלך על כסאו. גלגל בשנה כמלך במדינה. לב בנפש כמלך במלחמה. גם את כל חפץ זה לעומת זה עשה האלהים. טוב לעומת רע. טוב מטוב ורע מרע. הטוב מבחין את הרע והרע מבחין את הטוב. טובה שמורה לטובים ורעה שמורה לרעים:

The Teli in the world is like a king upon his throne. The Galgal in the year is like a king in a province. The heart in the soul (nefesh) is like a king in war. "Also every desire, this one opposite that one, has ha-Elohim made." Good opposite evil: good from good and evil from evil. The good distinguishes the evil, and the evil distinguishes the good. Good is kept for the good ones, and evil is kept for the evil ones.

שלשה כל אחד לבדו עומד. ז' חלוקין שלשה מול שלשה וחק מכריע בינתים. שנים עשר עומדין במלחמה שלשה אוהבים שלשה שונאים שלשה מחיים שלשה ממיתים. שלשה אוהבים הלב והאזנים והפה. שלשה שונאים הכבד והמרה והלשון. ואל מלך נאמן מושל בכולן, אחד על גבי שלשה שלשה על גבי שבעה

Three: each one stands by itself. Seven are divided: three against three, and a statute deciding between them. Twelve stand in war: three lovers, three haters, three life-givers, three killers. Three

שבעה על גבי שנים עשר וכולן אדוקין זה בזה:

וכיון שצפה אברהם אבינו ע"ה והביט וראה וחקר והבין וחקק וחצב וצרף וצר ועלתה בידו אז נגלה עליו אדון הכל ב"ה והושיבהו בחיקו ונשקו על ראשו וקראו אוהבי וכרת לו ברית ולזרעו והאמין בה' ויחשבה לו צדקה. וכרת לו ברית בין עשר אצבעות רגליו והיא ברית המילה, ועשר אצבעות ידיו והוא הלשון. וקשר לו עשרים ושתים אותיות בלשונו וגלה לו את יסודן. משכן במים דלקם באש רעשן ברוח בערן בשבעה נהגם בשנים עשר מזלות:

lovers: the heart and the ears and the mouth. Three haters: the liver and the gall and the tongue. And El, faithful King, rules over them all: one over three, three over seven, seven over twelve; and all of them are bound fast to one another.

And when Abraham our father, peace be upon him, gazed, and looked, and saw, and probed, and understood, and engraved, and hewed, and combined, and formed, and it came up in his hand, then the Lord of All, blessed be He, was revealed to him, and sat him in His bosom, and kissed him upon his head, and called him "My beloved," and cut a covenant with him and with his seed; "and he believed in YHVH, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." And He cut a covenant with him between the ten toes of his feet, and that is the covenant of circumcision, and the ten fingers of his hands, and that is the tongue. And He bound for him the twenty-two letters in his tongue, and revealed to him their foundation. He drew them in water, kindled them in fire, shook them in wind, burned them in seven, led them in twelve constellations.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim Hebrew beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

Controlled terms noted in this passage: **avot** (rendered as *fathers*), **chok** (rendered as *statute*), **ruach** (rendered as *wind (ruach)*), **teli** (rendered as *the Teli (transliterated)*), **galgal** (rendered as *the Galgal (transliterated)*), **tzedakah (צדקה) [cf. glossary tzedek]** (rendered as *righteousness*), **mazalot** (rendered as *constellations*). For each, the apparatus carries the sense set and the reason for the rendering chosen.

⁂

Scope note

Scope note. This passage is Sefer Yetzirah, a late-antique / early-medieval letter-cosmological treatise. It is not Idra material and it is not Lurianic. Comparisons with Idra and Lurianic teaching are made here only where they truly bear on the text: (a) the bodily imagery of the theophany to Abraham, and the structure

of a statute deciding between two opposites; (b) the later reception of Sefer Yetzirah. No partzuf terms and no tzimtzum / kav / igul terms occur in the source, and none have been imported into the body.

Chok machria

The triadic formula ‘chok machria beinatayim’ (a statute deciding between them) recurs three times: wind between fire and water, Alef between Mem and Shin, and the seventh between three and three. The verb hikhria literally means to tip the scale. The structure, a mediating third that makes opposites endure, invites comparison with the later term metkala (balance). That link is stated in apparatus only. Rendering chok as ‘balance’ or ‘metkala’ in the body would retroject the Zoharic term into a much older text.

Theophany bosom kiss

The Lord of All ‘sat him in His bosom and kissed him upon his head’. These concrete bodily gestures are kept in the body. They are not an assertion of a divine body. In the rabbinic-mystical register this is the language of intimate election. *Wolfson, Elliot R. 1994*

Lurianic reception

Reception note. Sefaria also carries a Gra version of the text. No mapping of the triads (three / seven / twelve, 'one over three, three over seven, seven over twelve') onto later systems is made in the body. Note also that galgal (sphere) is not igul (the Lurianic static concentric circle), and the two must not be identified. *Fine, Lawrence 2003*

Eccl 7 14 bending

The source quotes 'gam et kol chefetz zeh le-umat zeh asah ha-Elohim'. The received Masoretic text of Eccl 7:14 reads 'gam et zeh le-ummat zeh asah ha-Elohim' ('God has made the one as well as the other'). The source adds 'kol chefetz' ('every desire / matter'), blending the verse with Eccl 3:1 ('le-khol chefetz'). The source's wording is kept in the body. The bending widens the verse from a moral pairing of days into a cosmic law of paired opposites: good against evil, each distinguishing the other. The Name chosen, ha-Elohim, is kept.

Gen 15 6 isa 41 8

The Abraham passage sets Gen 15:6 ('and he believed in YHVH and He reckoned it to him as righteousness') beside an allusion to Isa 41:8 ('Abraham My beloved/friend') and the covenant language of Gen 15 and 17. The Tetragrammaton (ה׳) is kept as YHVH rather than flattened. The aggadic payload is that

Abraham's contemplative-operative mastery of the letters (gazed, looked, saw, probed, understood, engraved, hewed, combined, formed) is answered by revelation and covenant. This is aggadic narrative and is not philosophized in the body. The tradition of ascribing Sefer Yetzirah to Abraham rests on this paragraph.

Two covenants

Hint (remez). The covenant 'between the ten toes' (circumcision) and 'the ten fingers' (the tongue) takes up SY 1:3, where the ten sefirot beli mah are ranged five against five with the covenant of the One set in the middle, in the word of the tongue and the circumcision of the flesh. The ten digits allude to the ten sefirot. That identification is a hint and is left unstated in the body. *Hayman, A. Peter 2004*

Letter phonetics

'Mem is silent, Shin hisses, Alef a statute deciding between them.' The phonetic qualities of the three primary letters are mapped onto water (Mem, the closed hum), fire (Shin, the sibilant), and wind (Alef, the breath). This is letter-mysticism by sound, not by number, and so no gematria applies. The twelve + seven + three of the 'statute' equals the twenty-two letters bound to Abraham's tongue at the close. *Liebes, Yehuda 2000*

Teli galgal

Teli and Galgal are astronomical technical terms. Teli has been read as the celestial dragon (the lunar nodes or Draco) and as the axis on which the heaven is 'hung' (t-l-y). Galgal is the sphere / zodiacal cycle governing the year. The triad of kings (on the throne, in a province, in war) maps world / year / soul (space / time / person), the 'faithful witnesses' of the opening paragraph.

Twelve in war

The twelve organs 'stand in war': three lovers (heart, ears, mouth) and three haters (liver, gall, tongue). The other two triads (life-givers, killers) are named but their members are not listed in this text. The tongue is listed among the haters, which sits in tension with the tongue as covenant at the close. The tension is kept and not harmonized.

Editorial decisions

- **אבות.** The masculine 'fathers' is kept and not normalized to 'mothers'.
- **ha-Elohim / El / YHVH / Adon ha-Kol.** Each divine designation is kept distinct: ha-Elohim, El (faithful King), YHVH, and the Lord of All.

Manuscript variants

- **נ"א (nusach acher, in-text)**: כובשין (conquerors) for כוכבים (stars): This may be a graphic confusion (כוכבים / כובשין) or a deliberate reading that makes the seven planets 'conquerors' with hosts.
- **נ"א (nusach acher, in-text)**: עשרה (ten) for שנים עשר (twelve): The reading 'ten, seven, three' would bring in the ten sefirot. 'Twelve, seven, three' gives the twenty-two letters (12 + 7 + 3 = 22).

Colophon

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