


# Otiot: Sacred Signs (from “The Book of Sacred Names”)

by

Jacobus G. Swart  
(Sources not included)

 *Alef* is the first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. Pronounced with a different vowel, the name of this glyph reads *Aluf* (chief), referring to a person of elevated eminence. To the question “Who is Supreme Master?” we received the answer “*Aluf* is the Holy One,” literally meaning that God is, as it were, the “Big Chief.” The letters comprising the word *Alef* (א-ל-פ) also form the base of the Hebrew word “to teach,” as is written in *Job 33:33* “I shall teach you wisdom.” The two connotations of *Alef*, i.e. “chief” and “to teach,” are closely related. God is *Aluf* (Chief), since He “teaches” man understanding and wisdom, the aspects of the two higher spheres on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. This is the plain meaning of *Jeremiah 3:4* which reads “You are the Chief (*Aluf*) of my youth,” that is, “you are the One Who directed and taught me from my childhood.” However, we are also warned in *Proverbs 6:28* that “The complainer separates the Chief (*Aluf*),” indicating that perpetual grumbling and protestation will generate contention, and that this will foster a division of the one who complains from the “Supreme Educator.

Regarding the letter *Alef* being representative of the “Holy One,” it is worth noting that the spelling of several important Divine Names commence with this glyph, e.g. אֲדֹנָי (*Adon*) and אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*); אֵל (*El*), אֱלֹהִים (*Eloah*) and אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), אֲדִיר (*Adir*—Mighty One); etc., and likewise the names of a number of important “Divine Qualities” equally start with the letter *Alef*, e.g. אֵין (*Ain*—Nothing); אֹר (*Or* [Aur]—Light); אֶחָד (*Echad*—One); אֲנִי (*Ani*—“I am” or Self); אֱמֶת (*Emet*—Truth); אֹלָם (*Olam*—Eternity); and many more. In fact, it has been shown the letter *Alef* was constructed from a diagonal ו (Vav) and two י (Yod), one below and one above.




Adding the numerical values of its three component glyphs together totals 26, which is the *Gematria* of the Ineffable Name (יהוה).

Since *Alef* indicates the “Divine One,” we intuit a deeper meaning to our own existence as reflected in the word *Adam* (Man). The *Talmud (Niddah 31a)* refers to three partners in the conception of a human being, i.e. “The father, the mother, and the Holy One, Blessed is He,

Who gives the soul (*Neshamah*).” We are informed that the word *Adam* indicates this partnership, since it can be read אָדָם (*Alef Dam*). We know that *Alef* refers to God, the giver of the Divine Spark, the *Neshamah*, the most sacred aspect of the soul, whilst the latter two glyphs, reading דָם (*Dam*—blood), denote the material elements dispensed to us by our parents. In fact, on closer investigation the *Gematria* of the word *Dam* indicates both the father and mother to be involved in its production. The numerical value of *Dam* is 44, the aggregate of the values of אָ (Av—Father [3]) and מֶ (Em—Mother [41]). It is said that after Adam, our primordial ancestor, fell from grace, the letter א representing his “Higher Self,” removed or distanced itself resulting in only דָם (blood) and mortality remaining. Another exposition of the word *Adam* indicates it to be an acronym of *Adam*—a human being; *Dibur*—speech; and *Ma’aseh*—deliberate action, all qualities considered unique to humans.

Now, the order of the letters in a word also affords further meaning and greater insight. Commenting on the Hebrew words for “man,” that is אָדָם (*Adam*) and יֵשׁוּׁ (Ish), we are told that these indicate the importance of man, since in both words *Alef* leads and controls. In *Adam* the *Alef* (א) controls דָם (*Dam*—“blood”), and similarly in *Ish* the letter א controls יֵשׁ (Yesh—“existence” or “substance”). In both words *Alef*, the Divine Spirit, the “portion which is from God above,” prefaced the physical “blood” or “substance,” hence the importance of a human being pertains to the truth that the Divine Self can direct and control the material self. It is in reference to this that Eliphas Levi, the 19<sup>th</sup> century French Magus and Hermetic Kabbalist, said: “Spirit reflects itself in matter, and matter only shows itself to reveal spirit. Matter is the letter of spirit, spirit is the thought of matter.”

 We next encounter the letter *Bet*, the second glyph of the *Otiot*. Our Tradition tells us that *Bet* is one of seven “double letters,” each of which has two pronunciations, two meanings, as well as two applications: one positive, the other negative. As indicated, double letters have two possible sounds, and only three of the seven have been retained in modern Hebrew. Three of the rest are apparently used by very few individuals, and the double of the remaining one, *Resh*, is said by some to have been lost, whilst some maintain it to be a well-guarded secret. The “double letters” have either a “hard” (plosive) or a “soft” (fricative) pronunciation. The hard pronunciation is indicated by a *Dagesh* (dot) in the centre of the letter.

It is understood that the two-fold usage of the seven “double letters” comprises the invocation of sets of polarised potencies, each portrayed and “invoked” respectively by means of one of the “double letters” and their respective positions on the Kabbalistic “Tree of Life.” It has been said that the “hard” sound pertains to *Gevurah* (severity) and the “soft” to *Chesed* (mercy). The “negative quality” is associated with the plosive sound and the “positive” with the fricative, e.g. *Bet* with a *Dagesh* is “B”—a plosive sound considered to pertain to *Gevurah* (Severity); without the *Dagesh* the pronunciation is “V”—a fricative sound linked to *Chesed* (Mercy).

The letter *Bet* is itself a word meaning “within” and “house.” Metaphorically it depicts the mouth, a house and the interior of man, thus symbolizing internal action. According to the

*Talmud (Shabbat 104a)* this sign refers to inner reflection and perception, hence the letter *Bet* represents inner contemplation and examination of knowledge so as to gain additional awareness. We are told this is why this glyph is the initial of *Binah* (understanding). The letter *Bet* is in fact closely associated with both the concepts of “Wisdom” and “Understanding,” and since *Bet* means a “house,” we might grasp the meaning of *Proverbs 24:3* which reads “With wisdom the house is built, with understanding it is established, and with knowledge are its chambers filled.” It is believed this verse refers to ב, of which the *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance)* says “is like a man, formed by God with wisdom. He is closed on all sides, but open in front.”


Now, it is said regarding the letter *Bet*, that the whole of manifestation came into being through it, hence this glyph is the initial of בְּרֵאשִׁית (*Bereshit*—“in the beginning”), בְּרִיאָה (*Bri’ah*—Creation) and בְּרַחֵם (*B’rachah*—Blessing), the latter referring to the Divine Abundance permeating the whole of creation. Being the initial letter of both the words *Binah* (understanding) and *B’rachah* (blessing), it is understood that when Kabbalists mention the transcendence and prominence of God, they say He “fills all worlds and surrounds all worlds” (*Sefer ha-Zohar 3:225a*). The letter *Bet* indicates the link between these two ideas, and thus denotes a “house.” It is said that it is *B’rachah* (blessing) with which “God fills all worlds,” and furthermore, whenever the “Divine Essence” is disclosed in anything, that object is considered truly “blessed.”

Earlier we mentioned that *Bet* means “within.” In fact, as a prefix the letter means “in.” Viewed from the perspective of what was said previously, this is why it is said that “wherever we find the letter *Bet* it indicates a blessing.” Since it is understood that the whole of creation came into being by means of the ב of בְּרֵאשִׁית (*Bereshit*), it is clear that the whole is “blessed.” Regarding the meaning of the word *Bereshit*, it is worth noting that the standard, literal translation, “in the beginning,” is just one amongst many. In the plain usage of the Hebrew language *that* is exactly what the term means. However, that is not the only possible translation, and many authors, both within mainstream Judaism as well as numerous mystics, have recognised a variety of meanings within this word. Because the term “*reshit*” can be interpreted to refer to “beginning,” “head,” “wisdom,” etc., and since “*bara*” has been read variously as “created” and “healed,” the first portion of the first verse of *Genesis*, “*bereshit bara Elohim.....*,” has been translated:

1. “In the beginning God created.....”
2. “With the beginning God created.....”
3. “In the beginning God healed.....”
4. “With the beginning God healed.....”
5. “In the head God created.....”
6. “With the head God created.....”
7. “Using His head God created.....”

8. “In the head God healed.....”
9. “With the head God healed.....”
10. “In Wisdom God created.....”
11. “With Wisdom God created.....”
12. “In Wisdom God healed....”
13. “With Wisdom God healed.....,” etc.

None of these translations are essentially “right” or “wrong.” All of them are valid ways of reading and understanding the first three words of the “*Book of Genesis*.” These are also not the only translations around. In fact, the “*Tikkunei Zohar*” expounds seventy different ways of interpreting the term *Bereshit*. Many mystics, having employed the mystical meanings of the Hebrew alphabet, including a number of those esoteric methods of reading scripture, e.g. the earlier discussed *Gematria*, *Notarikon*, *Tzeruf*, etc., have come up with a whole range of exotic translations of those three words. Even today there are still many who reinterpret the first verse of the Bible, and some of them would have us believe that their personal interpretations are the one and only true ones—revealed to them by Almighty God.....where have we heard that before?

 *Gimel* is again a “double letter,” and what was said earlier in this regard, equally applies here. This glyph is called the emblem of benevolence and completion. Allegorically it signifies the human throat, a tube or a channel. It is interesting that in Kabbalah, ג is said to look like a conduit draining water from the roof of a building, that which conveys water through its extended spout onto the earth. In a similar way the Infinite Divine One emits currents of love and well-being towards all creation. This is a very interesting concept since *Gimel* is the sign of organic development, and the word *Gimel* (גמל) equates with *Gamol* (גמל—“to nourish until completely ripe”), indicating the task of bringing something to full fruition, i.e. to its highest stage of development, this being considered to be an act of great beneficence.

*Gimel* is also *Gamal* (גמל—a camel), an animal whose body is build to bear immense strain, aiding those who use it as a vehicle to endure the hazards of the desert terrain. All these ideas and many more finally merged into understanding ג to be a symbol of גמילות חסדים (*G'milut Chasadim*), acts of loving-kindness or mercy, said to constitute the very foundation of our existence on this planet. Since the letter *Gimel* embodies the endless Divine benevolence and compassion, without which the world would not endure for even one second, the essence of all mercy and kindness is understood to be centred within the “innerness” of the Eternal Living Spirit. Even death stems from Divine benevolence, though this might not be so apparent to our levels of comprehension.

So, *Gimel* represents an individual who “bestows” (גמל—*Gomel*) mercy or kindness, whilst ד (*Dalet*), the letter succeeding *Gimel*, refers to the poor (דל—*Dal*) who accepts acts of kindness, generosity, and the compassion which results from the feelings of tenderness and

compassion we feel towards those in need. It is important to understand that the majesty, the greatness of God, is revealed in the attribute of kindness, which is inherent in the word *Gedulah* (גדולה—greatness). It has been said that humankind attains the Summit or ultimate “Crown of Being” by emulating the ways of the Almighty, which is illustrated by *Gimel*, the third letter of the *Otiot*, positioned next to *Bet*. In this regard it has been suggested that the letter ב (*Bet*) represents בית (*Bayit*), a home open to everyone, while ג (*Gimel*) depicts גבר (*Gever*—a man), who observes those in need at the portal and who relieves their hunger.

The *Gematria* of *Gimel* is three, referring to the idea of two opposing forces being balanced in order to form a third, more complete expression. This glyph therefore also denotes the ability to balance the difference between two divergent powers, combining them permanently and beneficially. Thinking of what was said earlier, you might note that existence established on mercy and severity as opposing forces in constant conflict, would not be able to endure. The power of אמת (*Emet*—Truth) is required to bring the opposing forces into equilibrium, and truth is the factor deciding when mercy or severity should be employed in the process of rectification, i.e. when to balance one force with its diametrically opposite counterpart. Truth results when mercy and severity, benevolence and judgment, are correctly combined in a beautiful and meaningful manner. The letter ג therefore closes the breach between opposing forces, uniting them, and hence the word *Gimel* is also linked to גמל (*Gamla*), a bridge combining two regions.


Like *Bet* and *Gimel*, the letter *Dalet* is another “double” letter, with a positive and a negative application, the positive said to be “seed” and the negative “desolation.” Today its “double” usage is limited to Yemenite Jews, who sound the hard *Dalet* in the normal manner, as in the case of the letter “d”, and the soft *Dalet* like the “th” in “the.”


Now, we are told that *Dalet*, being numbered four, represents *Malchut* (Kingship), a reference to this world of quaternaries such as the Four Directions (East, South, West, North); the Four Elements (Fire, Air, Water, Earth), the raw material from which everything is made; the Four Seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter); the Path of the Sun (Dawn, Noon, Dusk, Midnight); the Phases of the Moon (First Quarter, Full Moon, Last Quarter, New Moon); the Four Archangels (*Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, Auriel*), the four letters comprising the Ineffable Name (יהוה); etc.




ד is said to represent the feminine, receptive angle of manifestation, and accordingly some maintain this glyph to be depicting the female breast. In this sense it refers to nourishment and prosperity. In our Tradition the letter *Dalet* also refers to the *Shechinah*, the feminine aspect of Divinity, who is said to be דלה (*Dalah*—poor) since She is, as it were, in “exile” in the lower realms of manifestation, where She has no light of Her own, and is dependent on the “rich flow of emanation from the higher *Sefirot*.” In the same manner, *Dalet* as an emblem of the universal quaternary and representation of all physical manifestation, i.e. of this world understood to be the lowest of material manifestation, is not perceived as “giver” but rather as “receiver” of שפע (*Shefa*), the influx of Divine Abundance, and is thus called דל (*Dal*—poor).


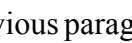


As indicated earlier, the letters *Gimel* and *Dalet* are intimately related. Concerning this we are told that “If there is no *Gimel*, there is no *Dalet*; if there is no *Dalet*, there is no *Gimel*. If there is no *G’milut Chasadim* (acts of mercy), there would be no *Dalim* (poor); if there are no poor in the world, there would be no acts of mercy.”

The word *Dalet* (*Delet*) refers to a “door,” and this glyph also symbolises concern and dimensions. In this regard we are told that “*dalet* is the door through which the humble enter into the realization of God’s dwelling place below.”

 *Heh* is said to be the symbol of Divinity, refinement and distinctiveness. The *Gematria* of this letter is 5, which we are told refers to the five books of the “Written *Torah*.” It is noted that *Heh* is just like a sigh, the lightest exhalation, needing no exertion, no motion of the mouth, lips or tongue. We are told this easy articulation indicates the smooth, effortless origination of the universe, as expressed in *Psalms 33:6* “By the word of *YHVH* the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their hosts.”

The gist of the hardly sounded *Heh* is that it refers to God manifesting in silent stillness. As a suffix at the end of a word,  alters the term from masculine to feminine. Thus the silent *Heh* shows the feminine form of a noun, and this letter is the only one employed in depicting the various characteristics of womanhood. On the other hand, if the letter is added as prefix a word, it indicates the word “the,” i.e. the definite article.

The letter *Heh* is considered particularly holy, and this single letter is considered to be in itself a “Divine Name,” the *Monogrammaton* or “One Letter Name.” As such, it is employed in a singular manner on Hebrew amulets. This glyph is also used as an abbreviation of the Ineffable Name, . The letter *Heh* is said to represent “life,” this being the meaning of the word “*Heh*,” and it is believed that our world was created by means of this letter. Kabbalah maintains this idea is substantiated in *Genesis 2:4* which they claim can be read “God engendered the world with the letter *Heh*.” Here the expression  (*b'hibar'am*), usually translated “when they were created,” is read as two words *b'Heh bar'am* () “He created them with *Heh*.”

Here we might consider something of special “magical” interest, specifically the saga of how the Patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah managed to have a child in old age when they were beyond any ability of engendering offspring. Curiously enough the name  (*Abraham*) is an anagram of  (*hibar'am*), the term addressed in the previous paragraph. The Patriarch’s name was initially *Abram*. The letter *Heh* was later included to form *AbraHam*. On the other hand Sarah’s original name was *Sarai* (). In the case of the Matriarch the last letter of her name [*Yod*—a masculine letter] was changed to the “feminine” *Heh* suffix, hence she is called *Sarah* (). In both cases the letter *Heh*, meaning “life,” was added to their names, and they were told that this would enable them to conceive and bear a child. Abraham and Sarah laughed at the pregnancy prospect, since they were by then respectively 100 and 90

years old. Consequently they were informed that they would name their son *Yitzchak* (Isaac), meaning “laughter,” and the rest of the saga is common knowledge. This incident in the Bible is the basic source of the “magical tradition” regarding changing one’s name in order to alter fate and fortune in favour of a personal benefit.

Now, the letter *Heh* stands for free will, that is freedom and choice given to man. The openings of this letter suggest that man has total free choice in his actions. It is said this glyph shows the mortals of this world, that they too must be merciful and patient with each other, having an entrance in their hearts. It is also indicated that *Heh* signifies the edifice of our world, and is in this manner connected to the letter **ב** (*Bet*), symbolizing the idea of a “house” or a building. The two letters are also related in another context. We noted before that *Bet* portrays *Binah* (Understanding). In Kabbalah it is indicated that *Heh* is related to the same *Sefirah*. It states the world to have been created from ten fundamental *Sefirot* (spheres or qualities). When each *Sefirah* is augmented ten times, it is expressed on a wider, more complex scale. Thus **ה**, the *Gematria* of which is 5, and which embodies the primary basis of *Binah* (understanding), becomes the letter *Nun* (**נ** = 50) on a more evolved level. We are told the latter number represents the “Fifty Gates of Understanding.” So we see the three letters of *Bet* (**ב**), *Heh* (**ה**) and *Nun* (**נ**) are not only closely connected to the sphere of *Binah* on the Tree of Life, but conjointly they spell **הנב** (*Binah*— Understanding).

The name of the letter **ו** (*Vav*) means a “hook,” a utensil connecting things, and the form of the letter is said to resemble a hook. *Vav*, the *Gematria* of which is 6, is the sign of corporeal completion. Thus it was said that the physical world was completed in six days, and all three-dimensional, self-enclosed things consists of six directions, i.e. right, left, front, back, above and below.

When **ו** is added as a prefix to a word, it means “and.” This glyph is therefore the symbol of union. It unites multiple, indeed contrasting, ideas, and is said to be the link connecting heaven and earth. When we spell the full name of this letter, **וואו**, its *Gematria* is 13, equaling that of **אחד** (*Echad*—One). Hence the letter *Vav* which joins and connects, is symbolising unity. This glyph links words to construct sentences, in turn combining these into paragraphs and chapters. It also joins chapters, and even books.

According to the *Sefer ha-Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*), the letter *Vav* denotes life, to which one commentator added that this letter portrays the notion of continuance. The notions of “life” and “continuance” are closely associated, and, whereas physical life ends eventually, the life of spirit is the one certain, profound existence which endures everlastingly. The *Zohar* also refers to **ו** as the letter of truth. The upright shape of the sign hints at integrity and verity. In Kabbalah we find further associations between this glyph and truth, indicating that **אמת** (*Emet*—Truth) is spelled with the first (**א**—*Alef*), middle (**מ**—*Mem*), and last (**ת**—*Tav*) letters of the Hebrew Alphabet in its regular order. From this perspective, “truth” comprises everything represented by the entire *Otiot*. This is said to indicate the affiliation of *Vav* with *Emet* (Truth).

In substantiation of this claim, some refer to one of the three possible spellings of the word *Vav* (װ), the *Gematria* of which is 22. We are told that, like “Truth,” this indicates the alignment of the letter *Vav* with the entire complement of twenty-two letters comprising the *Otiot*.

The *Gematria* of the single ם (6) also intimates the “Oral *Torah*,” the “Six Orders of the *Mishnah*” interpreted in the sixty tractates of the *Talmud*. Divine truth, wisdom and life everlasting are said to be contained in these “six orders” and “sixty tractates.” We might also note that an attribute of the number 6 is that it is the only figure in which the total of its parts is equal to the number itself:  $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$  and likewise  $1 \times 2 \times 3 = 6$ . This specific feature of the number 6 is said to be another demonstration of the truth, peace and unity denoted by the letter *Vav*.

A last word on this letter, when it is prefixed to a verb in the Sacred Scripture, the tense is altered from past to future or *vice versa*. This reversibility and bridging of past and future intimates a timelessness in connection with this glyph. In this manner man is brought closer to knowledge of God, since to the Supreme Spirit, neither past nor future has any real existence. Spiritual origination is not bridled by time, space and events. All are eternally accessible in the “Now,” hence it is understood that םםםם—the Ineffable Name of the One Eternal Living Spirit—refers to the all-encompassing “presence” of “Divine Is-ness”: “He was, He is, He will be” (*Hayah Hoveh v’Yihev*).

The *Gematria* of *Zayin* is 7, which is said to indicate the physical forces of the natural world, hence a week comprises seven days, the rainbow seven colours, the standard diatonic musical scale seven notes, etc. The name *Zayin* means a “weapon” and is therefore the sign of strife. It is however also the sign of spirit and sustenance. This glyph is said to refer to seven *Sefirot* termed the “Seven Qualities of the heart,” specifically *Chesed* (Loving-kindness), *Gevurah* (Severity), *Tiferet* (Beauty), *Netzach* (Endurance), *Hod* (Glory), *Yesod* (Foundation), and *Malchut* (Kingship). According to the *Talmud*, ם represents nourishment. The word *Zayin* is connected to the root *Zan* meaning “nourish.” As indicated, the name *Zayin* means “weapon,” this being indicated by the outline of the letter suggesting a sword-like weapon or an axe. It is maintained this glyph thus shows the necessity to conduct the “battle” (*Milchamah*) of life in the acquiring of ones daily “bread” (*Lechem*).

The letter *Zayin* (ם) is said to comprise the letter *Vav* (װ) crowned with *Yod* (י), and in this depiction we find something of special significance. Isaiah Horowitz tells us in his famous “*Shnei Luchot ha-Brit*,” that “the male organ resembles the letter *Vav*, and its crown is shaped like a *Yod*.” In fact, the letter *Vav* has elsewhere been considered to be representative of the extended phallus, and curiously enough the term *Zayin* is used today in reference to the penis in colloquial Hebrew. It has also been suggested that the *Yod* crown of the letter *Zayin* refers to the corona of the male sexual organ. Again in the form of the letter *Zayin*, the *Vav* (6) represents the six days of creation and the first six days of the week, whilst the crowning *Yod* refers to the seventh day, *Shabbat*, the day representing completion and fulfilment, the day on which we are told a “Sacred Union” takes place between the male and female aspects of God, between the Almighty and the *Matrona* or *Shechinah*. In this regard Joseph of Hamadan tells us “just as the letter *Zayin* has a crown, so the day of Sabbath is the crown and diadem of all the days the holy One, blessed be he, created. Thus you find a crown above and *Vav* below, for it is a crown of the six days in which God, blessed be he, made heaven and earth.....the crown of the six days is the day of Sabbath, which surrounds everything.....and the day of Sabbath, which corresponds to the letter *Zayin*, is from the word *mazona*, the sustenance (*mazon*) of the day of the Sabbath,



sustenance for everything, and therefore the Sabbath is called ‘covenant’ (*b’rit*), for it is the covenant of the holy One, blessed be he.....the ninth emanation, which is called the attribute of the righteous one, the holy covenant that pours fine oil upon the *Matrona*.....and the head of zayin is in the image of *Yod*, the crown atop the covenant, which is called the corona of the phallus.”

In this quote the “ninth emanation” refers to *Yesod* (Foundation), the ninth *Sefirah*, which, as indicated in the previous volume of this series, is traditionally associated with the “sign of the covenant,” i.e. the phallus, and righteousness. In conclusion we might note that whilst the letter *Vav* denotes the six directions—right, left, front, back, above and below, *Zayin* refers to the mysterious seventh position, the central focus. The six directions could be considered to comprise the “experience,” this being the constantly revolving “circumference,” whilst the central focus is the “Now-ness” of the “Experiencer,” the “One-who-is-Seeing.”

The letter *Chet* is said to indicate vitality (חַיִּיּוּת—*chiyut*) and charisma (חַיִּיּוּת—*chen*). The latter attribute is said to be bestowed by God on those who have reached the higher levels of spiritual development indicated by the first seven *Otiot*, i.e. א—Alef, ב—Bet, ג—Gimel, ד—Dalet, ה—Heh, ו—Vav, and ז—Zayin. When the letters of חַי (charisma) are reversed, they form the word נַח (*No’ach*) meaning “easy,” “pleasant” and “comfortable.” This is said to show the serenity of spirit achieved as a result of having performed *Mitzvot* (good deeds), which lead to a closer union with the Divine One, the fount of abundance and vitality.

A fundamental law of Kabbalah is that every positive power has a related negative one. Thus, besides the so-called “Double Letters” of the Hebrew Alphabet in which opposites are clearly indicated by the double pronunciations, all the glyphs of the *Otiot* comprise both positive and corresponding negative implications. In the case of the current glyph, the letters spelling the name of the letter, ח-ה-ח can, according to certain Kabbalistic rules, be interchanged with other linguistically related letters to read שחח, a word similarly pronounced “*chet*” but meaning “sin.” We are told that the articulation of the word *Chet* indicates חַיָּתָא (*Chitat*) meaning “fear.” Here we are reminded of *Psalms 110:10* (reiterated in *Proverbs 9:10*) advising us that “the fear of *YHVH* is the beginning of wisdom,” which is simply a reminder of the awe the “Work of Creation,” the infinite manifestation of the Almighty, inspire in us.

Now, in the *Torah* the letter *Chet* (ח) is written with two *Zayin* (ז), the latter forming the sides with a horizontal link placed between them like this ח. As we noted earlier, the glyph *Zayin* (ז) refers to a “weapon,” thus the traditional design of the letter *Chet* in a *Torah* scroll indicates two opposing powers confronting each other with weapons. Sadly, warfare, confrontation, and strive between combating powers comprise life on all levels, hence in the design of ח (*Chet*) in the Bible, the angle of one *Zayin* indicating increase and the assertion of being, is placed in opposition to the angle of another *Zayin* portraying warfare and annihilation. The forces of “right” and “left” battle each other, arousing fear, dread and apprehension amongst all on earth. *Chet* (ח) thus personifies the link between שחח (*Chet*—sin) and חַיָּתָא (*Chitat*—fear).

Of course, as I tried to explain previously, “sin” has *nothing* to do with trespasses against “a touchy, ill tempered God raging away at the antics of Man because those ‘offended’ His ideas of propriety,” but *everything* with “wrongful behaviour which damages us by the doing in such a way, that we fail to achieve anything like the ‘Intention of God’ in ourselves for our period of

incarnation. Therefore, in ‘falling short’ of the mark by so far, we hinder our progression towards ‘Perfection’ by that much. In sinning against ourselves, we sin against the ‘God-in-us’.”

Now, it is said that when terror and anxiety are kindled in an individual, the proximity of sin is shown, almost as if sin is the origin of fear. In fact, the order of ז (Zayin) and ח (Chet) in the *Otiot* is said to indicate the order of the attributes of *Chesed* (Kindness) and *Gevurah* (Severity) on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. *Zayin*, “nourising” man and the world, denotes *Chesed*, while *Chet*, indicating fear, indicates *Gevurah*. This description of ח (Chet) agrees with the correlation between the *Otiot* and the *Sefirot* (spheres or qualities) on the Tree of Life, where “the Three Qualities of the Head,” *Chochmah* (Wisdom), *Binah* (Understanding) and *Da’at* (Knowledge), are succeeded by the “Seven Qualities of the Heart,” the latter commencing with *Chesed* (Kindness) and *Gevurah* (Severity). We noted before that *Binah* (Understanding) and *Da’at* (Knowledge) correspond to the letters ח (Heh) and ו (Vav), thus in the natural order of the Hebrew Alphabet the following two qualities, *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, pertain to ז (Zayin) and ח (Chet).



The letter *Tet* represents the word טוב (Tov) meaning “good,” and is said to refer to the good that the Eternal Living Spirit bestows on an individual who embraced the positive attributes indicated by the first eight glyphs of the *Otiot*. ט makes its first appearance in the Hebrew Bible in *Genesis 1:4* “And God saw that the light was good (Tov),” indicating the importance and crucial attribute of this sign. The link between *Tet* and the notion of “good” is also indicated by the number 9, this being the *Gematria* of ט. Viewed from the angle of the three “Selves,” it is understood the *Neshamah* (Higher Self) is represented by *Keter* (Crown), the first and highest *sefirah* which is symbolised by the “head,” whilst the *Ru’ach* (Conscious Self), represented by the sixth *sefirah* titled *Tiferet* (Beauty), is symbolising the “heart,” and *Yesod* (Foundation), the ninth *sefirah* on the kabbalistic Tree of Life, is the focus of the *Nefesh*—Instinctual Self, and also representative of the “liver” (solar plexus).

The sphere of *Yesod* refers to a *Tzadik* (a righteous individual), hence we read in *Proverbs 10:25* “A *Tzadik* is the foundation (*Yesod*) of the world.” The *Tzadik* is the epitome of goodness, as indicated in several Kabbalistic texts and affirmed in *Proverbs 9:9* which reads “Say of a *Tzadik* that he is good.” The association of a *Tzadik* with goodness is also indicated by the affinity between the letter צ (Tzadi), referring to the righteous one (*Tzadik*), and the letter ט (Tet) indicating good (Tov). The *Gematria* of צ is 90, ten times that of ט (9). In this regard it is said that when ט (9) concludes its path evolution through all ten *Sefirot*, it becomes צ (90).

The configuration of ט also represents the mentioned concepts. The vertical stroke on the right is said to be ו (Vav) intimating the attribute of *Yesod* in all its connotations. On the other hand, the vertical stroke on the left is a ז (Zayin) denoting not only the power of growth and sustenance, but symbolises a weapon securely positioned to guard the *Vav* and its sacred values against sudden collapse. The name of the glyph is ט"ו (Tet), which again according to the laws pertaining to the interchange of letters, can also be read and spelled ט"ט (Tit) meaning “mud.” We are told that this indicates the physical to be like “clay in the hands of the Creator,” also implying the earth from which man was fashioned. Otherwise it was said the letter *Tet* symbolizes death and desolation, hence it was the customary sign with which ancient kings marked their places of burial. In this regard we might understand that our physical disposition, as creatures of flesh and blood who are literally derived from the earth, is in fact the very

foundation of our physical mortality, the need to return to the earth.

It is said that had *Adam*, our primordial ancestor, transcended material manifestation, that is, had he refrained from “eating from the Tree of Knowledge: Good and Evil,” he would not have had to deal with decaying flesh, but would have endured as an immortal entity. We are told the latter condition is indicated by the word *Netzach* (endurance or eternity) which can be read  $\aleph \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \aleph$ , i.e. the earlier mentioned “Fifty Gates of Understanding” combined with the “pure” (*Tzach*).

Again we notice that the Kabbalistic teaching that God fashioned a matching negative power for every positive power, is also indicated with the letter *Tet*. In the same manner as this glyph indicates that which is good (*Tov*) and the righteous (*Tzadik*), the full expression of goodness, it conversely shows the physical angles of life which includes death. We are told that 9, the *Gematria* of this letter, is the summit of the numbers, all further numbers being mere combinations of 1 to 9. *Tet* is therefore understood to represent the maximum limit. Positively it holds virtuousness and immortal life, but negatively it offers ruin, annihilation and death, the sentiments expressed in *Genesis 3:19* “you are earth and you will return to earth.”

Yod is the letter with which it is said “heaven,” the “World to Come,” was created. This is the smallest of the Hebrew letters, much smaller than its companion in the Ineffable Name, the  $\aleph$ , with which this material world was said to have been created. Some maintain the smallness of *Yod* to indicate that very few would be able to achieve their divine destination in the “World to Come.” Small as this letter is, it is great in meaning. After all, we are told that the letter *Yod* encompasses the beginning and the end of writing. When one wishes to write something, the very first dot with which one commences the formation of a letter, and likewise the very last dot with which one concludes a glyph of the Hebrew alphabet, is called a “*Yod*.” This letter is also one of the few that is absolutely singular, meaning that it cannot be divided into component parts. Its singularity is said to be indicated by the word *Yachid* ( $\aleph \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \aleph$ —single), indicating the “Singular Master,” the Divine One who is “a complete and absolute unity.”

Now, the *Gematria* of  $\aleph$  is 10, a number inclusive of all, and therefore called the “complete number.”  $\aleph$  (*Eser*), the Hebrew word for “ten,” has the same spelling as *Osher* ( $\aleph$ —“wealth”). From this it is understood that real abundance must be all-encompassing and without deficiency. This also tells us that *Yod* indicates the single source from which all the *Otiot*, Hebrew glyphs, originated. Viewed from the perspective of Kabbalistic thought, the letter *Yod* could be considered the most primordial of all the Hebrew glyphs. The utmost tip of *Yod* is considered to reflect *Keter* (Crown), the loftiest sphere on the sefirotic Tree of Life, whilst the remainder of the letter, streaming as it were out of that utmost focus, is said to be *Chochmah* (Wisdom), the second *sefirah* which flows out of *Keter*.

In reference to its primal position as the initial of the Ineffable Name,  $\aleph \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \aleph$ , the *Sefer ha-Zohar* relates the letter *Yod* to “holiness, firstborn of all the holy above. Breacher of every womb—by that narrow path descending from the  $\aleph$ , opening the womb to generate fruit and verdure fittingly. That is holiness above.” The “narrow path” refers to the bottom stroke of the glyph which is said to indicate the flow from *Chochmah* (Wisdom—the male “Father” principle) to *Binah* (Understanding—the female “Mother” principle). This could be interpreted as the undifferentiated Light within *Chochmah* being focussed and differentiated in the womb of *Binah*.

Regarding this process of “Divine Emanation” Aryeh Kaplan wrote “Since *Keter*-Crown

is a level beyond comprehension, the highest actual level that can be perceived is *Chokhmah*-Wisdom. For this reason, *Keter*-Crown is also referred to as ‘Eternity,’ the infinite time that the human mind cannot penetrate or fathom. *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding, on the other hand, represent the beginning and end of time, the depth of the past and the depth of the future. Like the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom represents the undifferentiated potential of existence that God wishes to give. *Binah*-Understanding, corresponding to the *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, is the ‘Hand’ that defines existence, or, in this case, the future that holds what the past gives to it.” Curiously enough, the name *Yod* is said to mean a “hand” (י), the “hand” that gives, whilst *Kaf* (כ), the letter succeeding *Yod* in the Hebrew Alphabet, represents the palm of the hand.

The letter *Kaf* (כ) is said to indicate functional operations. We are told that as a symbol this glyph “has a dual symbolism. It stands for the palm of the hand serving as a container and at the same time as the measure of what it holds. כף (*Kaf*) also denotes productivity and accomplishment, which result through mental or physical efforts, unlike י (Yod) which stands for יד (*Yad*), hand, indicating power and possession.” A commentator mentioned that the two letters spelling the name *Kaf*, i.e. כ (*Kaf*) and פ (*Peh*), represent respectively the words *Koach* (כוח—potential power) and *Po’el* (פועל—action). Hence the underlying meaning meaning is the “power of action,” which we are told pertains to “the power to actualize potential ever-present within the actualized.” In spiritual terms this refers to the potential power of the Almighty being constantly realised in the “Eternal Now,” and in more mundane terms this pertains to the palm of ones hand, the bodily part that fashions and constructs objects, surmounts the powers of this world, shaping them into patterns.

The shape of *Kaf* (כ) is closely related to the letter *Bet* (ב), the reason being that “both represent powers of construction and production.” Both letters symbolise the quality of containment. The correspondence between the two letters is also depicted in the *Gematria* of these two letters, *Bet* being two and *Kaf* twenty. The letter *Kaf*, whose *Gematria* is ten times that of *Bet*, signifies the evolution of the productive, effective force on earth. *Kaf* also means a “spoon,” the rounded shape of which parallels the palm of the hand. It has been said that the filled spoon represents the world, indicating a further affinity between *Kaf* and *Bet*, since the latter denotes the “house of the world” filled with *Shefa* — the abundant flow of blessing (*Berachah*) emanating from the “Divine Glory” (*Kavod*).


Now, being the initial of words like *Kol* (כָּל—All); *Kavod* (כְּבוֹד—Divine Glory); *Kabir* (כְּבִיר—Mighty); *Koach* (כוח —Power); *Kavash* (כָּבַשׁ—Conquer or Subdue); *Kisei* (כִּסֵּא —Throne or Chair); and *Keter* (כֹּתֶר—Crown), the letter *Kaf* is understood to be intimately associated with these terms. Closer scrutiny of these words, certainly shows an underlying inter-relatedness in their respective meanings. However, rather than filling many pages with an elucidation of these, I believe we might pay special attention to the often highlighted view regarding the letter *Kaf* being representative of *Keter* (Crown).

Jewish tradition tells us there are three “Crowns”: “The Crown of Torah,” “The Crown of Priesthood,” and the “Crown of Kingship.” However, it adds “The Crown of a Good Name” surpasses all of them. It is held that earning this “Crown” is entirely dependent on *Torah* study and fulfilling all 620 religious precepts. Furthermore, it is said that those who do not fulfill these specific religious commandments, will be cut off from the Divine One, since they have transformed *Keter* (כֹּתֶר—the Spiritual Crown) into *Karet* (כַּרֵּת—Spiritual Excision). As

mentioned in my “*Book of Self Creation*,” it is clear to me that “‘studying *Torah*’ did not necessarily mean pouring over ancient scrolls at all, but *Living the Law of Life*.” In fact, in harmony with the teachings of my late mentor, William G. Gray, I believe one would achieve the ultimate “Crown” of union with the One Eternal Spirit, when one lives by the rule indicated by the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, our “Tree of Faith,” informing us:

10 Man of Earth,  
 9 Faithfully Believe in Life.  
 8 Live Honourably;  
 7 Conquer Yourself;  
 6 Be Equable of Energy;  
 5 Self Disciplined;  
 4 Generously Merciful;  
 3 Understanding;  
 2 Wise;  
 1 Single of Spirit;  
 and ultimately,  
 0 0 0 You will live in Light Divine,  
 0 0 Immortally beyond all limits,  
 0 in Perfect Peace Profound.

*Kaf* is again one of the “double letters” which have a soft and a hard pronunciation. With a *Dagesh* it sounds *K*, without it is vocalized like the *Ch* in the Scottish word “loch.” Most versions of the *Sefer Yetzirah* associate the two variant pronunciations of *Kaf* with the opposing qualities of “Wealth” and “Poverty.” In this regard, we are reminded that he who is wealthy is actually “he who is satisfied with his lot.” This kind of satisfaction is entirely dependent upon one’s sense of being one with the whole, with the “All in All,” in which there is no separation whatsoever. *Shefa*, Divine Abundance, flows freely when such absolute “oneness” is realised, but it is equally stifled in the sense of separateness. *That* is what “cut off” means, and we will address this specific issue in greater detail later in this work. Now let us turn our attention to the lofty *Lamed*.

 Metaphorically *Lamed* depicts the human arm or the wing of a bird, in other words, that which unfolds, extends and lifts itself, hence it is also a whip or an ox-goad. *Lamed* is a sweeping motion and applies to all notions of expansion, elevation, possession, dominion and control. *Lamed* also refers to *Limud* (לִמּוּד—study), and its rulership is shown by its size which soars over the other signs. As said, *Lamed* means “to study,” or “to teach,” and its purpose is understood to be the directing of sublime merits into the world of manifestation. It has been said that the shape of the *Lamed*, reaching upwards into infinity, reaching as it were into the “celestial heights,” is telling us, that you “only learn something when you debate for the sake of Heaven, and your aim is to seek the truth.”

In our discussion of the previous letter, *Kaf*, we indicated the close association of that letter with the letter *Bet*. The latter glyph is considered equally closely linked with *Lamed*. When we combine *Lamed* (ל) with *Bet* (ב), we arrive at the very important concept of *Lev* (לב), the “heart,” which is said to be in man the foundation of wisdom, and the sovereign of all the organs. In this regard we are told in the *Otiot d’Rabbi Akiva* that the name “*Lamed*,” spelled

*Lamed-Mem-Dalet*, is an anagram for *Lev Meivin Da'at*, “the heart that understands knowledge.”

Now, earlier we saw that *Bet* stands for *Binah* (understanding) and *Lamed* for *Limud* (study), hence the combination of these concepts in  $\text{לב}$ , indicates the most suitable location for the union of learning and comprehension. We are further informed that the letter *Bet* represents our “World of Action” (*Olam ha-Asiyah*), “a world of conflict and continual change,” whilst *Lamed* with its towering reach, “denotes the World to Come, the world of peace and unity.”

The *Gematria* of  $\text{לב}$  is thirty-two ( $\text{ל} = 30 + \text{ב} = 2$ ), which we are taught refers to the “Thirty-two Mysterious Paths of Wisdom” through which the world was created. These “Thirty-two Paths” are said to refer to the “Heart of God” expressed as *Kavod*, the “Glory of God,” which is within and around all. One is reminded of *Isaiah* 6:3 exclaiming “The whole earth is filled with His glory,” and *Ezekiel* 3:12 saying “Blessed is God’s glory from His place.” Interestingly enough, *Kavod* (glory) and *Lev* (heart) have the same *Gematria*: thirty-two. “Glory” and “heart” are understood to be equal, respectively functioning “Above” and “Below.” Thus the “Heart of God” is His “Glory,” and the “Glory of God” is *your* Heart. There is of course more to this, especially as the concept of “heart” in this Tradition includes “Wisdom,” “Understanding” and “Kingship.”

Now, we noted  $\text{ב}$  to be the first letter of the Hebrew Bible, being the initial of the word  $\text{בראשית}$  (*Bereshit*) meaning “in the beginning.” Whereas the *Torah* begins with  $\text{ב}$ , it ends with  $\text{ל}$ , the last letter of the last word  $\text{ישראל}$  (*Isra’el*) in *Deuteronomy*. The combination  $\text{לב}$  is believed to represent the *Torah* as a whole. In this regard it is again worth noting that whilst in mainstream religion the term *Torah* simply means the *Pentateuch*, i.e. the “Five Books of Moses,” in esoteric tradition the term refers to the entire essence or basis of Creation.



The letter *Mem*, with its soothing nasal sound, is said to be one of the “Mother Letters.” Symbolically it symbolizes the woman, mother waters, womb, or the fertile generative region. The *Sefer Yetzirah* tells us that the letter *Mem*, whose name means “water,” actually represents Element of Water, and, curiously enough, it has been suggested that the word *Mayim* ( $\text{מים}$ —water), actually refers to the very atomic components comprising the watery element, i.e.  $\text{H}_2\text{O} = 2$  hydrogen atoms to 1 oxygen atom— $\text{מים} = 2$  *Mem* (water) to 1 *Yod* (oxygen).

As we know, water is the foundation of physical existence. In the same manner as we beget physical offspring by means of the flow of the “Mother waters,” so do engender mental progeny by means of the flow of words. In this regard the *Talmud* (*Shabbat* 104a) informs us that the letter *Mem* pertains to *Ma’amar* ( $\text{מאמר}$ —a word or saying), and Kabbalistic doctrine has it that the Divine One created the world through ten *Ma’amarot* (utterances) or *Dibberot* (sayings), these being a reference to the ten *Sefirot*, i.e. the ten powers expressed in the “womb” of the *Shechinah*, the *Matronit*, our Universal Mother.

Now, earlier we mentioned that the letter *Dalet* ( $\text{ד}$ ), being numbered four, represents the Four Elements on the physical plane. These are collectively termed  $\text{ארבע}$  (*Arma*), an acronym which stands for  $\text{אש}$  (*Esh*—Fire);  $\text{רוח}$  (*Ru’ach*—Air),  $\text{מים}$  (*Mayim*—Water) and  $\text{עפר}$  (*Afar*—Earth). *Mem* is numbered forty, ten times the *Gematria* of *Dalet*, referring to the identical “Four Elements” on a loftier plane, i.e. the level of spirit, in which every element embraces ten facets. Each of these four sets of ten qualities, refers to a related set of ten *Sefirot*,

all collectively designated אַבִּיָּע (*Abia*), this being a reference to the “Four Worlds,” or dimensions of being, known as אֶצִּילוּת (*Atzilut*—Emanation), בְּרִיאָה (*Bri’ah*—Creation), יְצִירָה (*Yetzirah*—Formation) and עֲשִׂיָּה (*Asiyah*—Action). These indicate the totality of manifestation, from spirit to matter, within the being of *Makom* (מָקוֹם—the Omnipresent; literally “Place”), or the full expression of existence within the primordial “waters” of the *Shechinah*. I have addressed the concept of the “Four Worlds” in some detail in the previous volume.

Note how the word מָקוֹם (*Makom*), considered a very special Divine Name, comprises the two shapes of letter *Mem*: the regular one (מ), employed anywhere in a word except at the end, and the final one (ם), used only at the end of words. Kabbalah tells us that the regular *Mem* refers to that which is open to us, and which we can fathom within the infinity of the Omnipresent, as indicated in *Isaiah 6:3* reading “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” On the other hand, the final *Mem* indicates that which is hidden from us, or that which we cannot fathom, that which is closed to us. This refers to that which is beyond the grasp of our intellect, and pertains to the hiddenness of the “dwelling place” of the Divine One, beyond time, space and events.

Next, let us look at the letter *Nun* (נ), the other “nasal” sound so closely associated with *Mem*. Whilst the letter *Mem* refers to “water,” *Nun* is a “fish.”

Symbolically נ represents a foetus, and the *Rosh Milin* tells us that the word *Nun* means “fish” in Aramaic, a symbol of fertility, productiveness, cleanliness and purity. On the other hand, we are told that the letter *Nun* represents the spinal cord, which “is the channel from the brain to the entire body,” and furthermore, we are taught “the brain is the main part of the spinal cord. It constantly draws from there, and if not for the spinal cord, the brain would not endure. And without the brain, the body could not endure.”

As in the case of *Mem*, the letter *Nun* has two shapes. The regular one (נ) also appearing anywhere in a word except at the end, and the final shape (ן) employed only at the end of words. In terms of its mentioned association with the spine, the two forms of the *Nun* are thought to respectively represent the bent and the straight spine. In this regard the *Talmud* (*Shabbat 104a*) maintains the letter *Nun* refers to *Ne’eman* (נֶאֱמָן), a trustworthy individual who bends and kneels in humbleness, modesty and submission in front of the Divine One, but who is equally upright, steadfast in righteousness, and “full of unwavering faith.”

Interestingly enough, the term “righteous” comprises two basic ideas, specifically “right” and “eous,” the latter being a remodelling of the word “wise.” “Right,” linked to the Greek “*orektós*,” means to be straight and erect, and the basic idea behind the term is a proper, suitable and correct design, likely to achieve a desired end, or appropriate to some particular end. Besides its Greek root, “right” is also linked to a Latin base meaning upright, lofty, to elevate and to be noble.

The two forms of the letter *Nun* are also explicated in terms of the human “Soul” incarnated in the flesh. Hence we are told that when the *Neshamah*, the “Higher Self” is incarnated in a material body, it becomes restrained and bends in dependence as symbolised by the bent shape of the regular נ. However, when it is freed from the flesh, it returns to its original lofty abode, ascending with full realisation of its exalted status as symbolised by the final ן.

It is maintained that the letter *Nun* is the model of holiness, because by means of it the

*Neshamah* (the Higher Self, Spirit Self or Divine Spark) was established. As indicated earlier, all the signs of the *Otiot* comprise both a positive and a negative connotation. So, whilst the letter *Nun* reminds us of our *N'filah* (נפילה), “falling” into the world of material manifestation, it also tells us of *Ner* (נר), the light of the *Neshamah* (נשמה), the Divine Spark, the breath of the Eternal Living Spirit within us.

In conclusion we should note that the *Gematria* of *Nun* is fifty, which is said to correspond to both the “Fifty Gates of Understanding” (*Binah*) and the “Fifty Gates of Purity” (*Taharah*). It is traditionally taught that the concepts of “Understanding” and “Purity” are closely associated, since profound comprehension of these spiritual concepts relies on your level of virtue or purity. Yet, we are also reminded of the contrary aspects indicated by the letter *Nun*, i.e. the “Fifty Gates of Impurity” (*Tumah*), which might trap the unwary. However, since נ indicates the power of obedience and modesty, it shows how we may enter the “Fifty gates of Purity.”

The name of the letter *Samech* means “to support,” and the shape of the letter, comprising a complete, unbroken circle, shows that it protects and retains what is within its boundaries, not allowing that which is contained to exceed set limits. The negative aspect of *Nun*, referring to the condition resulting from having fallen into this lower realm of manifestation, is now followed by ס showing security and maintenance. This is indicated in the Talmudic analyses of the *Psalm 145*, an acrostic psalm in which each verse starts with one of the letters of the alphabet in regular order, but in which the verse starting with the letter *Nun* is absent. The “missing” verse is said to indicate a sudden fall into error, this being suggested by the “bent-over” נ. However, the succeeding verse, *Psalm 145:14*, beginning with the letter *Samech* reads “YHVH upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down.” This is said to demonstrate the support of the Almighty, Who will raise the fallen who are “bent over,” or who are in the condition indicated by נ.

We are told the absolute inclusiveness of the circle of ס refers to the Divine One who is without beginning or end. This suggests “the infinity of the Almighty” which, when fully comprehended, pertains to the “equanimity at all stages of the ‘endless cycle’” of Divine Light encompassing “equally every point of reality.”

Now, it has been suggested that the name סמך (*Samech*) could be interpreted מך – ס, indicating “support” (ס) for the “impoverished” (מך [*mach*]). In terms of what was said earlier, the letter *Nun*, fallen and hunched, is sustained by *Samech*, and conjointly these letters spell נס (*Nes*), a miracle. Miracles and wonders are worked by the Almighty One, and this wondrous relationship between God and ourselves is elucidated by the alphabetical order of *Nun* (נ) and *Samech* (ס).

As noted earlier, the glyphs of the *Otiot* symbolise both positive and negative qualities. The same applies to the name *Samech*, the constituent letters of which can be permuted to read *Masach* (מסך) meaning a “screen.” Whilst this indicates a protective barrier, stopping the access of “psychic contaminants” and halting those forces which impacts on one in a destructive manner, it equally refers to a fence shutting out *Shefa*, the influx of divine abundance. It has been indicated that several Hebrew terms communicating ideas of obstruction and shutting off on all levels of existence, commence with ס, e.g. סתר (*Seter*—hiddenness) and סוד (*Sod*—secret). Curiously enough, the word כסם (*Kamus*—concealed) is itself a permutation



of the letters comprising the word *Samech*.

In conclusion, we are told that the *Gematria* of ם (60) also indicates the concepts of guarding and protection highlighted by this letter. In this regard it is written in *Song of Songs* 3:7 “Behold, it is the litter [bed] of Solomon, three-score [sixty] mighty men are about it, of the mighty men of Israel.”


Whilst ם (*Samech*) indicates powers shielded and contained within their own circumference and border, as well as the obtainment of strong support, the letter *Ayin* shows these powers released into action, fulfilling their accumulated aptitude. *Ayin* has been called “the symbol of sight and insight.” The beginning of physical and spiritual insight is in the mind, and we are told that this idea is depicted by the *Gematria* of the letter *Ayin* (70). This is said to coincide with the “Seventy Facets of the Torah” and its mysteries or secrets. Curiously enough, the *Gematria* of the earlier mentioned word סוד (*Sod*—“secret”) is also 70.

The name *Ayin* means an “eye,” and we are told the letter ס indicates the awareness of the Light of God, which leads to most profound spiritual perception and comprehension. The eye sees, and the mind perceives. With good physical “eyesight” and suitably associated spiritual “insight,” we perceive the inner essence of the Divine Presence in creation as our consciousness expands to embrace the wonders of the “Whole.” However, if we lose the realisation of the “Oneness” of the “All-in-all,” we are apt to “fall” into separateness and develop the “eye” of envy, greed, discontent, lust, jealousy, resentment, etc., i.e. the one sometimes called “the blind eye,” but mostly referred to as *Ayin ha-Ra*, the “evil eye.”

We are often told to clear the “lens of perception” in order to have correct cognisance of the “Divine Reality” within all manifestation. In this regard Nachman of Bratzlav informs us that “were a person to purify his eyes sufficiently, he would be able to see many wondrous things based solely on what he views with his eyes..... Yet someone who is worthy can attain a higher level of sight and find himself able to glimpse exceedingly great wonders all around him. Because most people’s eyes are not pure, they cannot focus properly, which precludes their seeing these wondrous, amazing sights.”

Besides denoting an “eye,” the word *Ayin* (׳״״) also means a “fountain” or a spring of water. We perceive the flow from the fount of *Shefa* (Divine Abundance) all around us, but if we do so from a sense of “lack,” we remove ourselves from its full expression in our lives, and so become “poor” on all levels of existence, i.e. physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. According to the *Talmud* (*Shabbat 104a*) the letter *Ayin* stands for the poor. A permutation of the letters comprising the name of this letter (׳״״) spells ״״״ (*Oni*—“poor”).

It is said the letter *Ayin* follows *Samech* in the *Otiot*, to indicate that humans should “support” (ם) the “poor” (״), in order to prevent them from falling into destitution. In this regard we are told that the shape of ״, showing one crooked leg, indicates an individual without a solid foundation, one who is bending, shaky and unstable. Whilst the *Talmud* shows the letter *Ayin* to symbolise the poor, we are also told that this letter represents recondite wisdom.


 From *Ayin* to *Peh* we turned from the “eye” to the “mouth.” This is again a letter which has a regular, bent form (פ), and a final, straight one (ף), the latter being exclusively at the end of words. According to the *Talmud* (*Shabbat 104a*) these two forms of the letter *Peh* pertain to a closed (פ) and an open (ף) mouth. We are told these relate to *Ecclesiastes 3:7* reminding us that there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.”

The alphabetical order פ to פ informs us that what is seen by the eye is declared by the mouth, the organ which brings what is perceived into actuality. Kabbalistic tradition has it that the mouth corresponds to the sphere of *Malchut* (Kingdom), which is said to be “the point through which the most sublime thoughts are channeled downwards until they are revealed on this gross physical plane.” This tells us that a King (*Melech*) governs mainly by means of speech. In this regard we are told “no leader can rule without speech. His edicts must be revealed in order for his subjects to obey them. In the same way, *Malkhut*, through the aspect of speech, *proclaims* God’s will and reveals His sovereignty.”

Seen from the angle of physical existence on this planet, the *sefirah Malchut* informs you that you are meant to be the “Ruler” of your life. William Gray, who applied the lofty concepts of the ten *sefirot* in everyday life, wrote that “the Kingdom indicated on your Tree is not some faraway ‘Kingdom of God’ in distant heavens, it is *your* kingdom right here in your own home and in yourself.” In this regard he queries “Do you make rules that you keep yourself? Can you control and govern your own attributes.....?”

*Malchut*, the *sefirah* related to the mouth, is also the sphere of the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence in manifestation. Nachman of Bratzlav wrote “*Malkhut* corresponds to the Divine Presence. One who rectifies his speech merits the ability to make intimate contact with *Malkhut*, God’s Divine Presence.”

In conclusion, this connection of the letter *Peh* to the mouth, *Malchut*, and the *Shechinah*, as well as the concepts of “speech” and “silence” represented by the two forms of the letter *Peh*, vividly brings to mind the words of my late mentor, William G. Gray, who reminded me of the saying that “in speech are many pitfalls, in silence none.” This statement indicates the positive and negative qualities of פ, both of which are based on the tongue, the organ that “shapes” our verbal expressions. The tongue “can defend or injure, save or lose mens lives, and though it be but inches long and speaks for seconds, it may slay tall men for many years.....A tongue which is divided is a serpent, poisonous and deadly. Keep yours, therefore, single, clean, resilient, and polished like a perfect Sword, ever ready for employment in the Cause of Justice and Eternal Truth.”

 The name *Tzadi* is said to refer to a צדיק (*Tzadik*), a righteous individual. Similarly to the letter *Nun*, the letter *Tzadi* has two forms, the standard צ used in a regular manner at the beginning, or within the body of a word, whilst the straight ץ is employed only at the end of a word.

We are told the bent shape of the regular צ denotes the great humility of the righteous person, who will be “straightened” in the eternal life of the “World to Come,” the latter being shown by the elongated form of the final ץ. On the other hand, the *Otiot d’Rabbi Akiva* informs us that the letter *Tzadi* indicates the righteousness of the Divine One towards humanity. In this

regard we are reminded that **צ** is the initial of **צלם**, an “image,” this being a reference to the fact that we are made in the “immortal image” of the One Supreme, Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Spirit.

Curiously enough, there is a close association between the letter *Nun* and the *Tzadi*, regarding which we are told in the *Sefer ha-Bahir* “*Tzadi* is a *Nun* and a *Yod*. Its mate is also a *Nun* and a *Yod*,” as shown below:



It is worth noting that the position of the *Yod* is reversed in the traditional *Sefardi* manner of depicting the *Tzadi*, like this:



A reason for this portrayal of the letter *Yod* in the *Tzadi* glyph is given in the beautiful saga of the letters parading in front of the Almighty, as they individually requested the primordial act of creation to be enacted through each of them “in person,” so to speak. We are told that when the letter *Tzadi* approached the Eternal Living Spirit, “she” said “Master of the world, may it please You to create world by me, for **צדיקים** (*Tzadikim*), the righteous, are sealed by me, and You, who are called **צדיק** (*Tzadik*), Righteous, are signified by me, as it is written: *For יהוה is צדיק—loving righteousness (Psalm 11:7)*. It is fitting to create the world by me!”

The Indefinable One is said to have responded “you are **צדיק** (*Tzadik*), but you should remain hidden—not revealed—so as not to provide the world a pretext.” In querying this response we are again informed that “**צ** is a **ן** (*Nun*)” and that the “**י** (*Yod*) from the holy covenant comes and rides on her, is united with her. This is the mystery: When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces.” The Almighty turned the *Tzadi* away, saying “I intend to split you and transfigure you face-to-face, but you will arise elsewhere.” Here we encounter the curious tradition regarding our primordial ancestor having been created androgynous, literally back to back, or *du-partzufim*, “dual countenanced,” which Moshe Idel called “the double-faceted nature of primeval man.”

Be that as it may, as we noted, the letter *Tzadi* is “the symbol of righteousness and humility.” However, whilst we may surmise and generalise the exact nature and expected behaviour of a *Tzadik*, a righteous individual, I believe it important to recognise that *tzadikim* have individual personalities, and that they express these, as well as their “righteousness,” in unique personal ways.

The letters *Kof* (**ק**) and *Tzadi* (**צ**) are intimately related, not only with regard to their adjacent positions in the *Otiot*, but equally as expressed in the earlier discussed **צדיק** (*Tzadik*), which, we are told, can be read **קצדי**, *Tzadi—Kof*. This is said to denote the “holiness” (**קדושה**) which follows “righteousness” (**צדקה**). Whilst the entire

construct, צדיק, refers to a righteous individual, its concluding letter “alludes to the nearness of the righteous person to holiness and to the Holy One.” Whilst the letter *Kof* indeed represents *Kedushah* (קדושה—“holiness”), this observation can be somewhat misleading. As we noted before, every letter has “positive” and “negative” qualities.

It is certainly true that ק is the initial of very important and lofty notions like *Kadosh* (קדוש—“holy”), *Komah* (קומה—“stature”), *Korban* (קרבן—“sacrifice”); etc., not forgetting *Kabbalah* (קבלה), the very Tradition addressed in this book, but this letter also dignifies the commencement of baneful concepts like *Kalon* (קלון—“dishonour”); *K'lalah* (קללה—a “curse”), *Kever* (קבר—a “grave”); etc., and note that the term *K'lippot* (קליפות), referring to the “demonic shards,” equally starts with the letter ק. In this regard the *Zohar* informs us that *Kof* “does not settle at all anywhere in the world,” and also refers to this letter as one which “dominates the place of Hell,” hence the unstable, one-legged ק pertains to the realm of the “demonic.”

It is maintained this letter extends downward “beyond its measure,” and “it is like that external force which mimics a human being like a monkey.” Here we should note that the Hebrew word *Kof* (קוף) actually means an “ape” or a “monkey,” and it has been said that the letter ק refers to “our outer ‘mechanical’ or Monkey consciousness....When we ‘ape,’ we Copy.” In my estimation the “monkey” quality of the letter *Kof*, refers to the restless, chattering, and distracting aspects of the mind.


Lest we overemphasize the “negative” aspect of ק, we should note that the single term קדוש (*Kadosh*), itself a Divine Name referring to the supremely exalted holiness of the Divine One, overrides the totality of negativity expressed by the letter *Kof*. In this regard it is worth noting that the English term “holy” derives from roots meaning to be whole, entire, unimpaired, unsullied and complete. Keeping this in mind, we realise the “wholeness” of the Omnipresent One to be beyond measure, and the exalted spiritual excellence and divine purity of the Holy One to be beyond compare.

The letter *Resh* is again a “double” letter, a term referring to seven letters, each of which has two pronunciations, though it would seem that currently only one pronunciation applies in the case of ר. It is interesting that since about the tenth century, most scholars have been asserting that *Resh* never has a *dagesh*, yet the letter is written with a *dagesh* in fourteen places in the Hebrew Bible. We are told that by the tenth century the double *Resh* was used only amongst the members of the small *Mazya* community in Tiberias, the last city in which the Sanhedrin flourished. Aryeh Kaplan suggested that this great Jewish Spiritual Council “entrusted,” amongst other mysteries, the double pronunciation of the letter *Resh* to the said community.

It is generally understood that the term רִשׁ (Resh) refers to the “head.” However, it is worth noting that the same combination of letters (רִשׁ), pronounced “*Rish*,” refers to neediness, impoverishment or destitution, and the combination רָשׁ (*Rash*) means “poor” or “destitute.” Add the letter *Ayin* (ע), and we get *Resha* (רשע), “wickedness,” and *Rasha* (רשע), a “wicked person” or a “villain,” who “act wickedly” (*Rasha*—רשע). Some see a connection between “head” and “wickedness,” regarding which we are told that the “desire to be at the ‘head’ is the essence of the negative character trait of pride, which causes one to become a *rasha*, a wicked one.”

However, it should be understood that personal “wickedness” is not necessarily fated to endure forever, or, for that matter, to result in “eternal damnation.” The instant a willing soul decides to work personal *Tikkun* (return and restoration), i.e. allowing א, the Divine *Aluf* (אֵלֹף—“Chief” or “Captain”), to enter the fray, so to speak, the *Rosh* (רֹאשׁ—the “Chief”), the Holy One, will facilitate the real “head” (רֹאשׁ), and the said individual will “inherit” (יָרַשׁ—*Yarash*) a new beginning (רֵאשִׁית). It has been pointed out that Kabbalists have found the double intimation of “inherit” and “poverty” in the שָׂר combination, to be present in the very shape of the glyph שָׂ.

In this regard we are told “The letter is seen as a passageway through which man can reach upwards to Heaven. If he manages to attain that degree of spiritual elevation, he can bring abundant blessing down to earth.” Yet we are also told that “if man, however, is so earthbound that he chooses not to ascend, then no response will be forthcoming from Heaven. The blessings will cease, leaving him without sustenance. Through his failure to elevate himself spiritually, he will sink into the depths of spiritual and moral poverty.” This literally means that each one of us holds our individual destinies in our own hands. The reverse of the word *Resh* (רֵשׁ) is *Shir* (שִׁיר) meaning a “song.” When you work evil deeds, you stifle the “celestial song” in your heart. Yet when you return to the “path of ascent,” and commence the “healing” (*Refu'ah*—רְפוּאָה) of your real “Self” (*Ru'ach*—רוּחַ), you will restore your voice, and reawaken the “song” into your heart.

 Due to some very fanciful notions regarding the letter *Shin* by Christian and Hermetic Kabbalists, this glyph has become rather controversial, especially so as this letter was allotted a unique status of holiness, due to the fact that Christian Kabbalists incorporated it into the Ineffable Name (יְהוה) to create the construct *Yeheshuah* (יְהֵשׁוּעַ). This, we are told, “is the esoteric name of the Messiah of the Jews and the Christ of the Christians,” the meaning of which is “Jah liberates.” As it is, this construct does *not* have this purported meaning, in fact, since it does not exist in Hebrew, it does not mean anything at all. The correct spelling of a personal name known to have the mentioned meaning is יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, which is correctly pronounced *Yehoshuah*, a fairly common Jewish Name.

Even in applying all the rules pertaining to Hebrew letters being interchangeable when they belong to the same phonetic family (i.e. being pronounced in the same spot in the mouth), we notice that although the letters *Heh* and *Ayin* are interchangeable (both being gutturals), the *Vav* and *Shin* are definitely not. The alteration of letters in a Hebrew word, and then expecting it to retain its original meaning, is simply not feasible. Yet, that is exactly what was done with the *Yeheshuah* construct from the 15th to 17th centuries, by Christian Kabbalists who acted from their own religious bias.

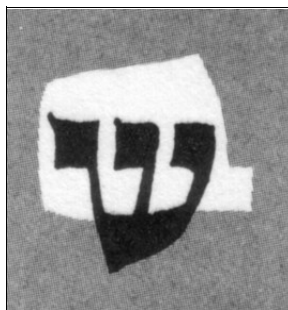
Now, regarding the special holiness assigned to the letter *Shin*, it should be noted that in Kabbalah *all* the Hebrew glyphs are “Holy.” The letter *Shin* is no more holy than any other Hebrew glyph. In fact, it is worth considering that the Hebrew letters comprise both “positive” and “negative” qualities, and this should be kept in mind when studying each letter-sign. In this regard, the letter *Shin* is termed “the symbol of Divine Power” as well as of “Corruption.” True it is the initial of two, very important Divine Names, i.e. *Shadai* (“All-sufficient Unlimited One”) and *Shalom* (“Peace”). To these we might add other significant concepts like *Shechinah*, *Shabbat*, etc., and we might also consider that the letter *Shin*, in representing *Shadai*, is the single letter shown on every *Mezuzah* placed on the doors of Jewish homes.

So, it is true that ש is known to be the symbol of “Divine Power,” mastery and peace, but it is equally clear that this letter also denotes corruption and *Sheker* (falsehood), thus being the initial of the name “*Shatan*” (Satan). In other words, Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism in general, recognise a dual principle in this letter. For greater comprehension of this fact, we might look again at the earlier mentioned saga of the Hebrew letters passing before the Holy One, Who finally chose to create the universe by means of the letter *Bet*. About the letter *Shin* the Divine One said “True, you stand for שׁ (Shadai), Almighty, Who is the essence of Perfection, but for man, Divinity is interspersed with evil and deception. Inevitably, your neighbour ק (*Kof*) and ר (*Resh*) will draw you into a קשר (*Kesher*), an *alliance* with them to establish שקר (*Sheker*—falsehood) on earth.”

We are told that the three letters comprising “falsehood” appear at the end of the Hebrew alphabet, so that they are far removed from the central axis of the array of glyphs, i.e. the letter *Mem* representing stability. Furthermore, it is said that none of the *millui*, the full spellings, of each of the other letters (e.g. א = א-ל-ף; ב = ב-ר-ך; etc.) comprise any of these three letters.

We are further informed that “to counteract the dangerous *shin* with its potential power to ruin mankind, the *Alef-Beis* ends with the letter *tav*, which alludes to *Emet*, Truth.” In this regard we should note that א (*Alef*) is the beginning, מ (*Mem*) the centre, and ת (*Tav*) the end of the Hebrew Alphabet, and that the combination of these letters in that exact order reads מת (Emet—Truth).

Now, tradition has it that a “four-pronged” *Shin* emerged during the engraving of the letters of the alphabet on the ancient “Stone Tablets” comprising the “Ten Commandments.” This “four-pronged” letter and the standard *Shin* are said to have appeared sort of folded into one another as shown in the following illustration. Note how the black letter is enfolded into the white, “four-pronged” *Shin*.




The two forms of the letter “*Shin*” are traditionally associated with the *Tefillin*, the phylacteries comprised of special leather boxes and thongs, which are tied to the forehead and the left arm. These two variants of the letter “*Shin*” appear specifically on the box of the “head” *Tefillin*, the standard letter placed on the right and the variant version on the left side. The “housing” (*Bayit*) is divided into four compartments, each comprising a small parchment on which distinct portions of Sacred Scripture are written, and some say the “four-pronged” *Shin* refers to this feature. Others maintain this specific glyph to represent the four letters of the Ineffable Name (יהוה—*YHVH*), and still others claim the two formats to respectively symbolise the three Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) on the right, and the four Matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah) on the left.

Some see a very close relationship between the patriarchs, matriarchs and the

*Tetragrammaton*, saying the twenty-six letters comprising the names of the three Patriarchs and four Matriarchs, thirteen each, correspond to the *Gematria* of the Ineffable Name (א = 10 + ה = 5 + ו = 6 + ת = 5 = 26). On the other hand it is said the seven “prongs” of the combined versions of the *Shin* relate to the seven planets, the seven *Middot* (qualities) of the seven lower *Sefirot* on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, the seven days of the week, the seven openings of the face (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth), etc.

In conclusion, the *Sefer Yetzirah* informs us the letter ו is one of three “Mother Letters,” the other two being א (*Alef*) and מ (*Mem*). We are also told that these three letters represent the three primordial elements of Air (א), Water (מ) and Fire (ו). As suggested elsewhere, these letters might have been termed “Mother Letters” because “they represent the three sounds used throughout the ages by all mothers in controlling their babies.” As mentioned in the previous volume of this series, a unique meditative breathing practice titled the “Mother Breath” is based on the three Hebrew “Mother Letters.” Some years ago I was told that the letters מ (Water) and ו (Fire) are respectively impacting on the “right” and “left” brain, and it has been suggested that one can “re-balance” the two hemispheres by rapidly whispering “mmmmmm.....shhhhhh.....mmmmmm.....shhhhhh.....,” whilst speedily flitting attention from one hemisphere to the other in accordance with their associated vocalised sounds. Curiously enough, over the years I have been employing this practice whenever I felt light-headed or ungrounded, and have been doing so with great success.

 This sign, the seventh “Double letter” and final glyph of the Hebrew Alphabet, is all about “truth.” According to the *Talmud* (*Shabbat 104a*) the letter א represents אמת (*Emet*—truth). Hence it would seem that whilst the letters ו and א are, as it were, “neighbours” in the Hebrew Alphabet, their respective meanings of שקר (*Sheker*—falsehood) and אמת (*Emet*—truth) are indicating a vast gulf to be existing between the two. As it is, I believe the closeness of the two letters can be understood in the statement that אמת (truth) is so “precisely bound, if one deviates from it only slightly, he slips into the tangent of שקר (falsehood).” It should be carefully noted that “truth” is not the opposite of “falsehood,” but rather that “falsehood” is the absence of “truth.”

It has been suggested that the Almighty “sealed” his creation with “Truth,” and regarding this “Seal of Truth” we are told “the beginning of Thy word is truth; and all Thy righteous ordinance endureth for ever” (*Psalms 119:160*). In this regard the letter א has been called the “Seal of Creation.” However, whilst the totality of “Divine Truth” is absolute throughout the whole of manifestation, humans may realise this only through personal effort. To illustrate this, it is said that whilst the final letters of the first three words of the Hebrew Bible, ברא אלהים, בראשית (“in the beginning created God”—*Genesis 1:1*) are the letters which spell “truth” in Hebrew, they are not presented in the correct order. It is only later, when creation is well settled and man is acting on the “Divine Plan of Perfection,” so to speak, that we are told לעסות ברא אלהים (*Genesis 2:3*), a phrase which is said to mean “God created to do.” In this instance the respective concluding letters of the three words are spelling אמת (truth) in their exact order of appearance. We are told this indicates to us “that truth is attained only through effort.”

“Divine Truth” is understood to be all-encompassing, and in this regard the Hebrew

אמת is an acrostic of תמיד אלהים מלך (*Elohim Melech Tamid*—“God is the Eternal King”), the One who “was,” “is” and “will be,” as exemplified in the Ineffable Name, יהוה, which articulates the totality of Divine Being, הוה ויהיה היה (*Hayah Hoveh v’Yiyeh*—“He was, He is and He will be”).

Now, the name תו (*Tav*) means a “mark,” and here we discover this letter to again comprise positive and negative aspects. The prophet Ezekiel related a vision in which he witnessed “a man clothed in linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn on his side” being instructed by the Divine One to “set a תו (a mark) upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof” (*Ezekiel 9:4*). In reference to this incident, we are told that “The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Gabriel, ‘Go and set a תו of ink upon the foreheads of the righteous, that the destroying angels may have no power over them; and a תו of blood upon the foreheads of the wicked, that the destroying angels may have power over them.’ Said the Attribute of Justice before the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Wherein are these different from those?’ ‘Those are completely righteous men, while these are completely wicked,’ replied He” (*Talmud Sanhedrin 55a*). The two *Tav* glyphs would respectively indicate תחיה (*Tichyeh*—“live”) or תמות (*Tamut*—“die”).

However, despite such fateful predications regarding the respective ultimate destinies of the “righteous” and the “wicked,” the letter ת also stands for תשובה (*Teshuvah*—“return” or “repentance”) and תיקון (*Tikun*—“restoration”). In this regard Abraham Abulafia, the great 13<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalist, wrote: “A line of life, a line of ink; and a line of death, a line of blood. And after this he showed us the form of his apprehension, and informed us that he had made the blood into ink—that is, from death to life. That is, he restored the soul of the spirit of life within him, with the apprehension, the form of a living, understanding and wise being, and he knew that it was deserving to survive eternally, by reason of the apprehension, and it was transformed from being dead to being alive.”

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74 Twelfth Street,  
Parkmore 2196,  
Johannesburg,  
Gauteng,  
South Africa  
email: [jacobsang@gmail.com](mailto:jacobsang@gmail.com)