



# Sefer Yetzirah

ספר יצירה

THE BOOK OF CREATION

Jaromír Hladík

ÉDITION CLEMENTINIUM

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# SEFER YETZIRAH

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*The Book of Creation*

*Translated from the Hebrew and annotated in German*

*by Jaromír Hladík*

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*By the same author, in the same Bibliotheca Hladikiana:*

*Defence of Eternity, Volume I.*

*A History of the Conceptions of Eternity.*

*Verlag Calve, Prague, 1928.*

*Defence of Eternity, Volume II.*

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*Verlag Calve, Prague, 1929.*

*Sefer ha-Bahir, The Book of Clarity.*

*Completed 1931, unpublished.*

*The Idroth, Idra Rabba & Idra Zuta.*

*Completed 1933, unpublished.*

*The Jewish Sources of Boehme.*

*Mánes, Prague, 1934.*

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# Sefer Yetzirah

THE BOOK OF CREATION

*Translated from the Hebrew with Commentary*

Jaromír Hladík

*(Berlin, 1928)*

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*Bibliotheca Hladikiana,*  
edited under the direction of W. D. F.

*Sefer Yetzirah, The Book of Creation: translated from the Hebrew and annotated in German by Jaromír Hladík. The present English follows that German edition (Das Buch der Schöpfung), which the author established from the short recension of the editio princeps of Mantua (1562) and the modern editions of Goldschmidt (1894) and Mordell (1914).*

*Published in Berlin in 1928 by the Hermann Barsdorf Verlag: the only work of Hladík to appear in his lifetime. The present edition reproduces the printed text; the marginal annotations of March 1939, recovered in the copy found at Hradčany, are set apart.*

*Note by the modern editor. The present typesetting (L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, EB Garamond, format 105 mm × 170 mm of the Clementinium Series) is the work of the Bibliotheca Hladikiana and does not belong to the original edition of 1928.*

*To those who learn to read  
the letters before the sentences,  
and the sentences before the deeds.*

## CONTENTS

<i>Note on this edition</i>	9
<i>Translator's Preface (1928)</i>	12
<i>Historical Introduction</i>	14
<i>Bibliographic Note</i>	20
<i>Appendix: the original German text</i>	67

## NOTE ON THIS EDITION

### I. THE BARSDDORF FIRST EDITION OF MCMXXXVIII

*The present edition renders into English the Sefer Yetzirah as Jaromír Hladík translated and annotated it, in German, and published it in Berlin in 1928 by the Hermann Barsdorf Verlag. That German edition is the only work by Hladík to survive as a physical printed edition: his dramatic and philosophical writings either remained in manuscript or appeared in private editions now lost. The Sefer, by contrast, was printed, distributed, and catalogued.*

*This very fact proved more of a burden than a benefit to its translator. The promotional notice that the Barsdorf house issued for the translation in its 1937 catalogue described Hladík, in Gothic type and in the inflated manner of trade copy, as “the leading European authority on speculative Kabbalah”. In March 1939, the notice was read by a Nazi official named Julius Rothe, who drew from it the familiar conclusion: Hladík was arrested on the 19th of March, sentenced to death on the 21st, and executed on the 29th of March 1939. The book now in the reader’s hands is therefore, in a terrible, almost literal sense, the book that killed its translator.*

## II. THE PLACE OF THE SEFER IN HLADÍK'S BODY OF WORK

*This translation is the earliest of Hladík's writings for which we have a reliable record. It precedes by a few months the Foreword to the first volume of the Defence of Eternity (Prague, November 1928, Verlag Calve), and by more than a year the composition of the second volume (1929). Hladík mentions it explicitly in the margins of his Hradčany notebook, under the title « Sefer Jezira, eigener Versuch »; and several commentaries in the Defence (notably in the sixth chapter of the first volume, on the alphabet as architecture of the world) take the present text as their point of departure.*

*The reader will not yet find, in the notes by J. H. that run through these pages, the visible motifs of the later work, but rather their first grammar: the letter as the condition of the world, combination as the form of the possible, the reversibility of signs, the idea of a freedom constrained by a structure that precedes it. The two volumes of the Defence of Eternity would later develop this intuition philosophically; Die Feinde would give it, ten years later, its dramatic and political form. The Sefer does not announce the play; it thinks, abstractly, the very condition of its possibility.*

## III. ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TEXT

*The copy of the Sefer recovered at Hradčany contains, alongside the printed text of 1928, several late pencil annotations that can be dated with high probability to March 1939. These have not been*

*incorporated into the original commentary; they appear separately, in the margin of the corresponding notes, wherever they shed light on the genesis of Die Feinde. In them one recognizes, almost word for word, the formula that haunts the margins and loose leaves of the Hladik papers (from the annotated copy of the present Sefer to the autographs of the two volumes of the Defence, from the Bahir to the Idroth, and on to the Boehme): “the move that does not lose”, and the hour stopped at seven. The editor confines himself to noting it; he does not undertake to decide its meaning. The first edition is reproduced without addition, save for two interventions, both declared here. They are limited to the correction of a manifest misprint at the commentary on III,6–9 and the harmonization, throughout the volume, of the rendering of the Hebrew expression בלימה as “without support”.*

*The reader will recognize Hladik’s name as that of the protagonist of a story by Borges first published in Sur in 1943 and then collected in Ficciones (1944), within its second section, Artificios, in which the catalogue notice issued by the Barsdorf house figures as the indirect cause of the death sentence. The present volume makes no attempt to decide whether Borges invented Hladik or whether word of Hladik’s existence reached him by some obscure route.*

W. D. F.

*Editio Clementinium.  
Bibliotheca Hladikiana.*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*Prague, June 1928*

I am no Hebraist by profession, and I should hardly have ventured to translate a text as cryptic as the *Sefer Yetzirah* had someone else pressed the task upon me. No one did. It came to me of its own accord, at the end of a long detour through the kabbalistic treatises, much as one realizes that a long-avoided threshold now asks to be crossed.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* is, so far as I know, one of the oldest speculative treatises in Hebrew. Where the Torah, the prophets, and even the *Hekhalot* tell stories (of creation, covenant, vision), the *Sefer* builds. It sets out numbers, letters, elements, and organs in a few pages of almost mathematical brevity. It was that brevity that arrested me. It promises a metaphysics without rhetoric, a cosmogony almost without narrative. From the first reading I sensed in it a quiet kinship with what I was struggling to write elsewhere, under the more pretentious title of *Defence of Eternity*.

The text I translate here is the so-called "short" recension, as transmitted and printed in the Mantua edition (1562, recension I) and adopted by the modern editions of Goldschmidt (Frankfurt, 1894) and Mordell (Philadelphia, 1914). I depart from the usual practice among Hebraists by setting beside the vocalized Hebrew a scholarly transliteration drawn from one of the academic systems (close to that of the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*). This duplication may seem superfluous to expert readers; it may prove useful to the philosopher or the poet, who may wish to hear the letter of the text without first having to learn the alphabet.

A word about the notes that accompany the text. They are not a scholar's commentary. I have neither the competence, nor the

temperament, nor the time required to compete with Saadia, Donnolo, or the commentators of Safed. My notes are, more modestly, the diary of one reader: the thought a verse prompted in me one afternoon at the Klementinum; what a phrase brought to mind: a problem of position, a clockwork mechanism, a figure of return; what a verse seemed to announce or contradict. There is in these notes an autobiographical element that I have not tried to efface: one always reads from somewhere, and it is better to say where than to conceal it.

A final warning to the reader. The *Sefer Yetzirah* yields nothing to anyone who does not read it more than once. The first reading is almost always disappointing: a sequence of obscure schemata, lists of correspondences, permutations. The second reading begins to arrange those schemata into an order one can half perceive. The third sometimes makes a single hidden device suddenly appear beneath the dispersion. I do not promise that this device is the “truth” of the work. I say only that it is worth waiting for it to take shape.

My thanks go to the Hermann Barsdorf Verlag, which has agreed to publish this volume without expecting profit, and to the memory of the anonymous librarians of the Klementinum, who allowed a Jew from the Zeltnergasse to use their side reading rooms in peace for three consecutive years.

J. H.

Prague, June 1928.

## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

*Title, date, language, manuscripts, posterity*

### I. The title and its meaning

The title ספר יצירה (*Sefer Yetzirah*) is usually rendered “Book of Formation” or “Book of Creation”. The word יצירה (*yěšîrāh*) derives from the root יצר (*yāṣar*), “to form”, “to fashion”, “to give shape”; it is the verb Genesis (2:7) uses when the Lord *fashions* man from the dust of the ground, and the verb of the potter who works his clay (Jeremiah 18:4). The title therefore speaks less of a creation *ex nihilo* than of a giving of form: a work upon a matter already given, as the potter works the clay or the engraver the stone. The nuance is not trivial. The *Sefer* does not recount that God brought the world forth out of nothing; it describes *how* the world was *formed*, by what instruments, according to what measure. The instruments are letters and numbers; the measure is a combinatorics.

One finds, among the older commentators, the same hesitation between the two renderings of the title. “Formation” insists on the process, “Creation” on the result. For the present volume I have kept the second word, more accessible to the English reader, without abandoning the reminder, in the notes, that the first would be, philologically, the more exact. The *Sefer* is a book about the *manner* in which the world holds together, rather than about the instant of its beginning.

## II. Date and milieu

The *Sefer Yetzirah* is, so far as one can judge, the oldest Hebrew text of systematic cosmological speculation: older by several centuries than medieval Kabbalah proper, to which it nonetheless furnished both vocabulary and skeleton. Rabbinic tradition attributes it now to the patriarch Abraham (the last chapter ends precisely on the figure of Abraham contemplating and forming), now to Rabbi Akiba, the tannaitic sage of the second century. Modern criticism holds both attributions to be equally untenable: the first belongs to pious pseudepigraphy, the second to an authoritative retrojection.

The dating remains one of the most disputed in all of Jewish literature. The internal evidence (the language, the absence of any medieval kabbalistic terminology, the affinity with certain Hellenistic and Neo-Pythagorean speculations on number) places the composition, according to the scholars, somewhere between the third and the sixth century of our era. One cannot be more precise without risking the arbitrary. What is certain is that the *Sefer* precedes by several centuries the Provençal *Bahir* (c. 1180) and the Castilian *Zohar* (c. 1280), and that it belongs to a far older stratum of Jewish thought: the one in which speculation on creation is still seeking a language, and finds it in the arithmetic of letters.

## III. Language and structure

The *Sefer* opens on a now famous formula: by “thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom” (שלשים ושתיים נתיבות פלאות חכמה) (*šēlōšīm û-štayim nētīvôt pelā’ôt ḥokhmāh*) the world was engraved. This

number, thirty-two, breaks down into ten plus twenty-two: ten *sefirot* and twenty-two letters.

The ten *sefirot* are here called *sefirot belimah* (ספירות בלימה). The word *sefirah* (from the root ספר, “to count”, “to number”) means first a *number*, an *enumeration*, and not yet the named divine emanation that medieval Kabbalah will make of the *sefirah*. The term *belimah* is obscure; it is read *belî mah*, “without anything”, that is “without support”, “without substance of their own”, or else as a form of the root בלם, “to close”, hence “closed”, “sealed”. Throughout the volume I have kept the rendering “without support”, which seems to me the most faithful: the ten *sefirot* of the *Sefer* are ten pure numbers, ten enumerations that rest on nothing, depth and height, east and west, beginning and end, and that close upon one another like the flame bound to the coal. This point must be stressed, for it is one of those on which the *Sefer* differs most from later Kabbalah: these are not yet the named *sefirot* (*Keter*, *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, and so on) of the medieval tree, but ten abstract numbers, ten dimensions of extension and of time.

The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are then divided into three classes. Three *mothers* (אמם, *'alef*, *mem*, *šin*), from which come air, water, and fire, the heavens, the earth, and the atmosphere that divides them. Seven *doubles* (בגדכפרת), which are pronounced in two ways, and to which the book attaches the seven planets, the seven days, the seven gates of the body. Twelve *simples* (the twelve remaining letters), attached to the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve months, the twelve “diagonal” organs of the body. From the combination of these letters with one another the *Sefer* derives the “two hundred and

thirty-one gates” (מאתים שלשים ואחת שערים), that is, the number of possible pairs that twenty-two letters form taken two by two: “from *aleph* to all the letters, and from all the letters to *aleph*”, forward and backward. The world, in this doctrine, is literally *spelled*: it is a language before it is a thing.

To this distribution of the letters answers a geometry. The book seals the six directions of space (above, below, east, west, north, south) by six permutations of the divine name, and it arranges the three orders of the real along three parallel axes: the *world* (space), the *year* (time), the *soul* (man). Each letter receives its place in space, in time, and in the body. The structure is therefore not merely a list: it is a *device* of three columns, in which the least letter holds together a region of the heavens, a month of the year, and an organ of man.

#### IV. Manuscripts and printed tradition

The text of the *Sefer Yetzirah* has not come down to us in a single form. The manuscripts and editions fall into three principal recensions: a *short* recension (the barest, and the one I translate), a *long* recension (enlarged with astrological and combinatorial developments), and the recension of *Saadia Gaon*, appreciably re-ordered, which the latter appended to his Arabic commentary of the tenth century. The differences among these recensions bear less on the doctrine than on the order of the paragraphs and the extent of the tables of correspondences.

The Hebrew *editio princeps* appeared at Mantua in 1562, and it is this edition that serves, directly or indirectly, as the basis of all later editions, including the modern scholarly editions of

Goldschmidt (Frankfurt, 1894) and Mordell (Philadelphia, 1914) of which I have made use. For the present translation I have taken as my base text the short recension of Mantua, signalling in the notes, where it was useful, the additions of the long recension.

## V. Posterity

The fortune of the *Sefer Yetzirah* bears no proportion to its brevity. As early as the tenth century, Saadia Gaon devoted to it an Arabic commentary that long fixed its philosophical reading; Shabbatai Donnolo, in southern Italy, gave it in the same century a Hebrew commentary of medical and astrological inspiration. In the twelfth century, Yehuda ben Barzillai commented on it again in Catalonia. The book thus passed, across the centuries, from one learned hand to the next.

But its deepest posterity lies elsewhere. The Ashkenazi *Hasidim* of the Rhineland, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, made the *Sefer* and its combinations of letters the heart of their speculative piety and of their traditions concerning the creation of an artificial man by the permutation of the letters of the Name, traditions from which the legend of the *Golem* would later arise. Medieval Kabbalah proper, born in Provence and in Castile, inherited from the *Sefer* its very vocabulary: the word *sefirah*, the number ten, the idea that the letters are the elements of the world. The *Bahir*, which opens medieval Kabbalah, takes up and transforms these ten enumerations into so many divine “powers”. And in the thirteenth century, Abraham Abulafia founded his whole “Kabbalah of the names” on the meditative

practice of the combinations of letters that the *Sefer* had, first of all, raised into a key to the real.

It is this first intuition that the present volume would make legible. The *Sefer Yetzirah* sets out, before all Jewish mysticism and long before the systems that would issue from it, a thesis of an almost vertiginous simplicity: the letters precede the sentences, and the sentences precede things. The world is formed as one forms a word. I pondered this thesis at length while writing elsewhere my *Defence of Eternity*; I did not yet know, in 1928, how literally a man can be bound by a grammar that others possess. It is for that reason, perhaps, that this minuscule book seemed to me, and seems to me still, one of the gravest I know.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

*Hebrew editions consulted.* Mantua, 1562 (editio princeps of the Hebrew Sefer Yetzirah); Lazarus Goldschmidt, *Das Buch der Schöpfung: (Sepher Jeṣirah)*, Frankfurt am Main, J. Kauffmann, 1894; Phineas Mordell, *The Origin of Letters and Numerals according to the Sefer Yetzirah*, Philadelphia, 1914; Vilna edition of 1874 (consulted for minor variants).

*Older commentators used in the background.* Saadia Gaon (c. 933); Shabbatai Donnolo (c. 950); Yehuda ben Barzillai (twelfth century); the commentators of Safed, principally Moshe Cordovero and, in fragments, Isaac Luria.

*Secondary literature.* A. Epstein, *Recherches sur le Sefer Yezira*, Paris, 1894; G. Scholem, *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, Leipzig (W. Drugulin), 1927 (a bibliography of the printed literature on Jewish mysticism). Internal references to the translator's own writings (*Defence of Eternity*, in two volumes from Verlag Calve in Prague) remain, at the moment of the present publication, in the form of a promise.

## CHAPTER I

*The Thirty-Two Paths, the Ten Enumerations*

*The first chapter lays down the whole apparatus: thirty-two wondrous paths, ten sefirot — the enumerations without support —, twenty-two foundational letters. It does not yet describe the detail of the letters; it establishes the gesture and the measure. Creation is not told here but engraved, sealed to the six directions by the permutations of the Name. All the rest of the ספר יצירה will only unfold what is here set down in a single stroke.*

## I.

בשלישים ושתיים נתיבות פלאות חכמה חקק י"ה יהו"ה צבאות אלקי ישראל  
אלקים חיים ומלך עולם אל שדי רחום וחנון רם ונשא שוכן עד וקדוש שמו, וברא  
את עולמו בשלשה ספרים, בספר וספר וספור.

*Transliteration*

*Bišlošîm û-štayim nētivōt pelā'ōt ḥokhmā, ḥāqaq Yāh Adonāi  
Šēva'ot, 'Elohé Israēl, 'Elohim ḥayyîm û-mélekh 'olam, 'El  
Šaddai, raḥûm wě-ḥannûn, rām wě-niśšā', šōkhên 'ad, wě-  
qādōš šēmō; û-bārā' et 'ōlāmō bišlošāh sēfārîm: bē-sēfer,  
wě-sēfār, wě-sippūr.*

*Translation*

By thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom, Yah, the Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the living God and King of the world, God Almighty, merciful and gracious, exalted and uplifted, who dwells forever and whose name is holy, engraved them and created His world by three things: the Book, the Number, and the Telling.

## 2.

עשר ספירות בלימה ועשרים ושתים אותיות יסוד, שלש אמות ושבע כפולות  
ושתים עשרה פשוטות.

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mǎ, wě- ‘ésrîm ûštayim ’otiygot yēsōd; šālōš  
‘imnot, we-ševa ‘kēfūlōt, û-šēteîm- ‘esrē pēšutot.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support, and twenty-two foundational let-  
ters: three mothers, seven doubles, and twelve simples.

3.

עשר ספירות בלימה במספר עשר אצבעות, חמש כנגד חמש, וברית יחיד מכוונת  
באמצע, במלת הלשון ובמילת המעור.

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mǎ, bě-mispar ‘eser ’ešba ‘ot, ḥamēš  
kenéged ḥamēš, û-berît yaḥid mēkuwenet bě-’emša ‘,  
bē-millat ha-lašon û-bē-millat ha-ma ‘or.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support, after the number of the ten fingers,  
five opposite five, and a single covenant set at the centre: the word  
of the tongue, and the word of the member.

**NOTE BY J. H.: ON I,1-3**

*The thirty-two paths of wisdom are not parallel roads, but the edges of  
a single invisible solid. The first mishnah does not describe a cosmos: it  
describes an act. God does not begin by telling the world; he engraves*

*it. Creation is therefore not a birth but an incision into a matter which, before the sign, was neither empty nor full, only indeterminate.*

*The ten ספירות בלימה, “sefirot without support” — ten numerations rather than ten reified spheres — are not things that can be located. They are the conditions that make location possible. They do not yet say what is; they make it possible for something to be said, counted, placed in opposition, oriented. For language, they are what fingers are to the hand: instruments, but also limits.*

*So at the very origin freedom and constraint stand together. The letters can combine, but they do not invent themselves. The world opens like a sentence, but no sentence speaks in an alphabet of its own choosing. This is perhaps the first mystery of the Sefer Yetzirah: creation is not the absence of rule but the appearance of a field in which rules will at last make something like freedom possible.*

#### 4.

עשר ספירות בלימה, עשר ולא תשע, עשר ולא אחת עשרה, הבן בחכמה והכם  
בבינה, בחון בהם וחקור מהם, והעמד דבר על בוריו, והשב יוצר על מכוננו.

#### *Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mā; ‘éser wě-lō tēša’, ‘éser wě-lō ’aḥat-  
‘ésrê. Hāvên bě-ḥokhmā, wě-ḥākhēm bě-vīnā; baḥōn bāhēm,  
wa-ḥāqōr mēhēm, wě-ha ’āmēd dāvār ‘al buriyyō, wě-hašēv  
yōšēr ‘al mēkhōnō.

#### *Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Understand by wisdom and be wise by understanding; test by them, search out from them; set the matter firmly in place, and restore the Maker to his station.

## 5.

עשר ספירות בלימה, מדתן עשר שאין להן 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 בכלום, ממעון קדשו ועד עדי עד.

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mǎ; middātān ‘éser še-’ên lāhén sōf: ‘ōmeq rē-’šīt wě-‘ōmeq ‘aḥarīt, ‘ōmeq ṭōv wě-‘ōmeq ra’, ‘ōmeq rōm wě-‘ōmeq taḥat, ‘ōmeq mizraḥ wě-‘ōmeq ma‘arav, ‘ōmeq šāfōn wě-‘ōmeq dārōm. ‘Adōn yaḥīd, El mēlekh ne’eman, mōšēl bē-kullān, mim ‘ōn qodšō we-‘ad ‘adē ‘ad.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: their measure is ten, and to none of them is an end given: a depth of beginning and a depth of end, a depth of good and a depth of evil, a depth of above and a depth of below, a depth of east and a depth of west, a depth of north and a depth of south. A single Lord, God, faithful king, rules over them all from the dwelling of his holiness for ever and ever.

## 6.

עשר ספירות בלימה, צפייתן כמראה הבזק ותכליתן אין להם קץ, דברו בהן ברצוא ושוב, ולמאמרו כסופה ירדופו, ולפני כסאו הם משתחווים.

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mǎ; šēfiyyatān kē-mar’ê ha-bāzaq, wě-takhlītān ‘ên lāhén qēš. Devarō bāhén bē-rašō wě-šōv; ū-lē-ma‘amarō kē-sūfāh yirdēfū, ū-lē-fānē kis’ō hem mištaḥāwīm.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: their appearance is like the flash of lightning, and their end has no boundary. His word runs through them in a “coming and going”; at his command, like the storm wind, they hasten; before his throne they bow down.

## 7.

עשר ספירות בלימה, נעוץ סופן בתחילתן ותחילתן בסופן כשלהבת קשורה בגחלת. שאדון יחיד הוא ואין שני לו. ולפני אחד מה אתה סופר.

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sefirot belî mǎ; nā ‘ûṣ sōfān bē-taḥillatān, wē-taḥillatān bē-sōfān, ka-šalhévèt qēšurā bē-gaḥélet. Še-’Adōn yaḥīd hū, wē-’én šēnī lō; ū-lē-fēnē ’eḥād, mǎ ’attā sōfer?

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: their end is set into their beginning, and their beginning into their end, like a flame bound to its coal. For there is a single Lord, and no second beside him; and before the One, what will you count?

**NOTE BY J. H.: ON I,4-7**

4. The text’s insistence — “ten and not nine, ten and not eleven” — is no pedantic fuss. It means that being is not approximate. There is a measure of the world, and that measure precedes our consolations. To add or to subtract one unit is not to correct the diagram; it is to change worlds.

5. The ten sefirot then disclose themselves as ten depths: beginning and end, good and evil, above and below, east and west, north and south.

The text offers no map but an orientation. Each of these axes asks us where we stand. Man never inhabits a pure point: he inhabits a tension between two directions.

6. Their appearance is like lightning, and their motion like the going-and-returning of the living creatures of Ezekiel. The sefirot, then, must not be imagined as motionless levels. What remains is the rhythm: outgoing and return, impulse and recall, expansion and limit. Time itself may be no more than a successive reading of this motionless structure.

7. "Their end is set into their beginning, and their beginning into their end." This sentence is perhaps the first acceptable definition of eternity. Not a duration that prolongs itself without end, but a form in which terminus and origin contain each other. If eternity is, it is not after time: it is the silent totality of which time grants us only the partial passage.

MARGINAL ANNOTATION, HRADČANY, MARCH 1939

In the margin of I,4-7: "If eternity is the silent totality and time only a partial passage through it, then no position in time is neutral. Seven o'clock. Still seven o'clock. Look for the move that does not lose."

8.

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

Transliteration

Éser sefirot belî mā; belōm pīkha mil-dabbēr, û-libbekha mil-harhēr. Wě-`im rāš libbekha, šûv la-māqōm, šelākākh ne`emar: we-haḥayyōt rāšō wě-šōv. Ū-`al dāvār zéh nikhrēt bērit.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: shut your mouth from speaking and your heart from pondering; and if your heart races, return it to its place, for it is for this reason that it is said: “and the living creatures ran and returned”. Upon this matter a covenant has been cut.

## 9.

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

*Transliteration*

‘Éser sēfirot bělî mā; ’aḥat rûaḥ ’Elohim ḥayyīm, bārûkh û-  
mëvōrākḥ šēmō šel ḥay ha-’olāmīm; qōl wě-rûaḥ wě-dibbūr  
— wě-zéhû rûaḥ ha-qōdeš.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: one is the Spirit of the living God — blessed and the source of blessing is the name of the Life of the worlds — voice, breath, and word: this is the Spirit of holiness.

## 10.

שתיים רוח מרוח, חקק וחצב בה עשרים ושתיים אותיות יסוד, שלש אמות ושבע  
כפולות ושתיים עשרה פשוטות, ורוח אחת מהן.

*Transliteration*

Šētayim: rûaḥ mi-rûaḥ; ḥāqāq wě-ḥāṣav bāḥ ’ésrīm û-štayim  
’otiyyōt yēsōd: šālōš ’immōt, wě-ševa ’kěfûlōt, û-štēim-’ésrē  
pěšûtōt; wě-rûaḥ ’aḥat me-hén.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: two — a spirit out of the Spirit; in it he engraved and hewed twenty-two foundational letters: three mothers, seven doubles, and twelve simples, and a single spirit out of them.

**II.**

שלש מים מרוח, חקק וחצב בהן תהו ובהו רפש וטיט, חקקן כמין ערוגה, חצבן כמין חומה, סיבבם כמין מעזיבה. ויצק מים עליהן ונעשו עפר, שנאמר כי לשלג יאמר הוי ארץ.

*Transliteration*

*Šālōš: māyim mi-rûaḥ; ḥāqaq wě-ḥāṣav bāhén tōhû wě-vōhû, refeš wě-ṭīt; ḥāqaqān kě-mīn 'arūgāh, ḥāṣavān kě-mīn ḥōmāh, sībḇān kě-mīn ma'zīvāh. Wě-yāšaḡ māyim 'ālēhén wě-na'āšû 'āfār, še-ne'emar: kī la-šēlēg yōmar: hēwī 'āreš.*

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: three — water out of the Spirit; in it he engraved and hewed tohu and bohu, mire and mud; he engraved them as a flowerbed, hewed them as a wall, surrounded them as plaster. He poured water over them and they became dust, as it is said: “For to the snow he saith, Be thou earth”.

**12.**

ארבע אש ממים, חקק וחצב בה כסא הכבוד, אופנים ושרפים וחיות הקודש ומלאכי השרת, ומשלשתן יסד מעוננו, שנאמר עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט.

*Transliteration*

'Arba': 'ēš mi-māyim; ḥāqaq wě-ḥāṣav bāh kissē ha-kāvōd, 'ofannīm wě-šērāfīm wě-ḥayyōt ha-qōdeš ū-mal'ākhē ha-šārēt; ū-mi-šēlōštān yāsad me'ōnō, še-ne'emar: 'ōseh mal'ākhāv rūḥōt, mēšārētāv 'ēš lōheṭ.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: four — fire out of water; in it he engraved and hewed the Throne of Glory, the wheels, the seraphim, the holy living creatures, and the ministering angels; and from these three he founded his dwelling, as it is said: "He maketh his angels winds, his ministers a flaming fire".

## 13.

חמש חתם רום, בירר שלש אותיות מן הפשוטות, וקבען בשמו הגדול יהו וחתם שש חתם תחת ופנה למטה וחתם בהם שש קצוות, ופנה למעלה וחתמו ביהו, שמנה חתם מערב ופנה לאחוריו שבע חתם מזרח ופנה לפניו וחתמו בהי"ו, ביו"ה, עשר חתם צפון ופנה תשע חתם דרום ופנה לימינו וחתמו בוי"ה, והתם בהו"י, לשמאלו וחתמו בוה"י.

*Transliteration*

Ḥāmeš: ḥātam rōm; bīrēr šālōš 'ōtiyyōt min ha-pěšūtōt, wě-qiv'ān bě-šēmō ha-gādōl יהו, wě-ḥātam ba-hén šēs qēšāvōt; pānāh lē-ma'lāh wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו. Šēs: ḥātam taḥat, ū-pānāh lē-maṭṭāh wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו. Ševa': ḥātam mizraḥ, ū-pānāh lē-fānāw wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו. Šēmōnāh: ḥātam ma'arav, ū-pānāh le-'aḥōrāw wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו. Tiša': ḥātam dārōm, ū-pānāh li-yēmīnō wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו. 'Eser: ḥātam šāfōn, ū-pānāh li-šēm'ōlō wě-ḥātēmō bě-יהו.

*Translation*

Ten sefirot without support: five — he sealed the height; he chose three letters out of the simples, fixed them in his great Name יהו, and with them sealed the six extremities. He turned upward and sealed it with יהו. Six — he sealed the lower, turned downward and sealed it with יו"ה. Seven — he sealed the east, turned forward and sealed it with ה"י. Eight — he sealed the west, turned backward and sealed it with ה"י. Nine — he sealed the south, turned to his right and sealed it with ו"ה. Ten — he sealed the north, turned to his left and sealed it with ו"ה.

## 14.

אלו עשר ספירות בלימה, אחת רוח אלקים חיים, שתיים רוח מרוח, שלש מים מרוח, ארבע אש ממים, רום ותחת מזרח ומערב וצפון ודרום.

*Transliteration*

'Ēllû 'éser sefirot bělî mā: 'aḥat rûaḥ 'Elohim ḥayyīm; šē-tayim rûaḥ mi-rûaḥ; šālōš māyim mi-rûaḥ; 'arba ' 'ēš mi-māyim; rōm wě-taḥat, mizraḥ ū-ma 'arav, šāfōn wě-dārōm.

*Translation*

These are the ten sefirot without support: one, the Spirit of the living God; two, a spirit out of the Spirit; three, water out of the Spirit; four, fire out of water; above and below, east and west, north and south.