

## THE THIRTY-TWO PATHS OF WISDOM

D.M. Dalton (2001)

The author of this text is unknown.

Judging from the style of the treatise it is of considerably later date than "Sepher Yetzirah".

There are several extant versions which differ in various points.

It should be noted that all attributions to Tarot cards, letters or position on the Tree of Life are the speculation of the translator. No attributions are given in the text.

The opening words of the Sephirah Yetzirah, "With 32 paths of wisdom.....", probably explain why this text is usually published as an addenda to it. The Sepher Yetzirah was introduced to Christian Scholarship in 1552 by a Latin translation from the Hebrew by William Postel, this being ten years prior to the first issue of the printed Hebrew text, which took place at Mantua, Italy in 1562. (This contained two recensions with variant readings of both, the second being longer than the first).

A second Latin translation first appeared in Basel, 1587 in the only volume of ARTIS CABALISTICAE SCRIPTORES under the editorship of Pistorius.

The Hebrew text with the third translation into Latin was produced by Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius in 1642 together with a commentary on the Thirty two paths of Wisdom by Rabbi Abraham Ben Dior.

The Twenty seventh path (Natural intelligence) is numbered as twenty eight by Comtesse Calomira de Cimara and Waite. The text followed by Westcott gives the correct number i.e. 27.

The Twenty eighth (Active intelligence) is omitted by Westcott. In the versions of Comtesse Calomira de Cimara and Waite it is numbered Twenty seven. "That this is a mistake may be found by comparing the contents of this path and the twenty seventh with the foundations of the seventh and eighth of the simple letters (L & N) (See Sepher Yetzirah Chap. 5 :13 & 14.) - Stenring.

Eliphas Levi applied the Hebrew Letters in their "Alphabetical order" to the twenty two last paths. This is however, entirely wrong according to Stenring and others.

Normally the tabulation of paths and their titles are given according to the Comtesse Calomira de Cimara who in 1913 translated it into French and whose text Waite used for his translation. Westcott translated his version from the Hebrew text of Rittangelius.

Papus considers that the "Fifty Gates of Understanding" relate to Binah whereas the "Thirty two paths of Wisdom" correspond to that of Chokmah. According to Papus, there is a link between the thirty two paths of Wisdom and the thirty two occurrences of the word *lyhla* in the first chapter of Genesis which he terms 'the pathways of created things'.

According to Aryeh Kaplan this text dates from the Gaonic period (7th-10th centuries). The 32 commentaries on the Paths are presented as different states of consciousness, which are possibly related to the 32 times that *lyhla* is mentioned in Genesis 1:1

## THE THIRTY-TWO PATHS OF WISDOM

Translated from the Hebrew text of Joannes Rittangelius by W.W. Westcott c1886

The 1st path is called the Admirable or the Hidden Intelligence (the Highest Crown): for it is the Light giving the power of comprehension of that First Principle which has no beginning; and it is the Primal Glory, for no created being can attain to its essence.

The 2nd path is that of the Illuminating Intelligence: it is the Crown of Creation, the Splendour of the Unity, equalling it, and it is exalted above every head, and named by the Kabbalists the Second Glory.

The 3rd path is the Sanctifying Intelligence, and is the basis of foundation of Primordial Wisdom, which is called the Former of Faith, and its roots, Amen; and it is the parent of Faith, from whose virtues doth Faith emanate.

The 4th path is named Measuring, Cohesive or Receptacular; and is so called because it contains all the holy powers, and from it emanate all the spiritual virtues with the most exalted essences: they emanate one from the other by the power of the primordial emanation. (The Highest Crown).

The 5th path is called the Radical Intelligence, because it is itself the essence equal to the Unity, uniting itself to the Binah, or intelligence which emanates from the Primordial depths of Wisdom or Chokmah.

The 6th path is called the Intelligence of the Mediating Influence, because in it are multiplied the influxes of the emanations, for it causes that influence to flow into all the reservoirs of the Blessings, with which these themselves are united.

The 7th path is the Occult Intelligence, because it is the Refulgent Splendour of all the Intellectual virtues which are perceived by the eyes of the intellect, and by the contemplation of faith.

The 8th path is called Absolute or Perfect, because it is the means of the primordial, which has no root by which it can cleave, nor rest, except in the hidden places of Gedulah, Magnificence, which emanate from its own proper essence.

The 9th path is the Pure Intelligence, so called because it purifies the Numerations, it proves and corrects the designing of their representation, and disposes their unity with which they are combined without diminuation or division.

The 10th path is the Resplendent Intelligence, because it is exalted above every head, and sits on the throne of Binah, (the Intelligence spoken of in the 3rd Path). It illuminates the splendour of all the lights, and causes a supply of influence to emanate from the Prince of countenances\*

The 11th path is the Scintillating Intelligence, because it is the essence of that curtain which is placed close to the order of the disposition, and this is a special dignity given to it that it may be able to stand before the Face of the Cause of Causes.

The 12th path is the Intelligence of Transparency because it is that species of Magnificence called *Chazchazit\**, which is named the place whence issues the vision of those seeing in apparitions. (That is the prophecies by seers in a vision).

The 13th path is named the Uniting Intelligence, and is so called because it is the Essence of Glory. It is the Consummation of the Truth of individual spiritual things.

The 14th path is the Illuminating Intelligence, and is so called because it is that *Chasmal\** which is the founder of the concealed and fundamental ideas of holiness and of their stages of preparation.

The 15th path is the Constituting Intelligence, so called because it constitutes the substance of creation in pure darkness, and men have spoken of these contemplations; it is that darkness spoken of in Scripture, Job 38:9, "and thick darkness a swaddling band for it".

The 16th path is the Triumphal or Eternal Intelligence, so called because it is the pleasure of the Glory, beyond which is no other Glory like to it, and it is called also the Paradise prepared for the Righteous.

The 17th path is the Disposing Intelligence, which provides Faith to the Righteous, and they are clothed with the Holy Spirit by it, and it is called the Foundation of Excellence in the state of higher things.

The 18th path is called the House of Influence (by the greatness of whose abundance the influx of good things upon created beings is increased), and from the midst of the investigation the arcana and hidden senses are drawn forth, which dwell in its shade and which cling to it, from the cause of all causes.

The 19th path is the Intelligence of all the activities of the spiritual beings, and is so called because of the affluence diffused by it from the most high blessing and most exalted sublime glory.

The 20th path is the Intelligence of Will, and is so called because it is the means of preparation of all and each created being, and by this intelligence the existence of the Primordial Wisdom becomes known.

The 21st path is the Intelligence of Conciliation, and is so called because it receives the divine influence which flows into it from its benediction upon all and each existence.

The 22nd path is the Faithful Intelligence and is so called because by it spiritual virtues are increased, and all dwellers on earth are nearly under its shadow.

The 23rd path is the Stable Intelligence, and it is so called because it has the virtue of consistency among all numerations.

The 24th path is the Imaginative Intelligence, and it is so called because it gives a likeness to all the similitudes which are created in like manner similar to its harmonious elegancies.

The 25th path is the Intelligence of Probation, or is Tentative, and is so called because it is the primary temptation, by which the Creator trieth all righteous persons.

The 26th path is called the Renovating Intelligence, because the Holy God renews by it all the changing things which are renewed by the creation of the world.

The 27th path is the Exciting Intelligence, and it is so called because through it is consummated and perfected the nature of every existent being under the sun, in perfection.

The 28th path is omitted.

The 29th path is the Corporeal Intelligence, so called because it forms every body which is formed beneath the whole set of worlds and the increment of them.

The 30th path is the Collecting Intelligence, and is so called because Astrologers deduce from it the Judgement of the Stars, and of the celestial signs and the perfection's of their science, according to the rules of their resolutions.

The 31st path is the Perpetual Intelligence; but why is it so called? Because it regulates the motions of the Sun and the Moon in their proper order, each in an orbit convenient for it.

The 32nd path is the Administrative Intelligence, and it is so called because it directs and associates in all their operations the seven planets, even all of them in their own due courses.

Notes:

\* The Prince of Countenances is Metatron.

\* *Chazchazit* - This word is from ChZCh, a seer, seership. Chazuth is a vision.

\* *Chasmal* - This word means "scintillating flame".

The 32 Paths are the Ten Sephiroth and the Twenty-two letters, each supplying a type of divine power and attributes.

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