

For the past year, we have studied many aspects of the Torah, i.e. Tanya, Kabbalah, Zohar, and many others. What is Torah? It means “teaching.” It is a set of instruction of how Hashem wants us to relate to Him. Thus, the Torah has two aspects to it: the revealed and the concealed, which are also referred to as its body and its soul:

1. The written Torah or the body of the Torah (*gufei Torah*) comprises the laws that govern our daily behavior. These laws express the will of Hashem for our ultimate and absolute good in this world and the World to Come. This aspect of the Torah is also called the Torah’s revealed dimension (*nigleh*).
2. The oral Torah or the soul of the Torah (*nishmeta de’orayta*) comprises the secrets relating to Hashem as the Creator, the process of creation, and Hashem’s Providence over creation. These secrets possess many dimensions of mysteries and mysteries within mysteries. This aspect of the Torah is also referred to as its concealed dimension (*nistar*).

Kabbalah is one of such mysteries. It is the study of Hashem, to come close to Hashem. The focus of Kabbalah is not just obtaining wisdom in and of itself: wisdom is only a tool, a bridge to connect us to our Creator through comprehension of the creative process.

The basic text of Kabbalah introduces the concept of thirty-two paths of wisdom with which Hashem, and man, engages in the creative process. The thirty-two paths of wisdom are comprised of:

1. The ten *sefirot* – the ten emanations of Divine light, which energize the creative process and define its parameters.
2. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew are the building blocks of creation and the channels through which Divine consciousness flows into creation.

The first person who devoted his life to discover and come close to Hashem was Abraham. Due to his great self-sacrifice, many deep secrets of creation were revealed to him, allowing him to experience what he desired most – a closeness and sense of oneness with his Creator. The very first text of Kabbalah is Sefer Yetzirah (the Book of Formation) is attributed to Abraham.

So, how do we study Kabbalah? Western culture sees the goal of study as the accumulation of knowledge, or at least, the gleaning of information; whether skimming or reading, the intent is usually to take out the useful points and proceed further. In contrast, the Torah instructs us that the goal of study is the refinement of our behavior. Through our study we seek to come close to Hashem, knowing that we can only draw close to Him by emulating His characteristics, as the sages say, “Just as Hashem is merciful, so must you be merciful.”

We see His mercifulness from the very first verse of Genesis when He “created the heavens and the earth.” The Kabbalah teaches that YHVH consists of Four Worlds of Creation. They are:

Letter of Havayah	Creative Process	World
Yud	Contraction	Atzilut (emanation)
Hei	Expansion	Ber’ah (creation)
Vav	Extension	Yetzirah (formation)
Hei	2 <sup>nd</sup> expansion	Assiyah (action)

The Ga’on of Vilna says that these four categories themselves correspond to the 4 letters of Hashem’s essential Name *Havayah*. *Havayah* is the pronunciation used for Hashem’s essential Name spelled with the four letters יהוה (yud, hei, vav, hei).

*Havayah* is the most sacred of the Names of Hashem. Although no name can fully express Hashem’s essence, *Havayah* refers to Hashem’s essence. For this reason, it is sometimes referred to as “the essential Name” (שם העצום), or “the unique Name” (שם המיוחד), or “the explicit Name” (שם המפורש).

The Divine Name used throughout the creation narrative (i.e., until 2:3) is Elokim, which signifies Hashem’s attribute of limitation and restraint. This is because Hashem created the world to operate according to strict, consistent rules. Later, with the creation of humanity, it became possible to mitigate Divine rigidity with Divine mercy, which is signified by the Name *Havayah*.

Due to its great sanctity, this Name may only be pronounced in the Holy Temple, and its correct pronunciation is not known today. For this reason, we refer to this Name by either the word Hashem, which simply means “the Name,” or *Havayah* (הוּיָהּ), one of the permutations of its letters.

In English, this Name is referred to as the Tetragrammaton, meaning the four-letter Name, because in Hebrew it is spelled with four letters.

Even though the Name *Havayah* does not appear explicitly in the first account of creation in the Torah, it is alluded to in the structure of the first verse. The first verse has 28 letters with the cantillation marks, which also serve as punctuation, divide the verse into two major phrases. Each phrase contains 14 letters which is the *gematria* of “hand” (י.ד. yud, dalet). Thus, the Divine Power (the total of 28 letters of the first verse) of creation manifests in the two “hands.” The 14 letters of “In the beginning Elokim created” (בְּרֵאשִׁית, בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים) corresponds to the right hand and the 14 letters of “the heavens and the earth” (וְאֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ.) correspond to the left hand. Isa. 48:13 states that Hashem created the heavens with His right hand and the earth with His left hand.

Now, in the Aramaic text reads: “God created the heavens and the earth in the very beginning.” Here we will examine the history of Egypt. The Greek King of Egypt Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE) brought in seventy-two Jewish scholars were asked by to translate the Torah from Biblical Hebrew into Greek, for inclusion in the Library of Alexandria. During his reign,

Egypt flourished with the material and literary splendor of the Alexandrian court was at its height. He also promoted the Museum and Library of Alexandria.

This narrative is found in the pseudepigraphic Letter of Aristeas to his brother Philocrates, and is repeated by Philo of Alexandria, Josephus and by various later sources, including St. Augustine. The story is also found in the Tractate Megillah of the Babylonian Talmud:

King Ptolemy once gathered 72 Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: "Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher". God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did.

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 CE), who relied extensively on the Septuagint, says that the number of scholars was chosen by selecting six scholars from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The sages say that since Egypt was worshiping many idols, Hashem "told" 72 elders to start with God as the very first word to show Egyptians that there are no other gods but Him.

Next, what is the origin of "God"? Our English term "God" comes from Teutonic roots and has been associated by St. Boniface with the German word 'gut', meaning "good." Its usage began about the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, and was known only among Teutonic peoples. It was known as the source of all life because it is "gut" who constantly pours out life.

The root of both the Aramaic and Hebrew terms for God – Alaha, Elohim – is assumed to be derived from אלה (aleph.lamed.hei). There are several mainline theories about the meaning of this root in Semitic language: (1) The strong or mighty one, (2) the revered one, (3) the highest one, (4) helper, supporter, one who sustains.

Another Aramaic term for God is Ithea, (self-existent," "self-eternal existence, i.e., something that exists of itself and does not derive its life from anywhere or through anything else. The major biblical Hebrew name that God is known by is YHWH, which has been translated as LORD, Adonai, and in Aramaic, Mariah.

Among the Semitic peoples of the Near East, no attempt was made to comprehend or define the mystery of God, nor did they question the existence of God. Robert Gordis, a Jewish writer and scholar, states: "It is true that the ancient Hebrews, unlike the Greeks, evinced no outstanding talent for scientific thought. Yet, incredibly, it was Genesis rather than the Greek philosophers and scientists that arrived at the concept of a 'uni-verse' created by one will and hence governed by universal laws of nature."

Finally, our purpose is to learn and then review again and again, each time adding a new, deeper layer of knowledge, like peeling an onion.

**Seven levels of Heaven** – The seven lower sub-sub-*sefirot* of *malchut* of *malchut* of *Asiyah* are sometimes referred to as “the seven heavens.” (Rashi on Deut. 4:35) Specifically, these realms are, in ascending order:

Name	Translation	Content
Vilon	“Curtain”	None; hides daylight during the night and is drawn open in the morning, renewing the creation of the world
Rakia	“Firmament”	Sun, moon, stars, planets
Shechakim	“Millstones”	Manna (Psa. 78:23-24)
Zevul	“Abode” (Isa. 63:15)	The spiritual Jerusalem, including the spiritual Temple (1Kings 8:13)
Ma'on	“Residence” (Deut. 26:15)	Ministering Angels
Machon	“Resting Place” (1Kings 8:39)	Sources of harmful natural phenomena (later transferred to earth)
Aravot	“Clouds” (Psa. 68:5)	Right, judgment, righteousness, life, peace, blessing, souls, the dew of resurrection, angels, the Divine Throne

### Chart of Correspondences of the Four Gospels

	Mark	Luke	Matthew	John
Target	Gentiles	Sadducees	Pharisees	Essenes
Level of Understanding	Pashat (literal 문자대로)	Remez (implied / 암시)	Drash (allegorical / 무화)	Sod (hidden / 숨겨진)
Face / “beast” (Ezek.1 & Rev. 4)	Ox	Man	Lion	Eagle
Aspect of Messiah	The Servant	The Son of Man	King Messiah	The incarnate Word
Branch	My Servant the Branch (Zech 3:8)	The man called the Branch (Zech 6:12)	David’s Branch (Jer 23:5-6; Isa. 11:1f)	The Branch of YHWH (Isa. 4:2)