

Chapter One:

The Gates of Heaven and the Enochian Tradition

In order to understand where John Dee and his Angels were going with their magickal system, it is important to first understand where they were coming *from*. There are several important historical threads to trace from classical European mysticism to their convergence in the scrying sessions of Dee and Kelley. Without taking these foundational influences upon both men into account, their mystical system can often appear an incomprehensible jumble of magickal squares and arcane language.

There are many such threads to trace beneath the whole of Dee's system- such as ancient Gnosticism, the Qabalah, Hermeticism, Alchemy, Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* and the Neoplatonic revival of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. However, in this text, we are only concerned with the angelic language and its intended magickal application as revealed by Dee's celestial contacts.

In this vein, it will be necessary to outline some aspects of the Qabalah- particularly the mystical models known as the Tree of Life and the 50 Gates of *Binah* (Understanding). We will also need to know something about the ancient *Book of Enoch*, and its affect upon the magickal system received by Dee and Kelley. This apocryphal Biblical text (the oldest known apocrypha) was not in Dee's possession in the 16th Century, but the legends based upon it- collectively called "Enochian"- were current and popular in the occult circles of Dee's time.

Finally, this chapter will cover a subject that just may enjoy the status of "most obscure" where it comes to influences upon Dee's work- the mysterious *Book of Soyga*. This text was in Dee's possession - and the references he makes to *Soyga* in his journals were the only hints we had to its existence for hundreds of years. Relatively recently (1994), no less than two copies of the book (one of which is likely the very copy that belonged to Dee) were finally discovered in England. The text has since been deciphered, and an analysis of the work will be included below. In this and the following chapter, we will see exactly what relationship this book has to the Qabalah and the *Book of Enoch*, and the influence it had on the magick Dee and Kelley received from the Angels.

Therefore, we will leave our two Renaissance mages behind for now- and explore

these particulars of the occultism that form the foundation of Dee's angelic language and the famed *Book of the Speech From God*.

The Fifty Gates of *Binah*

The world was created with Fifty Gates of Understanding ... (*Talmud*, Rosh Hashanah 21b)

In that Temple [of *Binah*] there are 50 gates, which are supposed to be closed, meaning that they block the flow of Lights. There are 49 gates engraved upon the 'four winds' of the world. One gate has no direction; it is not known whether it faces up or down. This is how this gate remains closed. Inside the gates is a lock with a tiny and narrow keyhole. This lock is marked and known only by the impression of the key. And no one is to know about this narrow keyhole without having the key. (*Sepher Zohar*, Prologue, The Locked and the Unlocked, vs. 43-44)¹

The Tree of Life is mentioned in Genesis (2:9) and the Revelation of St. John (2:7, 22:2), and is said to bear the fruits of God's graces.² As used by mystics (especially in the later Hermetic Qabalah), it has become a stylized diagram of the spheres of heaven- including the planetary spheres, the fixed stars, and the Divine Source above all. These spheres- each representing one of the divine "fruits"- are called *Sephiroth* (sing: *Sephirah*) in the Hebrew. One interpretation of this word is "to say"- indicating that each of the *Sephiroth* upon the Tree is associated with one of the ten creative instances of "God said..." in Genesis 1.

[IMAGE 02: Kircher's Tree of Life. See "Secrets"]

In the teachings of the Hebrew Qabalah, there are seven primary *Sephiroth* (or aspects of God):³ beginning with *Chesed* (Mercy), and then *Gevurah* (Severity), *Tiphareth* (Majesty), *Netzach* (Victory), *Hod* (Splendor), *Yesod* (Foundation), and *Malkuth* (Kingdom). These represent God acting in His seven principal characteristics throughout the Torah.

Each *Sephirah* is further represented in sacred Scripture by one of the Seven Patriarchs (the *Ushpizin*): Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.⁴ Biblical legend depicts these heroes acting on behalf of Yahweh within the context of one

or more of the *Sephiroth*. For instance, Abraham acts from *Chesed* (Divine Mercy), because he was allowed to spare his son from sacrifice. Isaac, meanwhile, acts from *Gevurah* (Divine Severity) because he was, in fact, almost sacrificed in blood. David, the first king of Israel, acts from *Malkuth* (the Kingdom) because he established God's Kingdom upon the Earth. Etc.

Further, the seven primary *Sephiroth* correspond to the Seven Days of Creation, the seven days of the week, the seven Planets⁵ and all related mystical considerations of the number seven. The three *Sephiroth* above these seven- *Kether* (Crown), *Chockmah* (Wisdom), and *Binah* (Understanding)- are considered "hidden *Sephiroth*" that are in many ways a separate system unto themselves. The physical man has no part in these transcendent levels of Deity- yet it is toward this Supernal Triad that the devout must aspire. It is the work of a lifetime, and the higher Spheres are gained only upon death and re-union with God.

In this section, we are going to discuss just one Qabalistic mystery based upon the *Sephiroth*: the Fifty Gates of Understanding, contained within a Jewish custom known as the "Counting of the Omer." An "Omer" is simply a generic Biblical term for a "unit of measurement", and in particular a unit (or sheaf) of wheat. Leviticus 23:15-16 instructs:

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf (Omer) of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number 50 days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

This Torah commandment outlines a specific period of time falling between Passover⁶ and, fifty days later, the observance of *Shavu'ot*. Primarily, each of these holidays is an agricultural observance: Passover marks the beginning of the harvest season in Israel, and *Shavu'ot* the end of the season and its first fruits. From the devotional perspective, Passover celebrates the sparing of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt from the Plague of Death, and the commencement of the Exodus. Seven weeks then follow until *Shavu'ot*, which celebrates the arrival of the Israelites at Mt. Sinai and the reception of the Ten Commandments. This period of seven times seven days (7 weeks or 49 days) plus the day of the Reception totals the fifty days of the Counting of the Omer as prescribed in Leviticus.

From this point, a mystical interpretation of the Torah must be adopted, similar to

that found throughout the *Sepher haZohar* and other foundational Qabalistic texts. By leaving the civilization of Egypt behind them in favor of the wilderness, the Israelites were both literally and philosophically removing themselves from the World of Man. At the same time, they were journeying *toward* the Divine Light as symbolized by Mt. Sinai and their meeting with God. Therefore, it is necessary for the devout to make this same philosophical journey each year- repenting and leaving behind the worldly sins of Man, and striving through the emotional wilderness to attain union with God and His Law (*Torah*).

This is the 50-day practice of the “Counting of the Omer.” Every night, a blessing is recited, and then the numbering of the day is stated. (For instance, twelve days into the process, one would state, “Today is 12 days, which is one week and five days of the Omer.”) It revolves around the concept of *Teshuvah* (Repentance), and is marked by focus upon Torah study, prayer and observance of the Commandments. Each day, a sin or other spiritual hindrance that has infected one’s soul throughout the year (by association with the World of Man, or “Egypt”) must be relinquished. This is known as removing oneself from the Fifty Gates of Impurity.

In order to accomplish this, a different “aspect (*midot*) of God” is singled out every day for devotional contemplation. It is these fifty (really forty nine) aspects of God, based upon the seven *Sephiroth* explained above, that comprise the *Nun Sha’arei Binah* (Fifty Gates of Understanding). By successfully exiting a Gate of Impurity, one necessarily enters its corresponding Gate of Understanding.

Students of the Qabalah will recognize the Hebrew word for understanding (*Binah*) as the name of an eighth “hidden” *Sephirah*- which lies immediately above the abyss that separates the Highest Divinity from the lower seven *Sephiroth*. It is true that the 50 Gates are related directly to this eighth *Sephirah*. It is Understanding of both God and the self which is sought by the devout during the Counting of the Omer- an attempt to bridge the span of the abyss (that is, to reconcile) between God and mankind. Therefore, *Binah*- in its entirety- is considered the 50th Gate, thrown open only by opening all the previous forty-nine.

The opening of this final Gate falls on the day of *Shavu’ot*, and is thus not actually counted among the 7 x 7 preceding days. It corresponds instead to the completion of the work, the reception of Divine revelation, or the reception of the Commandments by the ancient Israelites on the fiftieth day of the Exodus. The previous

forty-nine gates are, in fact, gates of entrance to the *Sephirah Binah*- and all 49 must be passed before the real *Binah* can be reached. (Seven is a mystical number of completion- as seen in the Days of Creation: six days of work followed by rest after completion on the seventh. The number 49 is seven successive sevens, and therefore represents the completion of the physical and entrance into the spiritual realm.)

[IMAGE 03 - The 50 Gates shown on the Sephiroth]

Reaching this height does *not*, however, represent passing through the fiftieth Gate of *Binah*- which corresponds to the Creator. That final Gate cannot be entered by a living human being- as it technically lies across the abyss in the realm of pure (Supernal) Deity. This Gate is reserved, instead, for the Messiah- who will open the 50th Gate in the "End Times" and bring about the destruction of the World of Man. According to the Talmud, only Moses has passed through this Gate, and that only upon his death. The Jewish mystic passing through the 49 Gates would be rewarded with a day of prophetic revelation, and an experience of closeness with the Divine. However, come back to earth he must, until the time of his own passing.

As can be seen from the above diagram, each of the seven lower *Sephiroth* is divided into seven sub-*Sephiroth*. Thus, within the context of God's Mercy (*Chesed*), we find the Mercy of Mercy (or pure *Chesed*), the Severity of Mercy, the Majesty of Mercy, the Victory of Mercy, the Splendor of Mercy, the Foundation of Mercy, and the Kingdom (or application) of Mercy.

During the first week of the Counting of the Omer, Divine Mercy would be the overall focus, along with the lessons taught by the Patriarch Abraham. On the first day, the aspirant would invoke the Mercy of God's Mercy, and would apply himself to the virtue of study. On the second day, the aspirant would invoke the Severity of God's Mercy, and practice the virtue of attentive listening. This process continues for seven days- all associated with *Chesed*- until the Kingdom of Mercy is reached:

Day 1: *Chesed of Chesed* - Study⁷

Day 2: *Gevurah of Chesed* - Attentive listening

Day 3: *Tiphareth of Chesed* - Orderly speech

Day 4: *Netzach of Chesed* - Understanding

Day 5: *Hod of Chesed* - Intuitive Insight

Day 6: *Yesod of Chesed* - Awe

Day 7: *Malkuth of Chesed* - Reverence

The second week would then focus upon Isaac and *Gevurah*- beginning with the Mercy of Severity, and continuing to the Kingdom of Severity on the seventh day (the fourteenth of Counting the Omer). The third week highlights the seven sub-sets of *Tiphareth*, the fourth week those of *Netzach*, the fifth those of *Hod*, the sixth those of *Yesod* and the seventh focuses upon *Malkuth*. All forty-nine days have virtues associated with them for study, meditation and practice. Finally, *Shavu'ot* falls on day fifty- where the dedicated aspirant will receive prophetic insight into his own soul, and into the Mind of God.

It might strike some as odd that this list appears to run backward. God exists above the highest Gate, while Man resides at the opposite end in *Malkuth of Malkuth*- the lowest and darkest position in the scheme. Thus, it might seem logical to assume that one should begin at this lowest point and move upward toward the Divine Source. However, this does not appear to be the traditional practice for the Fifty Gates- nor with many related mystical exercises. Instead, it was common to begin at the highest point, and work backward toward Earth. (For instance, the *Merkavah* Mystics- Hebrew shamans from whom much of the Qabalah was drawn after the Thirteenth Century- were known to achieve the Vision of God through fasting, prayer, and (some believe) sacramental drugs. Then, they would turn back toward Earth and “ride” downward through the Seven Heavenly Palaces.⁸)

A similar idea seems to be at work with the Fifty Gates of Understanding. Because prophecy flows from the Divine to the heart of man, it is necessary to invoke the Gates from the highest available to us (*Chesed of Chesed*) downward toward the physical realm (*Malkuth of Malkuth*). The impenetrable 50th Gate of *Binah* itself is actually the first in the list- but it is passed over in silence, and symbolized instead by the final day of *Shavu'ot*. The revelation that comes through the 50th Gate- since it cannot be attained by human effort alone- is regarded as a gift handed down from God.

The Hermetic Gates of Intelligence

Later Christian mysticism (circa during and after the Renaissance era) obtained a somewhat different scheme for the Fifty Gates- as we shall see here in the "Hermetic

Gates of Intelligence." Where the Jewish mystics were centered upon spiritual devotion, the Hermetic mages were scientists at heart. Their spiritual pursuits were grounded in practices such as alchemy, astronomy/astrology and mathematics. Therefore, the Fifty Gates became those of "Intelligence" rather than "Understanding", and were based upon an almost Darwinian progression of evolution.

This scheme was first presented in 1652 CE by Athanasius Kircher, in his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*⁹ - the same text from which the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn would later draw their standard version of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. In the late 1800s, one of the founders of the Golden Dawn, W. Wynn Westcott, appended a slightly altered version of the Gates of Intelligence to the *Sepher Yetzirah*. This is the most popular and readily available version:¹⁰

First Order: Elementary

1. Chaos, Hyle, the first matter
2. Formless, void, lifeless
3. The Abyss
4. Origin of the Elements
5. Earth (no seed germs)
6. Water
7. Air
8. Fire
9. Differentiation of qualities
10. Mixture and combination

Second Order: Decad of Evolution

11. Minerals differentiate
12. Vegetable principles appear
13. Seeds germinate in moisture
14. Herbs and Trees
15. Fructification in vegetable life
16. Origin of low forms of animal life
17. Insects and Reptiles appear
18. Fishes, vertebrate life in the waters
19. Birds, vertebrate life in the air
20. Quadrupeds, vertebrate earth animals

Third Order: Decad of Humanity

21. Appearance of Man
22. Material human body
23. Human soul conferred
24. Mystery of Adam and Eve
25. Complete Man as the Microcosm
26. Gift of five human faces acting exteriorly
27. Gift of five powers to the Soul
28. Adam Kadmon, the Heavenly Man
29. angelic beings
30. Man in the image of God

Fourth Order: World of Spheres

31. The Moon
32. Mercury
33. Venus
34. Sol
35. Mars
36. Jupiter
37. Saturn
38. The Firmament
39. The Premium Mobile
40. The Empyrean Heaven

Fifth Order: The angelic World (modified)¹¹

41. Angels
42. Archangels
43. Principalities
44. Virtues (or Authorities)
45. Powers
46. Dominations
47. Thrones
48. *Cherubim*
49. *Seraphim*

Sixth Order: the Archetype

50. God. Ain Suph. He Whom no mortal eye hath seen, and Who has been known to Jesus the Messiah alone."

Westcott prefaces the above list with a note that illustrates the scientific (rather

than devotional) nature of the Fifty Gates of Intelligence:

Attached to some editions of the *Sepher Yetzirah* is found this scheme of Kabbalistic classification of knowledge emanating from the Second *Sephiro Binah*, Understanding, and descending by stages through the angels, heavens, humanity, animal and vegetable and mineral kingdoms to Hyle and the chaos. The Kabbalists said that one must enter and pass up through the Gates to attain to the Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom; and that even Moses only passed through the forty-ninth Gate, and never entered the fiftieth.

We can see that the list has been changed from a devotional invocation for a “gift from God” into a “Kabbalistic classification of knowledge.”

Also, we can see that the practice of the Fifty Gates has been reversed in order to follow the more logical “from bottom upward” progression. (Remember, the Qabbalists actually said one should enter and pass *downward*, not upward, through the Gates.) Therefore, the Hermetic system does not begin at the highest Gate, passing silently over the unattainable Gate of *Binah*. Instead, it begins at the lowest point (chaos, hyle) and progresses upward toward the hidden Fiftieth Gate and the Divine. This ascension is a hallmark of the Hermetic practices (as opposed to the traditional descending practices of Hebrew Qabbalists and *Merkavah* mystics)- and can be seen in the modern Hermetic practice of initiation upon the Tree of Life from *Malkuth* upward toward *Kether*.

The Gates of Intelligence, as previously mentioned, incorporate a progression of natural evolution and (subsequent) human spiritual evolution. The Hermetic aspirant was intended to progressively study and experience (i.e.- come to Understand) each of the elements outlined in the list; meaning that one must engage in alchemy, astrology, ceremonial magick, and more in order to explore and bond with each of these concepts. (This reflects the attitude of the “renaissance man.” We see the attitude at work in men such as John Dee, who felt that acquiring all human- and more than human- knowledge was key to enlightenment.) As the fifty progressive Gates reflect the natural evolutionary advancement of Life in the Universe, the individual mage was to follow its pattern for personal evolution.

In Westcott’s prefatory note to this list, Moses seems to have been demoted - gaining credit only for passing through Gate Forty-Nine rather than the Fiftieth. However, the statement may be a simple reference to the fact that the prophet (according to the *Talmud*) only obtained forty-nine Gates by his own efforts. The Christian author

may or may not have known that Moses was supposed to have passed through the Fiftieth Gate upon his death.

Similarly, the “Sixth Order” includes a note assuring us that no mortal eye has seen the Fiftieth Gate (which matches tradition), and that Jesus alone has passed through it. The latter idea (apparently attributed to Kircher himself) is a Christianized recension of the traditional view that the Gate is reserved for the Messiah. To the Judaic mystic, this means that the Gate is sealed and will remain so until the advent of the final tribulations and the coming of the Messiah (who is *not* equated with the prophet Jesus). To the Christian Hermeticist, however, the Messiah has already come and gone- meaning that the Fiftieth Gate was opened during Jesus’ translation to Heaven. More than likely, this goes along with the view that the Gate will be opened by Jesus a second time during the Apocalypse.

Note, also, that Westcott’s list that equates Gate Fifty with the *Ain Soph* (Limitless)- the realm of pure Divinity that properly resides above even the highest *Sephirah* of *Kether*. However, if these are the Gates of *Binah* (which resides beneath *Kether*), this should not be the case at all. It is my own assumption that the three hidden and Supernal *Sephiroth* are simply being lumped together and equated with the Limitless Divinity within which they reside. Christian Qabalah often associated these with the Trinity: *Kether* (the Crown) as God, *Chockmah* (Wisdom) as the Holy Spirit, and *Binah* (whose Hebrew name contains the root *Ben-* Son) as the Messiah.

Finally, we can see that this Hermetic list has lost its traditional 7 x 7 categorization. Instead, the Gates of Intelligence are divided into “Orders” of ten- reflecting the Christian Qabalists’ obsession with the ten *Sephiroth* of the Tree of Life. (As we see in the Golden Dawn, nearly everything that can be divided into groupings of ten is presented as such. In this mindset, it is inconceivable to interpret a list of 50 Gates as anything other than a 5 x 10 equation.) Of course, the isolation of the Fiftieth Gate is preserved in the Hermetic system- leaving the “Fifth Order” of Gates with merely nine. This might at first appear to be problematic, but we find the solution by adopting the Pseudo-Dionysus list of angelic Choirs- containing only nine Orders of Angels (3 x 3) rather than the ten found upon the Tree of Life. This frees up the Fiftieth Gate for its presentation (or occlusion) as hidden and unattainable.

The Book of Enoch

[Uriel] said, "O Enoch, look on the Book which heaven has gradually distilled; and, reading that which is written within it, understand every part of it." Then I looked on all which was written, and understood all, reading the Book and everything written in it, all the works of man. [*1Enoch*, Ch. 80, v. 1-2, Charlesworth]

And Pravuil told me: All the things that I have told you, we have written. Sit and write all the souls of mankind...for all souls are prepared to eternity, before the formation of the world. ...and I wrote out all things exactly, and wrote three hundred and sixty-six books." [*2Enoch* 23:2-3, Charles]

"...from my heavenly vision and from the voice of the holy Angels have I acquired knowledge, and from the Tablet[s]¹² of Heaven have I acquired Understanding." [*1Enoch*, Ch. 92, v. 3, Charlesworth]

The patriarch Enoch (Hebrew *Chanock*) appears in canonical Scripture in at least three places. The first reference is in Genesis 5:18-24, during a longer list of genealogies.¹³ Enoch is said to have walked this earth for three hundred and sixty five years,¹⁴ during which time he fathered Methuselah. (Methuselah is famous for the grossly extended span of his life- just short of one thousand years!) Methuselah, then, fathered Lamech; who in turn fathered the patriarch Noah. Meanwhile, the saga of Noah's great-grandfather Enoch is summed up cryptically in verses 23-24:

And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Each and every generation outlined in this section of Genesis contains the birth, years of life, and death of the patriarchs. Enoch alone is given no time of death, and is (apparently) described as having been taken bodily into the heavens by God. (This honor was shared by only one other human being in the canonical Bible: the prophet Elijah.)¹⁵ This quirk in the wording of Genesis has fascinated Judeo-Christian devotees and mystics for thousands of years, and has served as the basis for the later traditions (such as *Merkavah*) based upon Enoch and his experiences in the heavens.

The second reference is, in fact, a product of these Enochian traditions.¹⁶ Within the New Testament, Hebrews 11:5, we are given a solid explanation of what happened to Enoch when "God took him":

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

The use of the word "translated" here indicates a person who has been taken bodily into heaven, as opposed to someone who has ascended into the Heavens after death.

The third reference to Enoch in the Bible returns to the cryptic. We also find this one in the New Testament, the Epistle of Jude, verse 14:

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints

This third reference was something of a problem for later (and many current) Christian authorities. It canonizes the words of Enoch - but there are no writings of the prophet found anywhere in the Bible!

Instead, we have to turn to that huge collection of "unofficial" Biblical documents known as the Apocrypha. In most cases, these books have been excluded from the canon- by both Christian and Jewish authorities- because of their mystical (and often very Pagan) nature.

In the early days of Christianity, before the Bible was canonized, there were actually several books attributed to Enoch in use by various churches. Three of them are known to us today. The first book of Enoch (*1Enoch*) is the oldest known Apocrypha- having been composed (most likely) during or directly after the Hebrew Captivity in Babylon. (We will return to this subject shortly.) It was known to ancient scholars- such as St. Irenaeus during the early Common Era- but was lost for nearly a thousand years during Roman Catholic world-dominance. Then, in 1773, the famous explorer James Bruce discovered three copies of *1Enoch* in Abyssinia. (This was later called the *Ethiopian Book of Enoch*- because it was written in Ethiopian. However, the oldest copies were likely written in Aramaic or Hebrew.) As it turns out, this is the very same text from which the Epistle of Jude draws its quote. Over the ensuing years, several portions of the same text- in Greek this time- have been found. Finally, in the late 1940s and early 50s, the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered near Qumran. Among the texts recovered from this library was *1Enoch* (now in Aramaic)- officially making the

book one of the Dead Sea collection.

The second Book of Enoch (*2Enoch*, or the “Slavonic” Book of Enoch) is actually titled the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*. This was discovered in 1886 in the Belgrade public library by a professor Sokolov, though it was not translated until ten years later. It is generally assumed the text was compiled (and perhaps altered) by Christian editors sometime after the Common Era- though much of its content is likely much older. (It may be dependant on *1Enoch* itself.)

Finally, in 1922, the scholar Hugo Odeberg translated the “Hebrew Book of Enoch” (*3Enoch*). This is another principally *Merkavah*-class text, depicting the heavenly ascensions of the second-century Rabbi Ishmael. It contains legends concerning Enoch’s shamanic translation from mortal man into the fiery Archangel Metetron (the Guide, and Voice of God- both jobs suited to the role of a prophet-made-celestial). Most significantly, this work had an influence upon the *Sepher haZohar*- a principal text of the Qabalah written in the thirteenth century.

The legend of Enoch weaves its way back to the Captivity in Babylon (circa 600 BCE). At the time, *1Enoch* was simply a Biblical text similar to the Books of Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, or (later) the Revelation of St. John. Like these latter four, the Book of Enoch was an apocalyptic writing- outlining various Divine communications between Enoch and God. It stands out in history as (perhaps) the first Biblical text written in which the Hebrew God promises retribution against the entire world for mistreatment of the Israelites. It is the source book for all of the above-mentioned Biblical Scriptures, and many further besides.¹⁷

This book gave birth to the widespread Judeo-Christian mindset that assumes “God will someday punish and destroy all of our enemies.” It was written by a people who had been defeated and carried into a foreign land against their will. It was written to help alleviate some of the anger and resentment that the Israelite people felt against their Babylonian captors. To this day, Babylon (along with Egypt) remains a Biblical symbol of wrongdoing and social degeneration.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the captive Israelites seem to have adopted quite a bit of Babylonian cosmology, along with no small amount of Babylonian mythology. *1Enoch* itself is overflowing with Babylonian astronomy, stories of Angels which mirror older pagan Mesopotamian tales, and a description of an ascent through the heavens- a very Chaldean concept.

It is this ascent through the heavens by Enoch that concerns us the most. *1Enoch* states that the patriarch was lifted into heaven by angelic guides. However, there are other legends asserting that Enoch flew into the sky in a chariot of fire.¹⁹ These, of course, are the legends associated with the *Merkavah* (Chariot) tradition, by Hebrew shamans who desired to follow in Enoch's footsteps. The various books attributed to Enoch, along with such books as Revelation and Ezekiel are *Merkavah* texts- in which prophets are taken to the very Throne of God and taught the mysteries of the universe in angelic colleges.

Needless to say, the rise of *Merkavah* Mysticism brought along with it an occult fad for Enochian mythos. When the texts were hidden away or destroyed in the first centuries of the common era, the legends of Enoch lived on- and perhaps prospered. The fact that the Books of Enoch had become the *Lost* Books of Enoch merely strengthened their popularity among occultists, adding to the already-passionate tales a deep air of mystery and the slight irritation of lost ancient wisdom. The interest in Enoch as a patron of *Merkavah* riders and Gnostic ascenders was still in vogue in 16th century Europe- paralleled by the similar fad that existed for Solomon and his *Keys* of magick.

The *Mah'aseh Merkavah* (Work of the Chariot), from a practical standpoint, generally had three principal goals. The first, was the gaining of the Vision of the *Merkavah* Itself- the Throne of God in the highest heaven, uplifted by the mighty *Kherubim* and surrounded by Its Choirs of ministering Angels.²⁰ Secondly, the *Merkavah* Rider wished to journey through the celestial spheres- passing through the seven Palaces (*Hekhaloth*) of Heaven by way of various talismans and passwords. (A practice not far removed from the entrance of the 50 Gates of Understanding.)

There also existed a third, almost hidden, objective to gaining entrance to the Heavenly Halls. The truly adept, through a lifetime of dedication, might be allowed a glimpse within the Celestial Book of Enoch. Do not confuse this with such human-created works as *1Enoch*, *2Enoch*, or *3Enoch*! Those apocryphal texts are, in fact, merely legends *about* the true Book (or Books) of Enoch- written many generations after the Patriarch's supposed lifetime. In such literature, the Celestial Book of Enoch is addressed by the terms "Tablets of Heaven" or "Book of Life."

At the beginning of this essay, I quoted several instances from Enochian literature wherein the patriarch beholds and then copies the content of the Tablets of Heaven. This is the very same Book that legends such as the Revelation of St. John describe- the seven

seals of which only the coming Messiah is worthy to break.²¹ Thus, granting Enoch the privilege to view *and copy* the Celestial Book of Life was a gift from God much akin to Moses' entrance of the 50th Gate of Understanding. (Except in Enoch's case, God was granting the gift to the entire world, by delivering the contents of the Tablets into human hands.)

The Enochian legends hold (in some cases) that Enoch filled 366 hand-written books before he completed his transcription.²² Then, upon his translation into heaven, he was transfigured into the Archangel Metatron- appointed to the position of Scribe within God's Court (with full authority to speak for the Creator!), and thereby granted stewardship of the Tablets for eternity. As for the hand-written copies he penned while still in the flesh, they've had a rather turbulent history.

The concept of the Tablets of Heaven is not at all confined to the *Merkavah* tradition. Stories about it appear again and again throughout history and all over the world. It has various mythologies and various names, but they all boil down to the same basic ideas. Many cultures also have a parallel concept of a Divine Record Keeper who records every single event that takes place in the world, along with all the secrets of Heaven.

In a similar Judaic legend, the Archangel *Raziel* (who's Name means "Secrets of God") holds the heavenly-scribal position. He is said to stand before the Divine Throne, just behind the Veil, and writes down everything that occurs in the Royal Court of *Elohim* (which is the origin of everything that happens in existence). Legend holds that this book (*Sepher Raziel*)²³ was given to Adam, but it was stolen by jealous Angels and tossed into the Sea.²⁴ The book was finally re-copied by Enoch, passed through Methuselah and Lamech and finally to his great-grandson Noah. (It contained the blueprints for the Ark.) At length, it was passed down to Solomon, and granted the king his world-famous wisdom and magickal power. Then, it disappeared yet again when Solomon fell from Yahweh's good graces.

In ancient Egypt, the precursor of the *Raziel* myth involved Thoth (*Djehuti*)- the Ibis-headed God who invented writing and words. In Pagan Egypt, *Djehuti* represented what the later Gnostics would call the *Logos* (Word).²⁵ The *Logos* is the Creative principal of the Divine- the Word of Creation used by God (or, in Egypt, Ra) to fashion the world. Thoth was the God of all language and communication, and (like *Raziel*) was a keeper of the Divine Secrets of the Heavens. The *Book of Thoth* appears in Egyptian

legend in the same manner as the *Sepher Raziel*- as a much sought-after but ever elusive tome of ultimate knowledge.²⁶

There are other examples of this Book in world history- such as the eastern concept of the “Akashic Records,” or the ancient Babylonian “Tablet of Destinies”- stolen from the Father God and gifted to humanity by the Goddess Ishtar. In all cases, we have references to an astral compendium of all knowledge and wisdom, that can be accessed only by adepts that learn how to gain entrance to the record itself.

There have been various attempts to actually write this great Book here in the physical. The medieval grimoire entitled *Sepher Raziel* is one example. The deck of Tarot cards is another. (This is likely why Aleister Crowley named his own Tarot deck the *Book of Thoth*.) Even the Torah is described by medieval Jewish mystics as a mere earthly reflection of the *real* Torah in heaven.²⁷ Another, more obscure, example is found in the little-known *Book of Soyga*.

The *Book of Soyga* (*Aldaraia Sive Soyga Vocor*)

Dee: Is my *Book of Soyga* of any excellency?

Uriel: That book was revealed unto Adam in Paradise by God’s good angels.

Dee: [...] Oh my great and long desire hath been to be able to read those Tables of *Soyga*. [- *Five Books of Mystery*, March 10, 1582]

For centuries, all that was known about the mysterious Medieval grimoire called the *Book of Soyga* (or *Aldaraia*) came from a few scattered references in Dr. John Dee’s journals, and from reproductions of eight of *Soyga*’s Tables appended to the back of Dee’s own *Book of Loagaeth*.²⁸

Dee obviously held the *Book of Soyga* in high regard. His inclusion of some of its Tables with, and similarity to, his Tables of *Loagaeth* have always hinted at a connection between *Soyga* and Dee’s angelic magick. However, with such a small amount of information on the *Book of Soyga* available, there was no hope of tracing an historical thread.

This finally changed in 1994, when scholar Deborah Harkness discovered two copies of the text: one in the Bodleian Library (Bodley MS 908) and the other at the

British Library (Sloane MS 8- which may have been Dee's copy). Each of them had been cataloged under the alternate title *Aldaraia*- thereby misleading generations of Dee scholars who had been seeking a book entitled "Soyga." Unfortunately, since their re-discovery, there has been little written about the *Book of Soyga*, and no copy of the book itself has yet been offered for publication.

The above-quoted conversation took place between Dee and the Archangel Uriel in March of 1582. In response to Dee's questions about *Soyga*, Uriel suggested that only the Archangel Michael could reveal the mysteries of the Tables. However, as far as we know, Dee never asked Michael to explain them.

At some point during the next year, Dee appears to have misplaced his copy of the *Book of Soyga*. In April of 1583, Dee asked the Angel Illemese²⁹ for information about his lost "Arabic book of tables and numbers."³⁰ Unfortunately, Illemese did not regard the *Book of Soyga* with the same esteem as Uriel- instead calling it a work of false witchcrafts. After some discussion on the matter, Dee finally changes the subject to the (also lost) *Book of Enoch*, which Illemese promises to deliver.³¹

Meanwhile, let us explore this obscure *Book of Soyga*. The *Soyga* Tables are large magickal squares (36 x 36 cells), filled with letters generated by a keyword (one associated with each table) applied by some unknown cipher algorithm. The cipher was so complicated that even the genius of Dee couldn't break it- hence his "great and long desire" to finally read the text!

The best study of the text to date is *John Dee and the Magic Tables in the Book of Soyga* by Jim Reeds.³² His interest in *Soyga* arises from the encrypted Tables, and he has actually succeeded where Dee failed in deciphering them. However, it is not necessary to go into detail on his cryptographic work here. Nothing mystical was revealed by finding the method used to generate the Tables. (I.e.- they did not produce a readable scripture. Instead, the letters represent a mathematical algorithm.) The magick is likely inherent in the keyword upon which each Table is based, but there has been no work yet toward exploring the linguistic origins of the keywords.³³

Of more interest to us here, Reeds also offers a (relatively) detailed description of the entire *Book of Soyga*- which he took from microfilm copies of the manuscripts. He assigns it roughly to the late Medieval period, and the texts he studied (the Sloane and Bodley manuscripts) are both of the sixteenth century. It is the Sloane 8 version of the manuscript that also bears the title *Aldaraia sive Soyga vocor*, though both copies were

cataloged under that title. The same copy also identifies the text as an astrological mystery- *Tractatus Astrologico Magicus*- which is hardly uncommon for a text of its period. (At the time, astrology was in the mainstream of medical practice.)

Soyga is principally divided into three parts, called respectively *Liber Aldaraia*, *Liber Radiorum*, and *Liber Decimus Septimus*. There also follow several unnamed additions to the text, ending with the 36 Magickal Tables that so fascinated and inspired the heart of John Dee.

The full Latin text actually begins as a rather typical Medieval grimoire. If one has seen a copy of the *Key of Solomon the King*, one has seen an example of this kind of literature. There are lists of demonologies, and conjurations full of classic (probably Gnostic-descended) barbarous invocations:

Adracty, Adaci, Adai, Terocot, Terocot, Tercot, Herm, Hermzm, Hermzisco, Cotzi, Cotzizi, Cotzizizin, Zinzicon, Ginzecohon, Ginchecon, Saradon, Sardon, Sardeon, Belzebuc, Belzscup, Belcupe, Saraduc, Sarcud, Carc, Sathanas, Satnas, Sacsan, Contion, Conoi, Conoison, Satnei, Sapnn, Sappi, Danarcas, Dancas, Dancasnar [-*Aldaraia*, Bodley MS 908, fol. 51]

Both copies of the grimoire also refer to Adam (to whom, Uriel told Dee, this book was given in Paradise) by the mystical name of “Zadzaczadlin.” As we progress in our study of Dee’s angelic magick, we shall see how similar his work is to this material.

Again, like the *Key of Solomon*, it is both astrology and alchemy that form the heart of *Soyga*'s magickal spells- classical aspects of Medieval Christian proto-Hermetic mysticism. This gives us some major clues into the core philosophy behind the mysteries transmitted to Dee and Kelley- which are also overflowing with alchemical and astrological references.

Reeds points out that *Soyga* is somewhat unique in the fact that it does not claim any mythological authority. It is not written by any pseudo-Enoch or -Solomon, and even the claim of ownership by Adam in Paradise comes from Uriel speaking through Edward Kelley rather than from the text itself. This suggests to me that the book was a practicing mage’s workbook, rather than something written exclusively for publication.

On the other hand, it does make reference to several medieval medical treatises- mysterious books called *Liber E* and *Liber Os*. This is perhaps less significant to Dee’s angelic magick than it is to the later Rosicrucian movement. There is some evidence to suggest Dee’s involvement in (or influence upon) the founding of the movement in early

Renaissance Germany.³⁴ The foundational document of that movement- the *Fama Fraternitatus*, published by physicians in the mid-1600s (after Dee's death)- contains many obscure references to texts such as *Liber M*, *Liber I*, and *Liber T*.

More relevant to Dee's Enochian system is the stress upon mystical writing in the *Book of Soyga*- especially the practice of writing backwards (mimicking the right-to-left nature of Hebrew). Words such as Sipal (Lapis), Munob (*Bonum*- Latin for Good), and Retap Retson (*Pater Noster*) are used throughout the text, and even the title of the book is a reversal of the Greek word *Agyos*, meaning "Holy."

Reeds describes an abundance of the same kind of gematria and word-play found in Book II of Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*. Letters are assigned numerical values (again like Hebrew) as well as occult correspondences, and are then recombined and permuted in various fashions to create magickal Names of Power.

Finally, the book contains the famous 36 Tables of *Soyga* (which are discussed within the *Liber Radiorum* section of the grimoire). Space does not permit a full discussion of magickal squares here.³⁵ It is only needful to point out that such squares were very popular among Hermeticists and Qabalists during the Middle and Renaissance Ages (roughly Dee's time). Their focus upon gematria and mathematics fascinated great scientific minds such as Dee, Trithemius, and others.

The Tables of *Soyga* are all 36 rows by 36 columns in size, and the keyword provided for each is exactly 6 letters long. This is necessary to the magickal square itself- so that the keyword will fit properly into the Table. It is repeatedly written down the left-hand column of each page- in a once forward and once backward pattern³⁶- a total of six times. Thus we have 6 words times 6 letters = 36 squares. (Because the number six is obviously the basis for this mystery, it is no wonder Uriel directed Dee to question Michael- the Angel of the Sun and the sixth *Sephirah*, *Tiphareth*- in many classical Qabalistic texts.)

Each Table is also labeled with the name of the occult force it supposedly embodies. Tables 1 - 12 bear the names of the signs of the Zodiac in order from Aries to Pisces, and Tables 13 - 24 repeat the same names again. I would assume these represent the positive aspects of the signs followed by the negative- a common 24-fold view of the Zodiac when associated with the 24 Elders of the Apocalypse. The following seven Tables, 25 - 31, are labeled with the names of the seven Planets in their proper Qabalistic or Chaldean order (from highest to lowest). The next four, Tables 32 - 35, then bear the

names of the four earthly Elements. The collection finally ends with Table 36, which stands alone with the label of *Magistri*- opened with the Keyword "MOYSES."

From what we've seen so far, it is quite possible to draw a connection between the Tables of *Soyga* and the mythological *Sepher Raziel / Book of Enoch*. Uriel told Dee that *Soyga* was revealed to Adam by good Angels before the fall from Eden- which parallels the legend of *Sepher Raziel*. The fact that it contains Tables referring to all of the occult forces of the universe suggests that it, too, is intended as the all-encompassing Book of Life. It even possesses 36 Tables exactly, which would have rested well upon legends of Enoch and his 366 books.

We can also find some relation between the Tables of *Soyga* and the Gates of Understanding. For instance, their progression from zodiac, to the planets, to the four earthly elements demonstrates the same kind of downward progression from highest to lowest found with the traditional (Judaic) 50 Gates system. Plus, the final Table of *Soyga*- like the final Gate of Understanding- is isolated from the rest of the group and reserved only for the adept. (The keyword for this Table- MOYSES- even hints at the only patriarch given credit for passing the 50th Gate of *Binah*.)

Finally, the labeling of the last Table of *Soyga* as that of *Magistri* (adepthood) indicates the entire set may have an initiatory purpose. Though we do not know how the Tables were intended for magickal use, it is not a stretch in logic to assume they- like all magickal squares- acted as talismanic gateways of some sort. Likely, a mage would have successively invoked the forces embodied in each table, thereby passing through each Gate in an effort to receive magickal power and Divine Revelation from God. In the following chapters, we shall see that this is how Dee was intended to use his own *Book of Loagaeth*.

- 1 The *Zohar* Online: <http://www.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar>
- 2 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow [...] the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. [Geneses 2:9]
To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. [Revelation 2:7]
In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [Revelation 22:2]
- 3 Though there are ten *Sephiroth*, three of the them are transcendent, leaving only seven accessible to man.
- 4 Along with the Seven Matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Miriam, Hannah and Deborah.
- 5 Remember that the Hermetic or Rosicrucian Qabalah- such as used by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn- is not always similar to older Judaic systems. The Jewish Qabalist does not necessarily place Saturn within *Binah*.
- 6 The fifteenth day of *Nissan*, the first Jewish month, falling in March/April.
- 7 See <http://www.yashanet.com/studies/revstudy/fifty-gates.htm> for this list of virtues.
- 8 *Merkavah* texts such as the *Book of Enoch* depict the patriarch gaining the Divine Vision, and then touring the Heavens with various Archangels as guides.
- 9 Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Vol II, p. 319
- 10 See Bibliography for more interpretations of the 50 Gates of Understanding.
- 11 The Fifth Order usually contains a confused mixture of the nine angelic Choirs of Pseudo-Dionysus with a truncated hierarchy of the Angels of the Tree of Life. It results in a misleading list of Hebrew names with utterly inaccurate “translations.” Because nine Choirs are called for in this Order of Gates, and the Tree of Life hierarchy properly includes ten Choirs, I have opted to retain the classical nine-Choir scheme as found in Agrippa's *Three Books*, Book II, "The Scale of the Number Nine."
- 12 This is singular in the text. However, Ch. 105, v. 16 of *IEnoch* refers to Tablets in the plural, so I have duplicated the reference here.
- 13 The first time by the name “Enoch.” He appears as “Enosh” in a parallel list given previously in the same chapter of Genesis. (There is also an “Enoch” described as the son of Cain in Genesis Ch. 4, but this person does not appear to be related to the Patriarch.
- 14 Note the Egyptian/Gnostic-flavored reference to the number of days in a year.
- 15 Jesus of the New Testament notwithstanding. Very much like the translation of Jesus, however, both Enoch and Elijah are said to have become purely spiritual (angelic) beings upon their ascension. Enoch became *Metatron*, and Elijah became *Sandalphon*.
- 16 “Enochian” indicates “of Enoch.” In relation to Dee’s magick, the term “Enochian” merely refers to the *type* of system- similar to saying other medieval systems are “Solomonic.”
- 17 Lyman Abbott’s Introduction to *The Book of Enoch the Prophet* is highly recommended. See

- bibliography, under Laurence.
- 18 Note the “Whore of Babylon” in the Book of Revelation.
 - 19 Elijah is said to have ascended in the same manner. The famous song “Chariots of Fire” is named after this Biblical convention.
 - 20 See Revelation Ch. 4.
 - 21 See Revelation Ch. 5.
 - 22 I assume this breaks down to 365 + 1. The number of days in a year played an important role in ancient Gnostic mythos, as did the concept of a singular Divine Source.
 - 23 *Sepher Raziel* = Book of the Secrets of God. This is the name of the Tablets of Heaven in this case. The medieval Jewish grimoire of the same title is merely based upon this legend, purporting to be the earthly copy.
 - 24 See *Legends of the Bible*, by Louis Ginzberg.
 - 25 See John Ch. 1. The Gnostics associated the *Logos* with Jesus, rather than the older *Djehuti*.
 - 26 <http://touregypt.net/godsofegypt/thebookofthoth.htm>
 - 27 Intense study of the written Scripture, after invoking the Archangelic Prince of the Torah (none other than Metatron under various names) for guidance, was a means toward achieving divine revelation, and thus visions of the Celestial Torah. Joseph Dan's *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* has come highly recommended for this subject. See bibliography.
 - 28 We will return to the subject of *Loagaeth* in the following chapter.
 - 29 An Angel from Dee's *Heptarchic* system of magick.
 - 30 *Soyga* is actually a Latin manuscript. However, there are many magickal names in it that appear to be of Arabic origin or influence.
 - 31 This turns out to be in the form of the *Book of Loagaeth*. See next chapter.
 - 32 Mr. Reeds (<http://www.dtc.umn.edu/~reedsj/>) is a professional cryptologist. See Bibliography for his work on *Soyga*.
 - 33 Presumably, each keyword has a mystical relationship with an astrological or elemental force, which would then be embodied in its corresponding Table. Reeds calls them arbitrary, but I tend to disagree with such an assumption. They are more likely corruptions of various Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and other words.
 - 34 See the *Rosicrucian Enlightenment* by Frances Yates.
 - 35 A great dissertation on magickal squares can be found in an appendix by Donald Tyson included with Llewellyn's publication of *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy*.
 - 36 Note the similarity here to the practice of the *Shem haMephoresh*. This 72-fold Name of God is obtained by writing three verses from Exodus in a pattern called “as the ox plows”: the first line written right to left, the next line (written underneath the first) from left to right, and the final line written right to left again.