

The Hebrew of the *Mutus Liber*

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Introduction:

The *Mutus Liber* first appeared in 1677 France. The hermetic climate of the time favored the publishing of Alchemical information but only with certain locks attached that required the keys of particular learning and experience to open. The fifteen plates of the *Mutus Liber* are no exception. They require a level of familiarity with certain symbols, processes, and patterns of logic to open. One of those perspectives is that of the Qabbalist.

The following is my perspective, as a Qabbalist, on but one small part of the *Mutus Liber* -- the biblical verses noted in Plate One. I present my personal conclusions only in an effort to better illustrate the Qabbalistic techniques discussed. [The "Allegory" section is the standard English translation of the Masoretic text, while the "Directive" and (especially) the "Letter as Symbol" sections are personal interpretations based upon months of work.]

I urge the reader to employ the techniques described and divine one's own meanings. Alchemy and Qabbalah as an Art are, after all, processes of self discovery.

מטל

The *Mutus Liber*



Plate #1

Through its title, the *Mutus Liber* declares itself the "wordless book", yet three of its fifteen plates contain words: Plates 1, 14 and 15. Plate One contains, in Latin, the following inscription:

"The wordless book, in which nevertheless the whole of Hermetic Philosophy is set forth in hieroglyphic figures, sacred to God the merciful, thrice best and greatest, and dedicated to the sons of the art only, the name of the author being Altus." [Adam McLean's translation.]

This is followed by the notation:

21.11.82. Neg:

93.82.72. Neg:

82.81.33. Tues:

To the experienced Qabbalist, this serves as a clear instruction to look to the original Hebrew (deduced from the fact that these notations are written from right-to-left as is Hebrew) of:

Genesis 28: 11 + 12

Genesis 27: 28 + 39

Deuteronomy 33: 18 + 28

In the Latin verse, we are being told the book is "wordless" -- separating the idea "word" from "hieroglyphic figures" such as the images of the plates; and, most significantly from Hebrew, which is a hieroglyphic aleph-beth. The term "sacred to God" in reference to the "hieroglyphic figures" which set forth the "whole of Hermetic Philosophy", is another reference to the Hebrew letters of the Torah. "Thrice best and greatest" may indicate the threefold techniques expressed in the following section on 'Qabbalistic Practice'. "Dedicated to the sons of the art only" indicates that the "hieroglyphic figures" are intended as specific Alchemical symbols. And finally, the author's self-declared name encourages the elevating and sanctifying of those very meanings (another echo of Qabbalistic practice).

The Hebrew verses (translated further on) refer to the allegory of Jacob's transmutation, as do the images presented in Plates One and Fifteen. [Plate One showing Jacob asleep beneath the ladder, angels trumpeting; and Plate Fifteen showing the conclusion of the allegory with Jacob's ascension as Israel.] This is to say, essentially, that the main body of the Mutus Liber occurs within the context of these six verses, symbolically sandwiched between images of Jacob's vision and his eventual ascension as Israel.

As a Qabbalist then, I recommend that these hieroglyphic-Hebrew verses be considered as a further elucidation of the processes described by the illustrations of the Mutus Liber. I expect they provide instruction that was felt to be too sensitive for "open" publication.

I further assert that the Latin verse of Plate One is a clear instruction to the reader that she/he is to treat the Torah verses Qabbalistically.

Torah and Qabbalist Practice:

The mythology upon which much of the Qabbalistic approach to the Torah is based goes something like this: The Torah was passed to us, from 'god', as an undivided string of Hebrew letters. They were given without the 'vowel points' which make them pronounceable. Essentially leaving it to our wisdom to divide them into words and interject the vowel points.

Thus, the old rabbinical aphorism that there are "72 ways to interpret the Torah"; meaning that there are as many ways to interpret it as there are interpreters. The more practical working approach is that there are 3 basic levels of meaning:

1) The Allegory: This is the tale being told by the letters through their common interpretation based upon accepted word groupings and vowel points. This is the level of dogma.

2) The Directive: This is the technique of looking at the individual words of the allegory, their verb-roots, and possible vowel point options. With this information, the Qabbalist arrives at an interpretation in the directive tense. [An excellent example of this technique can be found in "Sefer Yetzirah The Book of Creation: In Theory and Practice", by Aryeh Kaplan.]

3) Letter as Symbol: At this level, the Qabbalist looks at each individual letter as a symbol. Hebrew is a hieroglyphic aleph-beth and as such, each letter is symbolic of a specific meaning. The Qabbalist through meditation, study and prayer, works with the letter/symbols, considering their inter-relationships, frequency, context, charts their flow throughout, performs every trick they can think of to lure out their meanings, divining a deep (and often detailed) level of symbolism.

The Art of the Qabbalist is like that of the Alchemist. The process of looking for successively deeper levels of meaning can be equated to the Solve' of the Alchemist. The Coagula is accomplished by the Qabbalist through a process of bringing what is learned at the level of letter/symbol, up into one's awareness at the directive level. This is then integrated into the experience of the allegory.

This process elevates the merely dogmatic allegory to the state of personally meaningful symbol (i.e.: a Magical Tool).

Allegory:

GENESIS 28:11

And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

GENESIS 28:12

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

GENESIS 27:28

So God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fat places of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

GENESIS 27:39

And Isaac his father answered and said unto him: Behold, of the fat places of the earth shall be thy dwelling, And of the dew of heaven from above;

DEUTERONOMY 33:18

And of Zebulun he said: Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; And, Issachar, in thy tents.

DEUTERONOMY 33:28

And Israel dwelleth in safety, The fountain of Jacob alone, In a land of corn and wine; Yea, his heavens drop down dew.

A Directive Translation:

The following contains the Hebrew words; their root-verbs; and a simple directive translation of each -- in that order.

GENESIS 28:11

- 1) וַיִּפְגַּע ; to meet with, light upon; "And you shall meet with".
- 2) בַּמְקוֹם ; to arise, stand up, stand; "This place of remaining/standing".
- 3) וַיֵּלֶן ; to lodge, pass the night; "And remain through the night".
- 4) שָׁם ; adverb; "There in that place".
- 5) כִּי־בָא ; because -- to enter, come in; "Because -- entered has".
- 6) הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ ; noun; "The Sun".
- 7) וַיִּקַּח ; to take, take hold of; "And take hold".
- 8) מֵאֲבָנֵי ; noun; "Of the stones/weights".
- 9) הַמְּקוֹם ; see #2; "One from that place".
- 10) וַיִּשֶׂם ; to put, set, make stand erect; "And set it upright".
- 11) מֵרֹאשְׁתּוֹ ; head, chief, topmost; "Above your apex/head".
- 12) וַיִּשְׁכַּב ; lie down; "And you shall lie down to rest/sleep".
- 13) בַּמְּקוֹם ; see #2; "In this place of remaining/standing".
- 14) הַהוּא ; pronoun; "That one."

GENESIS 28:12

- 1) וַיַּחְלֹם ; to dream, or to be strong; "And you shall dream/be strong".
- 2) וַהֲנֵה ; adverb; "And BEHOLD !".
- 3) סֹלָם ; to raise, connect, link; "A ladder".
- 4) מֵצֵב ; take one's stand; "Is stationed on".
- 5) אֶרֶץ ; noun; "The earth/ground".
- 6) וּרְאֵשׁוֹ ; head, chief, topmost; "With its head/apex".
- 7) מִגִּיעַ ; to touch, meddle with; "Of which is touching".
- 8) הַשָּׁמַיִם ; noun; "Toward the heavens".
- 9) וַהֲנֵה ; see #2; "And BEHOLD !".
- 10) מִלְּאֲכָדֵי ; to send, to minister; "The angels/ministers of".
- 11) אֱלֹהִים ; to worship, to adore; "Elohim".

- 12) עלים ; to spring, or grow, up; "They spring up".
- 13) וירדים ; to descend or decline; "And they are in decline/descent".
- 14) בו ; preposition with suffix; "Within it."

GENESIS 27:28

- 1) ויתן־לך ; to give -- prefix with suffix; "And he will give -- To thee".
- 2) האלהים ; to worship, adore; "The Elohim".
- 3) מטל ; to moisten, to cover; "Out of dew".
- 4) השמים ; to be high; "The heavens".
- 5) ומשמני ; to be, or become, fat/fertile; "And out of fatness/fertility".
- 6) הארץ ; noun; "The earth/ground".
- 7) ורב ; to become many; "And abundance".
- 8) דגן ; noun; "Corn/grain/bread".
- 9) ותירש ; take possession of, inherit, dispossess; "And new wine / fermentation".

GENESIS 27:39

- 1) ויען ; to answer; "And he will answer".
- 2) יצחק ; to laugh; "Isaac (He laughs)".
- 3) אביו ; noun; "His father".
- 4) ויאמר ; to declare; "And he will declare".
- 5) אליו ; to, towards; "Unto him".
- 6) הנה ; adverb; "BEHOLD !".
- 7) משמני ; to be, or become, fat/fertile; "Out of the fatness/fertility".
- 8) הארץ ; noun; "The earth/ground".
- 9) יהיה ; to exist; "He will exist".
- 10) מושבך ; to dwell; "In your dwelling/ abode".
- 11) ומטל ; to moisten/cover; "And out of his dew".
- 12) השמים ; noun; "The heavens".
- 13) מעל ; to ascend; "From above."

DEUTERONOMY 33:18

- 1) ולזבולן ; to dwell; "And to Z'booloon (Habitation)".
- 2) אמר ; to declare; "He declares/commands".
- 3) שמח ; rejoice, be glad, shine cheerfully; "Be joyful/shine cheerfully".
- 4) זבולן ; see #1; "Z'booloon (Habitation)".
- 5) בצאתך ; to go, or come, out; "Upon your going forth".
- 6) ויששכר ; to hire; "And Esaskar (He Brings Reward)".
- 7) באהליך ; to tent; "On account of your tents."

DEUTERONOMY 33:28

- 1) וישכן ; settle down, abide; "And he will rest".
- 2) ישראל ; to wrestle; "Israel (Wrestler With God)".
- 3) בטח ; to trust; "Safely".
- 4) בודד ; be separate, isolated -OR- heart, love. "Apart from"- OR - "With the beloved".
- 5) עין ; noun; "Fountain of/ eye of/ descendants of".
- 6) יעקב ; to supplant; "Jacob (The Supplanter)".
- 7) אל־ארץ ; preposition -- noun; "On -- Earth/ground".
- 8) דגן ; noun; "Corn/grain/bread".
- 9) ותירוש ; take possession of, inherit, dispossess; "And new wine / fermentation".
- 10) ארְשָׁמִיּוּ ; preposition -- noun; "Furthermore -- His heavens".
- 11) ערפו־טל ; drop, distill -- moisten, cover; "They will distill -- Dew."

Appendix A:

Letter-as-Symbol Definitions

א Occurs 19 times. This is the Mother Letter of the Element Air. In each case, it seems to denote a subtle substance, sometimes as vapor, sometimes as energy.

ב Occurs 16 times. Beth signifies enclosure (it means "house") as either an action, or an achieved state.

ג Occurs 4 times. Gimel is "camel" and signifies movement from one place to another, as well as the vehicle of movement.

ד Occurs 5 times. Daleth means "door" implying an opening or passage.

ה Occurs 23 times. Heh means "window as seen hieroglyphically. But the pertinent symbolism in this context is that of the Heh-final of the Tetragrammaton -- the Element Earth, material form, Assiah, etc. In several of its 23 contexts, it clearly signifies THE Matter.

ו Occurs 36 times. Vav means "nail, or hook". It affixes.

ז Occurs 2 times. Zayin means "sword" and is supposed to look like one.

ח Occurs 5 times. Cheth means "fence" and implies an intentional enclosure of something.

ט Occurs 4 times. Teth represents a serpent coiled; either coiled in readiness to spring forth, or in rest, or even in Self-absorption like the Uroboros.

י Occurs 39 times. Yod is the "open hand" and indicates a particular force.

ך Occurs 9 times. Kaph is the "closed hand".

ל Occurs 19 times. Lamed means "Ox (a) prod" and is also seen to be the serpent un-coiled and active.

מ Occurs 38 times. Mem is the Mother Letter for the Element Water and has this essential meaning throughout.

נ Occurs 15 times. Nun means "fish". The symbolism here is one of great abundance and fertility, multiplication, yet with a sense of homogeneity.

ס Occurs 1 time. Samekh means "prop" and indicates something that supports, strengthens and gives stability to, another thing.

ע Occurs 8 times. Ayin has three possible meanings: Eye; Fountain/Spring; or Zero.

פ Occurs 3 times. Peh means "mouth". The Mars overtones in its related symbolism, lead me to think in terms of consumption.

צ Occurs 7 times. Tzaddi means "fish-hook" -- that with which one catches the Nun.

ק Occurs 6 times. Qooph means "back of the head". My initial sense was that Qooph meant the "un-conscious", while Resh (top of the head, face) signified the "conscious". Qooph can also be Luna to Resh's Sol; or descent to ascent; etc.

ר Occurs 15 times [The ABOVE reduces to the BELOW.]. See Qooph.

ש Occurs 21 times. Shin is the Mother Letter for the Element.

ת Occurs 5 times. Tau signifies the "equal-armed cross", or balanced, concrete manifestation.

ת:א



Plate #2



Plate #3



Plate #4



Plate #5



Plate #6



Plate #7



Plate #8



Plate #9



Plate #10



Plate #11



Plate #12

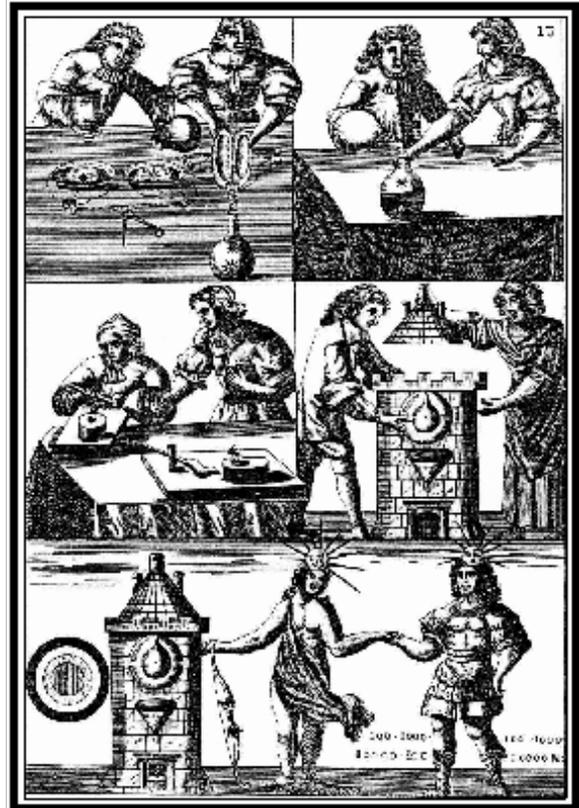


Plate #13



Plate #14

The Latin text reads:
“Pray, Read, Read, Read, Read again,
Labor and Discover.”



Plate #15

The Latin text reads:
“Provided with eyes,
Thou departest.”