

# The Pythagorean and The Kabbalist

Unlocking Divine Mysteries through  
Johannes Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517)

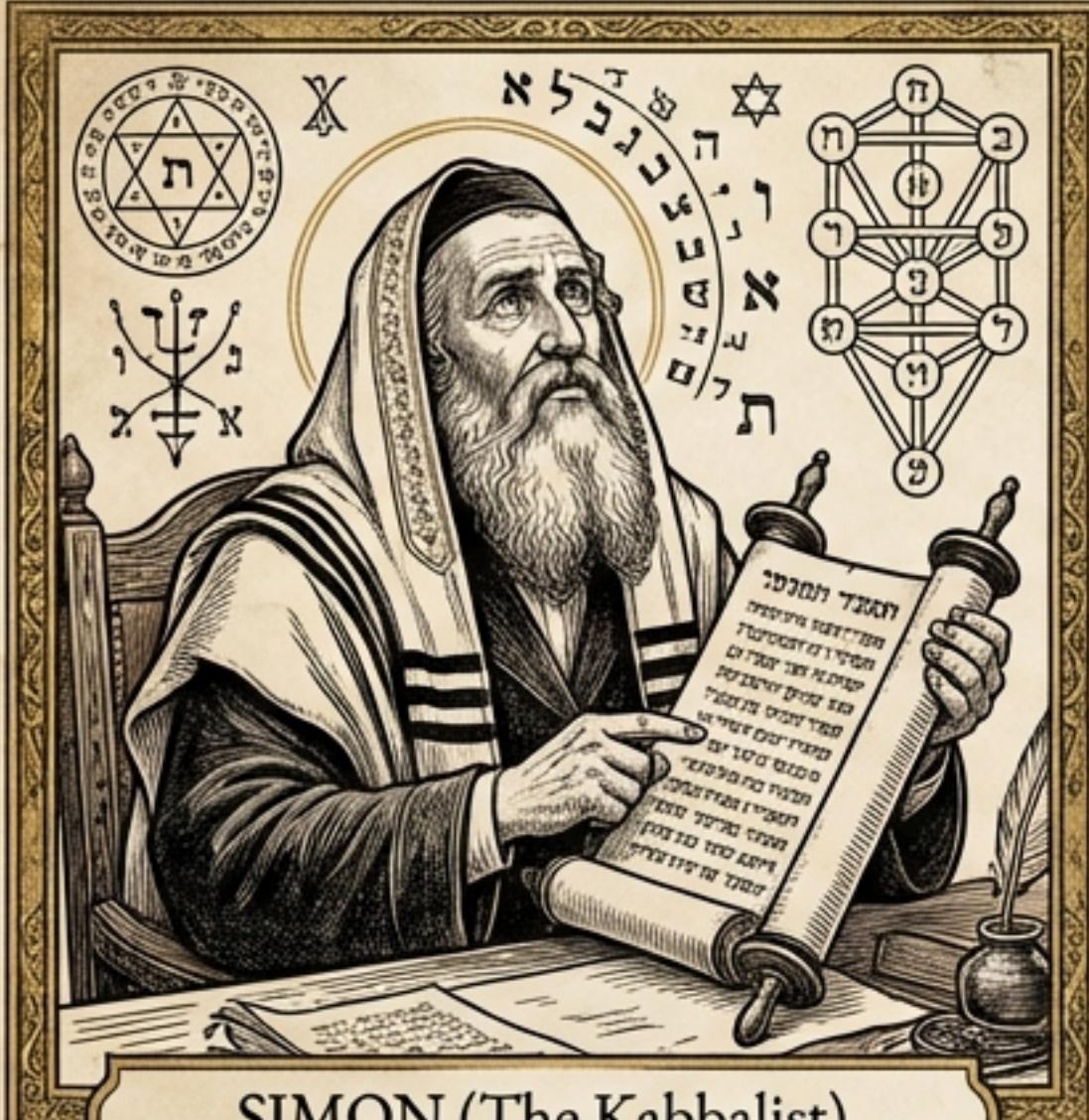
Dedicated to Pope Leo X, this text represents the first systematic attempt to introduce Hebrew Kabbalah to the European intelligentsia. It argues that all ancient wisdom—whether Greek Philosophy or Jewish Revelation—converges on a single truth.

“There is nothing more conducive to the salvation of souls than symbolic theology.”  
— Johannes Reuchlin

קְבָלָה חַכְמָה קְבָלָה קְבָת  
ΠΥΘΑΓΟΡΑΣ JOHANNES REUCHLIN  
ΣΟΦΙΑ ΔΕ ΑΡΤΕ ΚΑΒΑΛΙΣΤΙΚΑ  
חִסּוֹמָה אΛΗΘΕΙΑ MDXVII  
חֲכָחִים וּבְחַכְמָה  
קְבָלָה תִּיעַרְגֵּן חֶדֶד

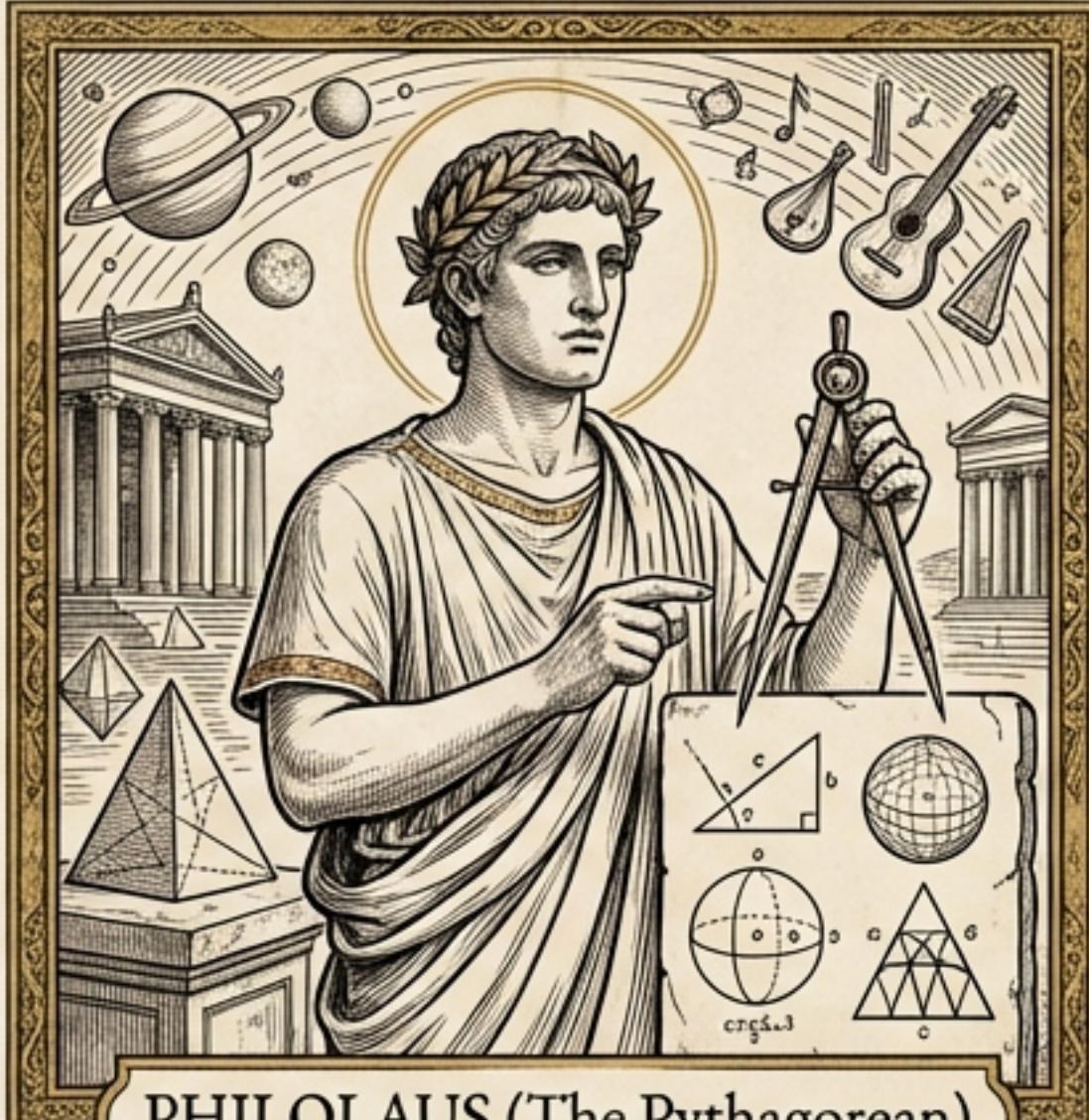


# A Meeting of Minds in Frankfurt



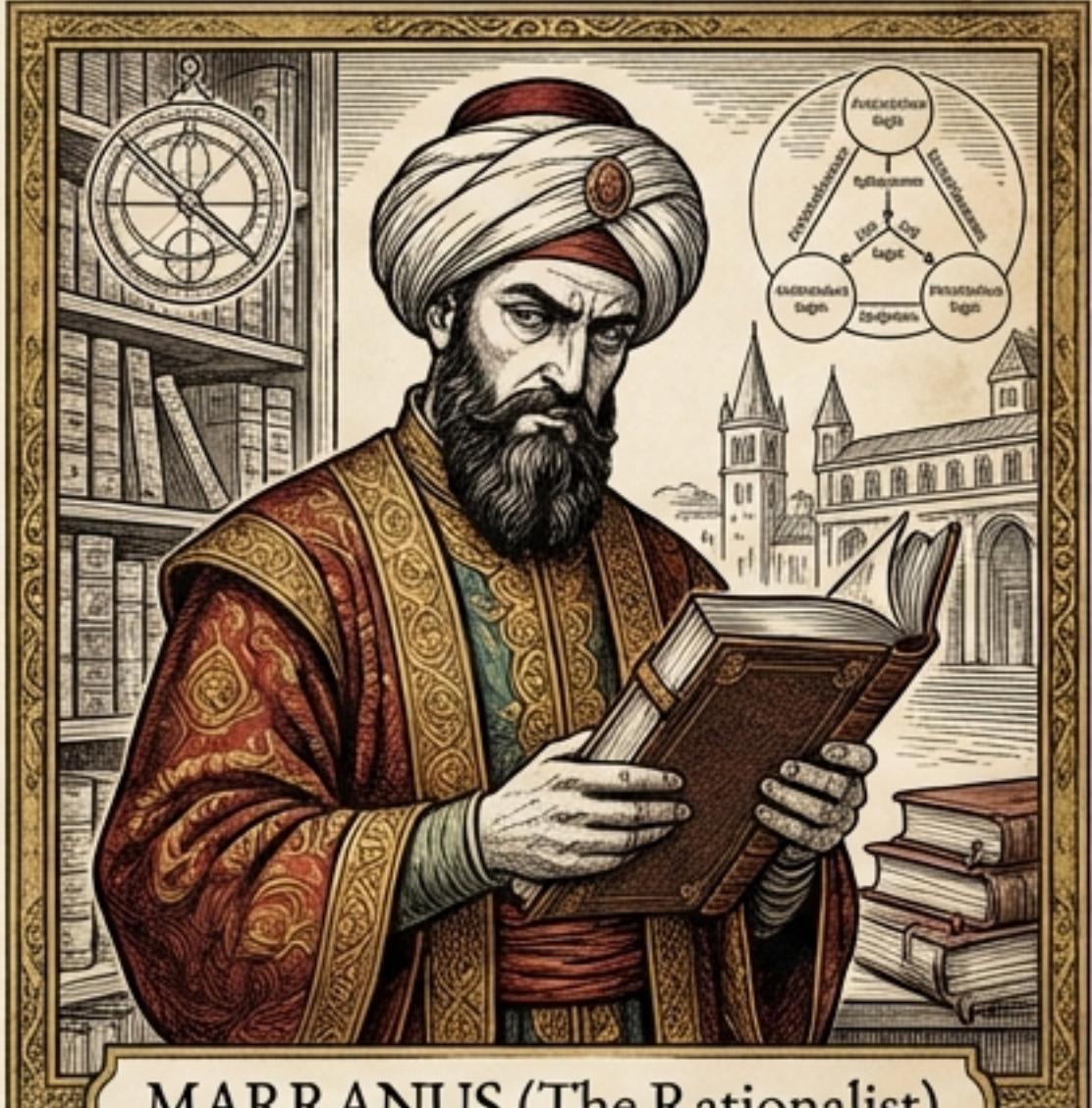
SIMON (The Kabbalist)

Represents Jewish Revelation, Oral Tradition, and the ascent to God through Hebrew names.



PHIOLAUS (The Pythagorean)

Represents Mathematics, Order, and the search for truth through reason and silence.



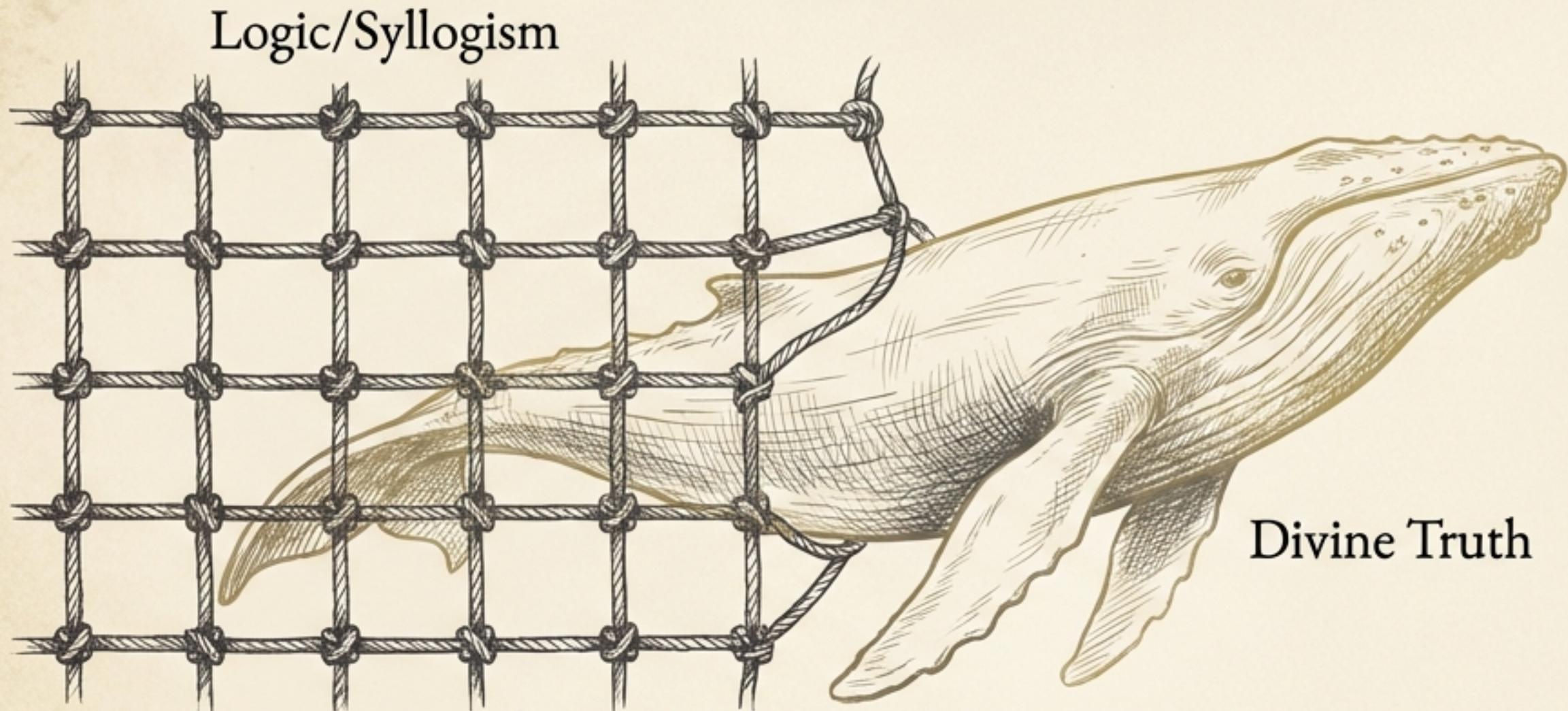
MARRANUS (The Rationalist)

Represents Skepticism, Aristotelian logic, and the scholastic worldview.

**Context:** Three scholars retire to a quiet garden to debate the nature of divine truth.

# The Finite Net Cannot Catch the Infinite

## The Limits of the Syllogism



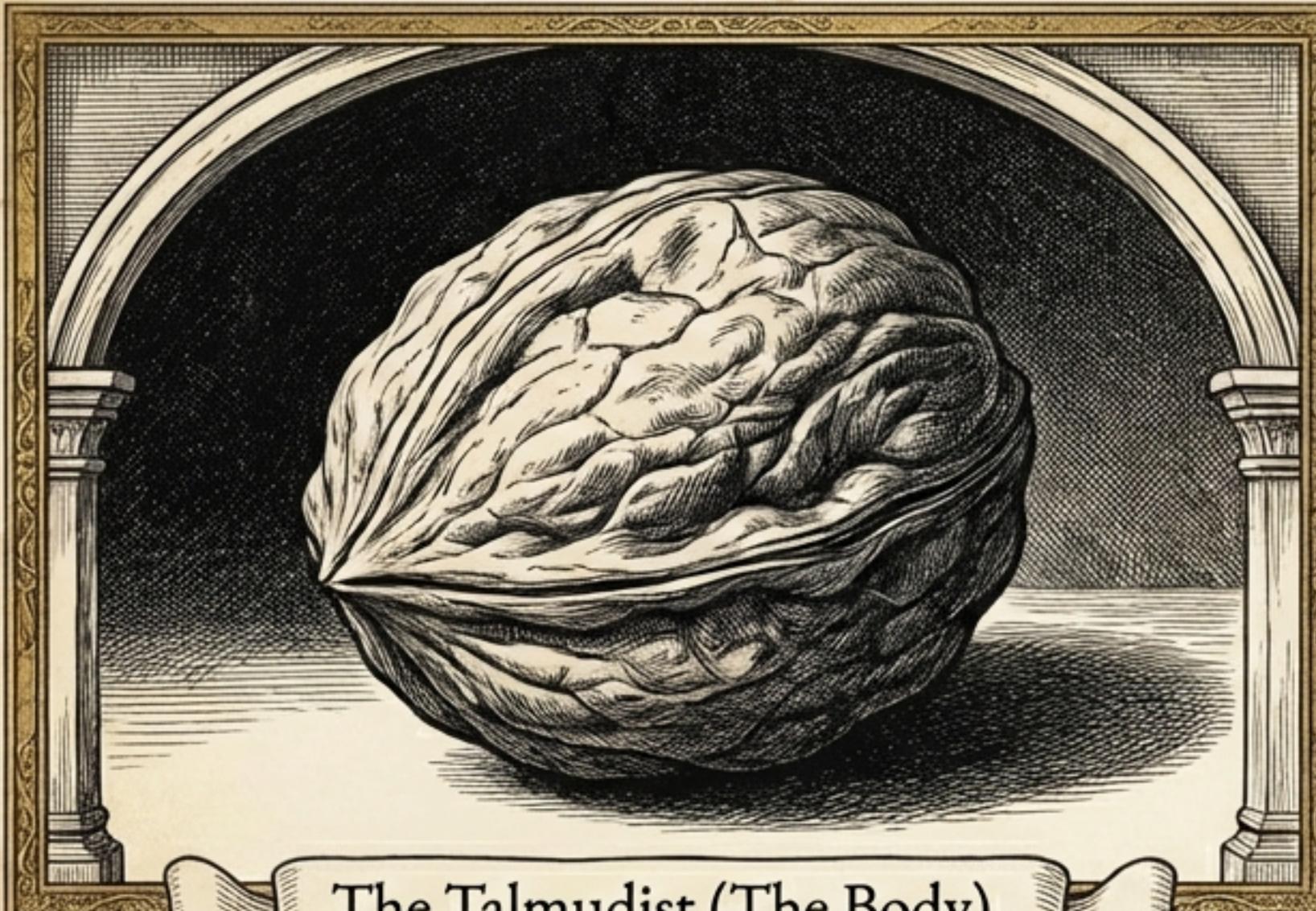
Reuchlin argues that Aristotelian logic works for the “Sensible World” (physics/nature) but fails in the “Divine World.”

Logic requires definitions and sensory input; God has no definition and is beyond the senses.

“The syllogism is a mesh that catches the small fish of opinion but lets the great whale of truth escape.”

We need a method of **RECEPTION** (Kabbalah), not **INVENTION** (Logic).

# The Shell and the Kernel



The Talmudist (The Body)

Focus on the letter of the law, rituals, and the world of Action. The Talmudist remains below.

**Kabbalah** translates to “Reception”—the act of receiving a truth that cannot be proven by logic, only handed down.

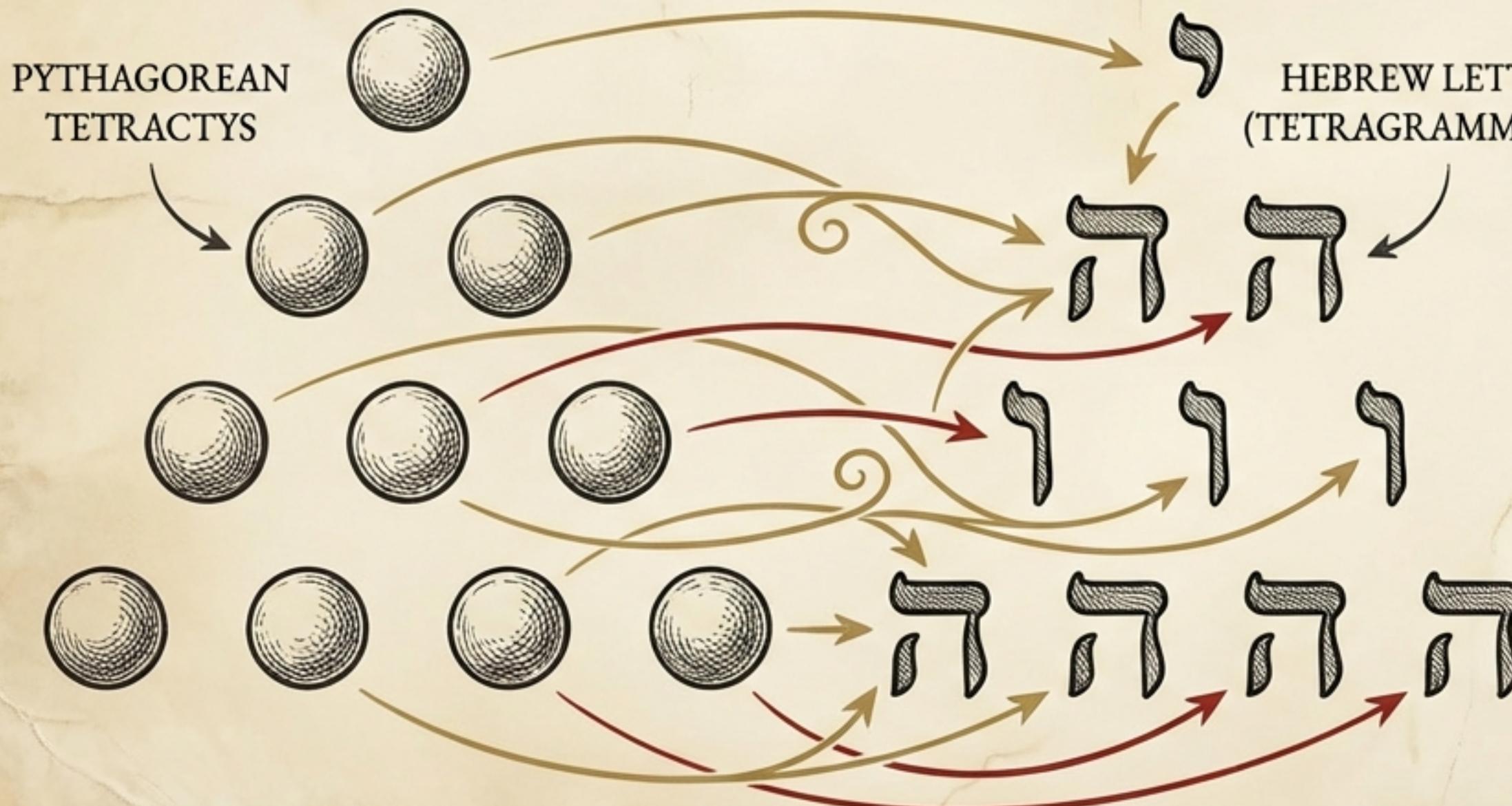


The Kabbalist (The Soul)

Focus on the spirit of the law, allegory, and the world of Contemplation. The Kabbalist tends upwards.

# Pythagoras the Kabbalist

Philolaus admits that Pythagoras traveled to the Near East and learned from the Hebrews.  
Reuchlin argues that Greek Philosophy is simply the 'Secret Tradition' clothed in different garments.



- ✿ Pythagorean Silence = Kabbalistic Meditation
- ✿ Pythagoras's "The One" = The Hebrew God
- ✿ Ipse Dixit ("He himself said it") = Hachamim ("The Sages said")

# The Architecture of Reality

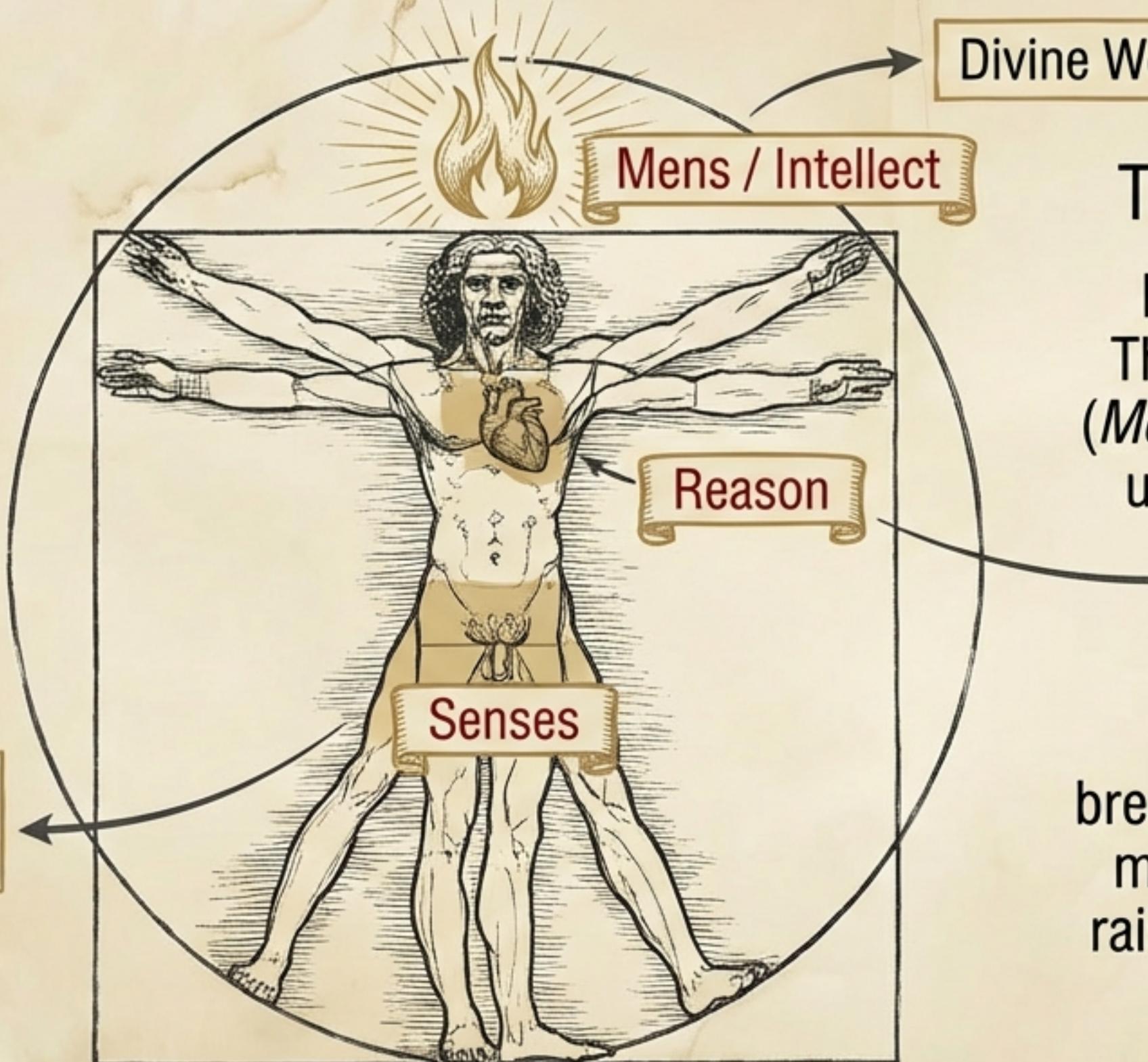


## EB Garamond

Humanity exists in the bottom world but possesses the spark to ascend the ladder to the top.



# Man as Microcosm



## The Anthropology of Ascent

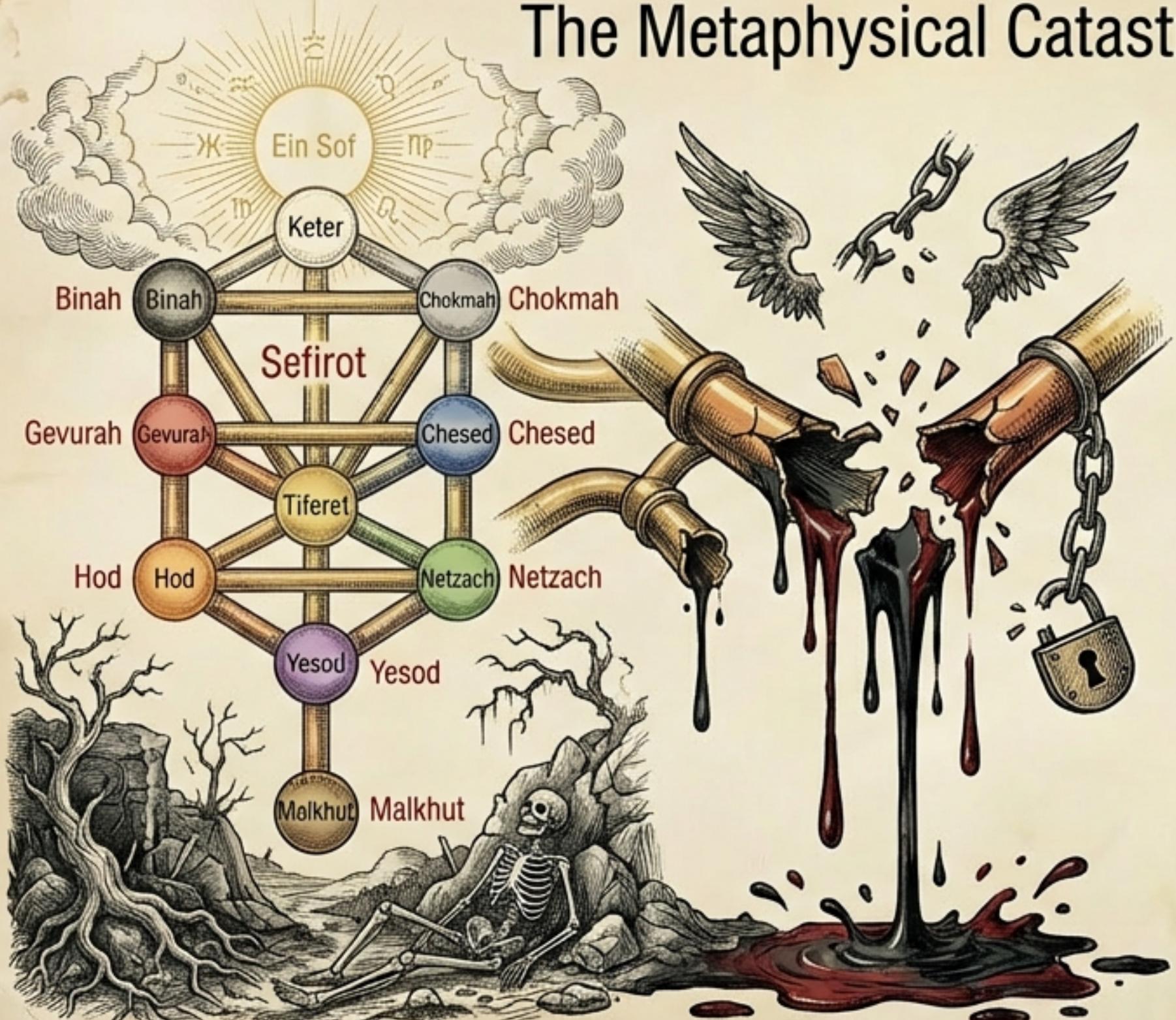
Reuchlin describes “Deification”: The process where the human mind (*Mens*) bypasses the lower faculties to unite directly with the Divine mind.

Intelligible World

“God created man from mud and breath... so that with feet on the earth he might walk with beasts, but with head raised he might converse with angels.”

# The Primal Ruin

## The Metaphysical Catastrophe



Adam's sin was not merely eating a fruit; it was a disruption of the spiritual infrastructure. The "channels" that allowed Divine Light to flow into the Sensible World were shattered.

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Consequence: Humanity is trapped in the "Sensible World" of death and decay, unable to access the Tree of Life.

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# The Promise of Restoration

## The Transmission of the Secret

Adam  
(אָדָם)



Raziel (Angel)  
(רְצִיאֵל)



Seth  
(שֵׁת)



Enoch  
(חֲנֹוך)



Abraham  
(אַבְרָהָם)



Moses  
(מֹשֶׁה)



The Prophets  
(הָנְבִיאִים)



Kabbalah is revealed to be the transmission of a specific secret: The promise of a Restorer. Reuchlin redefines the Messiah not as a political conqueror (the Talmudic view), but as a spiritual entity who repairs the broken channels between worlds.

# Renaissance Intellectual Editorial

יהוה = יהשׁוּה

The Ineffable Name (God)



Spirit / Fire.

יהוה = יהשׁוּה

Pentagrammaton (Jesus)

## The Word Made Pronounceable

The Tetragrammaton (YHWH) is unpronounceable.  
By inserting the letter Shin (Spirit), the name becomes vocal: **JeHSuH**.  
The Messiah is the Name of God made pronounceable.

# Eating from the Tree of Life

## The Restoration



The Messiah's role is to reverse the ban on the Tree of Life. He restores the 'Intelligible World' to human experience, allowing the mind to bypass the ruin and connect with the Divine. Christian Salvation and Kabbalistic Tikkun (Repair) are presented as the same metaphysical event.

# The Final Synthesis



Reason has limits;  
Tradition offers a  
path beyond.

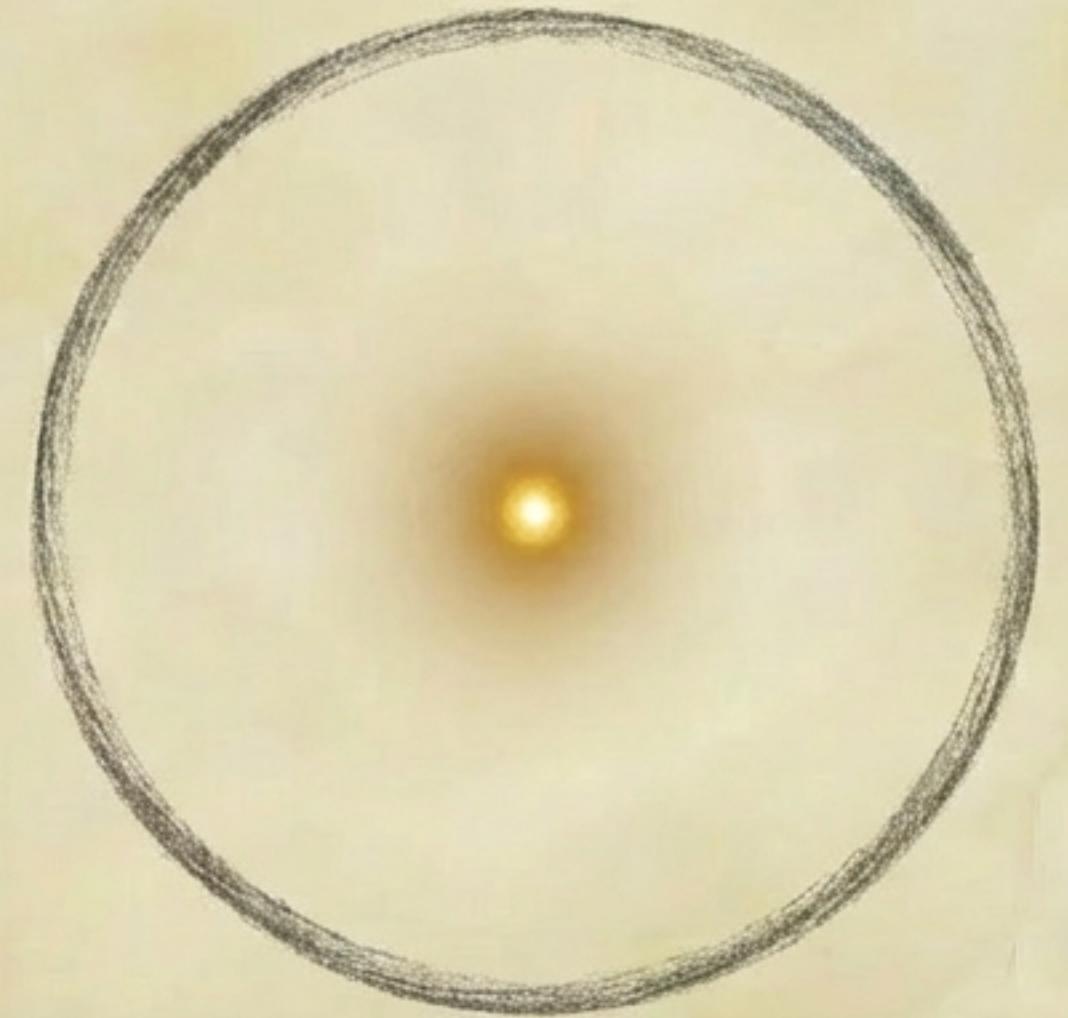
The Universe is  
a ladder we must  
climb.

The Name is the Key;  
The hidden YHWH becomes  
the revealed YHSWH.

The Pythagorean finds his numbers, the Kabbalist finds his names,  
and the Rationalist finds his cause. All paths lead to the One.

# Beyond the Syllogism

Reuchlin's work remains a testament to the human need to go beyond the "sensible" world. Whether through art, faith, or philosophy, we are all attempting to pronounce the unpronounceable name.



There is always a story, and the story is the return to the One.