

# THE MEDIATING SWORD AND THE TAMING HAND

## *The Tower, Strength, and the Corpus Callosum's Inhibitory-Mediating Architecture*

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### Abstract

This paper proposes that the Tarot's Tower (Path 27, Netzach–Hod) and Strength (Path 19, Chesed–Geburah) cards encode, in their Kabbalistic path assignments and symbolic imagery, a structural account of the corpus callosum's primary function as a mediating and inhibitory pathway between the cerebral hemispheres. Drawing on the Golden Dawn path assignments, tarot scholarship, and peer-reviewed neuroscience from the split-brain tradition of Sperry and Gazzaniga through contemporary interhemispheric-inhibition studies, the paper argues that the Tower's position between Hod and Netzach mirrors the posterior corpus callosum connecting the two posterior cortices; that Strength's position between Chesed and Geburah mirrors the anterior corpus callosum connecting the two prefrontal executives; that both cards' dominant symbolism — the Tower's lightning-strike discharge and Strength's gentle containment — corresponds to the inhibitory and mediating rather than simply facilitating character of callosal function; and that the traditional reading of both cards in terms of restraint, controlled discharge, and the prevention of runaway activity encodes an accurate functional description of interhemispheric inhibition long before its experimental discovery. The paper addresses the genuine complexity of the excitatory-inhibitory debate and argues that the symbolism captures the inhibitory-mediating pole specifically. It situates the account within Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism, identifies the two paths as the commissural realisation of the Dyadic and Triadic hemispheres held in productive tension, and aligns the cards' shadow expressions with the Qliphoth of the Paths.

*Keywords: Corpus Callosum · Interhemispheric Inhibition · Tower · Strength · Path 19 · Path 27 · Teth · Peh · Split-Brain · Anterior and Posterior Callosum · Dyad and Triad · Qliphoth of the Paths · KEP · Catharturgy*

# **I. The Kabbalistic Paths: Tower and Strength on the Tree**

## **I.1 The Two Horizontal Commissural Paths**

The Tree of Life is not merely a diagram of ten Sephiroth but a relational system of connecting paths, each bearing a Hebrew letter and, in the Golden Dawn synthesis, a Major Arcana card. A path is not a line between two nodes but the active force that mediates and regulates what passes between its terminal Sephiroth. The two paths central to this paper are the two horizontal commissural paths of the lower Tree. Path 19, the Hebrew letter Teth (serpent) and the card Strength, connects Chesed (Mercy, the left shoulder in the somatic map) to Geburah (Severity, the right shoulder). Path 27, the letter Peh (mouth) and the card The Tower, connects Netzach (the left hip) to Hod (the right hip).

In the Neurological Qabalah these anatomical correspondences are not metaphorical. Through the corticospinal crossing, the left-shoulder Chesed expresses the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (the contextual, expansive executive) and the right-shoulder Geburah the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (the analytical, restrictive executive); the left-hip Netzach expresses the right posterior cortex and the right-hip Hod the left posterior cortex. The two paths that cross the Tree horizontally — between the shoulders and between the hips — therefore mirror the anatomical situation of the corpus callosum, the primary commissural pathway connecting the homologous cortical areas of the two hemispheres.

## **I.2 Path 27: The Tower Between Netzach and Hod**

Path 27 runs between the two posterior cortices: Hod, the left-posterior analytical-receptive, form-giving function, and Netzach, the right-posterior affective, creative, spatial function. The Tower card depicts a stone tower struck by lightning, its crown knocked from the summit, two figures falling headfirst, flames bursting from every opening — an image of catastrophic discharge and structural disruption. The letter Peh means mouth: the organ of controlled expulsion, the gate through which interior force is released in regulated form. The path's title, the Exciting Intelligence, captures the forced activation of one hemisphere's content into the other's domain, and its planetary ruler Mars is the force of raw assertion and energetic discharge.

The Rider-Waite-Smith imagery reinforces this at every point. The tower is a structure of containment built, the tradition insists, on faulty foundations; the lightning does not destroy arbitrarily but strikes what should not have been built as it was. The twenty-two flames surrounding the falling figures represent the twenty-two paths of the Tree — the full structural architecture of the soul present and unbroken as the old structure falls, so that the discharge is not chaos but structural correction. What the Tower path does, in its assigned role, is regulate the relationship between the analytical left posterior and the affective-creative right posterior, providing a corrective when either has built too rigid or isolated a structure.

### **I.3 Path 19: Strength Between Chesed and Geburah**

Path 19 runs between the two executive cortices: Chesed, the right-DLPFC executive of expansive commitment and long-horizon mercy, and Geburah, the left-DLPFC executive of inhibitory precision and analytical discipline. The Strength card depicts a woman in white gently closing — not forcing, not shattering — the jaws of a lion, the lemniscate hovering above her head, the lion powerful but compliant: an image of calm containment and sustained equilibrium between wild force and governing intelligence. The letter Teth means serpent: the coiling, integrating energy that mediates and transforms rather than discharges. Its sign is Leo, the executive will that governs through presence rather than force, and its title, the Intelligence of all the Activities of the Spiritual Being, names the regulating intelligence that holds the tension between expansive mercy and restrictive severity without collapsing their distinction.

The older iconographic tradition, in which the figure holds or breaks a stone pillar, matters here. A pillar is a structural column — the same architectural logic as the Tower. The serpent coiling around the pillar and the woman closing the lion's jaws are two images of one function: the inhibitory mediating force between two powerful and potentially oppositional systems. The path between the shoulders is both the mediating intelligence that regulates the executive pair and the structural element that could, if its mediation failed, produce the Tower-path's discharge in the executive register.

### **I.4 The Two Paths as a Commissural Pair**

Together, Path 19 and Path 27 are the two primary horizontal pathways of the Tree below the supernal triad, crossing at the level of the shoulders and the hips. In the somatic architecture of the Neurological Qabalah they correspond to the two primary commissural systems of the cortex: the anterior callosal fibres connecting the prefrontal systems (the shoulder path, Path 19) and the posterior callosal fibres connecting the temporal-parietal-occipital systems (the hip path, Path 27). Both are characterised in the tradition as paths of mediation and regulation — not simple communication but active governance of what passes between the pillars, governing the productive tension rather than merging the two sides. This is precisely the inhibitory-mediating function neuroscience identifies as a primary role of the corpus callosum.

## **II. The Neuroscience: The Corpus Callosum as Mediator and Inhibitor**

### **II.1 Anatomy and the Anterior-Posterior Organisation**

The corpus callosum is the largest white-matter structure in the human brain, more than two hundred million myelinated fibres connecting homologous cortical areas of the two hemispheres. It is organised anterior-to-posterior: the genu connects the prefrontal cortices, the body the motor and sensory cortices, and the splenium the temporal, parietal, and occipital cortices. This

organisation precisely mirrors the Tree's two commissural paths: the anterior fibres correspond to Path 19 (Chesed-Geburah, shoulder level), the posterior fibres to Path 27 (Netzach-Hod, hip level).

## **II.2 Split-Brain Research and Hemispheric Independence**

Split-brain research, from Sperry's studies of the late 1950s and 1960s through Gazzaniga's decades of continuation, established what the corpus callosum does by studying what happens when it is severed. The striking finding for the present argument is not that the hemispheres can cooperate but that hemispheric independence is the default condition from which cooperation is constructed: each divided hemisphere has its own independent perceptual, learning, and memory processes, and split-brain animals could memorise two mutually exclusive scenarios simultaneously, one per hemisphere, in the time a normal animal memorised one. The normal brain's apparent unity is actively constructed by a structure that ordinarily prevents each hemisphere from being fully aware of what the other is doing. The corpus callosum does not simply connect the hemispheres; it governs the terms on which they know about each other — which is exactly the Tower path's character as the Exciting Intelligence, the forced awakening in which a suppressed hemisphere's contents flood into the other's conscious register.

## **II.3 The Inhibitory Theory of Callosal Function**

Whether the corpus callosum primarily excites or inhibits the contralateral hemisphere has been debated, and the most sophisticated current position holds that it does both, the balance depending on subregion, task, and degree of hemispheric competition. The inhibitory model, developed through Cook's 1984 homotopic-inhibition theory and confirmed in the motor domain, proposes that the callosum maintains hemispheric asymmetry and independent processing by allowing the task-engaged hemisphere to suppress homologous activity in the other.

Interhemispheric inhibition has been demonstrated directly with transcranial magnetic stimulation: activating one motor cortex sends inhibitory signals across the callosum to the homologous cortex, suppressing it and preventing mirror movements (Meyer et al., 1995). The paradoxically larger redundant-target effect in split-brain patients confirms the picture — without callosal inhibition, both hemispheres contribute their full arousal independently. A review in *Neuropsychology Review* (Bloom and Hynd, 2005) summarises the evidence that callosal size is negatively correlated with lateralisation strength: more callosal connection, less lateralisation, consistent with inhibition producing independence.

Most directly relevant is the regional specificity. Tzelepi and colleagues (2021) clarified that anterior callosal regions are preferentially associated with interhemispheric inhibition in executive competition (the Stroop and hierarchical-letter tasks), while posterior regions are more associated with facilitation of redundant sensory information. This topographic distinction maps precisely onto the two paths: Path 19 (Strength, anterior, executive) governs executive inhibitory mediation — the containment of one executive hemisphere by the other — while Path 27 (Tower, posterior, perceptual) governs the regulation of perceptual-affective cross-hemisphere discharge.

## **II.4 Evolutionary Logic**

Intrahemispheric processing is faster and more energy-efficient than interhemispheric processing, so for tasks that can be performed within one hemisphere there is an advantage to preventing the other from interfering. The inhibitory theory holds that the callosum evolved not only as a communication pathway but as a regulatory system governing when the hemispheres interact and when each is left to process independently. McGilchrist's account in *The Master and His Emissary* supplies the broader picture: the left hemisphere's sequential, analytical mode and the right hemisphere's holistic, contextual mode are in important senses incompatible when both are fully active at once, and the evolutionary advantage of the two-hemisphere brain is that each can work independently on what it does best while the callosum mediates how they share results. Hemispheric independence is the primary design feature; the callosum's inhibitory function is what makes it possible. Both paths are structural regulators of that independence, not channels of merger.

## **III. The Symbolic Correspondences: What the Cards Encode**

### **III.1 The Tower as a Map of Inhibitory Release**

Read against the neuroscience of interhemispheric inhibition, each major element of the Tower acquires a precise functional meaning. The tower is a bounded column representing the structural integrity of hemispheric separation — the state in which the two posterior cortices maintain their independent processing domains, callosal inhibition preventing each from flooding the other. Built on faulty foundations, it represents that separation become rigid and defensive: excessive interhemispheric inhibition, the analytical and affective contents functionally disconnected, each operating without the productive tension Strength normally maintains. The lightning strikes from above, entering through the crown — a sudden uncontrolled release of inhibition, the contents of the suppressed hemisphere breaking through the boundary, the experience of unwanted destabilising revelation that compromised callosal inhibition produces, directed at the site of misaligned governance. The two figures fall headfirst — the two hemispheres losing their maintained independence, the dominant interpretive system (Gazzaniga's left-hemisphere interpreter) most disrupted as the constructed narrative of unified consciousness is exposed. The twenty-two flames are the full architecture of hemispheric specialisation, intact even as a falsely rigid instantiation of it falls.

### **III.2 Strength as a Map of Active Callosal Mediation**

Strength encodes the complementary function. The woman is the mediating callosal intelligence; the lion is the raw executive power of one hemisphere that must be contained without being destroyed. She does not kill the lion (does not permanently suppress that executive) nor release it (does not let it dominate); she holds the jaws — the point of potential discharge, the interface at

which callosal mediation operates. The older image of the woman holding a pillar in integrity, rather than the Tower's lightning shattering it, is the corpus callosum held intact by the governing intelligence that sustains the productive tension. The lemniscate is the bidirectional, ongoing, self-sustaining character of inhibitory mediation — the tonic mutual inhibition the hemispheres exert even at rest. The garland of flowers connecting woman and lion, a living mutual link rather than a chain of force, is the most precise symbolic encoding of callosal function in either card: a bidirectional regulatory signal that shapes the output of both hemispheres in relation to each other, an adaptive process that grows with the organism rather than a mechanical constraint.

### **III.3 The Hebrew Letters as Functional Descriptions**

The letters add precision. Peh, the letter of the Tower, means mouth — the gate of controlled expulsion, the boundary at which one hemisphere's content crosses the regulatory threshold into the other's domain, the character of the crossing (disciplined or explosive) determining whether it produces destructive discharge or productive exchange. Teth, the letter of Strength, means serpent — the coiling energy that maintains its grip without crushing and transforms by sustained contact, precisely the callosum's tonic inhibitory mediation that neither crushes one hemisphere nor releases either, but holds the productive tension through continuous adaptive engagement. The serpent does not strike; it holds. The mouth releases; the serpent mediates. These are the two complementary modes of callosal function — regulated discharge and sustained mediation — that the two letters encode.

## **IV. The Dyad, the Triad, and the Kenotic Frame**

The two horizontal paths acquire a further significance in light of the system's formal account of the Dyad and the Triad. The two hemispheres are not merely two processors but the constructive and relating forms of one mind: the left hemisphere the Dyadic form of construction, the right the Triadic form of relation. The corpus callosum is therefore the commissural realisation of the relation between the Dyadic and the Triadic — the structure that holds the two forms in productive tension without collapsing either into the other. This is why the callosal function is mediating-inhibitory rather than fusing: the two forms must remain distinct to do their distinct work, and the callosum is the governance that keeps them distinct while permitting their results to be shared. The Tower and Strength encode, at the posterior and anterior levels respectively, the maintenance and the failure-modes of that governance between the Dyadic and Triadic poles.

Within Kenotic Effluent Panapotheism the significance is that the unity of consciousness is not a substance given once but an achievement continuously produced — the divine outpouring conditioned into a bilateral architecture whose unity must be actively maintained at the intersection the callosum constitutes. The split-brain finding, that severing the callosum yields conflicting hemispheric responses, shows the divided consciousness that makes cathartic work necessary to be a biological reality and not merely a spiritual metaphor: the privated orientations are distributed across the bilateral architecture, some analytical-verbal (Hod, Geburah) and some intuitive-somatic (Netzach, Chesed), and the cathartic work is the restoration of their right

mediation. This is why purely intellectual understanding does not accomplish transformation — the right-hemisphere material must be engaged as directly as the left, and their integration across the callosal paths is the work itself.

## **V. Nuance, Scope, and the Shadow**

### **V.1 The Excitatory-Inhibitory Debate**

The debate is not fully resolved, and the most defensible position holds that the callosum performs both functions, the balance depending on subregion, task, competition, and developmental stage — anterior regions showing stronger evidence for inhibition in executive competition, posterior regions for both inhibition and facilitation depending on whether the task involves competition or redundant integration. The symbolism of the two cards captures the inhibitory-mediating pole specifically. This is not a failure of the symbolism but a specific claim: the Tower's destructive discharge is an image of inhibitory release and structural correction, not facilitation; Strength's gentle containment is an image of sustained inhibitory mediation, not excitatory amplification. The excitatory-facilitatory function is captured by other paths — notably those running along the pillars rather than across them.

### **V.2 Scope of the Claim**

The paper does not claim that the Kabbalistic tradition had neuroscientific knowledge of the corpus callosum. The claim is structural and convergent: that the path assignments and tarot symbolism of Paths 19 and 27 encode a regulatory account of the relationship between the hemispheres that corresponds with considerable precision to what neuroscience has independently developed. The most parsimonious account of the convergence is that the cathartic tradition that developed the symbolism was a tradition of direct phenomenological exploration of the soul's architecture — and that architecture is the brain's. The symbols are accurate because the experience they encode is accurate, and the experience is the direct experience of neural dynamics neuroscience has since confirmed. The Pinto et al. (2017) revision (conscious unity, split perception) and Gazzaniga's later work (2000, 2005), characterising the callosum as enabling hemispheric specialisation by regulating what crosses between the hemispheres, both support rather than undercut the inhibitory reading.

### **V.3 The Shadow, Aligned with the Qliphoth of the Paths**

The shadow expressions of the two cards are the privations of their path-functions, and they align with the Qliphoth of the Paths, where each path's pathology is the privation of its virtue. The shadow of the Tower (Path 27) is the privation of the Exciting Intelligence's integrative function: the failure of cross-hemispheric posterior integration, which the Qliphoth of the Paths identifies as dissociation and fragmentation — the felt and the named, the embodied and the abstract,

falling apart, the rigid separation either over-maintained (the falsely built tower) or catastrophically released (the lightning). The shadow of Strength (Path 19) is the privation of the executive mediation: the lion allowed to run — either the inflation of unchecked contextual mercy (Chesed without Geburah's precision) or the rigidity of unmediated severity (Geburah without Chesed's breadth), the executive pair without the serpent's sustained governance. In both cases the pathology is the privation of the callosal mediation the healthy path performs, and the two cards take their place in the systematic path-pathology map alongside the affective privations of the paths to Yesod.

## **VI. Conclusion: Two Languages for One Structure**

The Tower and Strength occupy the two primary horizontal paths of the lower Ruach — between the hips (Tower, Netzach-Hod, posterior callosum) and between the shoulders (Strength, Chesed-Geburah, anterior callosum). Sixty years of split-brain research, TMS studies, and interhemispheric-inhibition experiments establish that the callosum's primary function is not simple communication but active mediation and regulatory inhibition — the governance of when, how much, and in what form each hemisphere's content crosses into the other's domain. The symbolism of both cards encodes precisely this: the Tower's discharge-and-correction imagery the dynamics of inhibitory release and the consequences of overly rigid separation; Strength's gentle containment the tonic, bidirectional mediating governance the callosum maintains in health.

The correspondence is not metaphorical. The two paths are in the right positions, connecting the right Sephiroth, with the right functional descriptions and the right imagery to describe the callosum's inhibitory-mediating architecture, and their letters — Peh, the mouth as the gate of controlled discharge, and Teth, the serpent as the coiling regulator of sustained mediation — are precise functional descriptions of the two callosal modes. That these were arrived at phenomenologically rather than in the laboratory does not reduce their accuracy; it confirms the Neurological Qabalah's central claim, that the soul's architecture and the brain's are the same structure, and that the traditions mapping the soul were mapping the brain. The Tower strikes; Strength holds; the corpus callosum does both — the commissural governance of the Dyadic and Triadic hemispheres, holding in productive tension the two forms of the one mind that the divine outpouring has conditioned into a bilateral brain.

The Tower strikes; Strength holds. The mouth releases; the serpent mediates. These are the two modes of the corpus callosum — inhibitory discharge and sustained mediation — and the two horizontal paths of the Tree encode them precisely, the posterior between the posterior cortices and the anterior between the executives. The callosum is the governance that holds the Dyadic and Triadic hemispheres in productive tension: the two forms of one mind, kept distinct so each may do its work, mediated so their results may be shared.

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