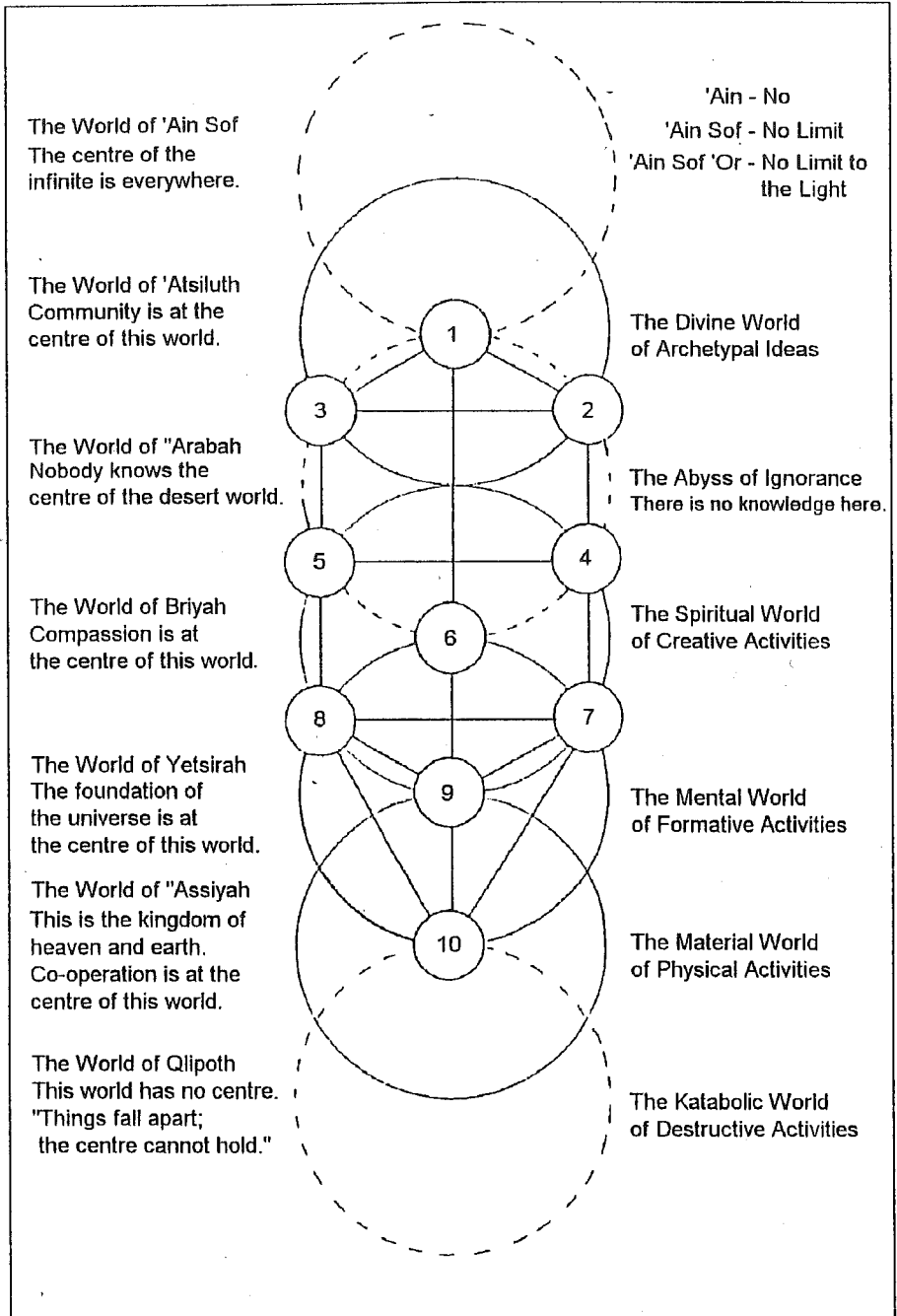


THE SEVEN WORLDS OF THE QABALISTS



The Seven Worlds of the Qabalists and the Tree of Life

By Michael Freedman

"The great, sacred glyph of the Western Mysteries, the Tree of Life, emerges quite naturally from the Circle."



IT IS AMAZING HOW POORLY drawn and ill proportioned are many of the Tree of Life diagrams that appear in the books published by the Magicians who were members of the original Golden Dawn and the various later orders that drew on its knowledge papers for their magical and qabalistic information.

It is obvious that none of these people knew the principles of Sacred Geometry on which the Great Mandala of the Western Mysteries is based.

In order to produce a well-drawn and correctly proportioned Tree of Life, you begin by drawing a series of overlapping circles of equal size, arranged vertically, so that the centre of each circle lies on the circumference of the circle above it.

While it is possible to draw a well proportioned Tree of Life using only five of these circles, it is customary to draw seven circles, because each circle is called a World-Circle and is referred to one of the Seven Worlds of the Qabalists.

In the diagram opposite, the Four Worlds of concern to humankind, commonly called the Four Worlds of the Qabalists and named 'Atsiluth, Briyah, Yetsirah, and "Assiyah, are drawn with solid lines, while the other three Worlds are drawn with dotted lines.

As you can see in the diagram on the page opposite, the Sefiroth on the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life are at the centres of the Four Qabalistic Worlds of concern to humankind, while the Sefiroth of the Left and Right Hand Pillars are on points where World-circles intersect.

The longest path in any of the 37 Trees of Life in Weavers' Woods is the length of a diameter of a World-circle. In the Tree of Life glyph best known among ordinary Qabalists and Magicians, this is the Path from the First to the Sixth Sefirah, referred to the Hebrew letter Gimel

This leads to the conclusion that the great, sacred glyph of the Western Mysteries, the Tree of Life, emerges quite naturally from the Circle.

The Seven Worlds in the diagram opposite are shown lying one below another. It might be truer to their essential nature to draw them one inside the other. Each higher world contains all the worlds within it, just as each Sefirah of the Tree of Life contains all the Sefiroth below it.

It is appropriate at this point to give a brief explanation of the nature of the Seven Worlds for the benefit of Magic Pentacle readers who might not be familiar with them. It is easiest first to describe briefly those

three Worlds not of direct concern to humankind.

'Ain Sof, the Limitless World

'Ain Sof, the first of the Seven Worlds, lies outside and contains all the manifested universe. It is beyond human comprehension. The infinite can have no centre, for every point in the infinite is at its centre. A mystic once said: "God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere."

"Arabah, the Desert World

"Arabah, the Third World among the Seven, is concealed in darkness and is therefore not at present open to humans as human, though it lies deep within the being of each one of us. Often referred to as the Abyss, it symbolises the unbridgeable gap which exists between the One Absolute and the many worlds of spirit, mind and matter. It has no characteristics except separation or absence.

Absent from any properly drawn diagram including "Arabah is the Sefirah called Da"ath, Knowledge. As it is said, "We know about the highest, but we do not know the highest." This world has no centre, because it expresses an absence rather than a presence.

It is closely linked with ideas of Time and Duration. The experience of this world, called by mystics "The Dark Night of the Soul" can seem unbearably long for those who endure it.

Qlipoth, World of Husks and Debris

The World of the Qlipoth represents the processes of Involution, as opposed to those of Evolution, katabolism, breaking down, as opposed to anabolism, building up; destructive activities as opposed to constructive activities. Its nature has been summed up by W. B. Yeats: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

This world cannot sustain anything so organised or evolved as the idea of a centre or a Sefirah. The activities of the Seventh World are not the concern of humankind, and

it is therefore forbidden to enter it deliberately or consciously. It is described as forbidden because to enter it is to become subject to its laws, which inevitable lead to disintegration. Like fire, it is a part of the whole, but, like fire, we do not expect to thrust our hand into it and remain unburned.

FOUR WORLDS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO HUMANKIND

The following might help you to understand the nature of the Four Worlds which are the particular concern of humankind. It might also throw more light on the mysterious, forbidden world of the Qlipoth.

'Atsiluth

An architect is commissioned to build a house. He begins by drawing on the fundamental Ideas of building and structure, which underlie all architecture and engineering. This is activity relating to 'Atsiluth, the World of Archetypal Ideas.

Briyah

Then the architect begins to engage in creative architectural activity, as he develops the fundamental Idea of a Building into the specific building or residence that is his commission. He exercises all his personal, artistic creativity at this stage. This is activity relating to Briyah, the Spiritual World of Creative Activities.

Yetsirah

Soon, the building begins to take shape in his mind. He starts to draw sketches and plans, beginning to prepare detailed specifications. All of what he is now doing can be related to Yetsirah, the Formative World of Mental Activities. At this stage, there is a great deal of very concrete activity.

The Brooklyn Bridge

The designer and chief engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge, John Roebling, drew up full and detailed sketches, plans and specifications for the bridge in advance, taking three months to do it.

Shortly before actual building of the bridge was begun, he was killed in an accident. His plans and specifications were able to be followed precisely during the following fourteen years, from 1870 to 1884, that it took to build the bridge, despite the fact that it called for the solution of engineering problems that never been faced before by bridge builders or architectural engineers.

Roebing was not only an experienced engineer. He is known to have based his design on metaphysical principles. The design had to satisfy not only engineering and architectural principles, it also had to satisfy philosophical principles of proportion and harmony.

That is why, even today, more than a hundred years after it was completed, the Brooklyn Bridge is at once uplifting to behold and efficient functionally. Yet, when Roebing died, nothing existed except a pile of paper. The plans are not the bridge; the plan is not the house. As teachers of General Semantics say, "The map is not the territory."

"Assiyah

Once an architect is satisfied that the plans have been prepared in sufficient detail, a builder is commissioned to undertake the physical work of building the project. This is the nature of the work in "Assiyah, the Material World of Physical Activities.

In modern architectural and building practice, this is by no means the end of the architect's formative activities. Nowadays, the architect does not prepare every, last detail of the specifications in advance. The finer details and minor adjustments are worked out between architect and builder while the actual construction is taking place.

Similarly, there always needs to be a lot of interaction between the worlds of Yetsirah and "Assiyah, between the worlds of mental and physical activities. No matter how detailed our mental activity is, nothing really exists until it has been worked on in "Assiyah, the Physical World of Material Activities.

Qlipoth

During the construction of any building, inevitably a mound of rubbish accumulates, bits of timber, heaps of rubble, empty paint-pots, bent nails, discarded machinery, scraps from workmen's lunches, a great pile of debris. Similarly, the Qlipothic World comes into being as a result of the activities of the manifested worlds.

Qlipoth, literally 'husks' or 'peelings', are none of our business, just as it is none of the business of architect or builder to pick up the rubbish and debris left from their activities.

That work is handed over to the garbage collectors and recyclers, who will carry it away to dump it somewhere else, either to be recycled into usable material or to be broken down by natural processes under the earth in a rubbish tip, later to become rich soil for the nourishment of new plant growth.

Just as garbage disposal is not the direct business of the architect, it is none of your business to get involved with the World of the Qlipoth. As it says, in *The 31 Final Statements on Magic*: "The work of the Lords of Other Worlds is none of your business. We do nothing about such things, unless they are under our noses, stinking!"

'Atsiluth contains everything in all the universes, but in potential. In Briyah the creative act begins to give shape to some of those potentials. In Yetsirah, our minds work dynamically on that which has been brought into focus in Briyah.

In "Assiyah, what was at first only a potential in 'Atsiluth, then was creatively focused in Briyah, and dynamically expanded in Yetsirah, is finally brought into concrete reality that can be touched and heard and seen by all humankind.

The Solids in the Worlds

The World of 'Atsiluth includes the Three Supernals, to which are referred the Sphere, the Cone and the Cylinder, as set out in the diagram that accompanied the second

part of this series [Magic Pentacle, Summer, 1995.]

The World of Briyah includes six Sefiroth, to which are assigned the following solids.

4	Gedulah	Icosahedron
5	Gevurah	Dodecahedron
6	Rachamim	Tetrahedron
7	Netsach	Octahedron
8	Hodh	Cube

These are the five perfect solids. The ninth Sefirah Yesodh, is on lowest point of Briyah and to it is referred the Star Tetrahedron.

The Solids in Yetsirah

Yetsirah, the Mental World of Formative Activities, which overlaps the World of Briyah, includes the five Sefiroth that make up the lower half of the Tree of Life. The 9th Sefirah, Yesodh, is at the centre of this World

Tetrahedron

The simplest perfect solid, the Tetrahedron is referred to the Sixth Sefirah, Rachamim, and to the element of Spirit. Rachamim is the central Sefirah on the Middle Pillar of the Tree and is the highest point in Yetsirah. It is the Essential Self or Spirit in human beings and its nature is its name, Compassion.

Plato referred the Tetrahedron to Fire, but Qabalists have always known of the close links between Fire and Spirit. In Christian legend, the holy Spirit descended on the Apostles of the Rabbi Yeshua' ben-Miriam 'in tongues of fire.' In the primary correspondences of the Qabalah, the Mother letter of Fire is Shin \aleph , which has the measure 300, which is also the measure of \aleph רוח אלהים, Ruach Elohim, Spirit of the Gods.

A symbol referred to the Sixth Sefirah is the Hexagram or Six-pointed Star of David. A Hexagram is formed when you bring an upward pointing and a downward pointing Triangle together so that they overlap symmetrically.



Tetrahedron



Cube



Octahedron



Star
Tetrahedron



Double
Tetrahedron

Star Tetrahedron

If an upward pointing Tetrahedron and a downward pointing Tetrahedron are interlaced so that they are exactly symmetrical, a 3-dimensional solid figure, called a Star Tetrahedron, is formed.

The Sanctuary of the Guardians has a Star Tetrahedron hanging from its ceiling, immediately over the Yesodh point of its Holy Table. If you sight along any of the axes of a Star Tetrahedron, it is possible to see a Six pointed Star within a Six-pointed Star. The badge on the cap of the Senior Guardian also shows a hexagram within a hexagram.

The Star Tetrahedron, referred to the 9th Yesodh contains within it the Tetrahedron, the Cube and the Octahedron which are referred to the 6th, 7th and 8th Sefiroth, Rachamim, Netsach and Hodh respectively, as is shown in the diagram above.

Double Tetrahedron

In this particular set of correspondences, the solid figure referred to Malkuth is a Double Tetrahedron, that is, a pair of Tetrahedra joined by one of their faces. It is the equivalent in Sacred Geometry of the Verse of the Elements:

*From One spirit flow three Forces,
Three from One and One in Three;
In one Earth dwell three Forms.
One from Three and Three in One.*

Yesodh, the Foundation of the Universe

Thus Yesodh, which is referred to the creative imagination and intuition of human beings and which lies at the heart of the World of Yetsirah, is seen to be the focus and the result of the balanced combination of the human spirit, emotions and intellect. The 8 vertices of a Star Tetrahedron are also the 8 vertices of a Cube, while the 6 points where the two Tetrahedra intersect are the 6 vertices of an Octahedron.

Relating this to the nature of an integrated human being: Every Cube [Intellect or Reasoning] contains a Star Tetrahedron [Imagination and Intuition], which is formed from an Octahedron [Emotions or Feelings] surrounded by eight smaller Tetrahedra,

suggesting the Ogdoad or eightfold Essential Self which is the God within each one of us.

Both the Star of David and the Star Tetrahedron represent the upwards aspiration of our conscious self towards the fulfilment of its divine potential, balanced by the downward reaching response of our higher Self, the Divinity within each one of us.

The importance in the Practical Qabalah of Yetsirah is indicated by the fact the oldest and perhaps the most highly regarded of all Qabalistic texts is called *Sefer Yetsirah* or *The Book of Formation*.

It has been said by more than one of the Wise that all magical work is done in the Mental World of Yetsirah, at the heart of which lies Yesodh, seat of human imagination and intuition. This means that all the work of Magic depends on the power of the human imagination and intuition supported by the balanced use of intellect and feeling. As it is wisely said: "It is all in the mind, you know." ■

Cosmic Consciousness

'All at once, without warning of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant I thought of fire, and immense conflagration somewhere close by...' the next, I knew that the fire was within myself. Directly afterward there came upon me a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe.. I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence; I became conscious in myself of eternal life. .. I saw that all are immortal; that the cosmic order is such that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all"

The term Cosmic Consciousness was invented by a Canadian doctor, R. M. Bucke, who published "Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind" in 1901. The passage quoted above describes an experience he had while seated in a hansom cab. He believed that it showed that 'the universe is God and that God is the universe'.

Of course this is not a rare experience. Freud described it as 'the oceanic feeling'. It is sometimes called 'nature mysticism', the sense of being merged into the One, the sum total and underlying unity of all things, which brings with it, since nature does not die, a conviction of immortality.