

## Chapter 3

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# Core Teachings of the Mystical Qabalah

### INTRODUCTION

The core teachings of any mystical tradition constitute the infrastructure of its worldview, and thereby form the basis and backdrop for its spiritual practices. All mystical worldviews are at once unique and yet identical. Since they are open ended, and provide a ladder for the finite human intellect to connect with an infinite Ground of Pure Being that is inherently unfathomable to that intellect, they are usually composed of allegories and allusions transmitted by messiahs, perfect masters, and great sages. Like a ladder that is used to climb up to the roof of a house and then as the means to come back down, a mystical worldview is intended to act as a vehicle for the awakening consciousness to ascend through the planes of existence to unite with the Divine Essence. The worldview becomes a frame of reference for the mind to come back into once the soul returns as an individuated being.

The elements of the qabalistic worldview are combined in the grand allusion of the Tree of Life. The Tree emanates from the Mysterious Unknown in its negatively existent roots, and descends through the planes of existence via a series of spheres connected by gates. All mystical traditions have ways for the human intellect to make a distinction between passive and active aspects of the Mysterious Unknown. In the Qabalah, they are respectively called “Vast Face” and “Small Face.” The relationship between the two Faces is portrayed in the Tree of Life. Like most other mystical traditions, the Qabalah has a variety of special Names for each of the two aspects, and a principal Name for the active aspect upon which the entire religious tradition usually centers. In the following sections of this chapter, the core teachings of the Mystical Qabalah that constitute its worldview are presented in detail.

## THE AYN, VAST FACE, AND SMALL FACE

### THE AYN

The Mystical Qabalah describes the roots of the Tree of Life as an ultimate, negatively existent substratum of pure Being that is Self-conscious and all blissful. It is described as “negatively existent” in relation to the “positively-existent” four worlds of the Tree of Life. The three roots of the Tree are named:

- *Ayn* (אֵין lit. Nothing; pronounced “ai-n” as in ‘nine’),
- *Ayn Sof* (אֵין סוּף lit. Without End, or Endless; pronounced “sof” as in ‘sofa’), and
- *Ayn Sof Or* (אֵין סוּף אוֹר lit. Endless Light, or Light of the Endless; pronounced “or” as in ‘oar’).

But these are only distinctions in human thought. The negatively existent Absolute Being, or shall we say “Mysterious Unknown at the Roots of All Things,” alludes to a depth of consciousness beyond Name and Form, and beyond the finite and supernal aspects of the Tree of Life. Individual consciousness cannot usually sustain this experience at length. In fact, most souls do not return from the experience in the roots. Their shells of embodied existence (*qlifoth*) dissolve completely, and they pass from their physical sheath (i.e. die). In Qabalah, the negatively existent Absolute Being is also called the “NOT” (לֹא, pronounced “lo” as in “below”).

The experience of the “NOT” finds Its counterpart in every mystical tradition. The Sufis refer to the experience as *fana ‘l fana* (*fana* means “extinction”). The Hindus call it *nirvikalpa samadhi*. The Buddhists call it *nirvana*, *sunyata* (emptiness), *satori*, and *anuttara samyak sambodhi* (full enlightenment). The *Qur’an* refers to the Mysterious Unknown by the same terms used in the *Torah*. In Arabic, the word for the NOT is “La”: this is written ل, which is virtually identical to the Ezra letter Ayin א. The shape of the Sinatic letter Ayin א is also suggestive—it is a circle. Within qabalistic literature, the foundational concept of the negatively existent “NOT” (לֹא) is most strongly and directly portrayed in the *Sifra Detzniyutha* (**Book of THAT Which is Concealed**).

The main body of the text begins:

“The Book of THAT Which is Concealed is the book of the balancing in weight.

Until NOT (לא, *Lo*) existed as weight, NOT (לא) existed as seeing Face-to-Face.

And the Earth (הארץ, *HaAretz*) was nullified,

And the Crowns of the Primordial Kings were found as NOT (לא).

Until the Head (ראש, *Rosh*), desired by all desires, Formed and communicated the Garments of Splendor. That weight arises from the place which is NOT Him.

Those who exist as NOT (לא) are weighed in *Yah יה*.

In His body exists the weight.

NOT (לא) unites, and NOT (לא) begins.

In *Yah יה* have they ascended; who NOT (לא) are, and are, and will be.”<sup>1</sup>

The first chapter of Lao Tze’s *Tao-Te Ching* opens with verses that address the Mysterious Unknown and Its two aspects:

“1.1 The Tao that can be trodden is NOT, the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is NOT, the enduring and unchanging name.

1.2 Conceived of as having no name, It is the originator of Heaven and Earth; conceived of as having a name, It is the Mother of all things.

1.4 Under these two aspects, It is really the same; but as development takes place, It receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.”<sup>2</sup>

## VAST FACE

In all mystical traditions, the “Mysterious Unknown at the Roots of All Things” is spoken of as having both inactive (impersonal) and active (personal aspects). These two aspects are called “Faces” in Qabalah. When referring to the inactive aspect, represented by the letter Ayin א, the *Zohar* (**Book of Splendor**)

speaks of “Vast Face” (אַרִיךְ אַנְפִּין *Arikh Anafin*, also אַפִּים אַרִיךְ *Arikh Afim*). It is also known as *Al* (עַל lit. upon), *Shomer* (שׁוֹמֵר, Witness, Guardian), *Atiqa* (עֲטִיקָא, Hidden One), Supernal Israel, the Ancient of Days, and other Names found in the *Sefer HaShmoth* and the *Torah*.<sup>3</sup> In the *Sefer Yetzirah* (**Book of Formation**), the Ayin ך is alluded to as the “Organ of Nakedness.” “Head” (רֹאשׁ, *Rosh*), a word that occurs in the fifth line of the first verse above, is also a Name of Vast Face. Ayin ך means “eye,” and in the *Idra Rabba Qadusha* (**Greater Holy Assembly**) it says:

“This is the tradition: Were the Eye closed even for one moment, no thing could subsist. Therefore, It is called the Open Eye, the Holy Eye, the Excellent Eye, the Eye of Fate (מִזְלָא, *mazal*), the Eye which sleeps not nor slumbers, the Eye which is the Guardian of all things, the Eye which is the substance of all things.”<sup>4</sup>

Also,

“And He Himself, the Most Ancient of Ancient Ones, is called *Arikh Anafin*, Vast Face, and He who is more external is called *Ze'ir Anafin*, or Small Face, in opposition to the Ancient Eternal Holy One, the Holy of Holy Ones.”<sup>5</sup>

And,

“The Ancient One is hidden and concealed.  
Small Face is manifested and NOT manifested.  
The manifested is written in the letters.  
The NOT on its level is hidden in the letters,  
And He (הוּא, *Hu*), the NOT (לֹא), is settled in  
*Yah* ך,  
The upper ones and the lower ones.”<sup>6</sup>

On the Tree, Vast Face is associated with the uppermost center at the crown of the head called Sefirah Crown/Above. Sefirah Crown/Above is a condition of Pure Being, a supernal station of superconsciousness that witnesses the singular modification “I AM” or simply “I.” Even this singular modification disappears in the negatively existent roots of the Tree. The *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches that the spheres (Sefiroth) of the Tree emanate in pairs. Sefirah Crown/Above emanates with its polar opposite Sefirah Foundation/Below. The tension between these two Sefiroth

manifests the descent of the Central Column of the Tree. The unmanifest Pure Being of Vast Face in Sefirah Crown/Above is reflected in the abysmal mirror of Sefirah Foundation/Below as veils of illusion appearing as planes of existence (see Figure 3.5 on page 89). These planes are unmanifest in the most sublime World of Atziluth (Emanation). The attributes of the *Ayn* are reflected in this mirror as the immense I-ness of Small Face as the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the universe. The energy of consciousness of Small Face manifests the planes of existence in the lower three Worlds of B'riyah (Creation), Yetzirah (Formation), and Asiyah (Making, Activity). Like Sefiroth Crown/Above and Foundation/Below, the two central Sefiroth Knowledge/First and Beauty/Last emanate as a pair, and represent two opposite stations in the consciousness of this Small Face I-ness. When the immense I-ness is centered in Sefirah Knowledge/First, It has the singular awareness that “I am Nothing;” when centered in Sefirah Beauty/Last that “I am All.” The composition of the Tree and the four worlds will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

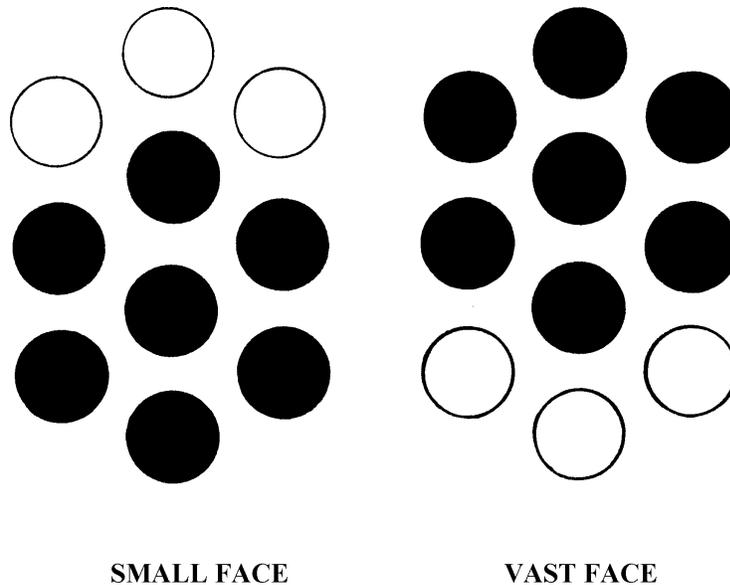
### SMALL FACE

When referring to the active aspect of the NOT (לא), the *Zohar* speaks of “Small Face” (זעיר אנופין *Ze'ir Anafin*, also זעיר אפנים *Ze'ir Afim*), represented by the letter Alef א. Small Face is the power of the *Ayn* (אין) to superimpose billions of illusory universes (and their apparent sustenance and dissolution over time) upon the Vast Face of the Deep. The generation of universes is brought about by the balanced tension between Vast and Small Face, or between the Ayin י and the manifest Alef א of Unity. In the *Sifra Detzniyutha*, this tension in the Tree is called “weight” and the “balancing in weight.” The relationship between Vast and Small Face is depicted in the Tree of Life. (Figure 3.1) Some of the most important Names of Small Face are YHVH יהוה, *El אל* (pronounced “ale,” opposite of *Lo לא*), and *Adonai אדני* (Lord, Master).

Each universe has its own Small Face who—like a dreamer who knows he/she is dreaming—creates, sustains, and dissolves the Creation moment by moment by moment. Our sense of time is formed by our imperfect perception of the higher planes of

existence. Our hopes for the future and our memories of a past (also created, sustained, and dissolved moment by moment) instill the impression that time is onflowing. To access the consciousness of Vast Face, one must renounce Small Face (in whose dream you are a creature) for release from the dream universe. Hence, it is “only through the Son (Small Face) that one can know the Father (Vast Face).”<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 3.1 Relationship Between Small and Vast Face in the Tree of Life



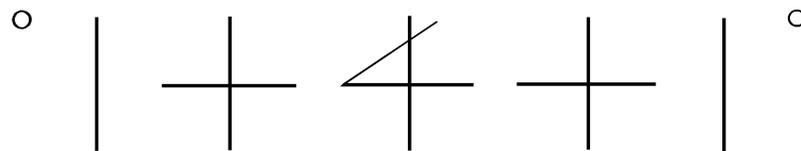
The Small Face Alef א is known as the “manifest Alef א of Unity.” Qabalists (and Sufis and Tantrikas) take the allusion of the alphabet quite literally, and see the universe as built from combinations and permutations of the letters that emanate from and return to the Alef א of Unity. In Sanskrit, the Alef א of Unity is called the *Om*कार. The Alef א of Unity/*Om*कार has unmanifest (Vast Face) and manifest (Small Face) aspects. As it is written:

“By the First It created *Elohim Eth* (אח i.e. the twenty-two Hebrew letters in the Upper Worlds) the Heavens and *VuhEth* (אחא i.e. the twenty-two letters in the Lower Worlds) the Earth.”  
*(Torah B’reshith 1:1)*

In its unmanifest, inactive aspect in the roots of the Tree, the Alef א of Unity/*Omikara* ॐ is the undifferentiated source from which emanate the supernal Hebrew/Sanskrit letters in the uppermost center of the Tree of Life (Sefirah Crown/Above). At this point, the unmanifest letters stand alone and have not combined into Names. The letters vibrationally differentiate when the Alef א of Unity becomes manifest in the throat Sefirah Knowledge/First. Each letter bears a characteristic root vibration or seed sound (Sans. *bija*). The Alef א of Unity/*Omikara* ॐ is therefore called the “Seed of Seeds” (*Bija of Bijas*). Vocalization of the seed sounds is enabled by the vowels in the throat Sefirah Knowledge/First. The vowels also empower the undifferentiated Names in the supernal Sefirah Wisdom/East to become manifest with a characteristic vibrational signature in the World of Creation (see Figure 3.5 on page 89).

The Sinatic Alef is written by scribing the vertical line first (Central Column), from the top point (Sefirah Crown/Above) downwards (see Figure 3.2). Then the horizontal line is scribed from right to left (Column of the Right). Finally, the diagonal line is drawn from the left end-point of the horizontal line upward to the right across the vertical stroke (Column of the Left). The Columns of the Left and Right are opposite reflections in the clear mirror of the Central Column. In the *Etz HaChayyim* (Tree of Life), the vertical stroke is called the Line of Light (כב, *Kav*). The Alif in Arabic uses only this vertical stroke, reflected in the principal Working Tree in the Sufi tradition that only uses the Central Column. The Cross is the Christian Alef +, with the diagonal stroke of the Column of the Left removed.

FIGURE 3.2 Evolution of the Alef of Unity



The second line of the first verse of the *Sifra Detzniyutha* (Book of THAT Which is Concealed) says, “Until NOT (לא) existed as weight, NOT (לא) existed as seeing Face-to-Face.” This is the condition where Small Face is turned toward Vast

Face and therefore is not active in manifesting a universe.<sup>8</sup> We find this condition further described:

“And when *Ze'ir Anafin* looks back upon Him (*Arikh Anafin*), all the inferiors are restored in order, and His Countenance is extended and made more vast at that time. But not for all time is it vast like unto the countenance of the More Ancient One.”<sup>9</sup>

The “weight” referred to in the first verse of the *Sifra Detzniyutha* is the single combination of all the Sefiroth on the Tree. Weights are the individual Sefiroth. The Primordial Kings allude to the unmanifest “Alef Worlds” or witness states of Vast Face in Sefirah Crown/Above. The “Crowns of the Primordial Kings” are the Sefiroth in the supernal World of Atziluth (Emanation), and the “Garments of Splendor” are the manifest Sefiroth in the successive three worlds. In the *Torah*, “Earth” (אֶרֶץ, *Aretz*) is a synonym for the Sefirah Malkuth/Kingdom. Hence, the phrase “And the Earth was nullified” infers that matter was absorbed and disappeared.

The *Sifra Detzniyutha*, and in smaller measure the *Idra Rabba Qadusha* (Greater Holy Assembly) and *Idra Zuta Qadusha* (Lesser Holy Assembly), also contain some wonderful verses pertaining to the allusions of the “beards” of the two Faces. The hairs of the beards are the Atziluthic letters evolving into Divine Names in the World of Creation. The beards each have nine formations or strands manifest in Small Face, with four more inside the Skull of Vast Face as the Hidden Brain. The strands of the Names of Vast Face generally convolute to the Atziluthic letter Ayin ם, and those of Small Face to the Atziluthic letter Alef א. The beards of the two Faces with their nine respective “formations” of Names are shown in Figures 3.3 and 3.4.

“The Beard of Faith, NOT (אֵל), is mentioned because it is the most precious of all.

It egresses from the ears round about the face,  
The white locks [strands of Names] ascending and descending,

Separating into thirteen of that most splendid of splendors.”<sup>10</sup>

“The formations of the Beard are found to be thirteen,

That is the upper one [Vast Face].

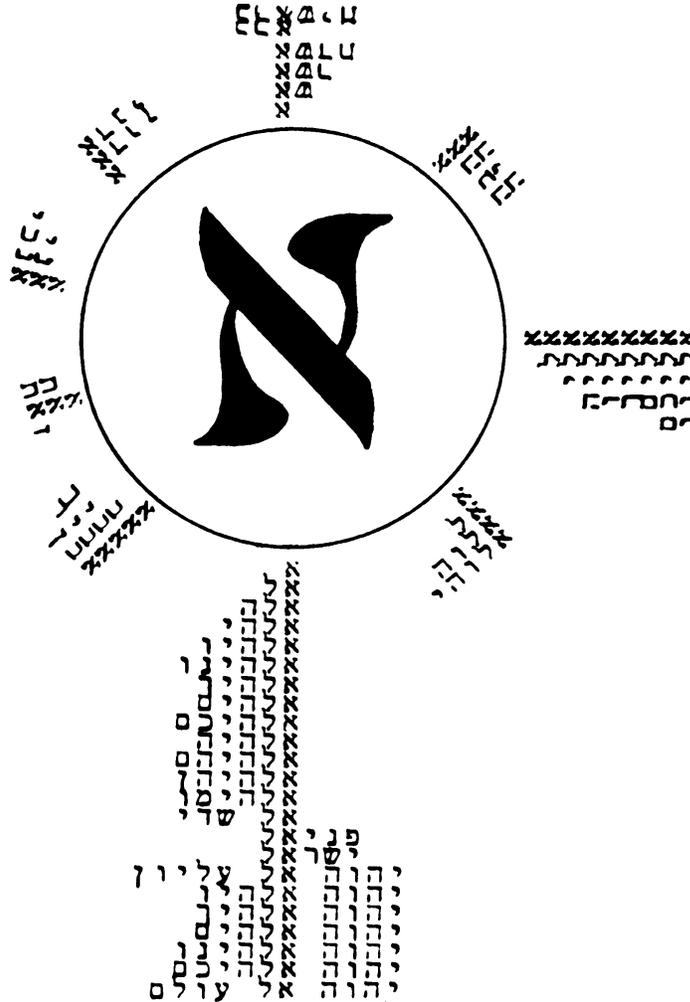
In the lower one [Small Face] they are beheld in nine.”<sup>11</sup>

“Each hair is said to be the breaking of the hidden fountains that issue forth from the Hidden Brain [Vast Face].”<sup>12</sup>

“And all those threads [i.e. convoluting Names] go out from the Hidden Brain and are disposed in the weights [i.e. Sefiroth].”<sup>13</sup>

FIGURE 3.3 Vast Face Beard (*Sifra Detzniyutha*)



FIGURE 3.4 Small Face Beard (*Sifra Detzniyutha*)

### CONCLUSION

In speaking of two “Faces,” it must always be remembered that we are talking about an absolute unity that is only differentiated by human thought, and can only be directly experienced in higher states of consciousness. Generally, mystical traditions are very fluid and flexible in assigning gender to Vast and Small Face. In most mystical traditions, both Vast and Small Face can take either the masculine or the feminine gender. Within a particular tradition, one may find Vast Face referred to in the masculine and Small Face in the feminine, and/or vice versa. The two Faces may also be

both masculine or both feminine. In the Qabalah, for instance, we find many references to the white-haired ancient father and the raven-haired youthful king. We also find the ancient mother and the maiden *Shekhinah* (שְׁכִינָה).

In virtually all traditions, we can also find many impersonal names and references to Vast Face that are neither masculine nor feminine. However, Small Face, as the active principle, is always named and referred to personally as masculine and feminine. It is cogent to note that the *Torah* commands us to “Honor thy father and thy mother.” While this is commonly understood to refer to one’s earthly parents, its higher meaning enjoins us to honor our Divine Father and Mother.

The great and beloved nineteenth century Bengali saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa offered several useful analogies to the relation between Vast and Small Face (static and active aspects of the Divine). These included the relation between milk and its whiteness, a gem and its sparkle, a flame and its power to burn, and the Sun and its rays.<sup>14</sup> An old Vedic analogy compares God to a spider that spins a web from and retrieves it back into its own body. An analogy in Qabalah cites the relationship between the letters of the alphabet and the vowels: without the vowels (active aspect), the letters (inactive aspect) cannot be pronounced. In the Tantra, it is said that “without the vowels, *Shiva*’s bones can’t dance.”

Another analogy that illustrates the nature and relation of the two Faces is presented in the parable of the rope and the snake:

“A man was walking down a road in the country at dusk. Just as he turned a corner, he encountered what appeared to be a large snake. His whole body gripped with fear, and without thought, he jumped back to avoid getting bitten. As he looked at the snake, he noticed that it wasn’t moving. He picked up a rock and threw it at the snake, and still the snake didn’t move. He thought, ‘Perhaps the snake is dead.’ This thought diminished his fear, and he inched closer to the snake to get a better look. As he neared the snake, he was amazed and relieved to find out that it wasn’t in fact a snake at all: it was a rope that he mistook for a snake.”

In this story, there had to be a rope in the first place for the man to have mistaken it for a snake. The “snakiness” was a superimposition upon the rope that only existed in the man’s mind. Such is the nature of the Creation, which is a collective illusion. The “snakiness” of Small Face is an illusion superimposed upon the reality of the “rope” of Vast Face. This illusion of a “difference within Itself” is a play of the Divine arising from an unfathomable whim.

## THE QABALISTIC TREE OF LIFE

### INTRODUCTION

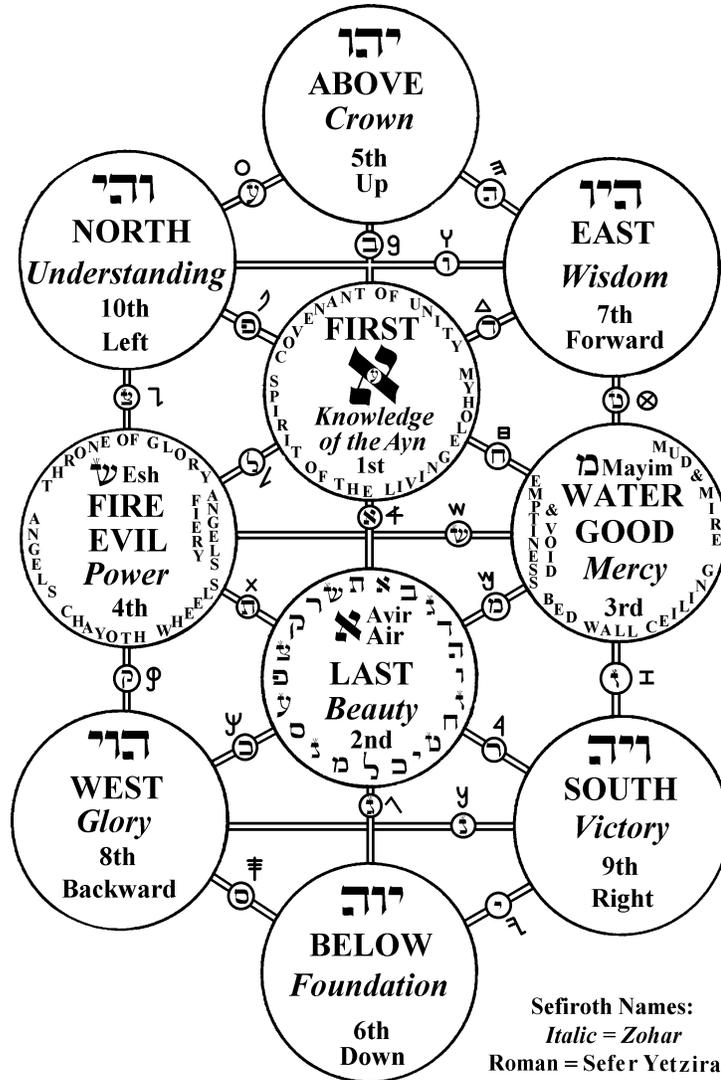
Virtually all books on the subject of the Qabalah feature one or more forms of the map of consciousness known as the “Tree of Life.” The Tree of Life objectively represents the physio-spiritual entirety of both the individual soul, or Microcosm “created in the image of *Elohim*,” and the Divine Soul, or Macrocosm as the “Body of Celestial Man (*Adam Kadmon*, אדם כדמון).” Thus, the Hebrew word *adam* (אדם, lit. man), like the word *purusha* in Sanskrit, denotes both the individual person and the Supreme Persona of the Divine Self.

“And upon the likeness of the throne was the appearance of Adam upon it from above.”<sup>15</sup>

As touched upon earlier, the Tree of Life is the qabalistic equivalent of the Tantric Chakras (see Figure 1.3 on page 48) and Sufi Latifas.<sup>16</sup> The Sefiroth of the Tree of Life, the Chakras, and the Latifas represent the same succession of centers or stations of consciousness that correspond to various nerve plexi along the spinal column and cerebrum. The Chakric and Sufi Trees have only one format, with all of their centers in a single vertical row. In contrast, there is a considerable variety of Trees of Life in the Qabalah. Some are flat and linear with one, two, or three vertical columns; some are flat and circular; and yet others are three-dimensional. Almost all books on the Qabalah contain only diagrams of flat Trees. Most of those flat Trees have a straight vertical trunk called the “Central Column,” flanked by two parallel side branches called the “Side Columns,” or the “Column of the Right” and the “Column of the Left.”

A pattern of ten circles connected by lines is superimposed upon the three columns (see Figure 3.5). The circles are known individually as “*Sefirah*” (sphere) and collectively as “*Sefiroth*” (spheres).

FIGURE 3.5 Ten Intangible Sefiroth



There are two very different sets of names for the same Sefiroth. One rarely used set comes from the *Sefer Yetzirah*, and one widely known and used set comes from the *Zohar*. So that the reader will get familiar with the parlance of both books, the

Sefiroth will hereon be referred to by both sets of names. The Zoharic name of each Sefirah will be given first, followed by the one from the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The Yetzirathic names are each preceded by the qualifying phrase “Depth of” (*Omehq*), but for the sake of brevity this designation will usually be dropped when referring to them. The two names will be separated by a forward slash e.g. Sefirah Crown/Above, Sefirah Wisdom/East, and so forth. Also, for the sake of brevity, the Zoharic Sefirah Knowledge (of the *Ayn*) will be referred to simply as Sefirah Knowledge. The Sefiroth are said to be emanations from the unmanifest, undifferentiated Divine Source. They form a set of four self-consistent worlds or planes of existence within which creatures can exist due to the relative orderliness and smoothness of change. The *Sefer Yetzirah* tells us that the Sefiroth emanate as pairs of opposites, such as East and West, Crown and Foundation, and Water and Fire.<sup>17</sup>

The Sefiroth are linked among one another by “gates.” Each of the interconnecting gates is associated with a specific Hebrew letter. The *Sefer Yetzirah* is the primary source for the teachings regarding the nature of the letters and their distribution among the Sefiroth on the Tree. The gates connecting the Sefiroth are doors that allow our consciousness to travel from one plane of existence to another. For example, all living beings pass through two gates connecting three Sefiroth every day and night. The physical plane, which is the waking state of dualistic consciousness in most human beings, is represented by the Sefirah at the very bottom of the Tree called “Kingdom” (there is no equivalent in the *Sefer Yetzirah*). When we go to sleep at night, we first move through the Gate of the letter Beyt ב that links Sefirah Kingdom to Sefirah Foundation/Below, and into the *Geviyah* (astral shell) in the World of Formation. All people do this every night, and the vast majority experience it as an unconscious state of REM sleep. However, if the gate is crossed while maintaining awareness, it will be experienced as a conscious dream state. Sefirah Foundation/Below is the point of departure from which we may enter the psychic states by passing through one of the gates into the side columns, or enter even higher levels of consciousness by moving further up the Central Column into Sefirah Beauty/Last.

When we pass through the next gate up the Central Column of the Tree, called the Gate of the Gimel ג, we move into the Sefirah Beauty/Last. Almost all people experience Sefirah Beauty/Last as deep sleep, and pass through the two gates and among the three lower centers unconsciously. Some individuals are able to transit to and from these three lower centers consciously, and there are those who can dual process information from the waking and astral states simultaneously as a matter of course.

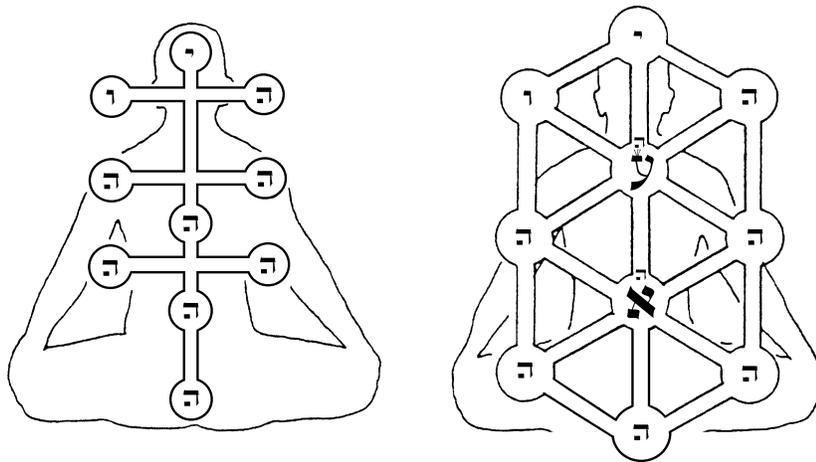
### THE COMPOSITION OF THE TREE OF LIFE

The three columns of the Tree and their respective Sefiroth are said to emanate from or be anchored in the substratum of the unmanifest, undifferentiated negatively existent roots. The Central Column emanates from the negatively existent roots through a single point in the uppermost Sefirah, called “Crown” in the *Zohar* and “Above” in the *Sefer Yetzirah*. In the initial event at the genesis of the universe, the unmanifest Light of the Endless enters the *Tzimtzum* (circular Contraction) through that point in the supernal World of Atziluth (Emanation), triggering a quantum fluctuation that generates the Big Bang and subsequent inflation of the universe. It then descends through the successive three worlds, thereby manifesting the complete Tree. The Central Column is called the “Line of Light” (*Kav*) in the Lurianic doctrine presented in the *Etz Ha Chayyim*.

With the expansion of the Tree, the universe is created by the Celestial Head of Messiah called “The First,” and sustained in the Tree as a balanced tension between Vast and Small Face.<sup>18</sup> The extension of the Central Column is precipitated and sustained by the tension between the two Sefiroth Crown/Above and Foundation/Below, which emanate as a pair of opposites. The Central Column is said to be a “clear mirror.” As the Central Column extends, the Column of the Right and the Column of the Left manifest as opposite reflections in the clear mirror of the Central Column. The remaining Sefiroth emanate as pairs of opposites in the two side columns, and the four qabalistic worlds manifest as self-consistent planes of existence. The four qabalistic worlds will be discussed in the next section.

These three distinct columns play a prominent role in the different ways the Tree can be ascended. When the spiritual energy (called *Shekinah* in Hebrew and *Kundalini* or *Chitshakti* in Sanskrit) awakens, it ascends the Tree of Life in various ways, expanding and moving the consciousness through successive planes of existence. Each different path up the Tree is known as a “Working Tree.” The entire spectrum of Trees of Life is also known collectively as “Angelic or Enochian Tree Language.” Angelic Tree Language consists of various types of “Working Trees” and “Trees of Perfection” (Figure 3.6). Mystics seeking union with the Divine, saints, wizards, and white and black magicians ascend the Tree through different Sefirothic patterns. A Working Tree, infused with the power of a suitable Name of God, mantra, or other invocation, automatically directs the changes in consciousness of the traveler along its characteristic pattern of gates. Different forms of the Tree, called “Trees of Perfection,” allude to enlightened yogis, transcendent devotees, saints and Messiah. In this book, all the various types of Working Trees and Trees of Perfection will be presented.

FIGURE 3.6 Fallen and Perfect Trees on the Human Body



The Tree provides the finite intellect with a frame of reference for all possible experiences. Each Sefirah is itself a complete Tree present in all planes of existence. The entire Tree, *as well as each individual Sefirah*, is therefore an open-ended ladder from the waking state all the way into the Light of the Endless (*Ayn Sof Or*,

(אֵין סוף אור). A great secret of the gates is that they are stationed in the Light of the Endless. Hence, by closing off both ends of any gate, consciousness automatically expands into the Light of the Endless. This is why the experience in the gates can be more unsettling than in the relatively stable and orderly Sefiroth.

Another significant component of the Tree of Life is called the “Inner Court.” The Inner Court of the Tree, also known as the “Throne of Glory of *El Shadai*,” generally refers to a grouping of four Sefiroth in the center of the Tree of Perfection. The Inner Court is most clearly seen in the three-dimensional, double pyramid Trees of the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the Merkabah literature. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the four Sefiroth of the Inner Court are called Spirit of Living *Elohim*, Air, Water, and Fire; and alternately, Depth of First, or simply First, (Depth of) Last, (Depth of) Good, and (Depth of) Evil. In the *Zohar*, they are the Sefiroth Knowledge, Mercy, Power, and Beauty. Each set of these four Sefiroth corresponds respectively with the three Mother Letters Alef א, Mem מ, and Shin ש, and the letter Tav ת of the Holy Temple. In the flat forms of the Tree, the Sefirah Mercy/Water moves into the Column of the Right and Sefirah Power/Fire moves into the Column of the Left (see Figure 3.5 on page 89).

The four Sefiroth of the Inner Court are also shown as corresponding to the four ‘Celestial Heads’ of Messiah of the Lord יהוה. These four Heads are functionally instrumental in creating, maintaining, and dissolving the manifest Small Face universe. In the *Sifra Detzniyutha*, the action of the Head of Messiah “First” (*Reshith*) to emanate and manifest the Sefiroth is described as Small Face turning outward from Vast Face. On the contrary, when the Small Face Universe is dissolved by the action of the Head of Messiah called “The Last” (*Acharit*), the side columns collapse and the Sefiroth return to their unmanifest condition in the roots of the Tree.<sup>19</sup> With the dissolution of the Small Face universe, the two “Faces” are said to return to the condition of “seeing Face-to-Face.” The four Heads of Messiah and the nature of the messianic advent of the Lord יהוה will be discussed more fully in a later section.

In addition to the four Sefiroth of the Inner Court, the Tree has six “Directional Sefiroth.” In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the six directional Sefiroth are aptly named “Above, Below, East, West, North and South.” In the *Zohar*, they are respectively called “Crown, Foundation, Wisdom, Glory, Understanding, and Victory.” In the Merkabah literature, four of the Directional Sefiroth are correlated with *Chayot* (חַיִּוִּת, Living Beings, sing. חַיָּה, *Chayah*), and are also referred to as the “Legs of the Throne.”

“And *Elohim* said the waters will swarm with the movement of *Chayah*.”<sup>20</sup>

“And the *Chayot* ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.”<sup>21</sup>

“And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four *Chayot*.”<sup>22</sup>

The nature of the Directional Sefiroth is most easily understood in the three-dimensional Trees, since humans live and move in a three dimensional space. On the flat Trees, their function with regard to directionality is less apparent, since such Trees emphasize the three-column structure, and two of the Inner Court Sefiroth are pulled into the side columns.

In a way, it could be said that the twenty-two letters are the most salient aspects of the Qabalah. The alphabet is etched deeply in the minds of most Jews from the time they are children. But while most Jews know the Hebrew letters, relatively few are aware of their function and nature within the context of the Qabalah. As mentioned earlier, the most ancient and prolific source regarding the mystical nature of the individual Hebrew letters is the *Sefer Yetzirah*. In the *Sefer HaShmoth* (**Book of the Names**), the letters are seen most prominently as the formulaic components of Divine Names and within the context of the Angelic Tree Language, but no further elaboration is given about them. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, on the other hand, the individual letters are introduced in their role as the infrastructure connecting the ten Sefiroth. They are identified according to type i.e. Mother, Double, Simple, how they correlate to various aspects of the human body and to nature, and how they relate to one another. Most contemporary books on the Jewish Kabbalah and Practical Qabalah assign the letters to the gates differently than the *Sefer Yetzirah*, and often in accordance

with the teachings of Luria recorded posthumously by Vital. Such discrepancies do not necessarily imply a dichotomy of opposing views, as there is flexibility for setting up the gates on the Tree in different ways. However, some such patterns can be problematic, and it is generally recommended to work with the assignments from the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The discussion of the letter-gates will continue in Chapter Five when the Trees from the *Sefer Yetzirah* are highlighted.

### THE FOUR QABALISTIC WORLDS

The Qabalah describes four “worlds.” These four worlds are respectively called *Atziluth* (אֲצִילוּת, World of Emanation), *B’riyah* (בְּרִיאָה, World of Creation), *Yetzirah* (יְצִירָה, World of Formation), and *Asiyah* (עֲשִׂיָּה, World of Activity or Making). The World of Atziluth is also called the “Supernal World.” It is rooted in the Sefirah Crown/Above and correlates with the letter Yod ך in the Name יהוה. In Atziluth, the twenty-two Hebrew letters are yet unmanifest, and are said to “stand alone ablaze the crown of the King Most High.”

“The Ancient One is hidden and concealed.

Small Face is manifested and NOT manifested.

The manifested is written in the letters;

The NOT on Its level is hidden in the letters.

Twenty-two letters that are concealed,

Twenty-two letters that are manifest.

A concealed Yod ך, a manifest Yod ך.

The concealed and manifest are balanced in weight.”<sup>23</sup>

The World of B’riyah is rooted in the supernal Sefirah Wisdom/East, and correlates with the Upper Heh ה in the Name יהוה. In the World of B’riyah, the Word of God (known in the Qabalah as the “Alef of Unity”) becomes manifest, whereby the letters vibrationally differentiate and combine to form Divine Names. In B’riyah, beings are formless and exist as vibrational signatures.

“Two stones (letters) build two houses, three stones build six houses, four stones build twenty-four houses, five stones build one hundred and

twenty-five houses, six stones build seven hundred and twenty houses, seven stones build five thousand and forty houses. From here go out (i.e. extrapolate) and think what the mouth is unable to speak and the ear is unable to hear.”<sup>24</sup>

The World of Yetzirah is commonly known as the Astral World. It is rooted in the supernal Sefirah Understanding/North and correlates with the letter Vav ו in the Name יהוה. In Yetzirah, the Names of B’riyah interact and manifest the forms of the divine archetypes, which are latent and undifferentiated in Sefirah Understanding/North. Beings in Yetzirah have both Name and Form.

Finally, in the World of Asiyah, there is the apparent solidification of the Yezirathic forms in physical matter. The World of Asiyah is rooted in the Sefirah Knowledge/First in the Upper Worlds and is represented on the Tree by the Sefirah Kingdom. The Sefirah Kingdom is associated with the *Shekhinah* and the Lower Heh ה in the Name יהוה. The four worlds are represented as a continuum by the Tree of Life. They are successively connected to one another by the letter-gates, which allow consciousness to move to and from them.

Many people find it difficult to grasp the idea of the four worlds contained in the Tree. The difficulty often stems from the fact that the four worlds can be assigned to groupings of the Sefiroth on the Tree in its flat, vertical form. At the same time, each Sefirah contains a complete Tree that extends through the four worlds. The relationship between the Tree and the four Worlds is displayed in Figures 3.7 and 3.8. Each figure contains two different forms of the Tree. The diagrams in which the throat Sefirah Knowledge/First is visible, and there is no anal Sefirah Kingdom, are Trees of Perfection. The Trees in which the Sefirah Kingdom is visible and the throat Sefirah invisible are Working or Fallen Trees. The difference between Perfect and Working Trees will be discussed in detail in the section “The Tree of Life and the ‘Fall of Adam’ ” on page 99.

In Figure 3.7, the qabalistic worlds are associated with successive sets of Sefiroth down the Tree. Figure 3.8 shows the four worlds as concentric circles of successively smaller diameter within each Sefirah. The outermost circle of each Sefirah, starting from Crown/Above, corresponds to the Tree of the World of Atziluth. The second circle within each Sefirah, starting from Wisdom/East, corresponds to the Tree of the World of B'riyah. The third and next smaller circle within each Sefirah, starting from Sefirah Understanding/North, corresponds to the Tree of the World of Yetzirah. The final and smallest set of concentric circles, representing the seven Sefiroth of the World of Asiyah, completes the Tree in the four worlds.

FIGURE 3.7 Four Worlds in the Fallen and Perfect Trees (1)

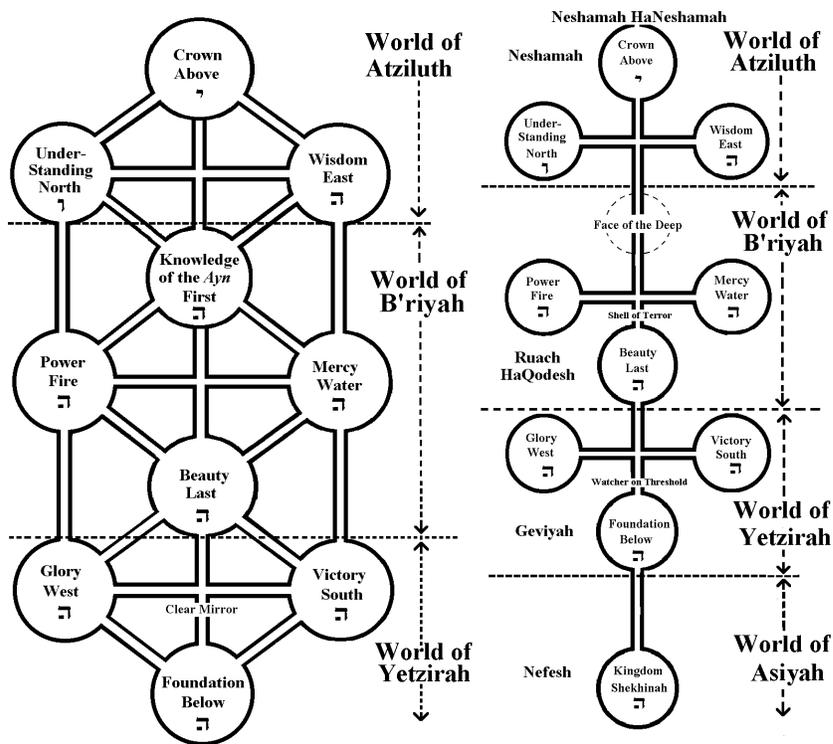
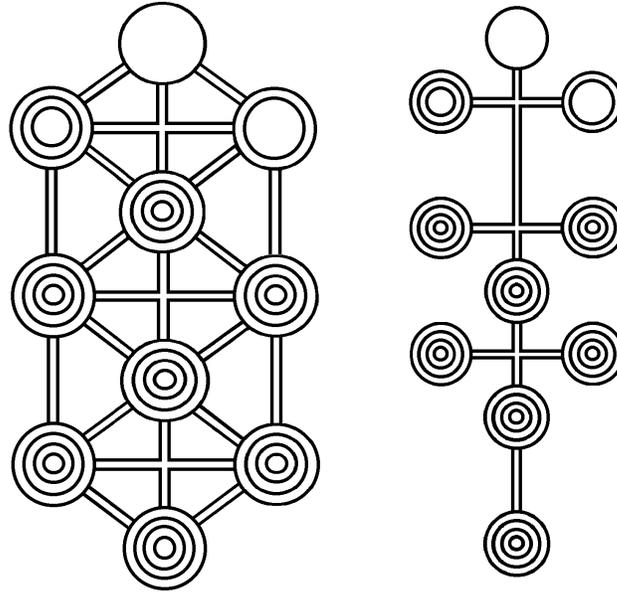


FIGURE 3.8 Four Worlds in the Fallen and Perfect Trees (2)



### THE QLIFOTH (SHELLS OF EMBODIED CONSCIOUSNESS)

Consciousness manifests substantially in the four worlds as different shells of embodied existence (קליפות, *p.qlifoth*, *s.qlifah*). The *qlifoth* of embodied human consciousness correlate with the *qlifoth* of divine consciousness embodied as the planes of existence. The qabalistic *qlifoth* can be correlated with the Vedantic *sharira* (bodies) and the Vedic *koshas* (sheaths).<sup>25</sup> As the empowered substance of consciousness manifesting in the four worlds, the *qlifoth* co-exist like the layers of an onion in reverse, differing from one another in size, density, and rate of vibration. Each *qlifah* makes its imprint on the next, denser shell. One might also envision the analogy of each shell casting a shadow that materializes as a successively denser shell. In ascending the Tree, the individuated consciousness expands through the successive shells, with their respective states and stations, and their associated powers. What happens when you ascend the Tree shall be described in a later section in this chapter, and the experiences in the various shells shall also be treated in more detail in Chapter Six.

The *qlifoth* also correlate with the four letters Yod י, Heh ה, Vav ו, Heh ה (and hence, we are formed “in the image of *Elohim*”). The physical shell in the World of Asiyah, infused with vital energy (*רוח ruach*; in Chinese, *qi*; in Sanskrit, *prana*), is called the *Nefesh* (נֶפֶשׁ), and is represented by the Lower Heh ה. The astral shell, called the *Geviyah* (גֵּוִיָּה), is the embodiment of consciousness in the World of Yetzirah (Formation), and is represented by the Vav ו.<sup>26</sup> The Upper Heh ה is associated with the bliss-filled *Ruach Ha Qodesh* (רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, Holy Spirit) in the World of B’riyah (Creation). The Yod י corresponds to the witness consciousness of the *Neshamah* (נִשְׁמָה, Divine Soul, equates to Hindu *Atman*) in the supernal World of Atziluth (Emanation). The “back of the *Neshamah*,” or consciousness in the roots of the Tree, is called the *Neshamah Ha Neshamah* (נִשְׁמָה הַנִּשְׁמָה, Soul of the Soul) and *Yechidah* (יְחִידָה, Singularity).

The *qlifoth* have “holes” in them and revolve around one another like the spheres in a Chinese puzzle ball. The holes can randomly line up and give a perceptive flash of the Light of the *Neshamah*. As the shells continue to move, the line-up of the holes is disrupted and the flash ends. Most humans bury such flashes as traumatic experiences. Purification of the shells through the repetition of a root mantra over time gives the ability to accept such flashes as a desirable experience, making it possible to sustain the experiences much longer. This is the most significant advantage of “taking the Name” (i.e. repetition of root mantra) over random flash techniques.

### THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE “FALL OF ADAM”

The Tree of Life is a universal map for the evolution of both Divine and individual consciousness in the planes of existence. It contains mysteries that manifest at both the macro- and microcosmic levels. One of the mysteries delineated in Tree of Life is the “Fall of Adam.” This Fall is portrayed in the difference between “Working” and “Perfect Trees” (see Figure 3.6 on page 92). Working Trees are so-named because they represent different ways of ascending the Tree. The primary source for all the different types of Working Trees is the *Sefer*

**HaShmoth.** Working Trees are also known as “Fallen Trees.” In the Fallen Trees, the Sefirah Knowledge/First has become invisible and “fallen” into position as the anally centered Sefirah Kingdom dangling at the bottom of the Tree. There is no equivalent for the Sefirah Kingdom in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, since it only has Perfect Trees in which the throat Sefirah is visible and there is no Sefirah at the anal center.

At the macrocosmic level, the Fall of Adam is seen as an apparent differentiation in the states of matter in the Tree of Asiyah. For example, matter can exist in a collapsed condition at the core of black holes as the Sefirah Knowledge/First. Or, it can exist in an expanded manner as mostly hydrogen atoms in Sefirah Kingdom. It is critical to keep in mind that Sefirah Kingdom and Sefirah Knowledge/First are one, not two. It is like looking at one object from two sides. At the microcosmic level in the Perfect Tree, the universe is perceived by human consciousness in Sefirah Knowledge/First as a perfect spiritual unity in the mind of God (i.e. Vast Face). In the Fallen Tree, human consciousness is dualistic in Sefirah Kingdom, perceiving the material universe as differentiated from the spiritual. The Fall is an illusion sustained in individual consciousness by the Lord of the Universe via His/Her power of obscuration, sustained through five limitations: temporal limits, spatial limits, attachment to particular things, limited knowledge, and limited agency. The predominant Hebrew Name for the active aspect of the *Ayn* as the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the Creation is the four letter formula ה' ו' ה' ך' (vocalized by some as “Yahweh,” and more commonly as “Jehovah”).<sup>27</sup> The Fall of Sefirah Knowledge/First into Kingdom is also reflected in the duplication of the letter Heh ה in יההה. The Upper Heh ה is the latent or unmanifest condition of all Mayic (illusory) possibilities in the form of an infinite number of waves of ideas, and the Lower Heh ה is their apparent finite manifestation in matter.

Most books on Qabalah show only what is known as the “Composite Tree of Life” (see Figure 3.9). The Composite Tree is obtained by superimposing all the Working Tree paths. This form of the Tree is often erroneously thought of as being a workable path in itself. However, as all the Sefiroth on the Composite Tree are connected among one another, it offers no

specific route up the Tree, and is consequently not effective as a working path. Names from *Tanakh* and the qabalistic tradition that have been attributed to the gates between the Sefiroth of various working paths are listed in conjunction with the Composite Tree diagram in Table 3.1 on page 102.

In many contemporary books on Qabalah, the Composite Tree is shown with gates connecting the Sefirah Kingdom to Sefirah Victory/South and to Sefirah Glory/West. This is not correct. When Sefirah Knowledge/First “falls” and becomes Sefirah Kingdom, it takes the Gate of the Beyt  $\beth$  with it, which thereby connects Kingdom only to the Sefirah Foundation/Below. No other gates connect to Kingdom in the Fallen Tree. The reader might also take note that the Composite Tree shows gates connecting Sefirah Power/Fire with Sefirah Wisdom/East (Gate of Samael), and Sefirah Mercy/Water with Sefirah Understanding/North (a Gate on the Way of the Saint). These gates are not usually seen in Tree diagrams.

FIGURE 3.9 Composite Tree

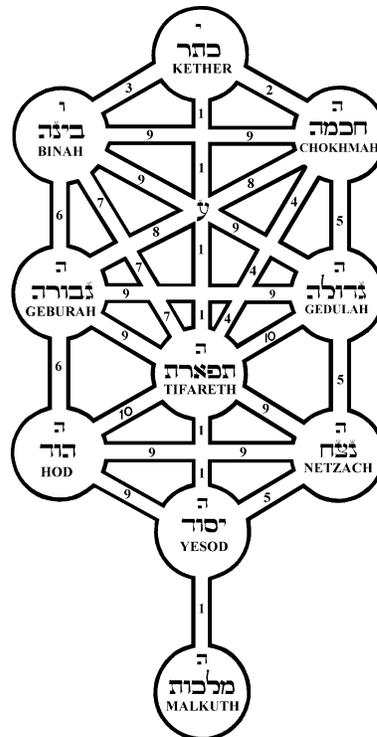


TABLE 3.1 Gate Names on the Composite Tree

Gate	Gate Name
1	Gates of יהוה Elohenu, Central Column
2	Gate of the Excellent Servants of Everlasting Action
3	Gate of the Unclean Servants
4	Gate of Messiah
5	Gates of the Ruler (Royal Gates), Right Column
6	Gates of Destruction, Left Column
7	Gate of Doom (Fate)
8	Gate of Samael
9	Gates of the Saint
10	Gates of the Wizard

### יהוה — THE “PERFECT NAME FROM NOT”

The single most important Name of Small Face in the Hebrew religion is YHVH יהוה. It is with this Name that most mystical qabalistic meditation and magical rituals are performed. The four letters Yod ך Heh ה Vav ך Heh ה correspond respectively to the four qabalistic Worlds of Atziluth (World of Emanation), B’riyah (World of Creation), Yetzirah (World of Formation), and Asiyah (Activity or Making). The relationship between Vast and Small Face is perfectly displayed in the Name יהוה. The Name יהוה portrays the active (sexual) tantric union between masculine (yang) and feminine (yin) aspects of Vast and Small Face in the Upper and Lower Worlds. The Yod ך and Upper Heh ה are the respective masculine and feminine (or yang and yin) aspects in the Upper Worlds. The Yod ך, which emanates in Sefirah Crown/Above, is essentially a witness state the size of the whole universe. The World of Atziluth is thereby rooted in Sefirah Crown/Above. The Upper Heh ה, which emanates in Sefirah Wisdom/East, is the latent condition of all Mayic (illusory) possibilities. The World of B’riyah is rooted in the supernal Sefirah Wisdom/East. In Chapter Two of the *Sifra Detzniyutha*, the Heh ה is equated with the nostrils of Vast Face, through which the cosmic breath “rushes forth.”

“The breath of the hollow pillar (nose) of the Ancient One unto Small Face.

Without the breath, It exists as NOT (לא).

In Heh ה, It is manifested (i.e. B’riyah).

The Heh ה above, the Heh ה below.

As it is written, “*AHH Adonai Elohim (אלהים) אהה ארני*.”<sup>28</sup>

And in Chapter Three of the *Sifra Detzniyutha*, we find:

“In the cohesion of the attached, in the breath of the weights is יהו.”

The superior Yod ך is adorned with the wreath of the Ancient One [i.e. the Ayin ף of Vast Face], the supernal envelope that is clear and concealing.

The superior Heh ה is adorned with the breath that comes forth in order to animate from the openings of the hollow pillar [i.e. the nose].

The superior Vav ך, the lamp of heavy darkness, which is adorned by its sides;

The letters then extend and are included in Small Face.

Just as they dwelled in the skull,

They are found to be extending into the whole body in order to establish all.”<sup>29</sup>

The Vav ך and Lower Heh ה represent the action of the consciousness of Small Face in the Lower Worlds. The Vav ך emanates from the feminine Sefirah Understanding/North and is masculine (yang) in the lower planes. The World of Yetzirah is rooted in this supernal Sefirah. The Lower Heh ה emanates from Sefirah Knowledge/First and is feminine (yin) in Asiyah (World of Activity or Making) as the Sefirah Kingdom. In Qabalah, the feminine aspect of the Spirit of Small Face in the lower worlds is called *Shekhinah* (שכינה lit. abiding, community). In the first chapter of the *Sifra Detzniyutha* is found the verse,

“Just as the Heh ה is found to be the *Shekhinah*.”

*Shekhinah* has many Names in the *Torah*, such as Bride (כלה, *Kalah*), Queen (מלכה, *Malkhah*), She (היא, *Hya*, pronounced “hee”), and Glory or Honor (כבוד, *Kavod*). It is through the interaction of the Vav ו and the Lower Heh ה that messianic appearances are manifested in the Lower Worlds. The action of the Spirit of Messiah in the World of Yetzirah resonates through the Vav ו. The Lower Heh ה is the presence of the Spirit of the Lord יהוה as the *Shekhinah* throughout the material Creation, or “Earth” (ארץ, *Aretz*). Actually, the Lord יהוה is referred to in the feminine about 10-15 percent of the time in the *Torah*, though often mistranslated or ignored. It is important to note that, despite the medieval injunctions of the rabbinate, the ancient Qabalah is not sexist. The Mystical Qabalah establishes the unity and equality of the male and female aspects of the Lord יהוה (“Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother”), and offers “equal opportunity” to become “Masters of the Name” and great servants of our Lord.

Among books on the subject of the Qabalah, there is some confusion regarding how the letters Yod י, Heh ה, and Vav ו are respectively ascribed to the supernal Sefiroth. Many authors ascribe only the upper tip of the Yod י to the Sefirah Crown/Above and the rest of the letter with Sefirah Wisdom/East. The Upper Heh ה is thereby associated with Sefirah Understanding/North and the Vav ו with the Sefirah Knowledge/First. This confusion may stem from the fact that most writers are not familiar with the Tree of Perfection, and may not clearly comprehend the nature of the relationship between Sefirah Kingdom and Sefirah Knowledge/First. The confusion may also arise from the fact that the Tree spans the four worlds, and at the same time, each Sefirah is a complete Tree. However, the *Sefer HaShmoth* and the *Sifra Detzniyutha* in the verses cited above clearly ascribe the Yod י entirely to Sefirah Crown/Above, the Upper Heh ה with Sefirah Wisdom/East, and the Vav ו with Sefirah Understanding/North. The Lower Heh ה and the World of Asiyah are associated with the seven lower Sefiroth beginning with Sefirah Knowledge/First.

It may help to visualize the Ezra letter Yod י as an eddy spinning around a still centerpoint. This still centerpoint is the infinitesimally small point (smaller than the Planck Constant

of  $10^{-34}$ cm) in Sefirah Crown/Above, where the Light of the Endless enters the *Tzimtzum* (Contraction) and descends as the Central Column of the Tree. If you could magnify this point and make it visible, you would see that it is not in fact a point, but rather a circle i.e. the “wreath of the Ancient One which adorns the superior Yod.” This is where the Yod ך is rooted in and emanates from the negatively existent roots. The two end points of the Yod ך are respectively the supernal Sefiroth Wisdom/East and Understanding/North, the uppermost sources for the two side columns of the Tree.

### יהוה AND THE NATURE OF MESSIANIC APPEARANCE

In all mystical traditions, the concept of Messiah and messianic appearances in the Lower Worlds is the pinnacle of all mysteries, unparalleled in its sublimeness, inscrutability, and controversy. Reflecting the apparently conflicting perspectives of dualism, qualified non-dualism, and pure non-dualism discussed in Chapter One, there are three distinct and seemingly incompatible views of the mystery of Messiah. Some unquestioningly embrace the idea that the immutable Divine Essence spontaneously manifests and sports in human form while retaining full power, omniscience, and omnipresence, and yet remaining unfettered by the laws of *mazal* and the limitations of relativistic illusion. From this perspective, such singularly exalted beings are said to appear from time to time throughout human history to deliver fresh dispensations of the universal mystical spirituality at the root of all religions. Another perspective regards such extraordinary souls as the rarest Masters i.e. the “Friends” or “*Rasools*” of God who lead demonstrative lives and perfectly reflect the divine attributes. This second view also embraces the idea that the active aspect of the Ancient One manifests, sustains, and dissolves the Small Face universe through the “Heads” of the Celestial Messiah in the Sefiroth of the Inner Court of the Tree. And finally, there are those who reject both the ideas of a corporeal and a Celestial Messiah outright, regarding all Name and Form as illusory and only the negatively existent *Ayn* as real.

The reader should not find it surprising that the proponents of these three different views of Messiah are prone to argue for the veracity of their perspective over the others. Previously, it was mentioned that the three different approaches to the mystical worldview are not in conflict, but represent gradations of distinction that exist only in human intellect. The three views of Messiah are likewise such gradations of perspective, all of which are relatively valid and reflect different spiritual constitutions. The Lord of All does appear to sport in human forms. And, the dream of the Small Face universe is projected and withdrawn through the action of the Celestial Messiah. And, all Name and Form are finite illusory manifestations, or shadows, of infinite undifferentiated Being.

Messiahs come as World Teachers when righteousness fades, and the message of the absolute unity of existence and the primacy of unconditional love, discrimination, and renunciation as a means to intimately know God becomes obscured by the conditioned impressions of conventional religions. Such extraordinary beings remind us in a lively way of our innate divinity and of the spiritual awakening that is our birthright.

“Whenever there is a decay of righteousness (*dharma*) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness, I manifest Myself; and for the protection of the virtuous, the destruction of the vicious and for the establishment of righteousness, I manifest Myself in age after age.”<sup>30</sup>

By appearing in a human form, Messiahs are able to perfectly portray divine qualities through the medium of human life in a way that can be comprehended by the finite consciousness of humans. In this way, it is said that the message of a Messiah *is* their divine life. Messiahs also perform other important functions. The deterioration of righteousness is often paralleled by deterioration in the gatekeepers, who have the responsibility of echoing the message of the Messiahs and pointing humanity to the “Open Gate.” Sometimes, Messiahs “wind the clocks” i.e. lead the transition from one Age to another, or vanquish powerful demons that threaten the stability of the Small Face universe.

Some Messiahs appear to be completely or partially veiled from awareness of their true identity until awakened to it by a Perfect Master who has incarnated to do so, or through a supra-conscious experience of the Divine. Master Mosheh was dramatically changed by his experience of the “Burning Bush.” The *Qur’an* also tells us that Master Mosheh was “guided” by Al Khidr, often referred to as the “Green One” or “The Jew.” The Perfect Master John baptized Master Yeshuvah in the Holy Spirit. The monk Tota Puri struck the Bengali *avatar* Sri Ramakrishna in the center of his forehead with a sharp rock. It immediately sent him into a *nirvikalpa samadhi* that lasted for six months and culminated twelve years of intense spiritual practices, after which Ramakrishna commenced his activity as a World Teacher.

The mystery of Messiah (Heb. *mashiach*) has been an important component of the Hebrew faith since ancient times. Yet, in the mainstream of modern Judaism, “Messiah” is a concept rarely referred to or discussed, except among the Chasidim. Most Jews are skeptical (if not cynical) that the Lord יהוה takes human form. Many religious Jews unequivocally deny such a possibility, even though there are a number of instances in the *Torah* where there is a strong inference that the Lord יהוה did so. As an example, the eighteenth chapter of *Torah B’reshith* begins with:

“The Lord יהוה appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinths of Mamre...[as one of the] three men standing near him.”<sup>31</sup>

Sometimes we find all of these mysterious strangers popularly portrayed as angels. However, later on, after Sarah laughs at hearing she would conceive, we read that one of the three speaks to Abraham:

“Then the Lord יהוה said to Abraham, “...is anything too wondrous for the Lord יהוה? I will return to you at the same season next year, and Sarah shall have a son.”<sup>32</sup>

And the Lord יהוה, through the form of this man, also goes on shortly thereafter to describe the fate of Sodom and Gemorrah. It then says that the other two men went on from there while

Abraham remained standing before and conversing with the Lord יהוה in the form of the third man. At the end of the conversation, in which Abraham pleads for mercy for Sodom, it says:

“When the Lord יהוה had finished speaking to Abraham, He departed...”<sup>33</sup>

The Shemite qabalistic tradition teaches that the Lord יהוה as the Celestial Messiah has a four-fold nature and function. All four aspects are mentioned and alluded to in numerous ways and places in the *Tanakh*, the *Peshitta*, and the *Qur'an*. In the Qabalah, the four aspects of Celestial Messiah are described as four “Heads.” The four Heads correspond respectively to the four Sefiroth of the Inner Court of the Tree and to the three Mother Letters Alef א, Mem מ, and Shin ש, and the letter of the Holy Temple, Tav ת. The four Heads emanate in pairs and represent the differentiated action of Small Face in manifesting, sustaining, and dissolving the Creation. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Celestial Heads of Messiah are:

1. “Depth of First” (עומק ראשית, *Omehq Reshith*), corresponding to the letter Alef א. Also simply called “The First,” active in creating.
2. “Depth of Last” (עומק אחרית, *Omehq Acharit*), corresponding to the letter Tav ת. Also simply called “The Last,” active in dissolving.
3. “Depth of Good” (עומק טוב, *Omehq Tov*), corresponding to the letter Mem מ, active in sustaining, manifested in the Lower Worlds as Master Mosheh.
4. “Depth of Evil” (עומק רע, *Omehq Ra'a*), corresponding to the letter Shin ש, active in sustaining, manifested in the Lower Worlds as Master Yeshuvah.

The four letters are also said to be the filters through which the Lord יהוה incarnates. The Name *Reshith* is contained in the first word of the first line of *Torah B'reshith*, which could be translated “By the First.” The Hebrew formulae for the names *Reshith* (ראשית) and *Acharit* (אחרית) contain many letters in common. The letter formula of Master Yeshuvah's name (יהשוה) clearly displays the filter of the Shin ש in the middle of the Name יהוה (see Figure 3.10). The Hebrew formula for the Name Mosheh משה is Mem מ (Water), Shin ש (Fire), Heh ה

(*Shekhinah*). The reverse of Master Mosheh's Name, Heh Shin Mem **השמ**, is *HaShem* (lit. "The Name," an epitaph of **יהוה**). It is also interesting to note that in the Sinatic Hebrew alphabet, the letterform of the Shin is contained in the letterform of the Mem.

The full implications of the Lord **יהוה** manifesting in human form as Master Mosheh have faded into esoteric obscurity. The penultimate storytellers of *Torah Shmoth* have relayed to us: the spectacular story of the liberation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery<sup>34</sup> and the High Magic of *Pesach* (**פסח**, *Passover*), the attempt to make Israel a "nation of prophets and priests," the ultimate drama on Sinai, and the meticulous construction of the Tabernacle containing the Ark. Many wonderful teachings about the nature and significance of Messiah in the Hebrew and Jewish traditions have been lost, suppressed, distorted, or watered down. Hence, Jews generally regard Master Mosheh as a kind of "holy magician," and have lost almost all awareness of the significance of Master Yeshuvah having come to renew the core mystical teaching of the Jews within the context of Judaism. Considering that many Christians themselves are confused by contradictions, inter-sect differences, and fundamentalist rigidity in Church dogma, it is not surprising that most Jews refute any credibility for Master Yeshuvah as being a messianic appearance of the Lord **יהוה**.

FIGURE 3.10 Hebrew Name *Yeshuvah*



When Master Yeshuvah came, the Jews were waiting for the messianic advent of the Lord **יהוה** as *Acharit* (The Last), who was expected to liberate them from Roman control and give the Jews dominion in Palestine. *Acharit* has been described as riding a white horse and wielding a fiery sword (Figure 3.11). When Master Yeshuvah's actions did not match the characteristics of *Acharit*, he was rejected by the pundits and religious politicians

(but not by many of the people). Furthermore, Master Yeshuvah threatened to undermine the spiritual authority of the Pharisees and the economic authority of the corrupt Sadducees, at a time when the Temple of Jerusalem was the biggest “bank” in the trade-rich Middle East.

In the **Gospels of Matthew** 11:14 and **Mark** 9:11-13, Master Yeshuvah specifically identifies his cousin, John the Baptist, as the reincarnation of Eliyahu HaNabi (Elijah the Prophet). In *Tanakh*, it is said that Eliyahu will again incarnate to announce the final messianic advent of the Lord יהוה. In the Qabalah, Eliyahu is said to be the incarnate form of the letter Tzade ט (letter-gate on the Column of the Left on the flat Tree). The Tzade ט is “at war with” the letter Zayin ז (letter-gate on the Column of the Right). The Zayin ז incarnated as Yezebel, who was subsequently vanquished by Eliyahu; and then as Salome, whose infamous nude dance resulted in the beheading of John the Baptist.

So, the mainstream of religious Jews deny Master Yeshuvah as a messianic appearance of the Lord יהוה within the context of Judaism. They greatly revere, but do not generally ascribe messianic stature to Master Mosheh, ignore the massive commonalties with Islam, and wait for *Acharit* who will bring the Jews to the Great Sabbath. Mainstream religious Christians politely respect Master Mosheh, but certainly have no sense of him as a Messiah. They feel no connection with the Prophet Mohammed and Islam, regard Master Yeshuvah as the exclusive and only incarnation of the Lord יהוה, and are waiting for “The Last” to appear as the “Second Coming of Master Yeshuvah” who will vanquish Satan (סמאל, *Samael*) and take (only) twice born Christians to Heaven. Mainstream religious Muslims, who officially don’t believe in the possibility of Messiah (notwithstanding their tradition of the “Hidden *Maghdi*,” and the messianic beliefs of some Sufis),<sup>35</sup> have an ambiguous respect for Master Mosheh and the “People of the Book.” They regard Master Yeshuvah (called *Isa* in the *Qur’an*) as an “immaculately conceived” master of the highest rung. They are waiting for “The Last” to take action on the “Day of Judgment” (*Yom Ah-Din*), when *Allah* will resurrect the souls of the faithful in Paradise.

FIGURE 3.11 *Acharit* Wielding a Sword Riding a White Horse



Many details found in the *Torah*, *Peshitta* (Gospels), and *Apocrypha* regarding the nature, lives, experiences, powers, and teachings of Master Mosheh and Master Yeshuvah find parallels in those of Messiahs in other traditions. Messianic appearances are called *avatara* in Sanskrit. The Hindu tradition contains beautiful and profound descriptions of the life dramas and teachings of the ten incarnations of *Vishnu*, including Rama, Krishna, Narasimha (lit. Man-Lion), and Matsya (the Fish, who is said to have appeared to Noah during the Flood). Hindus also ascribe messianic stature to Chaitanya (sixteenth century CE), Ramakrishna (1836-1886), Shirdi Sai Baba (d.1918) and Satya Sai Baba (1925-present). They assign such status as well as to incarnations of the Divine Mother i.e. the Goddess, such as Saradamani Devi (1853-1920), Anandamayi Ma (1896-1982), Amritanandamayi Ma (1953-present, known widely as “Ammachi”), and others. Buddhism provides detailed descriptions of the incarnations of the Buddha, and of the one to come called Maitreya. The sage Lao Tze, to whom is ascribed the *Tao-Te Ching*, was the revered divine incarnation who sired the development of Taoism. And Zoroaster

was the messianic wellspring who transmitted the *Zend Avesta* and originated the tradition passed down through the Farsis.

In studying the lives of these many diverse Messiahs, one notices the many instances where they persevered through challenges and travails. Master Mosheh suffered at the hands of the Egyptians and was excommunicated and sent into the desert. Master Yeshuvah was ridiculed by those in authority, and eventually tortured and apparently crucified. Master Mohammed was forced to prevail in tribal warfare, and at one point had to escape from Mecca to Medina. Master Rama was banished to the forest for fourteen years and forced to battle the demon Ravana to win back his kidnapped wife Sita. Master Zoroaster was poisoned. Master Ramakrishna, Master Satya Sai, and Devi Ammachi were all thought to be crazy by their families. Master Satya Sai was taken to a false healer who poured acid on his head. Devi Ammachi was sent away from her home as a youth to survive alone without support. And in every instance, these exalted beings demonstrated by the way they lived and responded to these challenges the very teachings they were trying to impart—their lives were their messages!