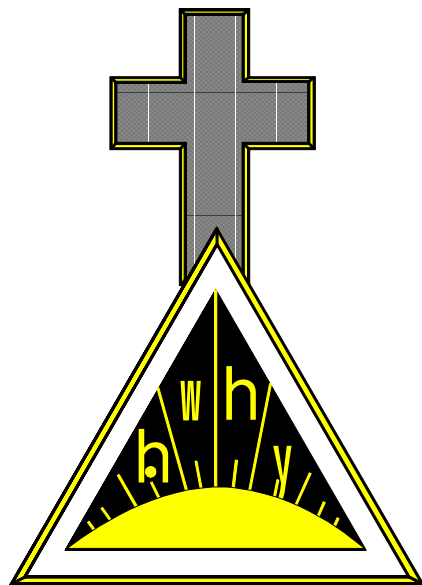


The Hermetic Order Of The
GOLDEN DAWN Intl.

**THE FOUR WORLDS OF THE
QABALAH**

**The Guide For Understanding
The Four Worlds**



ZELATOR 1=10

Having a good understanding and a firm grasp of the Four World concept of the Qabalah is essential for future Qabalistic understanding, and later, for Qabalistic magical workings. As has been pointed out in earlier lessons, the Qabalah describes the Tree of Life as having ten sephiroth and twenty-two paths. In addition, the Qabalah also defines the Universe as being divided into four worlds. Each of these worlds is represented by one of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. If the Tree is the glyph that we use to represent the total manifested Universe, then that would mean that the Tree is in fact divided into four sections. These four sections are called the Four Worlds of the Qabalah. On the other hand, modern Qabalists and those of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn prefer the glyph of four trees. This fits in with the old saying "rtk is in t̄wklm and t̄wklm is in rtk", for as we reach rtk, we then climb onto the next tree and again begin our path in t̄wklm. This also expresses that we have forty sephiroth and eighty-eight paths. Some Qabalists have gone even farther than this. They feel that in each sephira, an entire tree exists, or actually, that four entire trees exist. So, in t̄wklm, you would have an entire tree, or you could have four entire trees with one corresponding to each of the Four Worlds of the Qabalah, or to each letter of the Tetragrammaton. We in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn feel comfortable with the concept of four trees and four worlds. However, we do recognize the fact that aspects of any given sephira may be found in another sephira.

If we look, for example, at d̄wh as the sephira of intellect and j̄x̄n as the sephira of desire, it certainly could be argued that in d̄wh there is the possibility of thinking about desire. So, consequently, in that sephira it could be argued that an entire tree exists. Feel comfortable at this point in the theory that there are four basic trees, one tree on top of another. Each tree leads to a whole new and exciting dimension of consciousness. This dimension of consciousness is called a World in the Qabalah, and there are four of them.

Let's begin at the first world, it is called Atziluth. This is the archetypal world, or the world of pure Spirit, which activates all the other worlds. In other words, all other worlds evolve from it. Atziluth, because it is Pure Spirit beyond time, beyond space, and in essence beyond manifestation, is beyond description. Some Qabalists use the term Atziluth as the Divine world, or the world where the thoughts of God exist. This is the world in which the name of God is said to exist. Incidentally, and very important to remember, when you use a particular Divine name for any given sephira, Adonai Ha-Aretz for example, you are calling the name of God in that sephira in the world of Atziluth. Traditionally, this world is also referred to as Ha-Oh-Lam Atziluth, Ha-Oh-Lam meaning "world of." As might be expected by Qabalists, everything is corresponding. Thus, we ascribe the letter y to the world of Atziluth, or the world of Primal Fire.

The second world is Briah, also known as the Creative World. This is the world of pure intellect, of Archangels and archetypes, and is ascribed to the letter h and primal Water. Briah is known as Ha-Oh-Lam Briah, which means World of Creation. Briah is also beyond mortal comprehension. It is far beyond the ability of the conscious mind to understand it. It is in this world that we vibrate the Archangelic names. This is also called the Divine name in the world of Briah. For example, in the sephira of t̄rapt, the Divine name is YHVH Eloah Vedaath. That Divine name is the general Divine name that manifests through all the worlds as emanating from the World of

Atziluth. However, if I wish to call upon the name of God in trapt in the World of Briah, then I would vibrate the name Michael. Michael, of course, is the Archangel, but as you must remember, all manifestations are aspects of the Great Unknowable One. Even the Divine name is an aspect of the total Unknowable One.

The third world is the world called Yetzirah, or Ha-Oh-Lam Yetzirah. Yetzirah is the World of Formation, and here are found the subtle and flashing patterns behind physical matter. This is a very important world because most magical workings are done in the World of Yetzirah. The Emerald Tablet says, "As above, so below." That is why the occultist will raise his consciousness as high as he can stretch it. In other words, he will open it to the higher, and reach from the physical mundane world into the World of Yetzirah. By building and creating in the World of Yetzirah, the law of manifestation states that it must come into physical being on the physical plane. Put simply, as above, so below. Yetzirah is the world of angels, or high level energies as they are called. In studying various diagrams on the Qabalah, you will see Choir of Angels or Order of Angels for a particular sephira. The Order of Angels are manifested in the World of Yetzirah. Just like with Briah, the name of the Order of Angels is also the Divine name for that sephira for this particular world of the Qabalah. Coming back to our example, the Divine name for trapt in the World of Atziluth is YHVH Eloah Vedaath. The Divine name for trapt in the World of Briah is Michael. The Divine name for trapt in the World of Yetzirah is Melekim. To keep it simple, we refer to Melekim as the Choir or Order of Angels; Michael as the Archangel; and YHVH Eloah Vedaath as the Divine name in general for that particular sephira.

The final world, or the fourth world, is Assiah, or Ha-Oh-Lam Assiah. Assiah refers to the active world, or the physical world of sensation, both seen and unseen energies of matter. It is attributed to the final h of the Divine name. It also refers to Primal Earth. We ascribe the Kerubim, as representatives of the four elements manifested on the physical plane, to the World of Assiah. Essentially, you and I, most of the day, live in the World of Assiah, the physical, mundane plane.

Now, getting back to our definition that in fact there are Four Worlds and in each world there exists a tree, this gives us in reality forty sephiroth. In the course of this study we will not spend a lot of time with the other viable theories on the Four Worlds of the Qabalah. As I mentioned earlier, one theory essentially describes four hundred sephiroth, another theory forty, whereas another theory you just have the ten, but the four worlds are divided on the Tree. We feel that is too simplistic for deep level workings and magical workings later on. So, consequently, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn ascribes to the Qabalistic theory of forty sephiroth, or four hundred. The only difference between the forty sephiroth or the four hundred sephiroth is that the forty sephiroth each have a Tree within them, thus giving us four hundred.

Now, in addition to ascribing one letter of the Tetragrammaton to each World of the Qabalah, we ascribe a Divine name or an Archangelic name or a Choir or Order of Angel name to the worlds of the Qabalah. But there is no Divine name or Angelic name for Assiah, the physical world. In addition, we have four color scales and these color scales have been accepted by the Hermetic Qabalah as the King scale, the Queen scale, the Emperor scale, and the Empress scale colors. The King scale refers to Atziluth, the Queen scale to Briah, and the Emperor scale to Yetzirah, while the Empress scale refers to the physical world of Assiah. Traditionally, in Golden Dawn

philosophy, the sephiroth are usually colored in the scale of Briah, and the paths are colored in the scale of Atziluth, or the King Scale of colors. So you have the King scale of colors for the paths and the Queen scale of colors for the sephiroth. One of the reasons for this is balance, and in all workings of the Tree of Life, balance must be of prime importance. In describing the Four Worlds, the Order has chosen the term Primal Elements to describe Fire, Water, Air, and Earth, symbolized by the letters of the Tetragrammaton and corresponding them to the Four Worlds in a base effort to distinguish these energies from other forms of elements described on the Tree of Life.

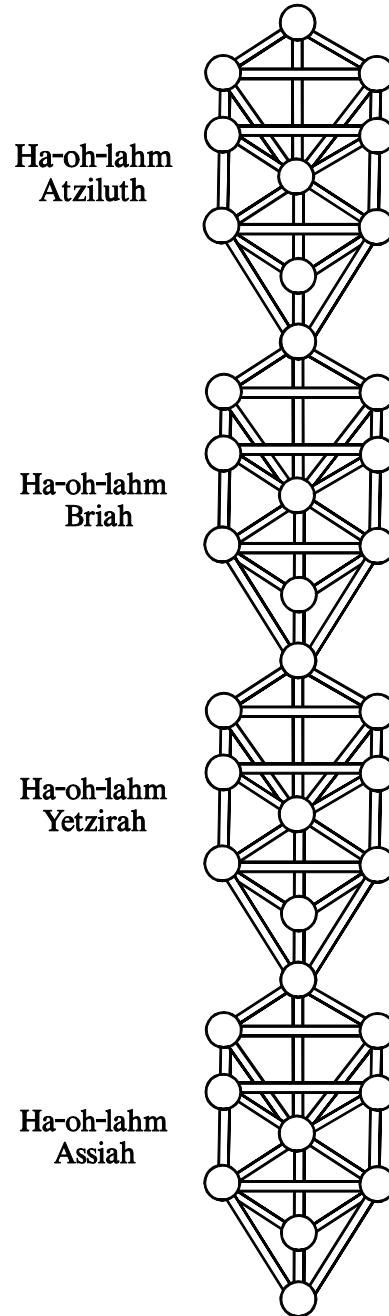
This is very important, since in each individual world, γ (Fire), is also attributed to $hmkj$; h (Water), to $hnyb$; \aleph (Air), to $trapt$; final h , or manifestation, to $t\aleph kl m$. We will distinguish these elements from the Primal Elements as Specific Elements. Thus, in Atziluth, Primal Fire, are four such Specific Elements; a Fire (Specific) of Fire (Primal); a Water (Specific) of Fire (Primal); an Air (Specific) of Fire (Primal); an Earth (Specific) of Fire (Primal). Now, when we examine the world of Briah, or Primal Water, there is a Fire of Water, a Water of Water, an Air of Water, and an Earth of Water. If we look at Yetzirah, or Primal Air, we have a Fire of Air, a Water of Air, an Air of Air, and an Earth of Air. The same would be true of Assiah. Assiah, of course, is Earth, so we would have Fire of Earth, Water of Earth, Air of Earth, and Earth of Earth. Another additional place where the Four Worlds concept helps us to better understand and classify is in the area of the Tarot. In the Tarot, Wands always refer to Atziluth, and cups to Briah. Swords refer to Yetzirah, and Pentacles refer to Assiah. So, the four suits of the Tarot are also broken down categorically into the Four Worlds of the Qabalah. This will later be of great help to you in understanding the Tarot. Of course, the Major Arcana refer directly to the paths and not the sephiroth.

Since we have been talking about elements in regards to the Four Worlds of the Qabalah and the Tree of Life, there is another aspect of the elements on the Tree of Life. These are the three maternal Hebrew letters, called the Mother Letters. It is important to understand that the element found on the paths of these three letters are not the same element as found in the sephiroth. These are called Transitional Elements. For example, the Fool card is the letter a and is Air. Do not confuse this with the same element of Air that is represented by \aleph of Yetzirah, which would be Primal Air, or the \aleph of $trapt$, which would be Specific Air. The elements of the paths are transitional in that they are in a constant state of flow between two sephiroth. It is not our intention at this point to bombard you with different categories of elements as related to the Tree of Life, but we will add two more at this stage. The first one is called Primordial Elements, and these are the elements as rooted in $r tk$. If every aspect of the Tree of Life finds its roots in $r tk$, $r tk$ being the primordial point, then we have at that point an aspect called Primordial Elements. If we look at the lower sephiroth on the Tree of Life, primarily $d\aleph h$, $d\aleph sy$, and $j \aleph n$, then we find Astral Elements, and these are not to be confused with the other elements explored on the Tree of Life. Finally, in $t\aleph kl m$, we have the Astral Elements, the Primordial Elements the Maternal Elements, the Specific Elements, Transitional Elements, and Primal Elements all coming into final manifestation in what is called Base Elements, which

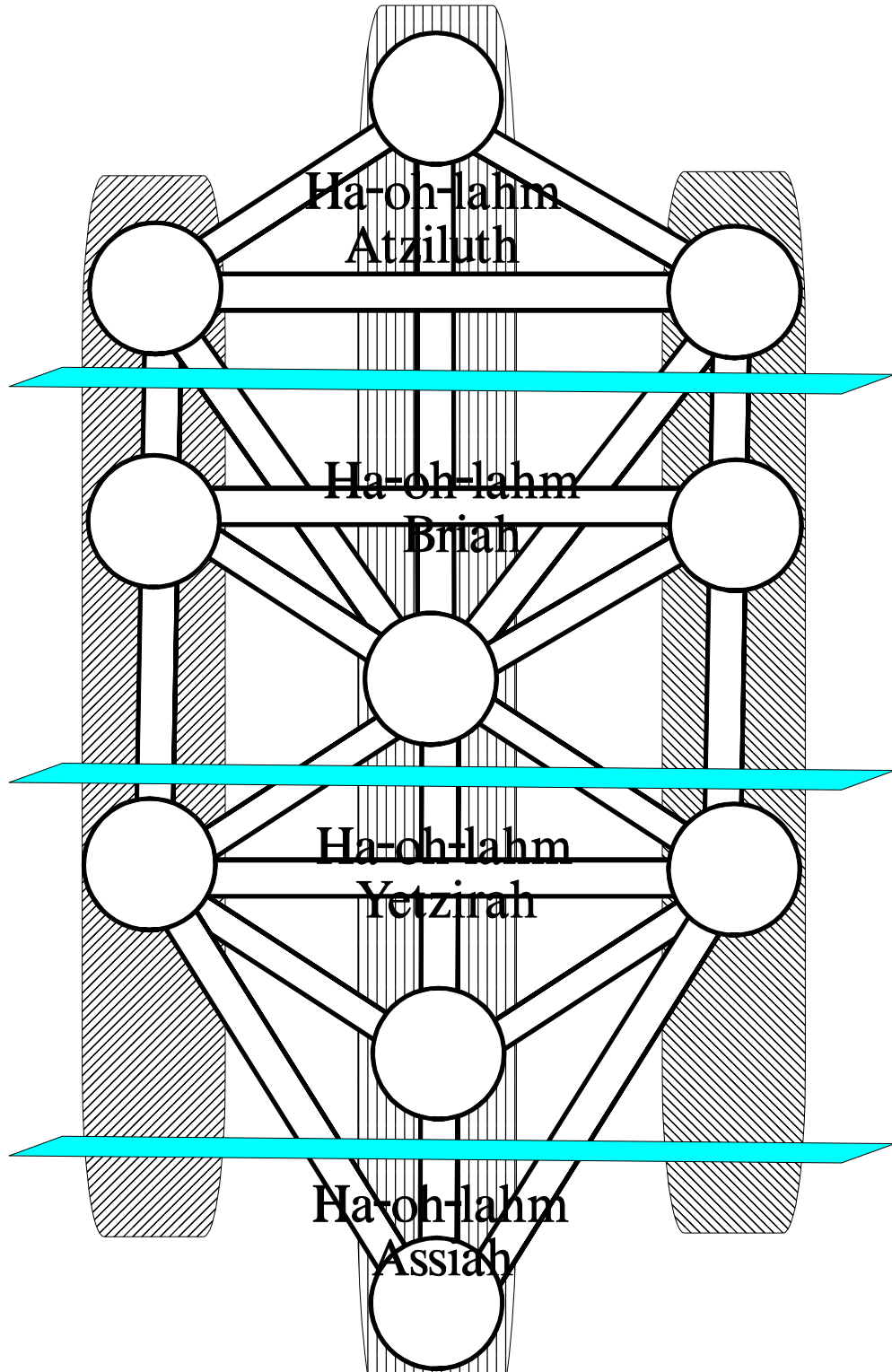
are the ultimate expression of those first found in r tk in their primordial state. In every single application of the term element, the formula of YHVH applies. Wherever y appears, we have fiery qualities. Wherever h appears, we have watery qualities. Wherever װ appears, we have airy qualities. Wherever final h appears, we have manifestation or Earth qualities.

In review, the Four Worlds of the Qabalah help us to classify and understand different aspects of manifestation as it emanates from the Unknowable to the physical plane of existence. Through this emanation, from Atziluth into Briah, Yetzirah, and finally into Assiah, we can also attribute other aspects such as elements and even Tarot Cards. Of course, all are under the heading and governance of hwhy. To reiterate the elements again, we have Primordial Elements found in r tk, the basically undifferentiated potential; we have Primal Elements, the hwhy applied to the Four Worlds of the Qabalah; we have Transitional Elements, the y, h and װ that are maternal, also signified by the three Mother Letters on the Tree of Life; we have Specific Elements, hwhy as applied to hmkj, hnyb, trapt, and twklm in any one of the four worlds; Astral Elements, the y h װ h applied to the lower sephiroth; Base Elements, found exclusively in twklm, blended and part of physical manifestation. This may seem complicated at first, but in understanding the Four Worlds, it will be easier for you to make transition into understanding other aspects of magical and theosophical working. It is important to understand what area or

plane of existence you are talking about. Consequently, the Four Worlds give us this subdivision and makes classification much easier.



**The Four Worlds
(Four Tree System)**



**The Four Worlds
(One Tree System)**