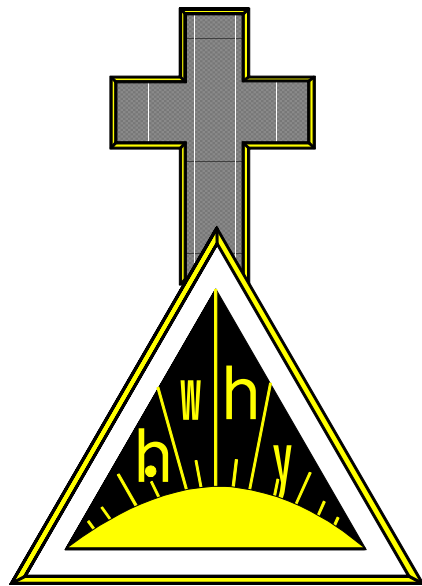


The Hermetic Order Of The
GOLDEN DAWN^{Intl.}

**THE THREE VEILS OF
NEGATIVE EXISTENCE AND
TZIM TZUM**



THEORICUS 2=9

This is without a doubt one of the most difficult lessons to write and express, because, when we talk about the Tree of Life, we are talking about creation and existence. When we talk about the sephiroth and the paths, we are talking about energy planes or states of consciousness. Now we are going to try to talk about what is beyond the Tree of Life. If you look at most glyphs of the Tree of Life, you will notice that there are three rings above rtk. These three rings are known as the three veils of negative existence. These veils are known as Ain, Ain Soph, and Ain Soph Aur, consecutively.

We are going to set a premise of understanding before we delve further into this lesson. The premise being stressed is that all the names of God, from whatever culture they may come, Hebrew, Arabic, Egyptian or Christian, all tend to deal with God in manifestation. They deal with the Creator after he has manifested. In many cases, they deal with the Creator in the state of polarity and duality as found in the sephiroth. There is no name for God beyond creation. God is without name. The best way to state this concept is that we can never know the true name of God as long as we are an aspect of creation. It is only through the elevation of our consciousness beyond our own limits that we can come to know the unspeakable name of God. It is probably the most significant reason why we find that in Hebrew, God's name is unspeakable. Speech, words and letters are aspects of creation, and thus they are aspects of consciousness. The three veils of negative existence, however, particularly Ain and Ain Soph, are beyond consciousness, beyond words and symbols, and beyond creation.

Some might bring up the creation according to Genesis in the Bible and say that the name of Elohim is used thirty-two times in the opening of Genesis. However, it must be kept in mind and emphasized that none of the names of God refer to the Creator himself. The Creator himself is referred to one of the veils of negative existence, particularly Ain Soph. This basically means "Infinite Being" or "The Infinite." The names used in the scriptures refer to various ways in which God manifested himself in creation. Thus, the name Elohim that is found in Genesis, refers to the manifestation of delineation and definition and not to the Infinite Being.

The Universe is nothing more than thought projected from the mind of Deity. Thought does have form, however, for it can be measured and is considered to have substance. Consequently, we can also consider thought as a basis of creation. Again, we are not absolutely accurate because we are at a place that doesn't exceed the limits of the veils of negative existence, which are essentially even beyond thought. Let us consider for a moment that the Universe is the consciousness by-product of the mental activity of the Infinite Unknowable Deity. If this be the case, then the Tree of Life is the symbolic representation of the raw material of the Divine Consciousness. It is also indicating the process whereby the Universe came into full manifestation and being. As stated earlier in this lesson, the three veils of negative existence really stretch and cross some imaginary line beyond thought and beyond consciousness in the sense of how we understand the term. Even thought itself and consciousness can be said to be manifestation in some form or another, aside from that of the three veils of negative existence which are beyond the World of Manifestation.

The Qabalist draws a veil at the point of manifestation between rtk and the three veils of negative existence. We draw this veil not because there is nothing there, but simply because the mind as such must stop there. It cannot comprehend beyond

that point. It is interesting to note that no matter how far we take our minds back to the origins of existence, we find that there is always a preceding existence. The mind can only go back so far. It only has the ability to reach back into history, time or space, or to a finite point if you will. We find that on the other hand, the three veils are infinite and, thus, the mind cannot comprehend them.

We, as Qabalists, attempt to allow our minds to go back as far as the highest point, the farthest backpoint that we can manage. This is rtk and it is equated with the most transcendent form of God that we can conceive with a physical mind. The God name of rtk is "Eheieh." This translated is "I Am", or more understandably, "The Self Existing One" or "Pure Being."

This, in its totality, does not mean very much to us unless we have a deeper understanding of its concept. Consequently, we need hmkj (Wisdom) and hnyb (Understanding) to have a better comprehension of rtk . The sephiroth become better known to us as we relate them to the other sephiroth on the Tree of Life. Moreover, we do not have this option when we reach this veil of negative existence simply because the veils have nothing to compare themselves to. All forms of science, philosophy and religion reach this point, the veil of negative existence. Scientists even go back to the Big Bang theory. However, due to this veil, it limits such passage to moving any further. The same is true with many religions. They find themselves picturing deity as a man with a white beard on a throne, certainly this is not accurate. It is only the occultist that attempts to go beyond the veils of negative existence. This may sound impossible, yet we are able to penetrate deeper into the creation of existence, of all that is and all that is not, because we use symbols and deep meditative methods for understanding the creation of the Universe.

S.L. MacGregor Mathers says that rtk is the $\text{t\textbackslash klm}$ of the unmanifest. "The Limitless Ocean of Negative Light does not proceed from a center, for it is centerless yet it concentrates a center which is the number one of the manifested sephira of rtk ." Thus, we see that the limitless gives rise and manifestation to the infinite center and oneness which becomes the crown, rtk .

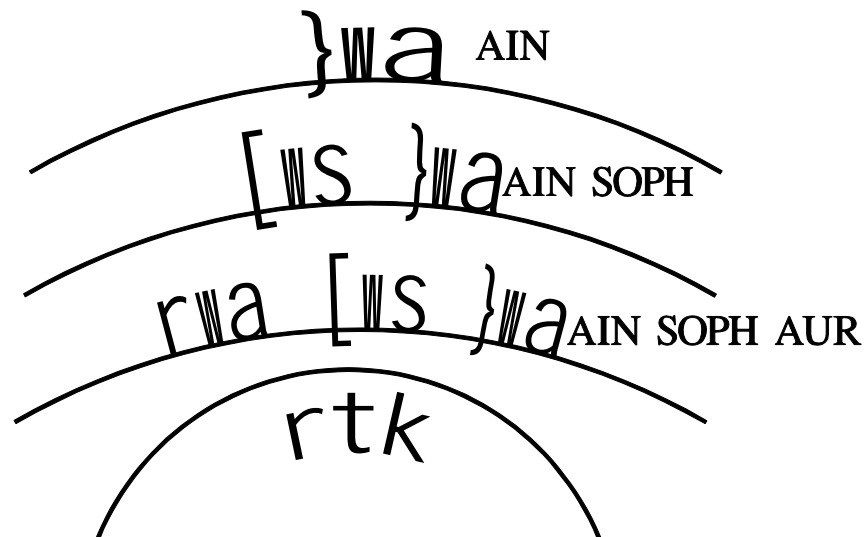
We, as occultists and Qabalists, recognize four planes of manifestation and three planes of unmanifestation or negative existence. These are called Ain, meaning negativity or no-thing; Ain Soph, meaning without limit; and Ain Soph Aur, meaning limitless Light. It is out of Ain Soph Aur that we have the Primordial One manifested as depicted in rtk . (For those of you who have forgotten the four planes of manifestation, they are as follows in order: Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah.)

In regard to negative existence, if we think in terms of anything that we already know or could possibly know, we shall be in error. For whatever else there may be, negative existence simply cannot be and, moreover, it is unmanifested.

The three veils of negative existence suggest certain concepts or ideas to our minds. Keep in mind now that everything in this lesson may not be purely accurate. In regards to Ain (again, meaning no-thing, and it is spelled rightly so), this particular veil is not the same as the concept of nothingness, but rather it is negativity. In addition, this is not to be related to the negativity of Darkness. Our minds cannot conceive of such a thing that is and is not. We cannot conceive of the concept of existence and non-existence as being one and the same.

Negative existence is really outside the realization of our ability to understand it. However, this does not mean to say that we are outside of the range of its influence on us. On the physical plane we have no direct access to the Being of negative existence, yet all that we know as existing has its roots and origins in this negative existence. What we are trying to say here basically is that although we don't truly know of negative existence, we certainly know of its effects on our own existence and lives. The Mystics throughout history who have ventured as far back as one can safely go on this physical existence have referred to negative existence as Light or Ain Soph Aur, the "The Boundless and Limitless Light." They have spoken of the first manifestation as sound; "In the Beginning was the Word."

Thus, in conclusion, we wish to emphasize that behind the most exalted aspects of our Universe lies the Unmanifest, which is the "Ultimate Source of All", "The Great Unknowable One" which cannot be known to us. The unmanifest is symbolized by the words negative limitless Light, or in Hebrew, Ain Soph Aur. On the glyph of the Tree of Life, you will notice that there are three curves of radiating Light. The outer curve is Ain (No-thing), the middle or center is Ain Soph, and the innermost is Ain Soph Aur. These are basically understood to be the veils that separate the outpouring of our Universe from that which it emerged. Behind these mystical veils energy flows constantly to us from rtk, moving down the Tree through hmkj, hmyb etc., following the path of the Flaming Sword until it reaches its base in twklm. Most of our study in the area of esoteric thinking and magical workings deals with the manifested Universe through the Tree of Life and the paths that connect them. Very little is done with the concept of negative existence because of the fact that it is beyond comprehension. Let us re-emphasize that negative existence does have an effect on our lives as it is the source of all that is and all that is not.



Tzim Tzum

One of the important concepts of the Qabalah is that of Tzim Tzum, or self constriction of God's Light. The process of Tzim Tzum is confusing to Qabalistic as well as Theosophic scholars. So, consequently, it is not important that you totally understand it, but it is essential that you do have some basic knowledge of it.

It was Rabbi Issac Luria, 1534 - 1572, the head of one of the finest Qabalistic schools, who probably gave us our clearest statement on the subject of Tzim Tzum. Here is what he had to say:

"Before all things were created... The Supernal Light was simple, and it filled all existence. There was no empty space... when His simple will was to create all universes... He constricted the Light to the sides... leaving a vacated space... This space was perfectly round...

After this constriction took place... There was a place where all things could be created... He then drew a single straight thread from the Infinite Light... and brought it into the vacated space... It was through that line that the Infinite Light was brought down below..."

So, we see the process of Tzim Tzum as being rather straightforward. God first withdrew His Light, forming a vacated space in which all creation would take place. In order for His infinite creative power to be in that space, He projected into that space a thread of His Light. Essentially, it was through this thread of Light that all creation took place.

Let us emphasize here that Tzim Tzum is not to be taken literally since it is impossible as human beings to apply any spatial concept to God. We are speaking of Tzim Tzum in a conceptual sense. If God filled every space of perfection, then man would have no reason to exist. In other words, God constricted Himself (His infinite perfection), allowing a place for man's free will and accomplishment to exist.

Let us also emphasize that Tzim Tzum did not take place in God's essence, but rather in His Light. It was this Light that was the first thing that was brought into being, representing God's power of creation. This itself, the Light, had been brought into existence for the purpose of creating the Universe.

We find that one of the first teachings of the concept of Tzim Tzum was really made available to us from the Zohar. A passage may be referred to as thus, "At the head of the king's authority, He carved out the Supernal Luminescence, a Lamp of Darkness. There emerged out of the hidden of hidden, the mystery of the infinite, an unformed line, embedded in a ring... measured with a thread... " Without a doubt, this is a direct reference to the process of Tzim Tzum.

If we examine the reasons behind Tzim Tzum, they stem from a basic philosophical paradox. God must be in the world, therefore, all things must be God and of God. Yet, if He does not restrict Himself from it, all creation would be overwhelmed by His essence, since His essence is infinite. This also creates another difficult paradox involving Tzim Tzum.

Since God removed His Light from the vacated space, it must be empty of his essence. Still, all in all, God must also fill this space since "There is no place empty of

Him." This is the most profound and basic paradox, and it closely relates to God's transcendence and eminence.

This paradox brings out a very strong point that we must realize, and that is, this space is only Dark and vacated with respect to us as human beings. This "Lamp of Darkness" mentioned in the Zohar is "Darkness" to us. In relation to the Great Unknowable Lord of the Universe, it too is a "Lamp." In other words, with respect to God, it is actually Light. For God it is as if Tzim Tzum never took place. The process of Tzim Tzum was not for God, but rather it was required for us.

It is through the study of the Qabalah that in the Mysteries we try to understand and solve the paradox of how an absolutely transcending God could interact with his creation. It is the understanding of the sephiroth and similar concepts that helps us to bridge between the Great Unknowable One and the Universe, as well as ourselves. Perhaps they are one and the same, yet certainly the Great Unknowable King of the Universe is more than His own creation. Let us also remember that the Darkness or vacated space created by Tzim Tzum is actually Light with respect to God. The creation of the vacated space through the process of Tzim Tzum as well as to all the worlds known and unknown, does in no way change or diminish God's Infinite Light of Ain Soph Aur. In simplistic terms, we have the concept of no-thing, otherwise known as "Ain" or negative existence. This then became the boundless, the feminine aspect, the Infinite known as "Ain Soph." Together they create "Ain Soph Aur," the Infinite Light. The Light then restricted itself through the process of Tzim Tzum, yet it was only restricted as far as our perceptions are concerned. This in itself gives rise to rtk. Through rtk we have the path of manifestation following the path of the Flaming Sword down to tklm. This is an essentially simplistic overview of the processes of negative existence and its influence on the Tree of Life and on us.

