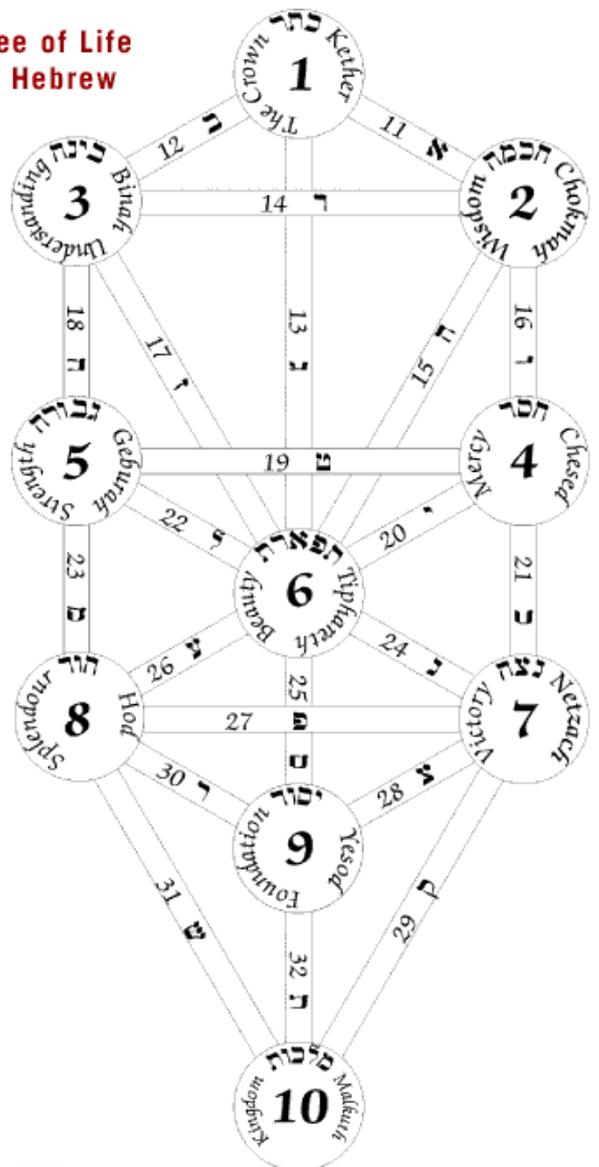
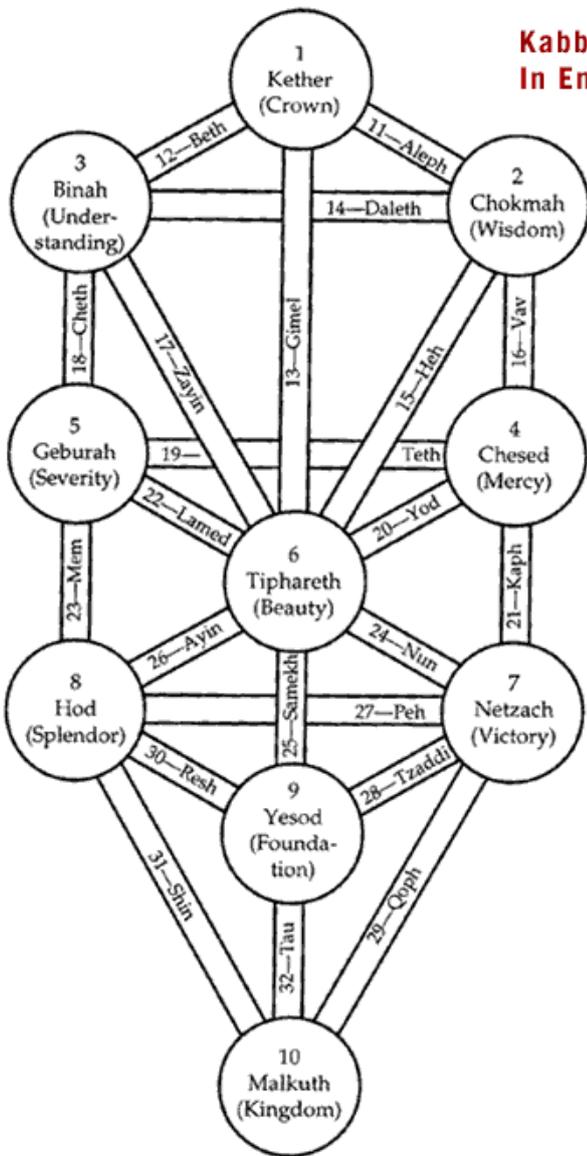
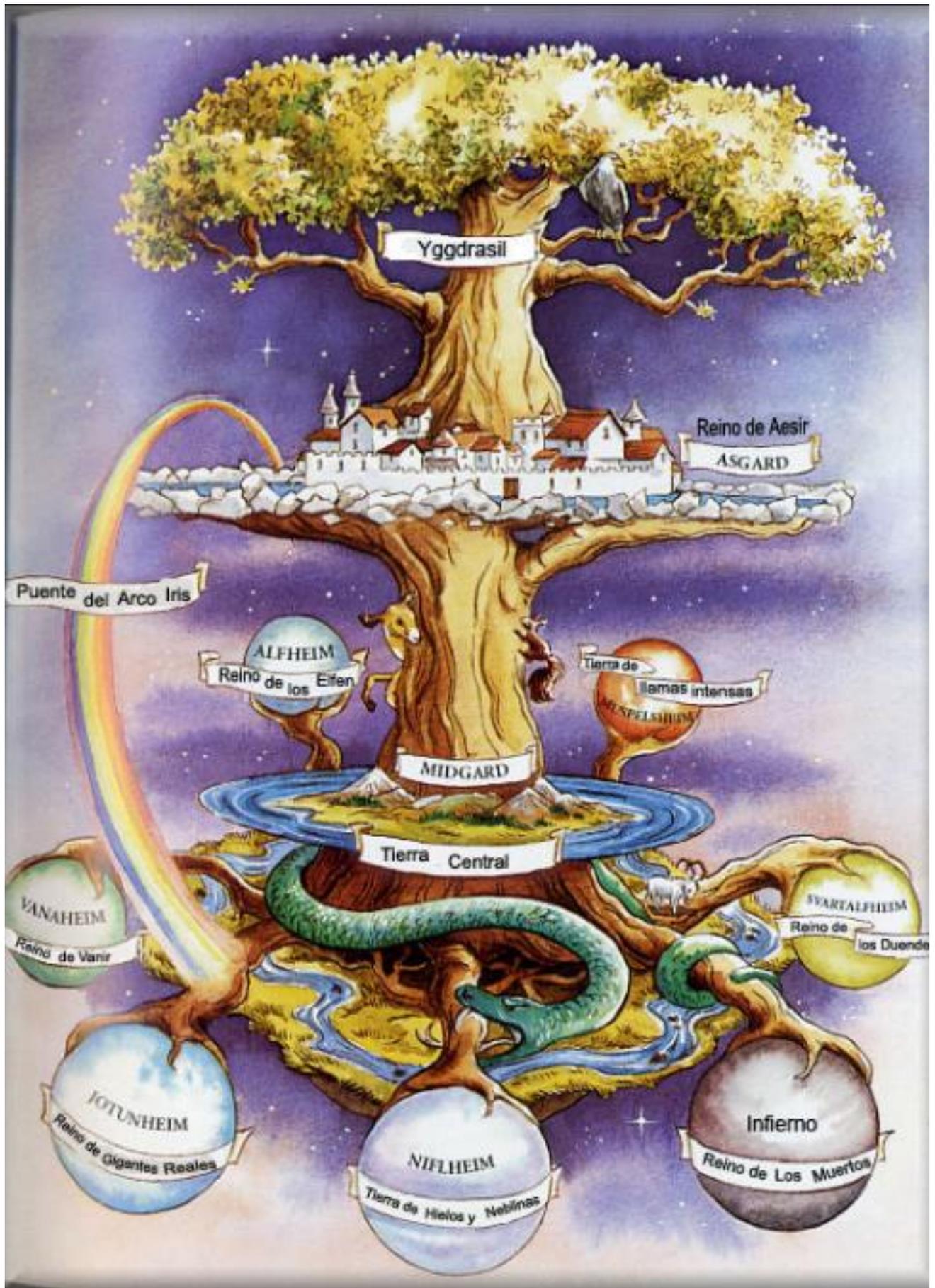
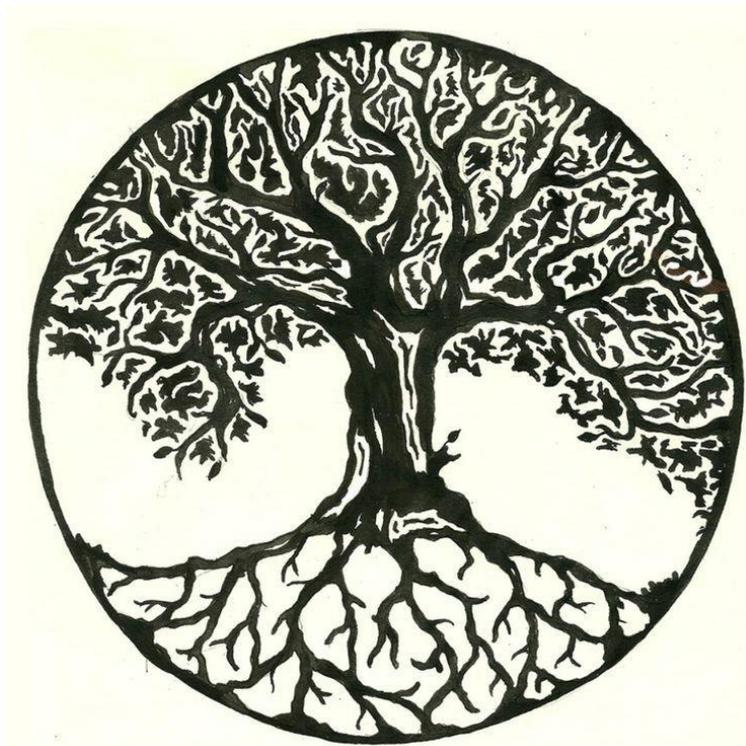
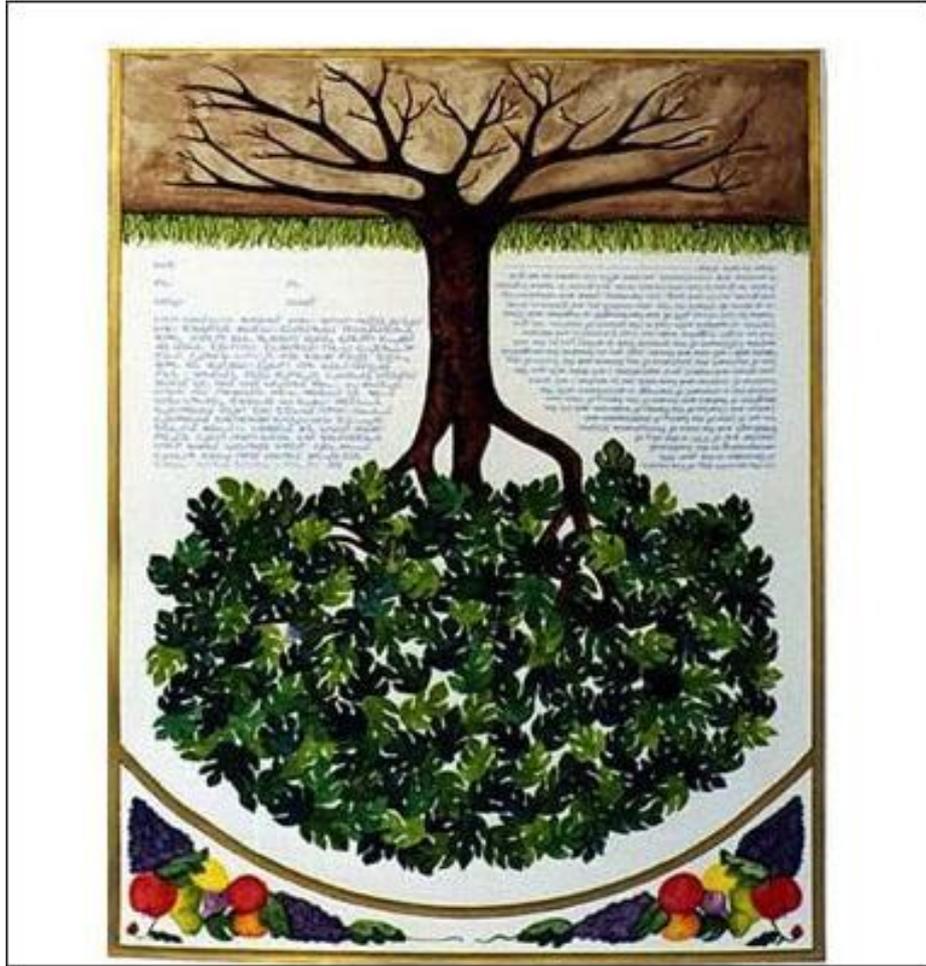


The Tree of LIFE

**Kabbalistic Tree of Life
In English and Hebrew**







Trees of Life. From the highest antiquity trees were connected with the gods and mystical forces in nature. Every nation had its sacred tree, with its peculiar characteristics and attributes based on natural, and also occasionally on occult properties, as expounded in the esoteric teachings. Thus the peepul or *Áshvattha* of India, the abode of Pitris (elementals in fact) of a lower order, became the Bo-tree or *ficus religiosa* of the Buddhists the world over, since Gautama Buddha reached the highest knowledge and Nirvâna under such a tree. The ash tree, Yggdrasil, is the world-tree of the Norsemen or Scandinavians. The banyan tree is the symbol of spirit and matter, descending to the earth, striking root, and then re-ascending heavenward again. The triple-leaved *palâsa* is a symbol of the triple essence in the Universe - Spirit, Soul, Matter. The dark cypress was the world-tree of Mexico, and is now with the Christians and Mahomedans the emblem of death, of peace and rest. The fir was held sacred in Egypt, and its cone was carried in religious processions, though now it has almost disappeared from the land of the mummies; so also was the sycamore, the tamarisk, the palm and the vine. The sycamore was *the* Tree of Life in Egypt, and also in Assyria. It was sacred to Hathor at Heliopolis; and is now sacred in the same place to the Virgin Mary. Its juice was precious by virtue of its occult powers, as the Soma is with Brahmans, and Haoma with the Parsis. "The fruit and sap of the Tree of Life bestow immortality." A large volume might be written upon these sacred trees of antiquity, the reverence for some of which has survived to this day, without exhausting the subject.

Yggdrasil (*Scand.*). The "World Tree of the Norse Cosmogony; the ash Yggdrasil; the tree of the Universe, of time and of life". It has three roots, which reach down to cold Hel, and spread thence to Jotunheim, the land of the Hrimthurses, or "Frost Giants", and to Midgard, the earth and dwelling of the children of men. Its upper boughs stretch out into heaven, and its highest branch overshadows Walhalla, the Devachan of the fallen heroes. The Yggdrasil is ever fresh and green, as it is daily sprinkled by the Norns, the three fateful sisters, the Past, the Present, and the Future, with the waters of life from the fountain of Urd that flows on our earth. It will wither and disappear only on the day when the last battle between good and evil is fought; when, the former prevailing, life, time and space pass out of life and space and time.

Every ancient people had their world-tree. The Babylonians had their "tree of life", which was the world-tree, whose roots penetrated into the great lower deep or Hades, whose trunk was on the earth, and whose upper boughs reached *Zikum*, the highest heaven above. Instead of in Walhalla, they placed its upper foliage in the holy house of Davkina, the "great mother" of Tammuz, the Saviour of the world - the Sun-god put to death by the enemies of light.

H. P. Blavatsky, "The Theosophical Glossary" p. 337, 379

FROM "THE SECRET DOCTRINE" BY H. P. BLAVATSKY

Thus, in the beginning of their joint existence as a glyph of Immortal Being, the Tree and Serpent were divine imagery, truly. The tree *was reversed*, and its roots were generated in Heaven and grew out of the Rootless Root of all-being. Its trunk grew and developed, crossing the planes of Pleroma, it shot out crossways its luxuriant branches, first on the plane of hardly differentiated matter, and then downward till they touched the terrestrial plane. Thus, the Asvattha, tree of Life and Being, whose destruction alone leads to immortality, is said in the Bhagavatgita to grow with its roots above and its branches below (ch. xv.). The roots represent the Supreme Being, or First Cause, the LOGOS; but one has to go beyond those roots to *unite oneself with Krishna*, who, says Arjuna (XI.), is "greater than Brahman, and First Cause . . . the indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them." Its boughs are Hiranyagarba (Brahmā or Brahman in his highest manifestations, say Sridhara and Madhusudana), the highest Dhyan Chohans or Devas. The Vedas are its leaves. He only who goes *beyond* the roots shall never return, *i.e.*, shall reincarnate no more during this "age" of Brahmā.

It is only when its pure boughs had touched the terrestrial mud of the garden of Eden, of our Adamic race, that this Tree got soiled by the contact and lost its pristine purity; and that the Serpent of Eternity - the heaven-born LOGOS - was finally degraded. In days of old - of the *divine Dynasties* on Earth - the now dreaded Reptile was regarded as the first beam of light that radiated from the abyss of divine Mystery. Various were the forms which it was made to assume, and numerous the natural symbols adapted to it, as it crossed aeons of Time: as from Infinite Time itself - *Kala* - it fell into the space and time evolved out of human speculation. These forms were Cosmic and astronomical, theistic and pantheistic, abstract and concrete. They became in turn the Polar Dragon and the Southern Cross, the *Alpha Draconis* of the Pyramid, and the Hindu-Buddhist Dragon, which ever threatens, yet never swallows the Sun during its eclipses. Till then, the Tree remained ever green, for it was sprinkled by the waters of life; the great Dragon, ever divine, so long as it was kept within the precincts of the sidereal fields. But the tree grew and its lower boughs touched at last the infernal regions - our Earth. Then the great serpent Nidhogg - he who devours the corpses of the evil-doers in the "Hall of Misery" (human life), so soon as they are plunged into "Hwergelmir," the roaring cauldron (of human passions) - gnawed the World-tree. The worms of materiality covered the once healthy and mighty roots, and are now ascending higher and higher along the trunk; while the Midgard-snake coiled at the bottom of the Seas, encircles the Earth, and, through its venomous breath, makes her powerless to defend herself.

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