

The Mystical Side of Judaism

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

All text, except Theosophical references, quoted from Chabad.org, the official website of the most influential & open group within Hasidic “ultra-orthodox” Judaism, unless otherwise indicated.

Principles of the Human Constitution

As it emanates from the Infinite One – the *Ein Sof* – eventually to be clothed in the physical body, the soul descends via the five worlds [i.e. the Absolute and the Four Cosmic Planes], leaving a root in each of the worlds, until it is clothed in a physical body. Thus there are five levels of the soul, or levels of G-d-consciousness, corresponding to the various planes of reality. Thus man includes all of Creation within him, from the loftiest spirituality to the most mundane physicality. The Kabbalists explain that through successive incarnations, all levels of the soul are elevated.

Soul	World
<i>Yechidah</i> (singular one)	<i>Ein Sof</i> (the Infinite)
<i>Chaya</i> (living one)	<i>Atzilut</i> (World of Emanation)
<i>Neshamah</i> (breath of life)	<i>Beriah</i> (World of Creation)
<i>Ruach</i> (spirit)	<i>Yetzirah</i> (World of Formation)
<i>Nefesh</i> (soul of vitality)	<i>Assiyah</i> (World of Action)

“Five Levels of Soul and Worlds” table from “The Key to Kabbalah” on Chabad.org. There are no standard English spellings for the Hebrew names. Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Assiyah, are rendered on “The Secret Doctrine” Vol. 1 p. 200 diagram as the Archetypal World, Intellectual/Creative World, Substantial/Formative World, Physical Material World. Regarding the *sevenfold* system taught in Theosophy, which reveals three *higher* planes beyond those four, H. P. Blavatsky writes, “The three higher planes of consciousness [are] revealed and explained in both schools [i.e. “the Kabbalistic and the Eastern”] only to the Initiates.” (S.D. 1:199) And on p. 137 of “The Theosophical Glossary” she states, “Between the division of Principles of the Eastern Occultists and that of the real Eastern Kabbalists there is no difference. Do not let us forget that neither the one nor the other are prepared to give out the real and *final* classification in their public writings.”

YECHIDA – equivalent to **Atma**, pure universal Spirit, the Higher Self (“Theosophical Glossary” p. 137)

Yechida corresponds to the level of soul called *Adam Kadmon*. Just as the sublime, pure and transcendent world of *Adam Kadmon*, cleaves to and reflects the original Infinite Light (*Ohr Ein Sof*), so too does the level of *Yechida*. This is the essence of the soul which is naturally and immutably bound to the Holy One. The level of soul called *Yechida* in essence transcends all the four worlds, since it is never separated from G-d. It is described as being “truly part of G-d above,” and as “a spark of the Creator en clothed within a spark of the created.” *Transcendent of the body, not connected with any particular organ or limb.*

CHAYA – equivalent to **Buddhi**, the “Spiritual Soul” which radiates Atmic Light (“Glossary” p. 137)

The aspect of the soul called *Chaya* gazes upon the Divine energy of the world of Atzilut. Whereas the primary activity of the level of *Neshama* is to use intellectual comprehension in order to come to communion with G-d as the Creator of the worlds, the level of *Chaya* communes with G-d as He transcends the worlds. Here the soul's knowledge is not in the immanence of Divine attributes which identify the nature of the Divine energy manifested in Creation, but rather with knowing what G-d is not – i.e. how He is not limited or defined by the finite universe. Thus the soul merges into a state of complete nullification of the ego. There is no self-seeking and no self-identity outside of G-d. *Chaya* is called loving G-d “with all one's being” (Deut. 6:5). This is knowledge of the absolute truth of things. *Transcendent of the body, not connected with any particular organ or limb.*

NESHAMA – equivalent to **Higher Manas**, the higher immortal Mind-Entity or Higher Ego, the reincarnating Individuality or “Human Soul” (“Glossary” p. 137) but not always exclusively, for “there are the “upper” and the “lower” *Neshamah* (**the dual Manas**)” (“Glossary” p. 348-349)

The primary activity of the *Neshama* is in the conceptual grasp of the intellect. The level of *Neshama* contemplates the manifestation of Divine energy in the world of *Beriya*. Just as in the world of *Beriya*, the primary *sefira* is *bina*, so too in the soul – the primary activity is understanding. Unlike the world of *Yetzira*, the world of form and relationship, the world of *Beriya* is nascent divine energy. *Neshama* analyzes underlying principles abstracted from the categories of thought imposed upon them by the human mind and human experience. It seeks to pierce through to the essential rather than the ephemeral. One of the signs that a person is on this level of consciousness is that when the mind is clearly focused on an appropriate Divine concept, all of the senses become temporarily nullified. Subsequently, due to the abundance of spiritual light one experiences at this level, the emotions of love and awe are automatically aroused – and to a much greater extent than in the *Ruach* level, where effort was expended in arousing the emotions. This is referred to in Kabbala as "the rapture of the heart" (*re'uta d'liba*, see *Zohar* 2, 93b). Here the heart truly desires G-dliness, and love is revealed in its fullness in the heart. This is referred to in the verse as loving G-d "with all of your soul." *Connected with the brain.*

RUACH – the term belongs properly to Buddhi-Manas ("Glossary" p. 280) but it is not used this way by Kabbalists and is used instead for the **Lower Manas**, i.e. the lower mind, the personal ego-consciousness, linked with **Kama**, the "Animal Soul" of desires, passions, emotions.

Ruach is the next level of soul – a higher plane of consciousness than the rank of *Nefesh*. The world (i.e. level of revelation of G-dliness) corresponding to *Ruach* is the world of *Yetzira*. The primary manifestation of *Ruach* is in the emotions. Although the intellect may be used extensively on this level of soul, nevertheless, the primary focus of the intellect here is contemplation *in order* to arouse the emotions. The Talmudic sages therefore refer to it as "the toil of the heart," through which one comes to love G-d with all one's heart. Nevertheless, this is a lower level of love, since it is generated by contemplating lower levels of G-d's creative energy. *Connected with the heart.*

NEFESH – equivalent to **Prana**, vitality or life-energy, and also **Kama** ("The Secret Doctrine" Vol. 1, p. 243) and by definition relates closely to **Sthula Sharira**, the physical body.

Nefesh, the lowest level of consciousness, is awareness of the physical body and the physical world, the world of *Asiya* – the world of Action. The *Nefesh* is in fact the life-force of the body, and it is precisely because it is the life-force of the body that the *Nefesh* has an awareness of the body. This physical awareness is a result of the enmeshing of the *Nefesh* with the body. It is this part of the person which dies and goes to the grave with the body. Just as in the world of *Asiyah*, *malchut* is the dominant *sefira* – so too in the *Nefesh*, which corresponds to the world of *Asiya*, the attribute of *malchut* – action – is the dominant characteristic of the soul. *Connected with the blood.*

TZELEM – not listed separately amongst the Kabbalistic "Five Levels of Soul" but mentioned nonetheless; equivalent to **Linga Sharira**, the astral body or astral double ("Glossary" p. 348)

Also known as the *Tzelem Elokim*. This may be described as the spiritual mold of man's physical form, linking his body and soul.

The "Divine Soul" and "Animal Soul"

The term "Divine Soul" or "G-dly Soul" (*Nefesh Elokit*) is also used for the higher three aspects and "Animal Soul" (*Nefesh HaBehamit*) for the lower. These two souls vie for control of a person's thoughts, speech, and action, which are often referred to as "garments" of the soul. If a person allows the *Nefesh HaBehamit* control of the mind, then the soul garments may be contaminated by the impurities of the animal drive. These impurities are vain and ruin the spirit.

The *Nefesh Elokit* also has its own infrastructure of pleasure, will, intellect, and emotions, but they are focused on the Divine rather than on the self. When a person is born, the *Nefesh Elokit* is

juxtaposed with the *Nefesh HaBehamit* and they both operate and express themselves within the thinking mind. The two souls live locked together for their lifespan, both trying to gain control of the thinking mind. In the *Nefesh HaBehamit* (animalistic soul), the predominant powers are the Emotions and are often classically referred to as the Evil Inclination (Yetzer HaRah). Intellect is dominant in the *Nefesh Elokit* (G-dly Soul) and is referred to as the Good Inclination (Yetzer HaTov). The intellectual faculty of the *Nefesh HaBehamit* is used primarily to serve the Emotions, whereas with the *Nefesh Elokit*, Emotions are an expression of the meditative Intellect. The arousal of emotions in the *Nefesh Elokit* is primarily through the power of meditation, which affects the emotions.

What Happens During Sleep? (compare with Theosophical explanations, such as “The Three Planes of Human Life” by William Q. Judge)

What happens with the soul and consciousness during sleep? Our eyes are closed. Conscious powers become weakened, and we lose control of many of our faculties. Yet, for the soul, it is a time of rejuvenation. It is united with its Source above and spiritually refreshed and recharged. During sleep there is a loss of consciousness. One does not fully hear, nor speak, nor see. There is an idea of death, a whisper of death – the Talmud calls sleep one sixtieth of death. Many people die in their sleep. Because during sleep everything slows down. The heart, the respiration, everything functions at a much slower pace than when the person is awake. During sleep the soul that was inside the body rises to its source above. During sleep, when the soul is free of the body, it can in a sense go higher and reach revelations that cannot happen during the day, when a person is awake.

Simple Meditation on The Various Planes (refer to “Five Levels of Soul and Worlds” table and summaries on p. 1-2; such meditation is also called the climbing of Jacob’s Ladder, which is said to have had four steps corresponding to the four manifested “Worlds” or “Planes”)

We may now start a meditative process to help us fully understand the greatness of the Creator. Firstly, one has a look at the splendid physical creation and sees how G-d has robed His glory in this world. One then contemplates that everything in this world is influenced and affected by the stars and in turn by the angels in the world of Yetzirah. One contemplates the service of the angels, how they stand completely nullified before the Divine. One then rises further into the world of *Beriah*, the world of the Throne, and finally one stands totally in awe in the world of *Atzilut*. One may then meditate that even the highest level of *Atzilut* is the Light of Memale Kol Almin, which is only a fraction of the Light of the *Or Ein Sof*. Such meditation puts one “face to face” with *Atzmut Ein Sof* (essence of the infinite Light). The true mystic is not concerned about going on spiritual ecstasy trips, rather he is more concerned about translating and integrating the spiritual experience to become a better, more productive, and spiritual individual here in this world.

Despite the above paragraphs, Kabbalah echoes Theosophy in saying that in reality the worlds or planes are like intermeshing *spheres* rather than levels stacked one above the other.

What is the Nature of G-d? – An Impersonal, Undefinable, Infinite, Universal Boundlessness

(Theosophy generally avoids the “God” word, considering it unsuitable, and also emphasises that the Absolute cannot be a “Creator” and that the real process is emanation and evolution, not creation. It also considers it unphilosophical to speak of IT as “He” or “She.” Kabbalah often speaks of “G-d” and “The Creator” and as a “He” but the *ideas* and *explanations* it presents are nonetheless very close and often identical to the Theosophical ones. Aside from the terminology, the following is *exactly* the same as taught in Theosophy.)

It is not only *human* features that *Chasidut* [i.e. Hasidism] views as inappropriate in reference to G-d, but features altogether. For G-d is not contained by parameters, however lofty and sublime. G-d is

truly infinite, infinite not only in degree – like a mathematical infinity, which is infinite in *degree*, but yet all its components are of the same *kind*, numbers – but also infinite in kind, transcending the boundaries that set entities apart. Any *definition* is restrictive of G-d, compromising of His omnipresence. It implies that beyond the parameters of that definition He does not exist.

Chasidut, as Kabbalah before it, emphasizes that even concepts such as G-d's wisdom or love, however lofty and different from human wisdom and love, emerge only post *tzimtzum* [i.e. after the process of Universal manifestation has begun], once G-d's true infinity is no longer manifest. Now it is true that in Chasidic literature as in Kabbalah, ten *sefirot*, that is, ten spheres each of a particular nature, are said to exist within the G-dhead. There is a sphere of Wisdom, a sphere of Kindness, a sphere of Leadership (*logos*), etc. In a sense, it is like the human personality which includes cognitive, emotional and other faculties. But nevertheless, though numerous references are indeed made to these Divine spheres and a great number of passages are spent describing their functions within the G-dhead, they are neither the totality nor the primary part of G-d.

Even with the human, his cognitive and overt emotional faculties are merely *at his disposal*, not the totality nor the core of his psychological makeup. Similarly, and to a greater degree, G-d has these "faculties" at His availability, as it were, but He transcends them. Though these spheres, too, are infinite in a relative sense – infinite Wisdom, infinite Love – and though they are Divine, part of the G-dhead, they are nevertheless not G-d as He is in His transcendent Self. For it is only *tzimtzum* that introduces classifications, definitions and features. Prior to *tzimtzum*, there was only the vast infinity of G-d; "an undifferentiated supernal light filled all of existence." In short, then, according to the teachings of *Chasidut*, concerning the question of the nature of G-d we can say: G-dliness is antithetical to the finite, to the constrained and defined, not to mention the physical. More G-dly implies less finite, less constrained, less defined and definable; more spiritual, transcendent and abstract, more expansive, more infinite. Thus, a short answer to the question "What is G-d?" in light of the teachings of *Chasidut* would be – not Sovereignty, nor Wisdom as it is for Maimonides, nor Love as for Crescas – but expansiveness: Infinity; Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence.

"In the real *Zohar* – not the fantastic and anthropomorphic caricature which we often find in the writings of Western Kabbalists – there is not a particle of the personal deity which we find so prominent in the dark cloaking of the Secret Wisdom known as the Mosaic Pentateuch." (HPB, "Theosophical Glossary" p. 138)

Adam Kadmon – A Term for what Theosophy calls the First Logos or Unmanifested Logos



The Arizal [i.e. a reverential name for Rabbi Isaac Luria, 16th century mystic and founder of the Lurianic Kabbalah system which has greatly influenced almost all forms of Jewish Kabbalah; he is briefly mentioned on p. 272 of "Theosophical Glossary" and pictured *left*] explains that when it arose in the Divine Will to create the finite world, the first step was to "withdraw" or conceal the infinite *Or Ein Sof* in the process known as "the first constriction" or "*tzimtzum harishon*". The first "world" (plane of existence) that came into being after the *tzimtzum* is called *Adam Kadmon*. But even though *Adam Kadmon* is a post-*tzimtzum* world, it is still a "meta-

world", so to speak – **undefined, unified, and transcending time, comprising a single transcendent primordial thought.**

The existence of the finite world as we know it, and as G-d intended it, is still not possible in *Adam Kadmon* due to its extremely lofty state. **In order for a finite world to exist, the light in *Adam***

Kadmon had to go through several more stages of quantitative contraction and descent. In one of these stages of descent, one of the several types of light emitted from *Adam Kadmon* is manifested as ten individual qualities or attributes that act as separate, independent points of light, or quanta of energy. Technically, this is called "light emitted from the eyes" of *Adam Kadmon*. *Light emitted from the eyes of Adam Kadmon* signifies a descent from an internal, essential level to an external 'sensory' level.

Adam Kadmon is the primordial world which is "in the likeness of" the Infinite Light which preceded it and which was concealed in the process of creation. This means that even though *Adam Kadmon* is a world, meaning that it comes into being through the concealment of the Infinite Light, **it is such an elevated plane of reality that it is "in the likeness of" the Infinite Light (which, by nature, "precedes" the world of Adam Kadmon).** *Adam Kadmon* mirrors the original Infinite Light. Thus, although the world of *Adam Kadmon* is a world, it is **a level so sublime, pure and transcendent that that it is almost imperceptible.** It cleaves to and mirrors the original Infinite Light. In Kabbala, the world of *Adam Kadmon* represents the transcendent will of G-d. G-d's desire for the Creation and how it is manifest are **planned out in one broad, all-encompassing overview, without separation into specific details.** This is called the *machshava kedumah*, or "primordial thought" of *Adam Kadmon*. **The primordial thought functions as the blueprint for all of Creation. In the world of Adam Kadmon everything is seen in one broad overview, but the exact details are not yet separated and ordered into the categories of reality. All the details of Creation, from the beginning of space to the end of space and from the beginning of time to the end of time, are all superimposed in this one thought, for, in Adam Kadmon, there is no concept of space and time whatsoever. There is as yet no inside and no outside, no up and no down, no before and no after. There is only a potential for these limitations. Everything is undefined, unified, and simultaneous.** Here lies the root and source of all the other planes of reality, which descend from *Adam Kadmon*.

As the light descends from *Adam Kadmon*, it breaks up into ten individual qualities. It is clear that the succeeding levels of Creation, i.e. the series of worlds which descend from *Adam Kadmon*, particularly the lowest world, cannot possibly exist within the parameters of the existence of *Adam Kadmon*. **Everything in Adam Kadmon is undefined, unified, and simultaneous, superimposed in a single primordial thought,** which contradicts the very idea of worlds in the sense that we understand them, as limited being which presupposes separation and division. Subjectively, in terms of our awareness of G-d, **the world of Adam Kadmon parallels the highest source of consciousness in man.** It is the awareness of total unity with the Infinite Light. [bold added]

HPB explains that the famous phrase "Let there be light" in the Book of Genesis refers in reality not to physical light but the projection or radiation of Adam Kadmon from the Absolute. In many places (such as "Glossary" p. 6, 268) she speaks of Adam Kadmon as a synonym for the *Third Logos*, the Manifested Logos, which would seem to contradict the above, which is undoubtedly a clear description of the *First Logos*, the Universal Monas of Pythagoras, the "point within the circle." But in some places HPB does use "Adam Kadmon" in a way that includes the above definition, such as in S.D. 1:137, 2:337, where she equates it with Kether, the highest of the Sephiroth, and the "Glossary" entry for "Heavenly Adam" on p. 138, which explains it as "The synthesis of the Sephirothal Tree, or of all the Forces in Nature *and* their informing deific essence."

The Baal Shem Tov [i.e. a reverential title for Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the 17th century Polish founder of Hasidism] explains that the words which G-d used to create the world were not just uttered once, but are being said constantly. In other words, the ten utterances of Genesis are not a mere historical occurrence, rather they are an ongoing dynamic, and represent the constant flow of Divine creative energy which vivifies all creation. If G-d were for one moment to withdraw that energy from the creation, then the world would cease to exist. If G-d were to withdraw the energy

configured in those letters, or figuratively speaking, if He was to stop uttering the words, “Let there be light,” the Light would cease to exist.

Compare with the “AUM!” article by WQJ: “There is pervading the whole universe a single homogeneous resonance, sound, or tone, which acts, so to speak, as the awakener or vivifying power, . . . This is the word, the *verbum*, the *Logos* . . . without this resonance or motion among the quiescent particles, there would be no visible universe. . . . the Divine Radiance [is] the Aum. . . . the Divine Resonance spoken of above, is not the Divine Light itself. The Resonance is only the outbreathing of the first sound of the entire Aum. This goes on during what the Hindoos call a Day of Brahma . . . It manifests itself not only as the power which stirs up and animates the particles of Universe, but also in the evolution and dissolution of man, of the animal and mineral kingdoms, and of solar systems. . . . The Divine Resonance, or the *au* sound, is the universal energy, which is conserved during each Day of Brahma, and at the coming on of the great Night is absorbed again into the whole.”



The Baal Shem Tov, father of Hasidism.

The Divine Names and YHVH the Tetragrammaton

Judaism never once speaks of “Jehovah” or “Yahweh.” These are Christian anglicisations of YHVH, the four-lettered name known by the Greek term “Tetragrammaton” or more commonly in Judaism as *HaVaYaH*. YHVH are the initials of four words: *Yud Hei Vav Hei*, which are viewed as “The Holy Ineffable Name.” The most frequent everyday Jewish word for “God” is “HaShem,” literally “The Name” and then “Adonai,” “The Lord.”

HPB’s article “Tetragrammaton” says of the YHVH that “They are the reflections of the Ain-Soph, the Hebrew *Parabrahmam*; . . . The “Logos” which *we* recognize is not the Tetragrammaton, but the CROWN, Kether, which has nought to do with the material plane nor with Macro, or Microprosopus – but which is connected only with the *pro*-archetypal world.” In that article she states that the Y is masculine and corresponds to the Archetypal World and to the sefira Chokmah, the first H is feminine and corresponds to the Creative World and Binah, the V is masculine and corresponds to the Formative World and Tiphereth, and the last H is feminine and corresponds to the Material World and Malkuth. These are the same correspondences as made in the Kabbalistic teachings.

The essence of faith and the basis for understanding the unity of G-d is to understand the applications for each Name. For all His Names that are mentioned in the Torah are included in the Tetragrammaton, *Havayah*, which is similar to a tree trunk. Each of the other Names has a unique function. So it is with the comprehension of the blessed Holy Names: there are Names in charge of prayer, mercy and forgiveness, while others are in charge of tears and sadness, injury and tribulations, sustenance and income, or heroism, loving-kindness and grace. If one does not know how to concentrate on the very Name which is the key to the answer of his request, then who is to blame if the request is not granted? One must therefore familiarize oneself with the ways of the Torah and know the purpose of the Holy Names. He should be expert in them, and when he needs to request something from G-d, he should concentrate on the Name designated to handle that question.

There are hundreds of Divine Names to be found in the Jewish scriptures and the main ten correspond to the Ten Sephiroth. The above paragraph shows the Kabbalistic process of prayer to be essentially one involving *meditative concentration on Mantras* (the Names or Words).

Angels, Planets, and Stars

The *Midrash* and *Zohar* state, “There is no blade of grass that does not have a “constellation” – *Mazal* – over it, telling it to grow.” This means that G-d’s providence works through the angels, but these angels in turn work through the stars and planets. In a sense, we could speak of the angels as souls to the stars. Some sources speak of the stars as having intelligence, but the commentaries note that this is actually speaking of the angels that are associated with them. The *Zohar* teaches that every star in the universe has a name, and the *Midrash* indicates that the names of the stars correspond to the names of the different angels. We see that the Divine influence and flow comes *through the angels, through the stars, and finally to earth*. It must be clear that despite the seeming influence of the stars upon human life, the concept of *Mazalot* (constellations) is essentially a physical concept. It is a channel through which spiritual forces flow down to the world. A person can establish direct contact with G-d through prayer, and bypass the influence of the stars. Influence extends only from the visible members of our solar system. The distant planets such as Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, which are invisible to the unaided eye, are not considered to have any significant astrological influence. It is the prevalent custom that on a happy occasion such as a birth, one wishes “*Mazal tov*” indicating the wish that the planetary influence on the child should be a good one.

Theosophy also teaches that the various Hierarchies of Dhyana Chohans (equivalent to angels of different kinds) are connected with various planets and constellations and in “The Secret Doctrine” it is similarly emphasised that Uranus and Neptune (Pluto was not discovered by science until 1930) are not amongst the “Sacred Planets” most closely connected with our Earth and humanity but that those Sacred Planets are seven in number and are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, plus two of a more mysterious nature which are left unnamed and for which the Sun and Moon are “exoteric substitutes” in astrology.

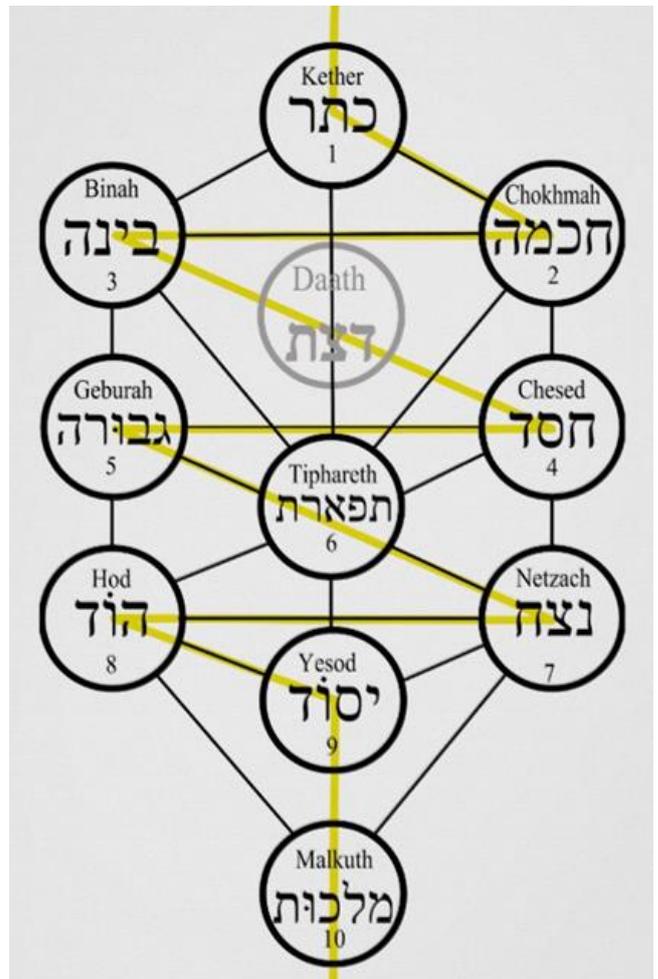
The Sephiroth and Kabbalistic Tree of Life

Every *Sefirah* (attribute) is composite of Lights and vessels. It must be emphasized that the existence of the *Sefirot* in no way implies plurality within Divinity. The *Sefirot* are not separate entities with the *Or Ein Sof*. The *Zohar* says, “The Holy One blessed be He, emits ten crowns, supernal holy crowns with which He crowns Himself. He is they and they are He, just as the flame is bound up in the coal, and there is no division there.” The *Sefirot* are ten modes or attributes through which G-d manifests Himself. The *Sefirot* are not G-d, but they are the medium through which specific qualities and attributes can be ascribed to Him. The word *Sefirah* is related to the verb *lesaper*, which means to “express” or “communicate.” It is also related to the word “sapphire” (*sapir*). A sapphire is a gemstone that is brilliant and illuminating, implying that the function of a *Sefirah* is to give Light.

The names of the ten Sefirot are: **Chochmah** – wisdom, **Binah** – understanding, **Daat** – knowledge, **Chessed** – kindness, **Gevurah** – strength, **Tiferet** – beauty, **Netzach** – victory, **Hod** – splendour, **Yesod** – foundation, and **Malchut** – kingship. Everything that happens in the spiritual worlds takes place through the medium of the *Sefirot*. However, as previously mentioned, they are not G-d, and the Kabbalists warn that one should not pray to them. Although we have enumerated the ten *Sefirot* above as including the *Sefirah* of *Daat*, some Kabbalistic texts count the *Sefirah* of *Keter* instead of *Daat*. The word *Keter* means “crown” and stands above all the other *Sefirot*, like the crown stands above the head. *Keter* is equated with “Divine will” (*Ratzon*) and “Pleasure” (*Taanug*). Divine will is the external level of *Keter* and Pleasure the internal level of *Keter*. *Keter* has an internal dimension known in Kabbalah as *Atik Yomin* (lit. “the ancient of days”) and an external dimension called *Arich Anpin* (lit. “the long countenance”). The *Sefirot* are the infrastructure of all the worlds and are reflected within the microcosm of man. They are the infrastructure of man’s soul; both his animal and G-dly soul.

In the Lurianic Kabbalah system established by the Arizal (see earlier reference) and followed in Hasidism, Kether is not counted amongst the Ten Sefirot (although it is mentioned, as has just been seen) and is replaced by Daat, whereas Daat does not appear in some other systems. All of HPB's statements regarding the Sefirot begin with Kether, which she sometimes just calls "Sephira," and she never mentions Daat, although there is a brief entry for it by Westcott in "The Theosophical Glossary." Daat is simply intended to represent the point in which all the Sefirot are united in one harmonious whole. In the S.D. 1:200 diagram, the Seven Globes of our Earth Chain are illustrated first as per "Eastern Gupta Vidya" and then as per "Chaldean Kabala." The latter illustrates them with the pattern and names as given opposite to the seven lower Sephiroth. The original source of this illustration is unknown.

HPB explains that the Ten Sefirot are intended to illustrate exactly the same principles and details as the ten points of the Pythagorean Triangle, also known as the Tetraktys. (S.D. 2:111) She also writes that the seven lower Sefirot are not only universal qualities but the seven chief Hierarchies of Dhyān Chohans within the Cosmos (S.D. 1:339, 579) and says "The Logos . . . emanates from itself – as the upper Sephirothal Triad emanates the lower seven Sephiroth – the seven Rays or Dhyān Chohans." (S.D. 1:130)



Theosophy presents almost exclusively a *sevenfold* system of the macrocosm and microcosm rather than a *tenfold* one but in a few places the Theosophical literature does disclose that ten is the true total: "This mysterious number Seven, born from the upper triangle Δ , the latter itself born from the apex thereof . . . is the sevenfold *Saptaparna* plant, born and manifested on the surface of the soil of mystery, from the threefold root buried deep under that impenetrable soil." (S.D. 2:574)

The Tree of Life and Sefirot are one of the most central and intricately detailed features of Kabbalistic teaching but due to this being a highly condensed compilation we cannot go further into them here.

Sefirah	External Aspect within Creation (Macrocosm)	Internal Aspect within Man (Microcosm)
INTELLECT		
<i>Chochmah</i>	Wisdom	Selflessness
<i>Binah</i>	Understanding	Joy
<i>Daat</i>	Knowledge	Unification
EMOTIONS		
<i>Chessed</i>	Kindness	Love
<i>Gevurah</i>	Strength	Fear
<i>Tiferet</i>	Beauty	Mercy
<i>Netzach</i>	Victory	Prevail
<i>Hod</i>	Splendor	Sincerity
<i>Yesod</i>	Foundation	Bonding
<i>Malchut</i>	Kingship	Service

H. P. Blavatsky recognised and understood the attraction of many in the West for Kabbalah but while she certainly encouraged its study and exploration she warned that it would be detrimental for the Western world to choose to *follow* Kabbalah rather than Theosophy or the esoteric teachings of the Eastern Adepts: “The long pent-up torrent [i.e. the river of “natural mysticism” that was “dammed during the Middle Ages” in the West] has now diverged into two streams – Eastern Occultism and the Jewish Kabbalah . . . The two systems threaten the world of the mystics with a speedy conflict, which, instead of increasing the spread of the One Universal Truth, will necessarily only weaken and impede its progress. Yet, the question is not, once more, which is *the* one truth. For both are founded upon the eternal verities of prehistoric knowledge, as both, in the present age and the state of mental transition through which humanity is now passing, can give out only a certain portion of these verities. It is simply a question: “Which of the two systems contains most unadulterated facts; and, most important of all – which of the two presents its teachings in the most . . . unsectarian and impartial manner?” One – the Eastern system – has veiled for ages its profound pantheistic unitarianism with the exuberance of an exoteric polytheism; the other . . . with the screen of exoteric monotheism. Both are but masks to hide the sacred truth from the profane; for neither the Aryan nor the semitic philosophers have ever accepted either the anthropomorphism of the many Gods, or the personality of the one God, as a philosophical proposition. . . . the Jewish Kabbalah, with its numerical methods, is now only *one* of the keys to the ancient mysteries, and . . . the Eastern or Aryan systems alone can supply the rest, and unveil the whole truth of *Creation*. . . . Even as it stands now, the Kabbalah, with its several methods, can only puzzle by offering several versions; it can never divulge the whole truth.” Yet she does close that article (“The Kabbalah and The Kabalists”) by saying, “If Kabbalah as a word is Hebrew, the system itself is no more Jewish than is sunlight; it is universal.”

SOME KEY SCRIPTURES AND TEXTS OF KABBALISTIC JUDAISM

The Tanakh – The Jewish Bible, containing exactly the same books as the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, albeit in a more reliable translation from the Hebrew. Its first five books, attributed to Moses – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy – are collectively called the **Torah**; this is what Christians call the Pentateuch.

The Talmud – Collection of commentaries, discussions, and details regarding the mitzvot – rules and commandments – contained in the Tanakh. Has two main sections, the Mishnah and the Gemara. Talmud was authored by Rabbis between 3rd and 6th centuries C.E./A.D. but existed as oral tradition much earlier.

The Zohar – “The Book of Splendour” or “Book of Light” or “Book of Radiance.” The foundational text of the Kabbalah and which is actually a compilation of various books and dialogues. Compiled by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, also known as Rashbi, of 2nd century C.E./A.D. Partly written by him and partly “the product of generations of masters and their disciples.” Largely kept secret for over 1000 years until Rabbi Moshe (Moses) de Leon began publishing it in Spain in the early 1300s. HPB said the Zohar was actually compiled in the 1st rather than 2nd century and calls it “the true Kabbalah of the Initiates, which is lost and whose original is to be found in the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*.” It “is lost” – to all except real Initiates – she said, because “the *Zohar* we have now is not the *Zohar* left by Simeon Ben Yochai to his son and secretary as an heirloom. The author of the present *approximation* was one Moses de Leon, a Jew of the XIIIth century.” (“Theosophical Glossary” entry for “Qabbalah”)

Sefer Yetzirah – “The Book of Formation” or “Book of Creation.” Major Kabbalistic treatise, attributed to Abraham but HPB discredits that notion.

Sifra Detzneyutha – “The Book of Concealed Mystery,” part of the Zohar, often spelt as “Siphrah Dzeniouta” and similar variants in HPB’s writings.

Kitvei HaArizal – “Writings of the Arizal,” i.e. of Rabbi Isaac Luria, considered by followers of Lurianic Kabbalah to be second only to the Zohar; includes the book “Shaar Hagilgulim,” “Gate of Reincarnations” which contains sections such as “Stages of the Soul,” “Levels of Rectification,” “Hidden Effects of Sin,” “Cross-Gender Soul Migration,” “Roots and Sparks,” “Souls Saving Souls,” “The Four Elementals,” “Place of Attachment,” “Moses our Teacher,” and more.

The Tanya – Small volume of practical wisdom by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, also known as the Alter Rebbe, founder of *Chabad* Hasidism, emphasises importance of using mind and intellect to comprehend and assimilate religious fervour and devotion.

NOTES

The United Lodge of Theosophists
62 Queen's Gardens, London, W2 3AH

www.theosophy-ult.org.uk