



## Gnosis of the Cosmic Christ: A Gnostic Christian Kabbalah

*By Tau Malachi*

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

**Tau Malachi's** (Malachi eben Ha-Elijah's) spiritual journey began when he met the acquaintance of a Tau of the Sophian Tradition of Gnostic Christianity, Tau Elijah ben Miriam. He received the oral tradition of Sophian Gnosticism from Tau Elijah, and has been a student and practitioner of Gnostic Christianity for over thirty-five years. In 1983 he founded Sophia Fellowship as an expression of the tradition, and has been teaching and initiating others into Christian Gnosticism, Rosicrucian Philosophy and Christian Kabbalah since that time. He is an initiate of Ordo Sanctus Gnosis and serves as an Elder and Tau within the Sophian lineage.

Tau Malachi is also a Chevalier (a dubbed Knight) in the International Order of Chivalric Companions, a Martinist, and is an ordained and consecrated Independent Bishop. He is co-founder of The Gnostic Apostolic Church of Sophia and is among the leading exponents of Christian Gnosticism and Kabbalah in our times.

Along with his exploration of the Western Mystery Tradition, he has studied extensively in several Eastern Traditions, such as Vajrayana Buddhism and Vedanta, and he also studied within a Middle Eastern Tradition of Sufism, as well as becoming involved in Native American Shamanism. Though Gnostic Christianity has always been his heart's path.

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#### Chapter One:

##### The Kabbalah of Gnostic Christianity

##### Purpose and Nature of the Kabbalah

The Kabbalah is an archaic system of Jewish Mysticism that has its roots in the assembly of prophets of ancient Israel and the Merkavah Mysticism of Palestine during the time of Jesus (Yeshua in Aramaic). Considering that Yeshua was Jewish and his disciples were Jewish, and understanding him to be a mystic and prophet of his time, it is reasonable to assume that he taught a form of the mystical tradition that has come to be known as the Kabbalah.

For this reason, many mystical and gnostic currents of Christianity have arisen that take the Kabbalah as their foundation. This is certainly true of the Sophian Tradition, which is so interwoven with the teachings of the Kabbalah that it is impossible to separate out Gnosticism and Kabbalah in the Tradition. Essentially, one might call the Sophian Tradition a Christian Kabbalah or a form of Gnostic Christianity that draws heavily upon its Judaic roots. Therefore, to explore Gnostic Christianity, as expressed in the Sophian Tradition, we must explore some of the basic ideas of the Kabbalah from which the teachings and principles of our Gnostic Christianity are derived.

The principal teachings of the Kabbalah were designed to explore and find answers to some basic questions:

- The nature and attributes of God and the Godhead

- The development of a cosmology
- The mystery of the creation of angels and humankind
- The destiny of humankind and angels
- The nature of the human soul and its connection to the divine
- The nature of cosmic forces-angels, demons, elementals and such
- The inner meaning of the revealed law and Holy Gospel
- The transcendental symbolism of numbers and geometrical shapes
- The mysteries contained in the Hebrew letters
- The balance in the play of cosmic forces
- The mystery of divine revelation and prophetic states of consciousness
- The mystery of the divine incarnation and the divine plan on earth

Considering the vast height, depth, and breadth of these metaphysical questions, one can imagine the enormous amount of esoteric teachings, practices, and literature that has formed around the Kabbalah in the course of thousands of years. Although there are many modern truth-seekers who have read a book or two on the Kabbalah and mistakenly assumed they know the Kabbalah, the truth is that even a master of the Tradition, who has studied and practiced the Kabbalah all of his or her life and who actively embodies something of the enlightenment experience it represents, would not claim to know the Kabbalah. One could say that God knows the Kabbalah and that, for our part, we know what we have received of it in our own experience?which is a far cry from knowing the Kabbalah as God knows it.

Essentially, the teachings of the Kabbalah represent the accumulated knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of initiates, which have been gathered from their own direct spiritual experience of the metaphysical dimensions of creatures, creation, and God. The Kabbalah itself is the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of the true nature of creatures, creation, and God-which is known in full only to God. If the whole of the Kabbalah is in a book, then it is the heavenly Book of Life of which the Holy Scriptures speak, and not any earthly book.

The teachings of the Kabbalah are founded upon the Bible, along with other books of Scripture that did not make their way into the canonized Bible. Thus, to study and understand the Kabbalah in its proper context is to study and understand the Scriptures also. Just as many mistakenly assume that they know the Kabbalah from reading a book or two, likewise many assume that they are knowledgeable in the Kabbalah without being well-studied in the Scriptures. Ultimately, however, one cannot study and understand the Kabbalah without also studying and gaining some understanding of the Holy Scriptures. To engage in the study and practice of the Kabbalah is to embark upon a mystical journey into hidden levels of the Scriptures and the secret wisdom they contain. In essence, the Scriptures and the Kabbalah are one and the same.

### Three Branches of the Kabbalah

The teachings of the Kabbalah are divided into three principal forms: the theoretical or contemplative Kabbalah, the meditative Kabbalah, and the practical or magical Kabbalah. The theoretical or contemplative Kabbalah is an intellectual study and contemplation of the principles, doctrines, and correspondences of esoteric wisdom, including gematria, the associations of numbers and geometrical patterns, and so on. The meditative Kabbalah represents the teachings and practices of mystical prayer and prophetic meditation-methods through which one can enter a higher state of consciousness and experience unification with the divine. The practical or magical Kabbalah represents teachings of invocations, incantations, rituals, and such, through which one is able to shift states of consciousness at will and to consciously direct hidden spiritual forces. From this, one will understand that the Kabbalah is both a mystical and a magical Tradition. Here, we will be dealing primarily with the contemplative Kabbalah and to some extent the meditative Kabbalah. The magical Kabbalah will be referred to in passing at different points of this book; however, it is not the subject

of this work.

## The Ten Holy Sefirot and the Tree of Life

There are ten Sefirot (plural), which are generally referred to as Midot, meaning “measurements” or “dimensions” and, by extension, also meaning “attributes” or “qualities.” The Sefirot are emanations of the divine presence and power of God, or the infinite light of God, and they are vessels receiving God's light and transmitting it to creation. They are gradations of the involution of the infinite light into finite creation, and thus are gradations of the evolution of creatures on the path of return-like rungs on a ladder of light. When we read of Jacob's vision of a ladder reaching up from the earth to the heavens, upon which he beheld angels ascending and descending, the Kabbalah would say that that Jacob had a vision of the constellation of the Sefirot that forms the Tree of Life.

The word Sefirah (singular) is related to the Hebrew word saper, meaning “to express” or “to communicate,” and to the word sapir, meaning “sapphire,” “brilliance,” or “luminary.” It is also related to the words sefar, meaning “boundary”; sefer, meaning “book”; and safar, meaning “number.” All of these terms represent related concepts and indicate the two basic functions of the Sefirot: lights or emanations that act to reveal and express God's presence and power (Shekinah); and vessels that limit and delineate the infinite light of God, bringing it down into the finite realm of numeration and boundary.

Essentially, the Sefirot, and the various levels of their manifestation called Olamot or universes, represent the metaphysical structure of creation or the vehicle through which creature, creation, and God are connected and interact. In Genesis, ten utterances are listed through which God creates. These correspond with the ten Sefirot and suggest the idea of creature and creation as the revelation or expression of God and as the vessel receiving and imparting the divine presence-hence the body of God. Through the Sefirot, God reaches out to us and we are able to reach into God.

The most common way these Sefirot are represented is as a glyph called the Tree of Life (Otz ha-Hayyim). The Sefirot are depicted as ten circles that form three triads, one atop, one in the middle, and one below, with a single Sefirah set as a pendant below the lowest triad. In this same configuration they also appear as ten circles divided into three columns-one to the right, one to the left, and one in the middle-which are called “pillars.” These are two ways to view the same glyph (figure 1, below).

In the view of the three triads of Sefirot and one Sefirah as a pendant, the top triad is called the supernal triad, the triad in the middle is called the moral triad, the triad below is called the action triad. The Sefirah that appears as a pendant is called Malkut (Kingdom). Malkut is the “fruit” of the Tree of Life, as well as the vessel receiving the influence of all the emanations above it. In the view of the Tree of Life as three pillars, the right and left pillars are composed of three Sefirot each, and the middle pillar is composed of four Sefirot. The pillar on the right is called the Pillar of Mercy and the pillar on the left is called the Pillar of Severity-the Pillars of Jachin and Boaz in the temple of King Solomon. One is positive and the other negative; one is male and the other is female; one is white, the other is black-so that these two pillars represent the eternal play of opposites in dynamic interaction. Evil is imbalanced force, out of place or out of harmony. Severity in imbalance is cruelty and oppression, and mercy in imbalance is weakness that allows and facilitates great evil. True compassion is a dynamic balance of severity and mercy.

The Middle Pillar is therefore the path of the ascension, representing the dynamic balance of all polarities or opposites, and the integration of everything that would otherwise be fragmented. The Kabbalah teaches the Middle Way, akin to what is found in forms of Hinduism and Buddhism in the Eastern schools. For this reason, whether the tree is viewed in terms of the triads or the three pillars, the Sefirah Tiferet (beauty), which is the Christ center on the tree, is in the middle.

As there are ten circles representing the Sefirot on the Tree of Life, so also are there twenty-two lines connecting the Sefirot, to which the Hebrew letters are attributed. Thus the tree is composed of thirty-two paths, which in the Sefer Yetzirah are called the “Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom.” Various correspondences are given to both the Sefirot and the Hebrew letters. Through the interrelationship of correspondences, initiates are able to look and see the mysteries contained in the Scriptures and are able to gain insight into the mysteries of creation and God. Yet more, they are able to receive the ongoing divine revelation in the same way as the prophets and apostles of God before them.

### The Olamot-Universes

The ten Sefirot manifest through five different levels or dimensions, which are called Olamot, meaning “universes.” These Olamot are known as the universe of Adam Kadmon (primordial human being), the universe of Atzilut (emanation or nearness), the universe of Beriyah (creation), the universe of Yetzirah (formation), and the universe of Asiyah (action or making). The Olamot extend from the supernal abode of the divine to the material plane of existence, the universe of Adam Kadmon being nearest to the light of the Infinite and Asiyah being the material plane of existence. The ten Sefirot manifest in each Olam, thus there are ten Sefirot of Adam Kadmon, ten Sefirot of Atzilut, ten Sefirot of Beriyah, ten Sefirot of Yetzirah, and ten Sefirot of Asiyah, for a total of fifty Sefirot, which are called the “Fifty Gates of Understanding.”

These five Olamot correspond to the divine name of Yahweh (Yod-He-Vau-He), frequently called the “Tetragrammaton” because it is composed of four letters. Adam Kadmon is represented by the upper tip of the Yod (y), Atzilut by the body of the Yod, Beriyah by the first He (h), Yetzirah by the Vau (v), and Asiyah by the final He. This divine name is said to be contained in the universe of Adam Kadmon and it is said to contain all other divine names, the divine names being within it and yet being worn by it as “garments.”

The divine name of Yeshua or Yeheshuah (Yod-He-Shin-Vau-He), which is the name of Yahweh with the addition of the letter Shin (w), represents the embodiment of the divine presence and power of Yahweh and thus something of the spiritual energy of Adam Kadmon. The universe of Adam Kadmon and the Sefirot it contains, therefore, represent the Soul of the Messiah. This gives insight into the title “Son of Adam” (son of man), used for Yeshua in the Gospels.

To gain some insight into the nature of the Olamot, one might contemplate them in terms of the sun and its light and the moon that reflects the light. First, one must understand that, looking at the sun, one does not see the sun but rather sees the glory or radiance of the sun. Therefore, within and beyond what one sees is the sun itself. From the “sun within the sun,” light is generated and that hidden place of the generation of light would correspond to Adam Kadmon. The glory or light of the sun one beholds would correspond to Atzilut. The light passing to the moon would correspond to Beriyah. The light of the moon itself would correspond to Yetzirah, and the light of the full moon shining upon the earth would correspond to Asiyah. In a similar way, the light of the Infinite passes through the Olamot from Adam Kadmon to Asiyah, and thus, the supernal light is progressively veiled and reduced in intensity.

Another way of gaining some understanding of the Olamot is to consider them at the level of human experience. The inmost will of a human being corresponds to the universe of Adam Kadmon. The level of pure awareness or preconceptual and undifferentiated mind corresponds to Atzilut. The process of thought itself corresponds to Beriyah. Speech or communication corresponds to Yetzirah, and action corresponds to Asiyah.

Adam Kadmon = Will

Atzilut = Mind

Beriyah = Thought

Yetzirah = Speech

Asiyah = Action

The best way to contemplate this is to consider the creative process of an architect who is designing a large building complex. First he or she decides what kind of buildings will fit the purposes for which they are being constructed. Then he or she draws up the corresponding plans and considers how each building will serve its function in relationship to the other structures. Finally, he or she gives orders to his or her workers and the actual construction begins.

In our analogy, the level of Adam Kadmon is represented by the desire and decision of the architect to build before there is any particular plan in mind. Atzilut would be represented by the process of designing a plan for the building on the most abstract level. Once there is a blueprint, everything still remains at an abstract level and thought must be given to figure out exactly how the plan will work or how it can actually be implemented. Up to this point, everything has taken place in the architect's office, but now seeking to practically apply the plan, the architect must go to the site.

Going to the site and thinking things through on a more practical level, bringing the idea down from the abstract symbolic form into something that can be implemented, would represent Beriyah. When the architect communicates the actual ideas and methods of construction to the workers, this would be akin to Yetzirah. The actual work of construction would correspond to Asiyah; the finished product itself would represent the final Sefirah of Asiyah (Malkut of Asiyah).

The analogy can be taken even further into all purposeful human activity. Any time a person decides to do something, he or she conceives a general plan. As he or she gets closer to enacting it, his or her thought processes almost spontaneously trigger nerve impulses, which then travel through the body. The person's muscles follow the commands of the brain and bring about the corresponding action.

We are experiencing something of the Olamot all of the time through our own process of translating will or desire into awareness, thought, speech, and action—a communication that happens at light-speed through our nervous system. From the most subtle and imperceptible levels to the actual manifestation, life comes forth, as though something from nothing. This is true throughout creation.

### The Universe of Adam Kadmon

One of the most basic teachings of the Kabbalah is that God and Godhead is ultimately nameless and unknowable, and that, therefore, nothing can be said about God. We can talk about emanations and manifestations of God's presence and power, about attributes or qualities of God and how we encounter the presence of God in our experience, but not about God as God is. We can allude to or indicate something about God, but we cannot speak of God directly. For this reason, the most common reference to God in the Kabbalah is Ain Sof, which literally means the "One-Without-End." God has no beginning or end, but is the Infinite, and therefore cannot be characterized or defined.

At the level of Ain Sof, there is only the one being-consciousness-force, the Infinite and eternal, and nothing else exists. Even the distinction of God and Godhead does not exist at this level, and thus, from our point of view, Ain Sof is the unmanifest-completely inconceivable and incomprehensible. From this state of nothingness (Ain), every idea or category of existence must be created, formed and made as though out of nothing; yet as everything comes from this no-thingness, it can also be called divine fullness. Although nothing exists in it, the unmanifest is pregnant with the divine potential of everything.

Will or desire (Ratzon) is the first expression of Ain Sof in the creative act, for in order to create and sustain creation, God must will or desire to create and sustain creation. The level of Adam Kadmon corresponds to

the will or desire of God that is the underlying foundation for all the proceeding levels of existence-the initiating principle of creation. In essence, the first emanation of God's presence and power is the will or desire to create, which precedes creation itself, and that will or desire is what is called Logos and Sophia-the word and wisdom of God.

To say that God "created" this divine will or desire is a fundamental misconception according to the Christian Kabbalah, for this will or desire that is called Adam Kadmon is, in fact, inseparable from the light of Ain Sof (light of the infinite). It is an emanation of the bornless Spirit of God, which, although made distinct from Ain Sof, is completely inseparable from the infinite and eternal. Adam Kadmon always existed in Ain Sof, although as divine potential. At the outset of creation, this divine potential emerged as the first of all holy emanations and is the interface of the infinite with the finite creation.

Because Adam Kadmon is inseparable from Ain Sof, it is called Ain (no-thingness), and thus the Sefer Yetzirah speaks of the Sefirot of Adam Kadmon as "Sefirot of nothingness." The whole of creation comes forth, as it were, from the womb of Adam Kadmon, the womb of God's will; therefore, this idea of nothingness does not imply a lack of existence. It is an emanation of the divine fullness in the no-thingness, from which the whole of creation is brought forth.

Adam Kadmon alludes to the ultimate purpose or intention of God in creating. The term itself is an anthropomorphism that literally means "primordial human being." If the letters of the Tetragrammaton are placed on a vertical line, with Yod at the top and the remaining letters placed in their proper order in descent, the image of a human being is formed by them (see figure 2). Likewise, the configuration of the Sefirot is frequently depicted as the body parts of a human form, each Sefirah corresponding to a part of the human body. What is suggested by this is that the ultimate purpose of God creating was to create the human one-the image and likeness of God.

To understand more deeply what this means, one must consider what a human being is, or is meant to be. A human being is a creature of higher intelligence that is self-aware and therefore can be aware of the existence of God. Because of this intelligence and self-awareness, a human being is capable of conscious evolution toward higher states of awareness and more refined and higher forms of life-specifically, an evolution toward unification with God. A human being has the capacity to consciously unite him- or herself with God and to embody something of God and the Godhead-the capacity to attain supernal consciousness or enlightenment.

To say that the ultimate purpose of creation is the human one is to say that God's ultimate purpose is to express or communicate him- or herself-to reveal him- or herself and make him- or herself known. The ultimate knowledge of God is unification with God and embodiment of God-Messianic consciousness or Christhood.

It is as though God, who is the Being of the Becoming, seeks self-knowledge through the act of creation. God creates because it is God's nature to create-to express and know God. While one can know nothing of God at the ordinary level of consciousness, in a state of conscious unity with God, the presence of God within oneself knows God and Godhead beyond oneself.

This fruition of creation is prefigured in the person of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), who represents the first human one to emerge from within humanity, embodying something of the Soul of Messiah-one anointed with the supernal light of God. The universe of Adam Kadmon in the Christian Kabbalah represents this level of attainment and all of the mysteries associated with it. It is the universe of the Soul of the Messiah, the Olam of supernal light.

At the level of Atzilut, the divine names and the Sefirot are one and the same; the Sefirot are the divine names and the divine names are the Sefirot. Therefore, the level of Adam Kadmon corresponds to the holy



letters from which the names are derived and, specifically, to the power of the word-wisdom of God of which the holy names of God serve as vehicles or channels.

### The Universe of Atzilut

The word “Atzilut” is derived from the root etzel, which means “nearness.” As the name implies, Atzilut is near to the infinite light, so near, in fact, that, like Adam Kadmon, Atzilut is also called Ain or no-thingness. Atzilut is the domain of the Sefirot proper, the holy vessels of Atzilut being filled with the infinite light via Adam Kadmon. If the existence of the primordial essence of the Sefirot at the level of the universe of Adam Kadmon were conceived of as the body of Adam Kadmon, the Sefirot at the level of Atzilut would be as garments of light.

The concept of Atzilut is not an easy one to describe. For all intents and purposes, one could say that it is truly alien to our perception of reality. One could characterize Atzilut as the level of reality that does not yet exist, or a level of reality beyond the space-time-consciousness continuum in which past, present, and future exist as a simultaneous reality-one ever-present reality. If this is not alien enough, at the level of Atzilut, not only are past, present, and future a simultaneous reality, but so also is every possible outcome, which is to say every possibility of the past, present, and future, not only of one single space-time continuum but of all possible space-time continuums!

Another characteristic of Atzilut is that knowledge, the knower, and the known exist in complete unity, so that there is no subject-object relationship and, in truth, no duality whatsoever. It is supernal or supramental. If one were to experience consciousness at the level of Atzilut, one would experience the knowledge and reality of everything within oneself-a state of pure radiant awareness. In the words of St. Paul, “One would know fully, even as one has been known.”

With the coming into being of the Sefirot proper in Atzilut, along with God's will or desire, God's wisdom, understanding, love, power, lordship, dominion, splendor, righteousness and kingdom emerge, and through them the great name of God is revealed. At the level of Atzilut, the Sefirot exist in an archetypal state and in perfect unity and harmony with one another-without any differentiation or division between them. God is One and he and his name are One. Only at the point when the Sefirot are manifest in a lower universe can they be conceived of as separate forces.

### The Universe of Beriyah

Adam Kadmon and Atzilut together form the realm of Yichud (Unity), but at the level of Beriyah, the realm of Perud (Separation) begins, which is to say, the appearance of independent existence and separation. According to the Kabbalah, creation occurs through a process of tzimtzum (constriction), in which God must withdraw his or her infinite light into him- or herself to make a primordial space in which creation can take place. The effects of this tzimtzum begin to manifest and play themselves out at the level of Beriyah.

The term “Beriyah” is derived from the Hebrew word bara, meaning “to create” and the Aramaic word bar, meaning “outside” or “external.” Therefore, Beriyah indicates the concept of creation brought from within God and distinct from God-“outside” of God or “separate” from God to some degree. Likewise, it suggests the creation of something new and distinct or creation “ex nihilo.” In Hebrew, this idea is represented in the phrase Yesh Mi-Ani-“Something from nothing.” In relationship to Atzilut, which is near unto the divine, Beriyah is outside or apart from the divine-two dimensions removed from the divine.

While the Sefirot at the level of Atzilut are expressed by the divine names, at the level of Beriyah they are expressed by the archangels-the divine powers of creation. However, all cosmic or spiritual forces at the level of Beriyah are not divine, for with the constriction of the infinite light and separation, cosmic ignorance

emerges and, with cosmic ignorance, forces of evil and darkness enter into creation. Therefore, along with the divine powers, there are admixed powers and dark powers. All of these together are the cosmic forces through which Beriyah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah come into being-Beriyah being mostly divine and Asiyah being mostly admixed and dark.

Beriyah corresponds to the first He of the Tetragrammaton, which is the “window” through which the true nature of existence is revealed and the mysteries made accessible. But in the process of this revelation, the cosmic forces become distinct and individual entities, some oriented to the universe above and others oriented to the universe below-some in submission to divine will and others seeking their own dominion over creatures and creation. Thus gods and goddesses, archdemons and demons, and all manner of spiritual entities came into being with the holy archangels. In Gnostic Christianity, Beriyah is therefore called the beginning of the dominion of the demiurgos and archons-the cosmic forces of ignorance.

In mentioning the reality of evil at the level of Beriyah, it must be said that evil is not seen as having an independent existence apart from God, as nothing whatsoever can exist in complete separation from God's presence and power. In the Kabbalah, the cosmic forces of ignorance and the “Evil One” are understood to be a secret operation of the Holy Spirit-so secret that such entities do not even know that, ultimately, they are serving God's plan in creation. Cosmic ignorance and evil is what makes free will possible in creation and therefore is an integral part of the divine plan.

#### The Universe of Yetzirah

The word Yetzirah comes from the root yetzar, which means “to form.” Yetzirah therefore denotes the formation of something from a preexistent substance, hence the Hebrew phrase Yesh Mi-Yesh, “something from something.” This is illustrated in a verse from the prophet Isaiah in which God says, “I form (yotzer) the light and create (boreh) darkness” (Isaiah 45:7). The light exists before creation and comes from within God and therefore is “something from something,” but darkness did not exist before creation, did not come from within God and the Godhead, and therefore was created “something from nothing.” However, at the level of Yetzirah, both the light and the darkness are formed, for darkness was created at the level of Beriyah, as were all cosmic principles and cosmic forces. In Yetzirah, the principles and forces found in Beriyah are shaped into more distinct patterns of form-hence the universe of formation.

In this process, there is a further division or separation of things-a further involution of the one becoming many. This is represented by the manifestation of the Sefirot in Yetzirah as orders of angels. Whereas, at the level of Beriyah, the presence and power of the Sefirot manifests as a singular entity, namely an archangel, in Yetzirah, the Sefirot become hosts or choirs of angels, the one presence and power manifesting as the countless many. This further division or separation of things happens through the cosmic ignorance that was created in the process of the tzimtzum. Thus, along with the generation of hosts of holy angels in Yetzirah, there is also the generation of legions of impure and evil spirits-beings-forces of admixture and darkness. At this level of creation, the divine order and the dominion of the demiurge exist in a dynamic balance so that Yetzirah is equally of the light and of the darkness.

In comparison with the realm of Yichud formed by Adam Kadmon and Atzilut, the light of the infinite is extremely restricted and therefore distinctly veiled in Yetzirah. There is a great difference between manifestation at the level of Atzilut and at the level of Yetzirah, which is well reflected by the correspondence of pure awareness or undifferentiated mind to the former and speech to the latter. One need only consider the difficulty of conveying one's mind and one's thoughts through speech to another person and the gap of subjectivity between the speaker and the listener. One might speak quite clearly and yet be sorely misunderstood as the meaning of one's words can easily be taken out of context. The same is true of cosmic forces manifesting at this level. They are often distorted and certainly less than the divine glory of the higher

Olamot.

Speech, being attributed to Yetzirah, represents the feeling or emotional level as well as actual words. Speech not only conveys thought but is also a translation of thought into feelings and emotions, which represents a lower gradation of the original ratzon (will or desire) underlying creation. Therefore, emotion is the motivating force at the level of Yetzirah-speech and emotion.

The universe of Yetzirah is often called the world of angels and, conversely, the world of demons. Asiyah is the material or physical universe. Therefore, speaking of Yetzirah as a world of spirits alludes to the play of spiritual forces within and behind everything that transpires in the material world. Essentially, as human beings, whatever we link ourselves with through our thoughts, emotions, speech, and actions, we bring down from Yetzirah into substantial being at the level of Asiyah, whether that be something angelic, admixed, or demonic. Contact with something angelic is a link to the divine, as angels are links between human beings and God. Contact with something admixed or impure is a distorted or imperfect link to the divine, while contact with something demonic is a removal of oneself from the divine presence. To commune with angelic beings and righteous spirits, one merely needs to align one's thoughts, feelings-emotions, words, and actions to those of the holy angels. Angelic beings are always seeking contact with humanity and contact is made any time we are willing. As the Kabbalah says, "Think of the holy angels and they will think of you and come to you."

#### The Universe of Asiyah

Asiyah is the universe of making, the word Asiyah being derived from the root asah, meaning "to make." Asiyah therefore connotes the final outcome or completion of the process of creation. At the level of Asiyah, the spiritual world and material world interpenetrate and interact, the material world being the most restricted or dense manifestation of spiritual energy. It is in Asiyah where potential is fully realized and actualized-the fulfillment of creation.

The supernal light of Atzilut is the secret center of every particle of matter, matter itself being crystallized light that has assumed the densest possible form-form representing force locked up into patterns of its own making. Thus, at the level of Asiyah, the light of the Infinite is most thickly veiled and hidden. In this sense, Asiyah is the dimension most removed from God's presence or the realm in which God's presence is most restricted, and yet the presence of God is everywhere within creation at the level of Asiyah-within everyone and everything.

Cosmic ignorance is the principle of constriction or restriction; therefore, cosmic ignorance tends to dominate the universe of Asiyah. Although this means that impure and evil forces have a great influence upon creatures and creation at this level, it also means that there is a full and complete freedom of will in Asiyah. Although restriction and bondage is the function of cosmic ignorance, its ultimate purpose is freedom or liberation.

Through cosmic ignorance, the light of the Infinite evolves into the material universe through gradations. Likewise, through gradations, creation is linked with the Infinite and is able to evolve toward the Infinite. Along with making free will possible, darkness also makes evolution possible, providing the resistance, tension, stress, and friction necessary for the development of higher and more refined life-forms and, thus, the development of higher and more refined states of consciousness-being. Therefore, Asiyah is designed for the awakening of souls-for the realization and actualization of divine potential.

This truth is given in the name of Yeshua, one of the esoteric meanings of which is "knowledge of the truth will set you free!" Only through a process of incarnations in Asiyah is a soul able to awaken and actualize the divine potential of the infinite light within it, and thus to evolve beyond the need for the dense forms of

physical or material existence. Asiyah allows for individuation so that, returning to the realm of Yichud and uniting itself with the universal and primordial dimensions of divine being, the soul is able to maintain self-awareness while in unification with the divine. Hence, the individual is not simply reabsorbed into an unconscious union but is fulfilled and completed in a conscious unification. It is Asiyah that makes this possible.

The Kabbalah says that, at the level of Asiyah, the spiritual energy of the Sefirot manifests through the stars and planets. Because of this, astrology is often the primary method of divination into the purpose and meaning of the soul's incarnation, as the birth chart reflects the configuration of Sefirotic influence at the time of one's birth. There is also a teaching in the Kabbalah that proposes that the stars serve as the bodies of archangels in the physical universe, their cosmic rays and light being likened to angels. Gnostic Christianity often speaks of God's presence in Asiyah as our "earthly Mother," and of features of the land, creatures, and forces of nature as "angels of our earthly Mother."

While these ideas may fall upon many modern ears as superstition, or seem silly to a noninitiate, the meaning is quite simple: the material and spiritual worlds are intimately connected and are ultimately inseparable. The material universe comes forth from the spiritual universe and is the outermost manifestation of the universe of the Spirit. There is a vast metaphysical reality within and behind the material plane of the universe. In fact, there are countless inner dimensions that are as equally "real" and distinct as the physical or material dimension. When there is the appearance of a miracle, it is simply the operation of the cosmic law acting through the hidden dimensions upon the material dimension. It only appears as a miracle to one who is unaware of the metaphysical dimensions of reality and the play of spiritual forces within and behind what transpires in the material world.

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