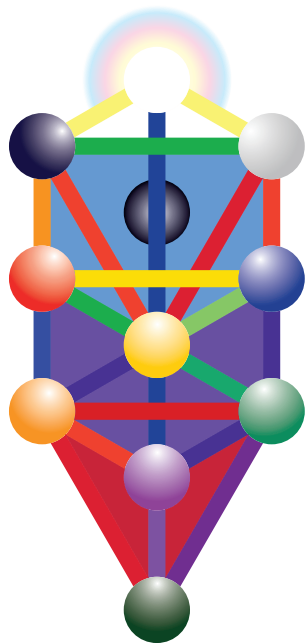


SEVEN HEAVENS

by David Goddard



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The Seven Heavens

Briah, the realm of Creation is the second of the Four Worlds of the Qabalah. This 'heavenly world' is the level of the archangels, and of the human Spirit. The Spirit is the true Self, that radiant essence which tabernacles the Divine Spark. In each life the Spirit sends a portion of itself into the material world, to be the indwelling Soul of an incarnate human.

For centuries, the initiates of the Qabalah have ascended into the Realm of the Spirit. There to be instructed in the secrets of Creation, and so evolve. This work of ascension is traditionally called: 'the Work of the Chariot - the Merkabah.' The World of Briah is divided into seven levels - traditionally called the Seven Heavens - they are stages of increasing refinement and unfoldment.

It is said, that "... to ascend in the Chariot, is also to descend into oneself". Because a human is the microcosmic reflection of the Universe, we contain everything within us - as potential. Rising through the heavens we discover the spiritual secrets within; we come to know the truth of 'Who' we really are - eternal aspects of the Great Mystery that men call God.

Each of the seven heavens has both a macrocosmic aspect and a personal, or microcosmic aspect. What follows is a collection of images - drawn from the visions of many Chariot-riders. These poetic images give us an intimation of the sapphire-paved Heavens, to which spiritual practitioners travel on high.

1st Heaven - Vilon - 'the Veil'

Macrocosmic aspect:

It is the first level of spirit and corresponds in an incarnate human being to the Higher-Self, to Ruach. The Vilon may be pulled back to reveal the light of the Upper Worlds; or drawn back over one the moment we fall back into our ordinary mental states, and spiritually fall asleep.

Microcosmic aspect:

Vilon is the place where the Three-Lower-Worlds meet. As the Malkuth of Briah it is the 'Gate of Heaven.' Here the stage of Devotion is entered; this means that all the power of the Soul-Triad is concentrated into an emotional amalgam of Truth, Justice & Mercy. Awareness of one's vices and virtues are impartially reviewed and considered. All imbalances are corrected, if possible, by conscious acknowledgement, honesty and generosity.

This allows progress, but holds the human Soul to account.

When an equilibrium has been attained, the Veil may be drawn back to reveal the 'Chamber of Purity'.

2nd Heaven - Rakiyah - 'Purity'

Macrocosmic aspect:

The Second Heaven is the Celestial Paradise. It is a curtain that prevents 'natural' humans from glimpsing too deeply into the Ways of Heaven; otherwise they would despair over the recurring rhythms and situations that will eventually bring them to perfection.

The Second Heaven is the place for one who wishes to discover the key to their being and the purpose of Existence.

Microcosmic aspect:

In Rakiyah repentance can occur which cleanses the Soul. This gives the consciousness a lucidity, which may precipitate the window of the Spirit being opened through the Da'ath - Yesod conjunction that joins Yetzirah and Briah. The state of Purity can be compared to the clean freshness of mountain air with the scale of vision to match. This is also the level of consciousness where all spiritual Traditions meet with no conflict over the outer forms.

3rd Heaven - Shehakim - 'Sincerity'

Macrocosmic aspect:

In the Heaven of Shehakim, the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alphabet manifest as Spirits of Light, as the Guardians of the Paths of the Tree of Life. Here the great millstones of Heaven can be seen, slowly revolving Creation through its vast cycles.

In this Third Heaven, the Grace of God brings forth the manna - the Bread of Angels - this food of Heaven to sustain the Worlds below. This is the esoteric meaning of the prayer: "... give us this day our daily Bread."

Microcosmic aspect:

Spiritual Sincerity is rooted in the Hod, Netzach and Yesod of Briah; constituting the theory, practice and image-making of esoteric work in the spiritual sense. Here a person operates from deep within, having the equivalent of Willingness at the Cosmic level. Such a one will do whatever Providence requires; be it to live, work, or even to die, for the sake of the Most Holy One. Few individuals can hold this level of spiritual Action; although many touch this 'Plane of Maturity,' as it is traditionally

called, in deep meditation.

The dynamic clam that pulsates from this Heaven is the prerequisite for entering the next level.

The understanding of Shehakim is most important for the practice of real Theurgy. Because it is in this Third Heaven that the prayers of incarnate humans periodically fuse with the prayers of the Angels and Pure Spirits (the Great Hierarchy). When such a willed cooperation occurs, the Third Heaven becomes filled with Divine Light flowing down the Middle Pillar from Atziluth. This Supernal Light illuminates the 12 celestial spirits of Humanity - pouring radiance upon the Heavenly Round Table.

4th Heaven - Zebul - 'with God'

Macrocosmic aspect:

All the stars, planets and moons have their origin here. Zebul also is the place of the Celestial Temple within the Heavenly Jerusalem, the 'Mother of us all'. This particular Heaven is the level of consciousness of the Ten Great Spiritual Masters; who are overseen by the incarnate Messiah, the Christos, that man or woman is who is fully conscious of the Divine.

Microcosmic aspect:

In this heaven there is direct contact with Divinity in the Heavenly Jerusalem, where the Three-Upper-Worlds-meet. Here, in Zebul, awareness of God is no longer a remote reflection of Light, but a direct entrance into the radiance of Atziluth. Some individuals actually perceive the rays of Emanation coming down into a deep inner space - but we should remember that these are just psychological images for something which is beyond all form.

This shift into the meeting place of the Three Upper Worlds constitutes a major shift in the individual. In many cases, because the range of consciousness is small, all contact with the Earth is lost. Also, awareness of the psyche is diminished as the individuality is reduced to a dot within infinite Light. But, the speck of 'I' does respond to the Divine Presence, as the limited self within each of us experiences the Cosmic SELF of the Unlimited. This can lift us into the level of Holiness.

5th Heaven - Maon - 'Holiness'

Macrocosmic aspect:

Maon is a place of cosmic Sound and Colour. Here the Angels of Praise and evolved humans worship God. It is

the place where the Love of Creation dwells, and so it is the abode of the Barakhah or Blessing. Also, the Divine Thunderbolt passes through this Heaven to create the Kether of Yetzirah.

Microcosmic aspect:

In this Fifth Heaven, we can undergo a wholeness and healing of our being. Here we may perceive all we have ever been - even as the Buddha saw all his past lives in a cosmic moment.

6th Heaven - Makom - 'Sanctification'

Macrocosmic aspect:

The Sixth Heaven is also known as the 'Palace of the Will'. Here events are created high above the level where they will occur, and long before they manifest upon Earth below. These events - or crises - are symbolised by fire, smoke, biting dews, storms that burn - all symbols of test and turmoil.

At the centre of the Heaven of Makom, is the Da'ath of Briah, the Dark Abyss out of which the Voice of Holy Spirit emanates.

Paradoxically, because of the very real power of intercession, this Heaven is sometimes named the 'Palace of Mercy.'

Microcosmic aspect:

Here in Makom, one is also with in the ambit of the Living Almighty and experiences the Power of Divinity. This is where the great Archangels of the Face chorus the praises of the Most Holy One.

Some people actually hear their voices, and even sing with the Universal Choir that hovers in this vast Place of Sanctification. No words can describe the bliss undergone in this level of consciousness - it is to know what it means to be 'blessed.' People who reach this level usually say nothing about it, although the radiance of their faces often reveals where they have been. This extraordinary light sometimes remains for a while before fading, unless it is renewed by a constant return to this level. Examples are: that of Moses coming down the mountain with a blazing countenance, or the Transfiguration of Jesus, when 'his face shone like the Sun'.

7th Heaven - Arabot - 'in the Presence'

Macrocosmic aspect:

Arabot is sometimes perceived as the surface of a vast, cosmic sea; or a bank of endless cloud or a vast plain. In Arabot shines the Light that was called forth on the 1st Day of Creation - Fiat Lux - this light is such that, by it one can see from one end of Existence to the other.

Here is found the Dew of Heaven that resurrects the dead; and here too is the storehouse of life, peace and blessings; everything that is good, beautiful, just and merciful.

As each being emerges as a Divine Spark, through the Spiritual Kether, it cries Eheieh: *I Am - I exist* - and plunges down into the Cosmic Sea of the Seventh Heaven.

Microcosmic aspect:

The Seventh Heaven is the greatest height one can reach in the World of the Spirit. Penetration of the 7th heaven is a rare occurrence as a conscious action; although it is said that each person, at one moment in their life, has a flash of what it is like to be in the Presence of the Lord of the Universe at the Crown of Creation.

To reach this highest Heaven, is to be at one with the Heart of the Divine; and therefore, mutual Love is the key to this meeting with the Most Holy One. Indeed, it is noted that at each step, one is met by Divine encouragement; it is like being welcomed by the Beloved.

Anyone who enters into the Seventh Heaven enters that place, where beyond, lies the Great Abyss. This is the point where total Union occurs, where the individual becomes one with the Godhead. So, unless one's destined Work has been done, there is no stepping into highest Place of Knowledge [Da'ath in Atziluth] before the Three Great White Heads of the Holy Tree, for to go higher would be to see God, Face to Face; so to realise the highest Name: I Am that I Am.

This can only be attained when one's destiny has been completed; when one has fulfilled that for which one was 'called forth', 'created', 'formed' and 'made' for, completing that for which the Absolute willed you into Being. From this we learn that there can never be any spiritual 'abortions or suicides', no lasting failures, or shortcuts; because Omnipotence cannot fail.

When a person touches and is touched by the Divine, then he or she is 'known by name.' To possess a name is to become individual, to be quite separate from others, who might be similar to oneself. This Self is a unique 'spark' of Divine consciousness. So that each self is a photon of Divine Light, removed from its usual habitat in the World of Emanation, Atziluth. It is because of this fact that often a sense of alien-

ation occurs, particularly in the young or the sensitive. This is why true spiritual Companions are so important.

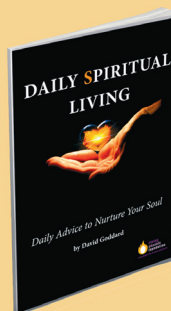
Only when an individual comes to know, and be known, by the Most Holy One, then something of the Divine begins to manifest, and this dissolves the sense of isolation that many people feel, but know not why. To be 'known by name' is the prelude to acquaintanceship, then love, and eventually union.

This Work of Unification is the concern of the Companions of the Light whatever their earthly tradition might be. In this Labour of Love there is no differentiation, even as there is no difference between the Self in one human being and in another 'All is One,' say the mystics, and The ONE is All.

Man's schemes are inferior to those made by heaven.

Chinese Proverb

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