



Mensionization *Complementation*

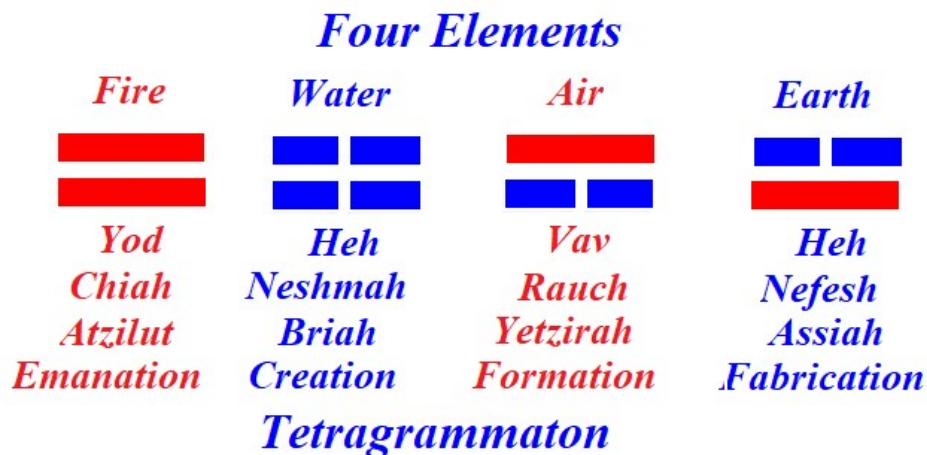
The Mathematics of Hermetic Alchemy

The First Substance of the Qabala

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Alignment of the Four Elements to the Tetragrammaton



THE FIRST SUBSTANCE OF QABALA manifests differently at different levels of the Tree of Life, "*manifests*" being the key word here, as the manifestation is secondary to its Creation.

Nachmanides, in his commentary to the first verse of Genesis, spends a lot of time discussing the *First Substances*, of which he says there are two. To quote directly from the translation I use (by *Rabbi Charles B. Chavel*; *Shilo Publishing House*):

"Everything that exists under the sun or above was not made from non-existence at the outset. Instead He brought forth from total and absolute nothing a very thin substance devoid of corporeality but having power of potency, fit to assume form and to proceed from potentiality into reality. This was the primary matter created by G-d; it is called by the Greeks "hyly" (matter). After the hyly, He did not create anything, but He formed and made things with it, and from this hyly He brought

everything into existence and clothed the forms and put them into a finished condition.

"Know that the Heavens and all that is in them consist of one substance, and the earth and everything that is in it consist of one substance. The Holy One, blessed be He, created these two substances from nothing; they alone were created, and everything else was constructed from them."

Now this is just the beginning (no pun intended) of a lengthy and profound discourse on the "Chaotic and Void" nature of the earth. "Chaos" and "Void" being these two substances (these English words do not do justice to the concepts discussed, and aren't even used in the translation; the original Hebrew being transliterated as "**tohu**" & "**bohu**"). Of course, the "Spirit/Breath of God [which] hovered on the face of the Deep" is explained, and it is here that *Nachmanides* talks about the primal state of the *Four Elements*, and their derivation from a First Point, *Qabalistically* called the "Stone of Foundation".

The order given in *Sefer Yetzirah* is:

- "One is the Breath (*Ruach*) of the Living God...the Life of [All] Worlds...and this is the Holy Spirit/Breath."
- "Two: Wind from Spirit (*Ruach* from *Ruach*; "Wind", "Breath" & "Spirit" being the same in Hebrew - alternatively - 'Breath from Breath')....and one Breath is from them."
- "Three: Water from Wind; He engraved and carved with it (Water) Chaos & Void (**Tohu** & **Bohu**), Mud and Clay..."
- "Four: Fire from Water..."

The Foundation of the Act of Creation is Breath, as everything came into being when "God Said...etc." But the Substance of Formation is *Water*, more specifically what is called "*Philosophical Water*", the purely fluid and volatile Substance which was the only thing Created, and can be fixed into any given form. That *Fire* ensues from *Water* indicates that the Spiritual Principle of the Creative Will is not lost from the substance in it's "*Descent*". In terms of two substances, the possession of - or conscious contact with - the Holy *Ruach* of Heaven, is that

which gives the power to **Fix** the **Volatile** into any form, and/or to return a fixed form to a volatile state, and then "**re-fix**" it in another form.

The **Sefer Yetzirah** only speaks of the Fluid Elements of Fire, Air, & Water, which are Active conduits of Creative Influence. Earth, however, is considered by Sefer Yetzirah to be both the Passive Result and ultimate Receiver of all the Creative Forces, and the subject of their Formative Influences. Earth is not a Creative or Formative Force in itself. Hence, it has no association among the 22 Paths which are the conduits of Influence flowing from the Creator to His Creation. This structure of "conduits" exists in and defines the Qabalistic World of Yetzirah ("**Formation**"), being the origin of the title of the Sefer ("Book of") Yetzirah. This World receives its name from the fact/concept that it is the Forces of this realm which impress Forms upon the One Substance. However, none of these Forms are Fixed until manifest in the "subsequent" World of **Assiah** (literally "Action") which is the realm of ultimate manifestation and Fixation in the element Earth. These are all the "Philosophical" qualities of the elements in the *Creative & Formative* process as delineated by the Qabala. However, in *Assiah*, the realm of fixed manifestation, the *Four Elements* are defined as the existential basis of all Matter. As such, they are not Formative Influences, they are Manifest Results. But they are the *Root Elements* of which all Forms of Matter are combinations, in varying proportions. And it is these proportions, among other qualities & quantities, which are determined in the World of Formation.

What I find very interesting is the correspondence of the states of matter in modern physics to the four manifest elements. When the old system of qualities - **Hot, Moist, Cold, Dry** - are looked at from a slightly different angle, where we see "**Hot**" & "**Cold**" as representing different states of density, it can be seen that physics hasn't changed much at all in their definitions of matter. Thus, going from the lightest to the most dense, we have **Fire** = **Energy** (which is definitely a terrestrial substance &/or manifestation); **Air** = **Gases**; **Water** = **Liquids**; & **Earth** = **Solids**. These "modern" definitions are obviously synonymous with the older states of matter which we call the *Philosophical Elements*. As **Air** & **Water** are the most fluid of the "tangible" elements, they are most often used as representations (at least - we can also see them as the Ideal Source Substances) for the primal substance of Terrestrial manifestation, where **Earth** itself is the final Fixation of the fluid state (**Fire** being the substance of the "**Heavens**", which must undergo a more profound transfiguration in order to be Fixed). This is, of course, also paralleled in modern physics

in the dichotomy between *Matter* "vs." *Energy*.

Qabala, as a practice, is (among other things) the process of entering the Volatile & Volatizing World of Formation in order to reform oneself. In this context, "*reformation*" is a very exalted, spiritual process, merited only by devotion to the Will of the Creator. As such, it is a process which is very much akin, historically as well as spiritually, to the "*Inner*" Alchemical process.

In the Sefer Yetzirah, the Formative Principles of *Fire* and *Water* (the letters *Shin* & *Mem* and their Paths) find both their source and reconciliation in *Aleph/Air*. As the Two Substances spoken of by *Nachmanides*, which are equated with Heaven & Earth, they are reconciled by *Air/Aleph* as the Firmament. These are attributions of the three Mothers in Sefer Yetzirah as well, thus also equating the three *triads* of the *Tree* with Heaven, the Earth, and the Firmament between them. In relating the Tarot images to Sefer Yetzirah we have - following the very effective Golden Dawn attributions - Mem/Water being associated with The Hanged Man, immersed in Waters (from a Qabalistic point of view, considering the proper placement of the Path of Mem between Netzach & Hod). Shin/Fire is associated with Judgment (or The "Aeon"), the liberating Fire of the original Path of Shin, between Chochmah and Binah. The Source and Reconciliation of these Paths is the Path of Aleph, the liberated Ruach of the "Fool", between Chesed and Gevurah. The Fool is the Individual who is immersed in the Path of Mem and emancipated in the Path of Shin. But the return to, and reconciliation in, the central Path of Aleph is the Ruach freed from either extreme. These three paths define the three triads of the Tree of Life, and by extension, all the dynamics of the Tree of Life. As to why the founders of the Golden Dawn found it necessary to reattribute the Hebrew Letters to the Paths on the Tree, I do not know. All I can say is that the actual placement of the paths themselves are derived from Sefer Yetzirah's division of the Hebrew letters into groups of three, seven & twelve. Hence, 3 horizontal paths (as delineated above), 7 vertical paths, & 12 diagonal paths.

Using the "*pre-Lurianic*" Tree of Life diagram, in which the diagonal paths only extend from the Middle Pillar to either one of the extremities of the Right or Left Pillars (this IS the diagram most often found in Esoteric literature), the attributions are as follows:

The 12 "Simples":

Keter -- Chochmah: **Heh**

Keter -- Binah: **Vav**

Chochmah -- Tiferet: **Zain**

Binah -- Tiferet: **Chet**

Chesed -- Tiferet: **Tet**

Gevurah -- Tiferet: **Yod**

Tiferet -- Netzach: **Lamed**

Tiferet -- Hod: **Nun**

Netzach -- Yesod: **Samech**

Hod -- Yesod: **Ayin**

Netzach -- Malchut: **Tzaddi**

Hod -- Malchut: **Qoph**

The 7 "Doubles" ("BeGeD KaPaReT", the words for "garment" & "covering"):

Chochmah -- Chesed: **Beit**

Binah -- Gevurah: **Gimel**

Keter -- Tiferet: **Dalet**

Chesed -- Netzach: **Kaf**

Gevurah -- Hod: **Peh**

Tiferet -- Yesod: **Resh**

Yesod -- Malchut: **Tav**

Careful study & meditation on these paths - especially in relation to the three triads of the spheres - will quickly begin to reveal a transformative process; whether from "*Above to Below*" (the *Fixation of Spirit* in Matter) or from "*Below to Above*" (the *Volatization of Spirit* from Matter). Again, how these 22 Paths are grouped in relation to the 3 Descending/Ascending Triads of the Ten Spheres - the Triads being defined by the 3 Horizontal paths as much as by the spheres of the Middle Pillar - is the key to practical work with them.

