

# THE TREE OF LIFE IN RELIGIOUS AND MYSTICAL LITERATURE OF ISLAM

## A ÁRVORE DA VIDA NA LITERATURA RELIGIOSA E MÍSTICA DO ISLÃ

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**Abstract:** The tree of life is one of the few common symbols of mythological and religious beliefs in the world, whose signs can be observed in the ancient Mesopotamian thought and other ancient civilizations around the world. Later, under the title of Sephirot, it has been reflected as the most pivotal discussion in the mystical literature of the Jews. In this study, the archetype of the tree of life in the mystical literature of Islam has been investigated with the Quranic terms, such as Tuba tree, Sidrat al-Muntaha (Sidra tree), Shajarat al-Mubarakah al-Zaytun (the blessed olive tree), and also with the title of Shajarat al-Kawn (tree of existence) in Sufi texts from the cosmic perspective and titles like seven facetiae in the human dimension.

**Keywords:** Tree of life. Tuba tree. The blessed olive tree. Tree of existence. Seven facetiae.

**Resumo:** A árvore da vida é um dos poucos símbolos comuns das crenças mitológicas e religiosas do mundo, cujos sinais podem ser observados no antigo pensamento mesopotâmico e em outras civilizações antigas em todo o mundo. Mais tarde, sob o título de Sephirot, foi refletido como a discussão mais importante na literatura mística dos judeus. Neste estudo, o arquétipo da árvore da vida na literatura mística do Islã tem sido investigado com os termos do Alcorão, tais como a Tuba, Sidrat al-Muntaha (árvore Sidra), Shajarat al-Mubarakah al-Zaytun (a oliveira abençoada). árvore), e também com o título de Shajarat al-Kawn (árvore da existência) em textos sufis da perspectiva cósmica e títulos como sete facetiae na dimensão humana.

**Palavras-chave:** Árvore da vida. Tuba árvore. A oliveira abençoada. Árvore da existência. Sete facetiae.

## Introduction

Talking about the tree of life is an easy yet difficult issue. The great mythologists have spoken a lot about it. Countless images are available to everyone and we have provided examples in the early chapters. But what truth does this myth refer to? Many believe that the discovery of the meaning of myths has, in most cases, led to one-sidedness and their reduced semantic value. But is it always the case?

For example, Frazer's<sup>1</sup> conclusion from the Aeneid story is helpful in this regard. Thus, we will continue by reviewing the introduction to the book and the reason for choosing the title "The Golden Bough" for it: The important point is that Frazer's interpretation is indebted to another piece in classical literature rather than the botany of his own "The Golden Bough"<sup>2</sup>. Serverius Daneshvar wrote the following about Virgil's poems:

"Those who write about the mysteries of Proserpine believe that this branch has a mystery. But rumors are somewhat different: It is said that after the killing of King Twas, Orestes escaped with her sister, Iphigenia, and reconstructed the image of Diana near Arisia, whose temple had an alternative ritual. There was a tree whose branch should not be damaged, except that any fugitive slave had the right to duel with the temporary priest of the temple in case of breaking the branch and become the temple priest in memory of the first escape."

In 1889, Frazer eagerly hoped this matter. Ambassador of England in Rome, who was an amateur archaeologist, dug a place in five miles from Arisia. The drilling confirmed the connection between the place and Diana whose various small sculptures were found. There were also several other factors that added to the peculiarity of the story. Frazer was certain that there was such a ritual. Further, study of the first book of Pausanias travels (which he was trying to edit and publish) was an amazing confirmation that the ritual itself was not merely a myth. Frazer wrote his book (The Golden Bough) in order to investigate the refinements of these kinds of thinking processes globally and their different methods of manifestation in various places. In 1889, he wrote to a publisher named George McMillan:

"I will soon conduct a study on the early religions... The similarity between the customs and ideas of primitive people and basic teachings of Christianity is astonishing" (Frazer, 2005: The introduction to the book "The Golden Bough", 22-27).

## Science and demythologization

Unlike Mircea Eliade, Carl Gustav Jung and Joseph Campbell who have remembered the myth with glory and considered it as a primordial and eternal phenomenon, George Frazer, like Tylor<sup>3</sup>, believes that myth is part of the primitive religion and the primitive religion is a proportion of the natural science which is completely modern. So, the time of myth has come to an end since the task of the primitive religion is to explain the events of the physical world and now, science and technology have opened a path that there is no longer a chance for myths. Frazer believes that the primary task of the primitive religion is the creation of events, especially the growth of agricultural products. Frazer considers the myth of Adonis as one of the most important examples of a myth that in his opinion is the main myth among all myths, i.e. the story of the original god who is the god of plant growth. We also work exactly with the god of plant growth\_ but with another literature\_ and, like Frazer, believe that the myth of this god is a single myth within which other myths fall. But there is room for debate on whether science has completely replaced myth or gods like Adonis were made by the early humans so that they can justify issues using them.

Frazer states that the people of ancient times performed the myth of Adonis and believed that this ritual performance magically fulfills what has been performed. Indeed, the performance of the scene of Adonis return to earth was for the realization of that event, resulting in regrowth of agricultural products. The function of this myth was not only to explain the cause of the death of products but also to revive them. Adonis' life, even in the hybrid phase, is nothing but a symbol of the transition of plants themselves (the myth that Adonis spent part of the year in the underworld)...

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1 James George Frazer (1854-1941), Scottish-born mythological critic and the writer of the famous book "The Golden Bough".

2 Frazer, 2005: 151-180; however, mention has been made of the holy trees everywhere in the book.

3 Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), British anthropologist

Assuming that he represents the plants and especially cereals, it is described in the simplest and most natural form that he is buried underground half of the year and appears on the ground the other half Frazer, 2005: 392).

The biggest problem of Tylor's and Frazer's view stating that myth is a primitive proportion of science is its apparent disability in explaining the cause of the sustainability of myth in the age of science. If the function of myth is not more than the function of science, then why hasn't it disappeared yet? However, Tylor and Frazer could respond promptly that whatever has remained is not myth just because it does not have the same function as science. But Hans Blumenberg<sup>4</sup> mentions that the survival of myth along with science proves that the function of myth has never been the same as the function of science. However, neither Blumenberg nor Tylor nor Frazer explain why people still resort to myth along with science, or religion in general, to describe physical events.

For example, passengers who have survived a plane crash provide a scientific explanation for the accident but attribute their survival to God's will not, for example, to the location of their seats. Certainly, Tylor and Frazer would respond to this doubt that these survivors did not realize the discrepancy between their religious and scientific explanations. But this need for consistency is apparently overshadowed by a more important need which is satisfied only by religious explanation (Ref: the article "Return of myth to science"; Noushin Shahandeh, Great Islamic Encyclopedia).

With the expansion of human knowledge, exploration, space travel and so on, many of the superstitions and old beliefs disappeared. But as knowledge grew, more unknowns became apparent and the distance between the undiscovered spiritual and mythological truths with superstition was more clearly revealed. For example, extensive research based on science has been conducted by scientists about near-death experiences<sup>5</sup> or for the clarification of metaphysical issues; but it should be accepted that supersensory matters are never denied or proved by our rational knowledge and it is better not to mix the issues that are not of the same kind. That is, "human science can only examine the state of affairs of this world and cannot respond to many questions, including how is the other side of this universe? What events occur after death? Where does the soul go after burial? What is purgatory? These are the questions that science is incapable of understanding and responding to them negatively and positively" (Javadi Amoli, 41: 2012).

## Seed, tree and fruit of the existence

The holy matter as the seed of the tree of existence manifested itself from a position that is hidden to us so that the tree of existence is formed and its fruit which is a perfect man becomes manifest. Now in this section, we examine some of these facts in detail and in the next section, we will describe the matter more precisely by stating the creation myth with the help of drawing the charts. In fact, both the tree and the mountain symbolize the direct connection between the earth and the sky; a symbol to refer to the center of the universe, a column that is the location of the intersection of the place and utopia; the utopia to which, in the words of Suhrawardi, any power has no way. Utopia is the opposite of the place as many regard holy as the opposite of unholy. The holy matter is totally a different thing but manifests itself in different forms and in this way, man becomes aware of the holy existence and according to the hadith (I was a hidden treasure), the holy matter is likened to a hidden treasure or the seed of the tree of life, which can only flourish and manifest itself from the tree of existence. However, this refers to the general manifestation of truth in the universe. But the perception of the special manifestation is only possible for people of revelation and intuition and those who are aware of the secret of the unity of existence. According to Haji Sabzevari, "There is no Moses who hears the outcry of I'm right, or else this whisper is not in every tree" and based on the holy verse, "So wherever you look, you see God's face\_ but with the eye of Moses who traveled through the desert of bewilderment, poverty and annihilation.

But regarding the holiness and unholiness of the universe, as previously mentioned, holy is the opposite of unholy from the perspective of many mythologists. But Eliade reminds us of this point that "although in all definitions of the religious phenomenon so far, holiness is always compared with worldliness, we have pointed out that everything could sometime be a manifestation of

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<sup>4</sup> Hans Blumenberg (1920-1996), contemporary German philosopher and the writer of "Work On Myth"

<sup>5</sup> Or, in short, NDE; new studies about near-death experiences that raise the possibility of consciousness after brain death.

holiness (Eliade, 2016: 33). So, if anything can accept holiness, to what extent is holiness/unholiness of the world valid? Therefore, we should accept that this is an apparent contradiction because if it is true that everything can be a manifestation of holiness and no object, essence, existence and plant can be found that has not enjoyed the dignity of holiness some time or some place in history, it is also true that we do not know any religion or race or ethnicity that has simultaneously considered all these sacred manifestations to be holy during the course of its history. In other words, within the framework of any religion, holy and unholy objects or creatures are put together.

Primitive people considered certain objects and trees to have special holiness and saw the holy spirit within them and believed in the existence of special power and ability called Mana. They also paid special attention to the existence of Mana (the great spirit) in nature, plants and notably trees and believed that they are very effective in attracting good and repelling evil so that until several centuries later, it was thought that “anyone who picks mehr-e-giah (a holy plant in the ancient Iran), which is in the form of man, immediately dies” (Qazvini, 1982: 307-326).

Based on the evolutionist view of many mythologists and religious scholars, the title of the Spirit of God and the penetration of God in Christ (AS) is the evolution of Mana. At the time of the Prophet Jesus (AS), God manifested himself in the form of Christ (AS). Here, it is essential to express two points: First, most of these researchers were born in Christian families and we cannot ignore the influence of faith in Christian on the minds of these scholars, which has sometimes moved them away from the path of justice and second is the discussion of evolution in the domain of religions, meaning that they believe that modern advanced religions (such as Ibrahimi religions) are the more developed form of primitive religions. But this should not be overlooked that “the religious life of the most primitive people is truly complicated and cannot be confined to animism of nature, Totemism and ancestor worship; rather, people have faith in the great beings enjoying all authorities of the Almighty God. The evolution hypothesis according to which the primitive people are not able to achieve the great manifestations of holiness is invalidated” (Eliade, 2016: 28).

The human perception of the unseen world is the product of divine favors, and human perceptions and thoughts do not have a way to receive the truths of the holy world except through the inner discovery of mysterious matters. That is, to understand the unknown world and its hints and annunciations, one should be a semiotician. That is to say, he should find and interpret (or better to say paraphrase) the holy signs. So, “people are not free to choose the holy place and only search for it and find peace with the help of mysterious verses (signs)” (Eliade, 2014: 24). What the prophets and divine saints have spoken of the world of meaning is within the framework of words, stories and narrations that were understandable to the people of their time. If we pay careful attention, we notice that these great men, to transfer their spiritual experiences to others, have not found a way that is free of mistake and near truth except the language of metaphor and mystery. Perhaps they were the only channel to show the truths related to the unknown universe, and the unknown can only be described with the language of allegory and mystery. It should be accepted that the language of mythology which is closely linked to religions has always been a mysterious (coded) language and according to Mircea Eliade, “mystery is the continuation of manifestation of the holiness (myth) and is considered as its crystallization. And even in this field that is the privileged arena of mystery, exaggeration has sometimes been used so that for example, one of the Manichaean Gnostics of Spain called Priscilin who was burned alive and martyred in the year 385 on the charge of atheism, believed that Jesus is a pure mystery and is not a human being like others but is a Libe (pure mystery). In a famous book called ‘The book of faith and faked writings’, he says: Mystery is the work of God” (Sattari, 2013: 27).

### **Myth of creation of the tree of existence**

In Indian myths, it is said that an egg appeared from nonexistence that is the existence itself, stayed one year and was then halved; the silver half became the earth and the golden half became the sky.

In Vedic myths, the cosmos has emerged from an initial egg. Eurynome who was the goddess of everything rose naked from the first chaos and took a pigeon shape after a long story and laid a universal egg and was ultimately halved and created the earth and the sky (Esmailpour, 2016: 92).

In Zoroastrian mythology, boundless light is on the top and boundless darkness is at the

bottom of the cosmos and the sky is between them. Between these two worlds of light and darkness is emptiness or vacuum which is itself divided into good emptiness and bad emptiness. The god of emptiness is the ruler of good emptiness space and the earth is like the yoke of the egg of the sky.

In the religion of Manichaeism, it is said that at the beginning, the world was divided into two parts in which goodness and light were on the top and were unlimited from the north, east and west directions, and darkness and evil were at the bottom and were unlimited from the south, east and west directions. The world of light was full of joy and purity and was the place of the god of heaven or Zurvan and, at the bottom which was a dirty and wicked place, demon lived. A war took place between light and darkness and finally, demon won and light and soul were captured by darkness and body. Mani believed that this captivity has remained so far.

According to the opinions of Manichaeism, light falls from its original place to the darkness of the physical and material world.

Belief in light and darkness is very close to the two forces of Spenta Mainyu and Angra Mainyu in the Zoroastrian religion. Zarathustra attributes the gate of good and bad manifestations of the universe to these two forces while Ahuramazda is the only god. According to most of the philosophical scholars, Suhrawardi's belief in light and darkness derives from Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. Now, we should know what view exists in the works of Sheikh Ishraq concerning Manichaeism. He has condemned the Manichaean atheists. However, at that time, atheism was unforgivable. The followers of Mani were people of interpretation or Hermeneutics. Following the opinions of Mani at that time meant blasphemy. "Our light ontology is based on the Mashreqiyya rule in light and darkness which was the manner of Persian philosopher Jamasb, Forushashtar and Bozorgmehr and the philosophers before them and this Mashreqiyya rule is monotheistic and is not the rule of infidel magians and Manichaean atheists and whatever that leads to the polytheism of God" (Razi, 2001: 156).

What is the origin of the creation of beings, Yin or Yang? Light or darkness? For Suhrawardi, since light is the same as perfection, asset and the actuality and in contrast, darkness is the same as loss and defect, then it is light that is the origin and regulator of the whole world of existence. Phenomena and creatures become satisfied only from one source and are indebted to one truth and that is the pure light (pure Yang). In this perspective, everything is indebted to the sky. But indeed, there was no distance between the earth and the sky, light and darkness, in the world before our bipolar and contradictory world. In the holy Quran, mention has been made of the unity and separation of the earth and the sky, where it says: "Don't disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth have been connected and then, we have separated them?" (Surah al-Anbiya, Verse 30). Although the profound interpretation of such verses is beyond the scope of our research, it can be concluded that this is a recurring pattern. That is, this rule has existed in the creation of the universe, meaning that initially, there was a position beyond the conflicts of the earth and the sky, Yin and Yang or light and darkness; i.e. zero dimension and one-dimensional position (pure Yang from the viewpoint of Dao religion) and then the two-dimensional world, a world in which the earth and the sky have been separated, the world we are living in.

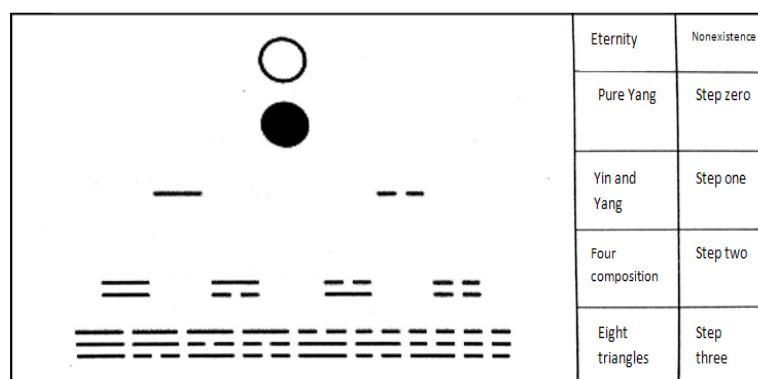


Fig 1. Eight triangles chart, taken from the book "An introduction to Dao", P. 240

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that the pearly star mentioned in the holy Quran

and assumed by mystics as equivalent to hidden treasure or the position before the creation of the universe is considered as the origin of creation and the center of the universe. Then, this center wanted to become manifest and reveal its hidden treasure. Afterwards, the beginning and end of two sides of a coin (light and darkness) which were already available at the same time created the universe in a big bang. In the following chart, a light is displayed by default on the top and a black dot is put inside it\_ which is reminiscent of the materials we stated about taijitu. This light acts like the information and software of existence and the light below which is in the darkness exhibits the material and filthy part or hardware of existence:

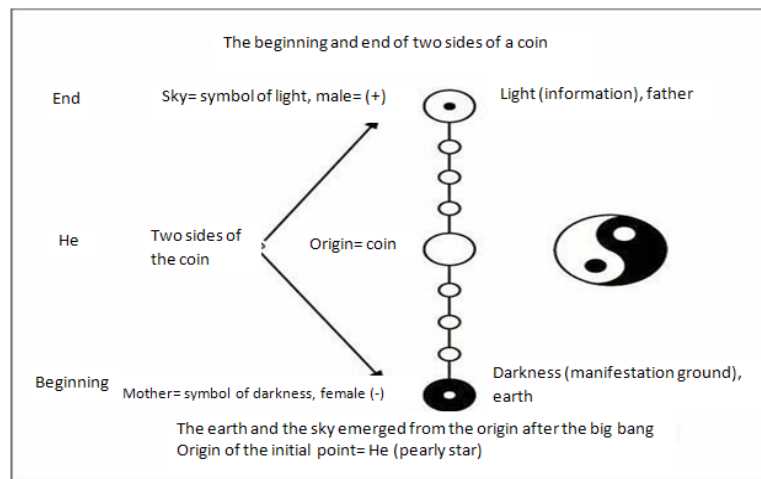


Fig 2. Chart of the manifestation of the hidden treasure in a big bang from unity to plurality

The graph that we drew refers to a primordial pattern and by the earth, we mean the ground or hardware of creation. But at a lower level, this pattern was also repeated in our solar system such that the sun draws the earth in its orbit and the earth draws the moon. A lunisolar flow has been established in our world; the course of emanation-giving and emanation-taking based on the important issue of “receiving”. Thus, for a deeper understanding of this issue, let’s take a look at the subject of creation in Jewish mysticism since in the text of Zohar, the reason for the creation has been stated to be “the desire for partnership” and “the desire to receive”. In this case, we will see why the Jewish mysticism is called kabala or Qabala (accepting, receiving) and then, our understanding of the subject of the containers of receiving or tree of life centers\_ mentioned in the second section\_ will be further clarified.

### The story of creation in Jewish mysticism

One of the discussions that took a lot of pages in Zohar is the subject of creation and how and why creation has taken place. Kabbalists explain this issue based on the idea of “receiving”. That is, they believe that “the desire to receive” affects the whole creation because it is the foundation of all creation and has influence over all four levels of creation; i.e. human, animal, plant and solid levels. In a solid object, the desire to receive is small. One piece of rock is almost independent of the physical world since it does not require anything to guarantee the survival of life. Nevertheless, even for this amount of existence, it needs some desire to receive. The higher we go up the ladder of evolution, the greater this dependence on the outside world will become for more survival and this need culminates in human beings (Safizadeh, 2013: 380).

One of the important topics in Qabala is the issue of creation and why and how creation has taken place and it is explained with the subject of emanation-giving and emanation-taking and with the terms “partnership” and “receiving”. According to Qabalists, the Creator’s attribute is participation and partnership. But there can be no partnership without an agent that can receive it. Besides, it should be considered that the endless desire of the Creator to partner represents his desire to satisfy each degree and quality of the desire to receive: Wherever there was a desire to have health, wisdom, money or property, its satisfaction was inherent in the early desire for partnership (Safizadeh, 2013: 446).

Here, we are faced with something that Qabala calls the thought of creation; i.e. how did God's endless desire to partake lead to the creation of a container to receive His blessings? Although we speak of a container (or Sefhira), it should be noted that because of the light's infinite desire for partnership, this container should also be considered as including countless containers and it receives its individual satisfaction from the Creator by using each of these containers. According to Kabala's principles, creating this container was the beginning and end of creation.

If all that existed was a desire for partnership, then all that was created was the desire to receive. The desire for partnership could not have been created since the meaning of the creation process is that something should be created that has not existed before. But we already mentioned that the essence has the desire for partnership within it, which is complete and does not lack anything. Hence, it is unacceptable that the desire for partnership has been created since the desire for partnership has no deficiency, and existence is one of the attributes that it possesses (Safizadeh, 2013: 447).

This issue has been mentioned in the commentary of Ramban in the phrase of the morning prayer: "He forms light and creates darkness". Ramban asks: Why are the two words used here, forming and creating? He concludes that light<sup>6</sup> could not have been created because being created means not being complete and light is always perfect. Instead, light was formed; that is, light was shaped and enclosed so that it can descend from that souf. Darkness was created because it is a sign of imperfection, negative energy and desire to receive. Therefore, darkness had no place in the existence of the Creator but was created as a completely new phenomenon. Thus, the creation of this container called the desire to receive is referred to as Yesh Me Ayin<sup>7</sup>. Under no circumstances, that nonexistence out of which the desire to receive was created should not be mistaken for the concepts like vacuum and blackness. This nothingness is merely a state of nonexistence or preexistence and is exempt from every attribute.

Now, we have reached a stage in our description of the course of the creation of worlds in which the true essence of creation has taken place. This claim of Kabala that creating a container to receive, i.e. Yesh Me Ayin, forms the whole creation is justified based on the fact that all subsequent manifestations and events are nothing but the reproduction and expansion of the results of this initial alliance between cause (positive) and effect (negative) (Safizadeh, 2013: 447, 448).

Hence, the desire to receive knowledge simply represents the whole creation. Consequently, the early desire of the Creator to partner which was the cause of creating the desire to receive resulted in a new phenomenon called the desire to receive that was said to be created out of nothing in order to show the essential nature of the Creator. Nevertheless, before we can witness the final appearance of the physical world, there are other countless steps in its emergence (Safizadeh, 2013: 449).

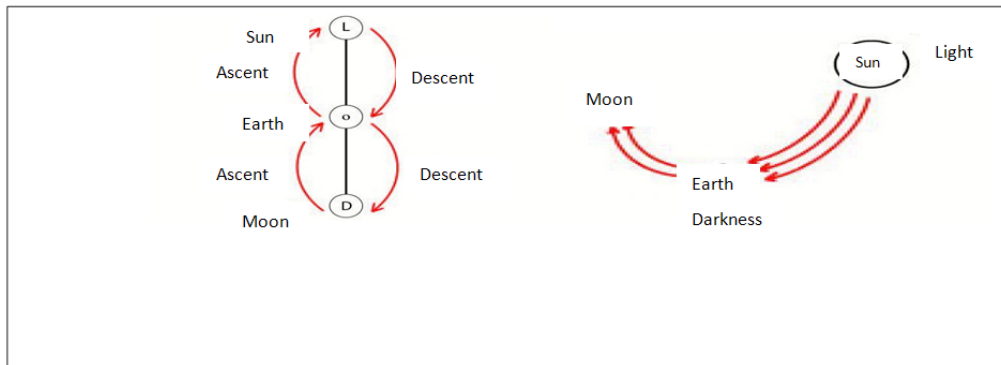
## Lunisolar flow and the tree of life

According to the correspondence theory stated previously, as one rule is established in the cosmos, we can consider it for the existence of human beings or anything that can be adapted to it, including the lunisolar flow. That is, the current of light and darkness or Yin and Yang that has led to the emergence and consistency of the tree of existence and the universe plays the same role in the tree of our existence. Initially, we deal with the relationship between the earth with the sun and the moon and then the correspondence of this issue with the tree of our existence.

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<sup>6</sup> Light indicates positive energy or power and unlike lights, containers are the negative aspect and represent the desire for receiving while light is the positive aspect and represents the desire for partnership.

<sup>7</sup> The existence (Yesh) that was created out of nothing (Ayin)



**Fig 3.** Chart of the ascending-descending or lunisolar channel of the earth

With the introduction to emanation-taking (or the desire to receive) and emanation-giving (or the desire for partnership), we investigate this abstract subject in our sensual and material world. We know that the earth, after being fixed in the orbit of the sun, achieved a solar flow; that is, the ability to “receive” became apparent within it in this way. Further, light, gravity or the melted fire inside it obtained the capability of “emanation-giving” to the moon which was placed in the noose of its own orbit. In Dao, it is believed that this Yin-Yang flow has achieved a kind of cold-hot balance over time, which led to the growth and life of plants on earth. The terrestrial tree of life gradually entered from the level of plants to level of animals and then humans.

Thus, it can be stated that Yin-Yang flow is also established in human existence, meaning that if Yin-Yang flow is not in balance in the body, it causes disease and deficiency. “The basic principle of effective physiology in traditional Chinese medicine is the permanent exchange of vital energy according to Yin-Yang pattern”.

As we breathe and the heart beats, “Qi” is also moved by the meridians<sup>8</sup>. An important point for Dao is that “this Yin-Yang pattern not only govern human physiology but is part of the world’s structure; hence, it governs all aspects of theology, traditions and Dao practice” (Miller, 2016: 143).



**Fig 4.** East: Bright and emanation-giving sun (Yang)

West: Dark and emanation-receiving moon (Yin)

The lunisolar flow in human existence is divided as the following: 1) Inner light or light in darkness which is like the light and heat inside the earth; the same gravity that has trapped the moon in the orbit of the earth and has led to the creation of plants and life, which we have called light in darkness. If we rely on light within darkness, we will be like a tree rooted in the soil and will move toward the supermaterial world (D stands for darkness); 2) outer light: this light is associated with the sky of the existence and the supermaterial world, and the creatures of the material world are not directly related to it, and the sun displays the lights of that shining truth for the people of the earth. Additionally, creatures of the supermaterial world, such as angels and spirits, are rooted in the sky and their movement is downward so that they can find a way into the water of life in darkness and achieve the truth and water of life (L stands for light).

<sup>8</sup> Circulation of the vital force or Qi in the body occurs by channels called meridians.



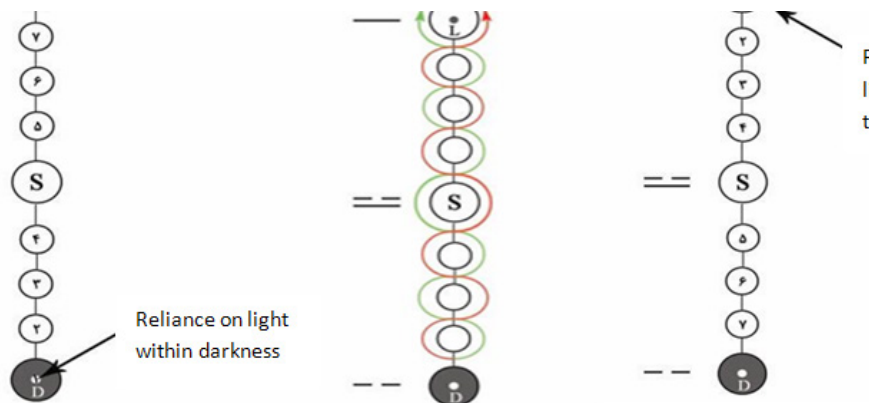


Fig 5. Truth and water of life

### Tree of life; energy centers, Sephirot and seven facetiae

Some of the world's schools and rituals consider concepts such as the center of the universe, the tree of life, the flower of life and the divine throne as truths related to outside of human existence and some other believe that they are associated with the secrets of the inner sphere of man. For example, some people believe that "the altar or holy shrine is like the repetition of the ideal pattern of the center of the world in which Nasut is linked to Lahut" (Warner, 2016: 56). In Islamic mysticism and wisdom, the throne and seat are called the actual manifestations of the unseen world. According to a hadith from the Prophet (PBUH), the whole world is within the divine seat which is in the heart of the divine throne like a ring in its mold: "He extended His seat over the heavens and the earth" (Surah Baqarah, Verse 255). Besides, in another hadith, we have: "Inside the perfect man (or the heart of a believer) is the throne of Almighty God". As a result, God rules over the throne of the existence of a believer. However, another meaning of throne is the wooden frame and scaffold over which trees like grapes are set up. That is, God has created the world on the throne. So, the throne can be regarded as the basic truth and pattern of life. A word from the book "The tree of life" by Ibn Arabi about the throne and the seat is worth mentioning: "But the seat is the container of mysteries and cover of brightness and is a place where everything in the circle of life is kept". Allah says: "He extended His seat over the heavens and the earth" in which the issued sciences are obtained and which is like a space in the heart and the soul, through the heart, finds a way into those two gates, i.e. the throne and the seat. What happens in the heart out of goodness and in the soul out of evil all gather together in the chest and are issued from the chest (heart) to the members of the body. This is the meaning of God's great speech which says God put the heart as the throne, His throne is well-known in the sky and is placed on the earth, because the throne of the hearts is superior to the heaven's throne; that throne does not surround, bear and understand him and it is this throne that looks at the truth at any time and is manifested to him and descends to him from his sky of generosity. In this regard, God says: "The earth and the heavens with all their capacity are not my place, but my house is the heart of the believers" (Ibn Arabi, 2002: 111, 112).

### Everything in the world is not outside of you

#### Seek whatever you want within you

Based on the correspondence theory that we have covered throughout the research, people of knowledge, while believing in seven heavens in the world outside human existence, introduce points within him as the place of manifestation of the tree of life. That is, they believe in both seven heavens in the external world and seven heavens or existential realms within human beings. Of course, one of the most important topics in today's spiritualist schools of the world is the issue of the tree of life as energy centers (seven Chakras) in human existence. Much has been talked about these old beliefs of seven floors of the universe and seven centers for energy exchange from the spiritual world to the material world. Seven heavens of Judaism, seven levels of the tree of life of Allah's Ka'bah (the House of Allah), seven rituals of Christianity religion and seven Hindu and Buddhist Chakras are all the ways to express how we can fillip the higher levels of our spiritual awareness and in this way accelerate the energy flow from the soul to the material, from the throne

to the earth and from inside to outside (Praft, 2017: 2).

The basis of Sufism and practical mysticism is the traveling of mystical journeys based on the movement from darkness to light or from the body to the soul.

According to Suhrawardi, the seeker’s job is to separate darkness and blackness from the fountain of life (Suhrawardi, 2009: 3/ 237) or in other words, his job is to become Khezr and pass through Qaf mountain and finally reach the fountain of life (ibid.: 238). Theoretical mysticism examines these journeys in the form of ontology or describes the positions and levels of perfect man or divine names. According to the principle of the Minor World, “as there is the big one, there is also the small one, as there is top, there is also bottom”. In other words, the pattern of the soul is so carved in our existence that it will never be erased. Scholars and healers state that the power caused by the presence of God within human beings will heal their inside. In a word, the seven energy centers of our body are the gates of our spiritual self. If we could observe our spiritual levels, we would see that the light manifested from every chakra (energy center) differs from another in terms of strength and purity and from each, unique color and vibration are emitted that are related to one of the seven colors of the rainbow.

### Tree of life; understanding the levels of existence through the name of prophets

As stated in the chapter of Islamic mysticism, Alaoddoleh Semnani (Qudsollah) has considered each of the levels of human inner existence (i.e. seven facetiae including nature, soul, heart, spirit, mystery, hidden and secrets) as corresponding to the position of one of the Quranic prophets:

Seventh	Mohammad’s position
Sixth	Jesus’ position
Fifth	Davoud’s position
Fourth	Moses’ position
Third	Ibrahim’s position
Second	Noah’s position
First	Adam’s position

Table 1. levels of human inner existence

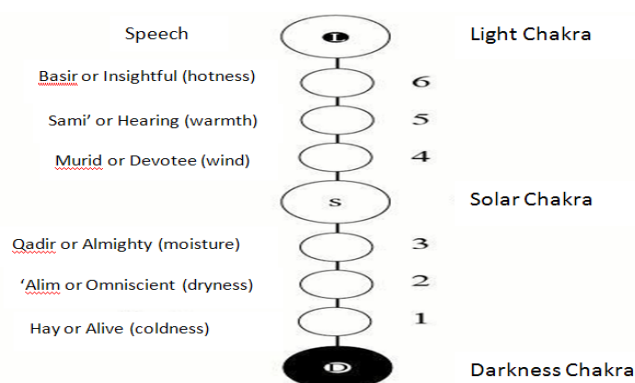


Fig 6. Quranic prophets

Also, Muhi-e-Din Ibn Arabi, before Alaoddoleh Semnani, has used the Owliyayi order to understand the levels of existence in his book called Fusus al-Hikam which is all about their secrets and mysteries (Ref: Zarrinkoub, 1983: 176-7). In the epistemic system of Sheikh Akbar, the hierarchy of existence has been stated in 27 seals<sup>9</sup>. Since all letters are derived from “A” which represents God, then other letters of the alphabet can be the symbol of the 27 words that have set up the tree of

9 Hazrat Allameh Hassanzadeh Amoli has placed “هَيِّطَافِ قَمَلِكِ يَفِئْتِ مَصْعَقِ مَكْحِ صَفِ” as the twenty eighth seal of Sheikh Akbar’s seals (Fusus).

existence by the prophets and divine philosophers. “Word” in Fusus al-Hikm means “truth”, “the inner part” and “wisdom”; e.g. “Mohammadi word” refers to “Mohammadi truth”. Although the message of all prophets is the same and many narratives refer to the similarity of the nature of the Imams (AS), each prophet has become the container for the manifestation of a specific attribute or reign of a name from divine names with respect to his temporal and spatial conditions. As Ibn Arabi has dealt with the subjective interpretation of Quran by comparing the levels of existence with one of the divine words and has made us aware of the heavens of the existence, such a manner can also be seen in Jewish mysticism since the easiest way to understand Sephirot is through prophets. Each of these great men represents a certain energy source that is one of Sephirot’s characteristics and is regarded as a means by which that specific energy changes from its potential form in the supernatural world into its actual form in our universe. For this reason, we will get a better understanding of the type of energy hidden in each Sephira by studying the stories of the Torah about the prophets” (Safizadeh, 2013: 480).

We said that in Qabala, the essence of creation is “the gradual transfer of energy levels” which is called Sephirot. This transmission does not change energy at all but merely reveals different aspects of energy, just like when we pour water into different colored glasses, the color of water is different in each glass but we know that the nature of water has not changed.

As all the manifestations of creation begin from the single day of envy, the spiritual building of the Jews also takes root from Ibrahim (AS) (ibid.: 472).

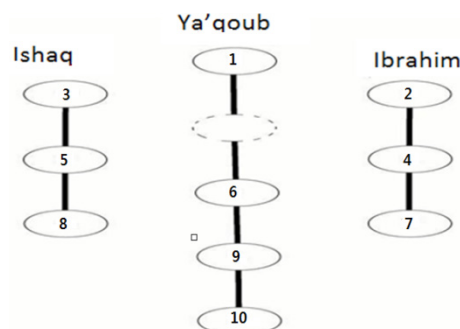


Fig 7. Three father kings; right, left and middle way

Qabalists believe that Ishaq, on the opposite side of his father Ibrahim (AS), transforms the system within the framework of Gouvera (arbitration), which is negative energy. Ultimately, his son, Ya'qoub, places the system in its assigned position which is the energy of the central pillar. It is concluded that the system of left, right and central columns in Ya'qou was fully developed. This categorization is sometimes reminiscent of the Muslims’ view to Christianity and Judaism in the past and present since the truth of Islam is neither eastern nor western but the middle ground. “My brother, Moses, was blind in his right eye and my brother, Jesus, in his left eye and both of my eyes are clear-sighted”. In the book “The secrets of prayer”, Imam Khomeini quoted and interpreted this narrative: “In Moses, plurality prevailed over unity and in Jesus, unity prevailed over plurality; and the Prophet Mohammad had a great purgatorial position which was the middle and straight path” (The secrets of prayer, 1996: 92).

## Conclusion

The notion of the “tree of life” in the ancient designs worldwide is among the few holy archetypes that attracts the attention of every honest researcher. And perhaps the first question that could be whispered regarding this universal symbol within oneself is whether this design has been drawn by primitive people based on material and terrestrial patterns or is the result of an extraterrestrial idea and belongs to another time and place, which has been drawn up by artists everywhere in the universe through intuition, inspiration or remembrance of intermediaries (people who have been connected). In the first state, since sacred trees like cedar have been the sign of eternal life and immortality or palm trees which have been a symbol of sustainability and blessing, such vital trees have created the idea of the “tree of life” for our ancestors, which is the source

of plant biology. But in the second state, the notion of the “tree of life” can indicate a primordial truth; a pattern based on which the universe has emerged and has been shaped and man has been created as a minor world. Man has sought assistance from the external symbols of this invisible truth in order to achieve eternal life, understand the story of creation, answer unresolved questions of the mind or at least seek for health and blessing. Given that the research subject was called “The tree of life in the religious and mystical literature of Islam”, attempt was made to state the background of this issue until the advent of the last heavenly religion. Then, we reached an identity between Tuba tree and the tree of life and demonstrated that the fruit of the tree of existence is the first emanation and the seed of the existence, the primordial light of the Prophet (PBUH) and Ali (AS). This position has been called Mohammadi truth in the literature of Ibn Arabi and his followers. Therefore, the hierarchy of existence from Adam to Khatam (Mohammad) is like a blessed tree; a holy tree that is the manifestation of appearance of divine names in the outer world. The same spheres are potentially embedded in human existence. It is only the perfect man who has been able to pass through the seven cities of love and all the inner levels of human facetae, i.e. seventy thousand veils of darkness and light, and reach the divine knowledge. For the seekers of monotheism, this knowledge is not obtained unless they gain knowledge of the brilliant truths that God has put inside the infallible Imams.

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