

# THE SEPHIROTH

The *Otz Chaim* – the Tree of Life in the Jewish Qabalistic tradition – encompasses 10 “spheres,” or *sephiroth*. These represent emanations of the divine, descending from the highest spiritual plane to base matter. Each *sephirah* can be viewed as a mystical realm as well as an aspect of God.

Mystics follow 22 linking paths to pass through the sephiroth on a spiritual pilgrimage toward enlightenment. This process *must* be taken in the correct order, which isn’t universally agreed upon. One plausible sequence is Malkuth, Yesod, Hod, Netzach, Tiphareth, Geburah, Chesed, Binah, Chokmah, Kether – although this involves a path that isn’t shown on every depiction of the Tree. Taking the sephiroth out of order – or trespassing without ritual preparation – can result in Very Bad Things. “Entry” into a sephirah can be envisioned as physically visiting a spirit realm, as traveling there in astral form, or as a purely spiritual achievement. Entering progressively higher spheres brings increasingly difficult challenges involving confrontations with guardians, tests of purity, and intellectual complexities.

A magician who has *attained* a sephirah – entering it correctly, in the proper sequence – may qualify for bonuses with some magic. The meanings of the sephiroth are usually defined in mystical terms, though, making them rather abstruse for use in secular magic systems. To resolve this, *Decanic Correspondences* (p. 248) associates each decan with a sephirah, and the descriptions below relate the sephiroth to classical elements, astrological features, and “verbs” suitable for verb-noun syntactic magic (see Chapter 6). Attaining a sephirah might permit a wizard to purchase levels of aspected Magery that give bonuses with magic related to a particular decan, verb, or planet. This can justify buying (limited) Magery well beyond campaign limits! In a setting where magical power demands mystical insight, entry into the appropriate sephirah might be *required* to use a magical verb, and the other associations of the sephiroth could form the basis of a system of Realm-based syntactic magic.

## Kether

“The Crown” comes closest to the Godhead, and manifests as a brilliant white light. Relating to perfection and the infinite, it’s the “Primum Mobile” above all planetary spheres, the unification of all the elements.

*Verb:* Create.

## Chokmah (Cochma)

“Wisdom” – related to the most basic of insights – resembles a rainbow star field, a mosaic of all colors. It comprises the entire zodiac, and is the root of elemental fire and air that form the fixed stars.

*Verb:* Sense.

*Other Associations:* Masculinity.

## Binah

“Understanding” is crucially concerned with comprehension. It can be seen as a black cave full of rich food smells. It touches the sphere of Saturn. Deep within it are the true spring of elemental water and the lush cornucopia of elemental earth.

*Verb:* Communicate.

*Other Associations:* Femininity.

## Chesed (Gedulah)

“Mercy,” the sephirah of generosity and protection, appears as a brilliant blue temple mirrored in blue airy skies. It abuts the sphere of Jupiter.

*Verbs:* Protect/Guard; Warn.

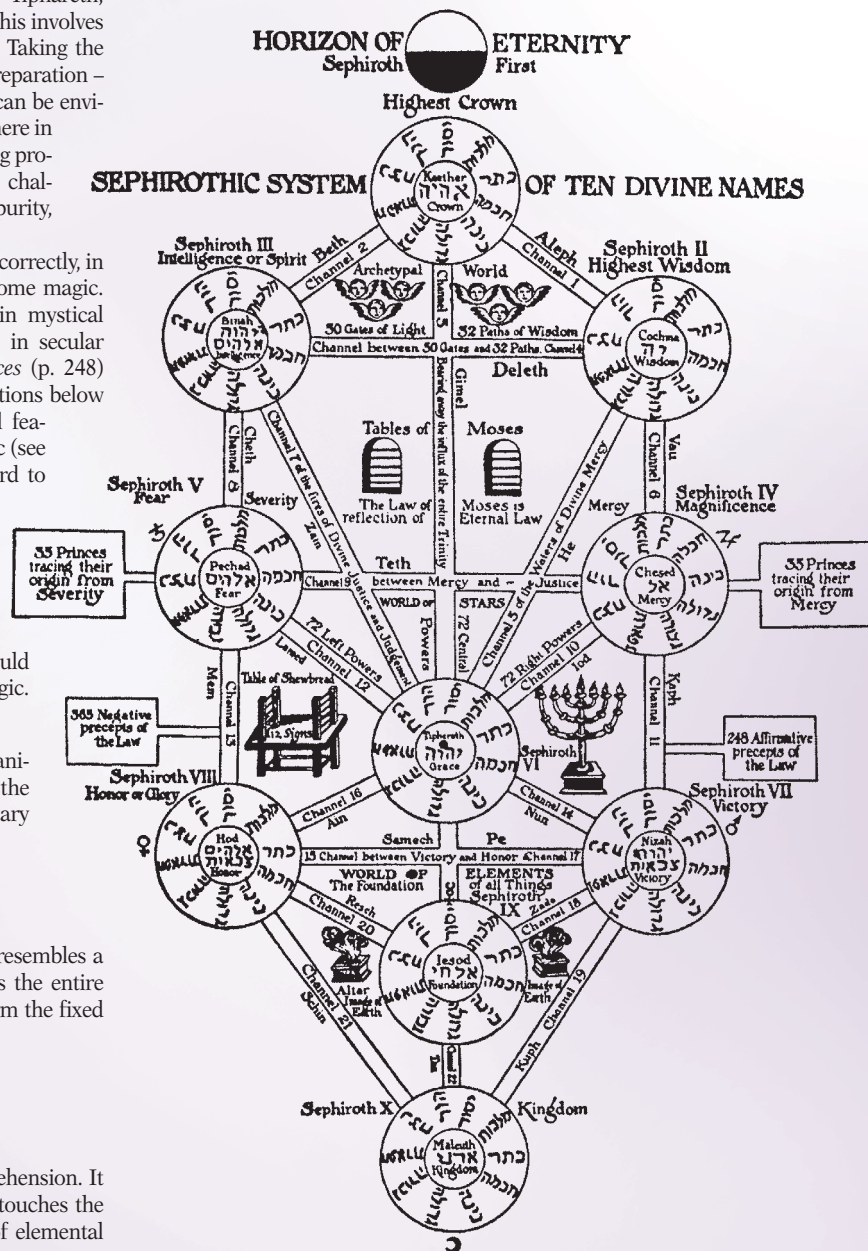
*Other Associations:* Love.

## Geburah (Pechad, Din)

“Severity” appears as an arsenal of iron chariots; the weapons, walls, and armored figures all glow with ruddy fire. It relates to violence and destruction (which *can* be used for good, but must be controlled). Obviously, it’s associated with Mars.

*Verb:* Weaken.

*Other Associations:* Strength; Justice.



## Tiphareth (Rahamin)

“Beauty” is suffused with a golden lambency, and relates to balance and moderation. Guarded by lions, it resembles ancient savannas. Its dry, shimmering heat denotes its fiery nature; its golden light emanates from the sphere of the Sun.

*Verb:* Heal.

*Other Associations:* Balance; Wholeness.