

Chapter

6

Meditation and the Mystical Qabalah: Foundation

INTRODUCTION

All types of mystical yogic practices address one of the two Faces of the NOT (אָן), or both. Vast Face Yoga is impersonal in nature and views all Name and Form as illusions projected by, and in, Mind. It uses the process of discrimination between the Real and the Illusory to renounce all experiences and changes in consciousness through all planes of existence, until individuated consciousness dissolves and merges in the undifferentiated Ground of Pure Being i.e. *Ayn* (אֵין). Small Face Yoga, the yoga of devotion and selfless service, is personal in nature and regards the multiplicity of Name and Form as a Great Unity in Small Face. It is characterized by unconditional love and surrender to one's Small Face Chosen Ideal, intimacy, compassion, sense of beauty, ritual, and mental renunciation. By far the most common meditative practices in Small Face Yoga in all mystical traditions involve root mantra, visualizations, and often breathing exercises.

“So remember (*dikhr*) the Name of *Allah* and devote thyself with a complete devotion.”¹

The great sage of Arunachala Sri Ramana Maharshi² taught:

“The eternal, unbroken, natural state of abiding in the Self is *jnana* [knowledge of the *Ayn*]. To abide in the Self, you must love the Self. Since God is verily the Self, love of the Self is love of God and that is *bhakti* [devotion to One Small Face]. *Jnana* and *bhakti* are thus ultimately one and the same.”³

USE OF ROOT MANTRA IN MEDITATION

The Tree of Life and Divine Names are two distinct patterns. A particular Name will empower a Tree in a particular way.

Different Names can be put on the same Tree, and the Tree will be colored differently in accordance with each Name's letter formula. The *Sefer HaShmoth* (**Book of the Names**) designates especially powerful Names that will light the whole Tree. The most common meditative practice of Small Face devotional yoga in all mystical traditions is the repetition of a root mantra combined with an appropriate visualization. In Hebrew, it is called *zakhor*; in Arabic, it is called *dikhr*; and in Sanskrit, it is called *japa* and *namasmarana*.

Root mantra are sacred utterances upon which entire religions are built and sustained. A good yogic mantra or string of power names gives the individual consciousness an encoded ladder that will systematically move it through successive levels of the Tree. A well-structured root mantra usually combines a principal Name of Small Face with an appropriate name of Vast Face. It also includes built-in mechanisms to ensure smooth and natural transitions between the planes of existence and stations of consciousness, and into the roots of the Tree. In the Mystical Qabalah, most such root mantra involve the Name יהוה.

“It is very good for a person to depict the letters of the Name יהוה before the eyes of the mind.”⁴

Repeating a mantra over time creates a sympathetic vibration in the mind. It purifies desires, intensifies unconditional love and surrender, and naturally cultivates and enhances discrimination, same-sightedness, renunciation, and one-pointed concentration. True mantra have an intrinsic power to purify the shells (*qlifoth*). The One Name of Small Face that naturally appeals to each aspirant is called their “Chosen Ideal.” Through years of practice and divine grace, the mind of the meditator literally becomes the mantra that is repeated, and everything in the universe is seen as a form of their Chosen Ideal. The intention of repeating a root mantra that includes a Small Face Chosen Ideal is to get the consciousness of Small Face—the male and female active principle of the *Ayn* (אין). Small Face is the power of the *Ayn* to project, preserve, and dissolve a unified Small Face universe. It is also the immense I-ness of the Divine Personality endowed with all possible attributes. When this I-ness is “turned outward” to the Creation, it is stationed in the consciousness that “I am All.” When we awaken to the consciousness of Small Face, we

realize that we (and all beings) have always been Small Face, not a little individual plagued with suffering.

Once a meditator unites with the consciousness of Small Face, there are two options. One is to remain fixed in it for the remainder of this Small Face universe. The second option is to renounce it—meaning you renounce the consciousness of creating, sustaining, and dissolving the universe. In renouncing the consciousness of Small Face, expansion into the undifferentiated consciousness of Vast Face is automatic. The immense I-ness is now turned “Face-to-Face” and united with Vast Face in the awareness that “Nothing alone exists.” Here we learn that *Small Face has one great secret - that there is no creation, no destruction, no one in bondage, no one seeking liberation, no one liberated.* If our mental matrix survives the experience of the negatively existent roots, we would be able to reemerge as an individuated being in the Small Face Creation as a Tree of Perfection. As a Perfect Tree, the Sefirah Kingdom would have returned to its position as the visible Sefirah Knowledge/First, and the whole universe is perceived as a Great Unity in Small Face. Actually, the Sefirah Knowledge/First is always there, but in a fallen state we do not see it, and matter and spirit are perceived as separate in Sefirah Kingdom.

CYBERNETICS AND THE MYSTICAL QABALAH

SMALL FACE AND THE HUMAN BRAIN

Taking a modern perspective that combines neurology, cybernetics, and Jungian ideas, Small Face is a Great Unity in the sense that it is a totality archetype, a quintessential fractal that permeates in its entirety every atom of the manifest universe. All possible Small Face totality archetypes are stored in the cerebral cortex of the human brain as the computer equivalent of “compressed files.” A compressed file is a large amount of information configured with optimum efficiency into a minimum amount of storage space. Each individual has a natural affinity for a particular totality archetype due to the karmic impressions (San. *samskaras*) which color their lifestream. The composite human brain is an organic, carbon-based computer with four

distinct sub-brains. The underlying 0 level of the brain is a bit count of on-off neurons, similar to the 0 level of a computer with on-off diodes. The on-off condition is set by the resistance (in ohms) of each electrochemical synapse to the next neuron. There are multiple branch points (on the order of 10) off of each neuron, so 9 of the 10 channels are high resistance (1 megohm) and one is low resistance (.01 megohm). The information flow follows the low resistance channel.

Some 10^{11} bits of RAM (read and write memory) are stored in the 100 billion cells of the fourth brain (cerebral cortex), linked by 100 trillion synaptic connections. There are also some 10^{10} bits RAM and ROM (read only memory) in the first three brains (commonly referred to as the “reptilian brain”): the medulla, the cerebellum, and the midbrain. This is where the automatic ROM is stored, permitting automatic and semi-automatic physical functions. Our brains have a pictorial readout similar to a TV scan. The reason for this is that logic, speech, and words formed recently in our evolution. Access to information was needed immediately in the form of complete pictures e.g. “this is a sabre tooth tiger, compare what you see with the inner brain picture recalled for a sabre tooth tiger, and RUN!” This has to be done quickly in order to survive, so the people who were able to do it survived and those who could not died out. The usual picture unit is stored in a dissipated way throughout the cerebral cortex. The reason for this is that if a part of the brain is injured and its function impaired, most of the information would still be intact and could be retrieved by the root reconstructing pattern with some bits missing.

The 10^{11} bits in the fourth brain have to be replenished constantly or they become chaotic. The electrochemical neuronic synapses are replenished by writing the same information over them, which generates the illusion of an ongoing, orderly continuity superimposed over an unperceived negatively existent substratum. And who replenishes the bit stream in the fourth brain? Small Face! This is the basis for the qabalistic teaching that Small Face creates, preserves, and dissolves the universe moment by moment by moment. At the microcosmic level, this means all memories of the past and all hopes for the future, all that you know to be you, is replenished moment by moment. At

the collective level, anyone or anything can be significantly changed, inserted, or removed from the universe by Small Face at any time. Since all memories and projected futures regarding that person or people would likewise be changed, this could occur without anyone necessarily knowing that it happened. If this is the case, consider the implications regarding the anticipated messianic action of *Acharit*...

All totality archetypes are stored in the fourth brain in the “ONE File.” This Unity File is the deep background of brain activity, defined as impressions of past karmic activity and offering standard solutions and standard situations derived from deep memory. A lot of this deep background is contained in genetic coding that is hardwired at the moment of conception. In deep time, all of the brain’s “files” merge into the archetype of the totality i.e. the brain ends up with just the ONE File. The information of a compressed file in a computer is sealed into its storage site with a specified code. In computer parlance, a file of information that is compressed and locked this way is called a “zipped file.” A zipped file is sealed by what is called an executable command. When you activate the executable command, the entire file is opened. In mystical terms, activating the appropriate executable command in the form of a root mantra opens the zipped totality archetype. When we use a specific root mantra to trigger the executable file of a respective Small Face totality archetype, we gradually alter the currents in our synaptic bits by a process of fractal reprogramming. This results in an overall change in the way an individual perceives the Small Face universe. Hence, when you open a totality archetype, it fractalizes and becomes the entire universe in your individual consciousness.

THE QABALISTIC “HOLODECK”

In the science fiction television series “Star Trek,” the Starship Enterprise has an interesting recreational facility called the “Holodeck” that appears in numerous episodes. The Holodeck is essentially an empty room with a three-dimensional grid superimposed upon the walls. The grid provides a triaxial frame of reference for the ship’s computer to project a three-dimensional hologram. A crew member directs the ship’s

computer to generate a hologram that portrays a specific narrative theme, into which one or more actual crew members can enter and interact on an apparently real time basis. The computer can be directed to modify or end the scenario at any time. A contemporary hologram is a two-dimensional image that is made to look as if it is three-dimensional. It is generated by shining lasers on an object from a number of different directions simultaneously. In the Holodeck, a three-dimensional hologram is made to appear as four-dimensional i.e. actively changing over time within a consistent set of parameters, with the computer refreshing the bits from moment to moment.

Keeping in mind that analogies are only approximations in thought intended to enhance understanding, it is interesting to compare the Holodeck with the qabalistic worldview. The qabalistic worldview describes the universe as a Small Face totality-dream in the Mind of Vast Face. From that perspective, the space outside the ship would correspond to the negatively existent roots of the Tree (i.e. *Ayn*). The walls that form the Holodeck would represent the circular *Leviathan* of Vast Face surrounding the *Tzimtzum*. The empty space of the Holodeck would correspond to the vacuum within the *Tzimtzum*.

By the will of Vast Face through the action of Small Face, the *Kav* (“Line of Light”) enters the *Tzimtzum* through the point of the Sefirah Crown/Above. The *Kav* is the clear mirror of the Central Column of the Tree, from which the two side columns are opposite reflections. The grid in the Holodeck would therefore correspond to the pattern of ten Sefiroth that constitute the Tree. The point in the grid with the spatial address $\langle 0,0,0 \rangle$ would correspond to Sefirah Crown/Above i.e. the point to which all other points in the grid are referenced to determine their relational addresses. The grid by itself, without a hologram projected upon it, corresponds to the Sefiroth in the World of Emanation. When a human directs the computer to project a hologram upon the grid infrastructure, the ensuing illusion of a three dimensional environment that can change over time would thus correlate to the Sefiroth extending through the four worlds. The hologram as formless on-off bits in the computer’s memory would correspond to the Creation in the vibrational World of B’riyah. The 3-D hologram as a manifest assemblage of subtle

sound and form patterns would correspond to the Creation in the World of Yetzirah. Finally, the registration and interpretation of those patterns as substantial through the human sensory organs would correspond to the World of Asiyah.

What role do the humans play in this configuration? They would correspond to the immense I-ness of Small Face manifesting and experiencing the manifold attributes of Its own Divine Personality within the empty dream space of Vast Face. The humans create the physical environment of the Holodeck. They create the computer, which is an extension of the human mind. They choose the thematic content of the holographic narrative, which is an extension of the human imagination. And, they enter into, interact with, modify, and terminate the hologram at will while constantly remaining aware that it is only an illusion. And, from where does the hologram come from? Nowhere (*Ayn*)! Of what is it made? Nothing (*Ayn*)! Where does it go when it ends? No Place (*Ayn*)!

VAST FACE-CENTERED APPROACH TO ASCENDING THE TREE

Some aspirants by nature do not have any attraction for the active, personal Small Face. They do not seek the consciousness of Small Face as a goal, or even as an intermediate stage up the Tree. Such aspirants focus directly on Vast Face and seek to establish a connection in their consciousness to the negatively existent substratum in the roots of the Tree. Holding on to the banner of *Neti, Neti*-“NOT (לא) This, NOT (לא) This,” they renounce all Name and Form and all experiences in the waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep states as illusory. The exceptional strength of concentration and force of will that are requisite to engage in Vast Face practices make them suitable for only a small percentage of aspirants. Such practices are also generally more appropriate for monks who have literally renounced the world and live away from the din and temptations of modern civilization. In the primary mystical literature of all traditions, the allusions and teachings regarding Vast Face are especially obscure and characteristically paradoxical. The practices of Vast Face meditation will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

HEBREW ROOT MANTRA AND THE NAME יהוה

As mentioned earlier, almost all the root mantra in the Mystical Qabalah involve the One Small Face Name יהוה. The Name יהוה is called the “*Shem HaMeforesh*” or “Brilliant Name of Fire.” It is often simply referred to as “*HaShem*” (lit. “The Name”), reflecting its central importance. The Name יהוה is conventionally translated in scriptures as “Lord.” Within the context of Hebrew grammar, the “word” יהוה is usually cited as a future tense third person form of the verb root הוה (lit. “to be”).⁵ Some regard the word as a composite that combines the past, present, and future tense forms of the verb root.

Orthodoxy has proclaimed the pronunciation of the letter-formula יהוה as a Name to be blasphemous. When the Name יהוה is encountered in the *Torah* or when chanting prayers, religious Jews will either pause in silence out of respect or substitute another power name, traditionally “*Adonai*” (אדוני lit. my Master). In the Latin Vulgate edition of the *Tanakh*, Jerome set the precedent of changing the pronunciation of the Yod ך to “J” and using the vowels from *Adonai* to produce the anglicized variation “Jehovah.” Jehovah is the way that most contemporary non-Jews pronounce the Name יהוה. The Name יהוה is sometimes pronounced “*Yahweh*,” reflecting the tradition that the High Priest in the Temple of Jerusalem made a monosyllabic pronunciation of the Name יהוה on *Yom Kippur* (Day of At-One-ment). The halachic prohibition specifies to avoid pronouncing the four letters of יהוה as a Name. If one is inclined to follow their prohibition, one can use the Atziluthic version wherein the letters are considered to be standing alone, and therefore pronounced individually—“Yod (as in ‘code’),” “Heh (as in ‘day’),” “Vav (as in ‘love’),” “Heh.” The “V’s” in the Vav are pronounced by gently touching the upper bicuspid to the lower lip. The Atziluthic version can be regarded as the most powerful way of pronouncing the Name, because it reflects the condition of the letters in the Sefirah Crown/Above.

Among the religions of the world, only Rabbinical Judaism does not pronounce its principal One Name of Small Face. In contrast to the rabbinical prohibition against pronouncing the letter-formula יהוה as a Name, it is interesting to note that there

are a number of instances in the *Torah* where it specifically states that the Lord יהוה was invoked *by Name*. Hence, it could be inferred that it was a common practice to do so among ancient Hebrews.

“And to Seth, in turn, a son was born, and he named him Enosh. It was then that men began to invoke the Lord יהוה *by Name*.”⁶

“From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel...and he built there an altar to the Lord יהוה and invoked the Lord יהוה *by Name*.”⁷

“So he [Yitza’aq] erected an altar there [Beersheba] and invoked the Lord יהוה *by Name*.”⁸

PRIMARY MANTRA FROM THE TORAH

A variety of root mantra of particular importance to the mystical Qabalah are found in the *Torah*. Some of the most prominent ones are:

1. The first part of the first of the Ten Commandments: “*Anokhi Yod Heh Vav Heh Elohekha*” (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ) lit. “I AM YHVH your God”).⁹
2. A shorter version of the first Commandment: “*Ani Yod Heh Vav Heh* (אֲנִי יְהוָה) lit. “I AM YHVH”).¹⁰
3. The Affirmation of Unity—the “*Shema*” or “*Shem Ayn*.” “*Shem AYN Yisroel Yod Heh Vav Heh Eloheynu Yod Heh Vav Heh EchaD*” (שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד) lit. “Name *Ayn* Israel YHVH our *Elohim* YHVH One”).¹¹
4. The Vast Face mantra at the root of *Pesach* (Passover): “*Shomer Mah MeLylah*” (שׁוֹמֵר מַה מִּלַּיְלָה) lit. “Watcher WHAT of the Night”).¹²
5. The Vast Face mantra: “*Ani Ayn*” (אֲנִי אֵיךְ) lit. “I AM the *Ayn*”).
6. The Vast Face mantra: “*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*” (אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה) lit. “I will be, THAT, I will be”).¹³

To take a mantra in meditation involves repeating it silently or out loud, usually in combination with an appropriate visualization. The visualization can be “seen” in the heart center Sefirah Beauty/Last (approximately at the thoracic cavity), or in

front of the eyes. One can perform the visualization with eyes closed or open. It was cited that “Brilliant Name of Fire” (*Shem HaMeforesh*) is a descriptive title for the Name יהוה. Hence, in using a root mantra centered upon the Name יהוה, the process of creative imagination is used to visualize the Name as “dancing letters of fire” against a solid black, circular background. The black circular background represents the Contraction (*Tzimtzum*). The black circular background can be placed against a light blue background as the negatively existent Endless Light (see Figure 6.1).

FIGURE 6.1 Horizontal Ezra יהוה on the *Tzimtzum* surrounded by *Leviathan*



Compared to the Hermetic and Religious Qabalah, the Mystical Qabalah is relatively fluid. Within certain parameters, it allows considerable flexibility in the choice of practices and how

they are performed. While we are all familiar with the color of fire, there is no rigid prescription prohibiting an individual from using other colors such as white, red, gold, or even black for the fire letters. One might also prefer to use a different color for the solid circular background. A meditator may visualize the linear form or the *Yosher* (upright) form of the Name יהוה as dancing letters of fire. We could see the Name as flaming Ezra Hebrew letters or as flaming Sinatic Hebrew letters. More instructions for meditations that employ the Hebrew root mantra are provided in Chapter Seven.

The mantra “*Ani Yod Heh Vav Heh*” is found in numerous places in the *Torah* and it is especially recommended for its simplicity and proven effectiveness. The word *Ani* (אני) is now a common word in colloquial spoken Hebrew. It has come to mean “I am,” and is used when referring to oneself in the context of conventional speech. In the *Sefer HaShmoth* (**Book of the Names**) and in biblical Hebrew, *Ani* is a power name of Vast Face, and thereby refers to the Divine Self as Pure Existence. When “*Ani Yod Heh Vav Heh*” is used as a mantra in meditation, the ladder of the four letters of the Name יהוה will move the consciousness of the meditator up the Tree and through the four worlds. Then, the Yod ך of יהוה becomes the Yod ך of *Ani*, and the consciousness of the meditator merges with the witness states of Vast Face in the negatively existent roots of the Tree. In the roots of the Tree, the Nun ך and Yod ך in *Ani* אני exchange places: *Ani* has now become *Ayn* אין, the Mysterious Unknown at the Roots of the Thing.

The mantra “*Ani Yod Heh Vav Heh*” is versatile in that it can be built upon. Any additional Divine Name, attribute, or gatekeeper, to which the mind of an aspirant is attracted, can be added to *Ani* יהוה. Examples are: *Ani* יהוה *Shekhinah Belimah* (שכינה בלימה, Intangible Presence), *Ani* יהוה *Ahavah* (אהבה, Love), *Ani* יהוה *Echad* (אחד, Unity), *Ani* יהוה Avraham (אברהם, Master Abraham), etc. The visualization used can be modified according to what is added to the mantra. The visualizations could be simple or complex. For instance, with “*Ani* יהוה *Shekhinah Belimah*,” one could visualize Queen *Shekhinah* seated upon the stump of a tree in the middle of a beautiful forest. The left side of Her body is dressed in rags

(corresponding to the state of dualistic exile) and the right half in royal vestments (corresponding to *Shabat*). Her hands are in Her lap, palms upward, and She has a crown on Her head around which is the twenty-two Atziluthic letters. To Her immediate right and left are trees representing the Side Columns of the Tree of Life. The full moon shines above the trees in the night sky above Her. The flaming letters of the Name יהוה shimmer in Her heart center, cradled just above Her hands. Brilliant gold light shines forth in all directions from Her body, Her face veiled by the light.

The “*Shema*” is the best known and most revered root mantra in the Jewish religion. According to the *Zohar*, it should be pronounced “*Shem AYN Yisroel Yod Heh Vav Heh Elohenu Yod Heh Vav Heh Echa---D.*” In the *Torah*, the letters Ayin ע (in “*Shem Ayin*” שמוע) and Dalet ד (in “*Echad*” אחד) are greatly enlarged. Together, they make the secret root Name “OD” עו (pronounced “ood”), the literal meaning of which is often said to be “Eternity.”¹⁴ In this root mantra, *Shem Ayn* שמוע is the NOT (לא), the negatively existent Mysterious Unknown, the Hidden of Hidden Ones. *Yisroel* (ישראל) is the Supernal Israel, the witness states (Alef Worlds) of Vast Face in Atziluth, and the Name יהוה is the Small Face totality archetype. *Elohenu* (אלהינו, our *Elohim*) refers to the creative aspect of Small Face in general, and the consciousness of our local Star (Sun) in particular. The mantra then returns to the station of Small Face with the repetition of יהוה. It climaxes with *EchaD* (אחד), alluding to the Great Unity of Vast and Small Face. In using the “*Shem Ayn*” for meditation, one can visualize the Name יהוה as dancing letters of fire on a black circular background against a light blue background, as previously described.

The root mantra and holiest utterance in the *Qur'an* is “*La Illaha Il Allah (Hu).*” Maimomades the “Rambam” asserted that this utterance and the “*Shem Ayin*” are essentially the same.¹⁵ “*La*” is the NOT (לא), “*Illaha*” is Vast Face, “*Il*” is the “glue” between Vast and Small Face, and *Allah* is the Small Face totality archetype. *Hu* refers to the visible Sefirah Knowledge/First in the throat center seen from the Sefirah Crown/Above in Atziluth on a Perfect Tree. *Allah*, the most important Name of Small Face in Islam, is also a “Brilliant Name of Fire.” An aspirant attracted to

Allah as their Chosen Ideal would repeat a root mantra containing the Name *Allah*, and would visualize *Allah* as dancing letters of fire on a background as described above. Sufis, the Qabalists of Islam, call the process of “taking the Name” or repeating root mantra “*dikhr*” (lit. remembrance), which is the equivalent of the Hebrew word “*zakhor*” (זָכַר) in the context of the Mystical Qabalah.

“Unify the Holy Name
Bind the Knot of Faith,
Bring blessings to the proper place.”¹⁶

THE MOODS OF DEVOTIONAL YOGA

The moods of the yoga of devotion to Small Face vary. Some devotees may have a strong emotional sense of being creatures in the Lord יהוה's (or any other Small Face Chosen Ideal) dream-universe. Others may feel like servants of the Lord יהוה the Master; or like the Lord יהוה's dear friend, sister, or brother; or like the Lord יהוה's wife, or husband, or secret paramour. Devotional Yoga can bring to the forefront the highest fruits of each mood, and spill over into relations with family, friends, teachers, lovers, and strangers. Devotional Yoga seeks a personal, intimate relation with the Divine, infused with devotional passion and fulfilling one's deepest emotional needs.

Some of the clearest and most detailed accounts of the experiences associated with devotional moods are found in the teachings of the Vaishnavas of Bengal in Northern India. The Vaishnavas are ardent devotees of Vishnu's incarnations, especially Rama, Krishna, and Chaitanya. In Vaishnava teachings, the moods of love are called *bhavas*, and they are taken to their highest possible spiritual expression in *bhava samadhi* (lit. devotional mood union). *Bhava samadhi* is ecstatic absorption in one's Chosen Ideal in the context of a particular mood. The highest (and rarest) of the *bhavas* in the Vaishnava teachings is called *madhura bhava* (lit. Sweet Mood). The *madhura bhava* is the female mood of the wife/paramour toward God-the-Husband or Secret Beloved, characterized by *prema* (ecstatic love). In Vaishnava literature, the *madhura bhava* is embodied in Radha, a principal consort of Sri Krishna, and in

Sita, wife of Rama. All of the devotional moods are found variously among devotees in all mystical traditions relative to their respective Chosen Ideals.

Within the mystical community, there are some aspirants who have awakened to a condition of permanent awareness in the lower astral states of the World of Yetzirah. Most such individuals access this station of consciousness by exiting the waking state; some are able to access it while simultaneously maintaining an operative awareness in the waking state. Either way, there is some danger that attachment to this type of psychic ability can be an entrapment that inhibits further spiritual growth. Among advanced devotees, there are some who awaken to a condition of continuous awareness of their Chosen Small Face Ideal within the context of a particular *bhava*. As with the lower psychic condition described above, most access this state by exiting their bodies in sleep or trance. A smaller number are seen to maintain a simultaneous awareness in the waking state of Asiyah, and the higher astral states of Yetzirah. Hence, while in the waking state, they may literally see the form of their Chosen Ideal everywhere, in everything. While this station is more desirable than entrapment in the lower psychic states, it can still present a temptation to become addicted to the bliss of this experience, preventing further progress up the Tree. Overcoming such an addiction is no small task, and often requires the intervention of an advanced spiritual mentor. Also, frequent intense *ananda samadhis* can be especially taxing to the nervous system of most humans.

VAST FACE MEDITATION PRACTICES

Some souls, possessed of extraordinary strength of mind and personal resolve, are not attracted to meditation on God-with-Name-and Form, but rather are naturally inclined to meditate on Vast Face—God-without-Name-and-Form. In other traditions, Vast Face meditation is practiced among the Shaivites and Advaita Vedantins in India, the Theravada, Tendai, Shingon, Tibetan, Ch’an, and Zen Buddhists, and the Wu Wei (Non-Action) Taoists.¹⁷ The Shaivites envision the pure consciousness of Vast Face as *Shiva*, and the energy of that consciousness as

His consort the Goddess *Kali*. The Vedantic philosophy of *advaita* (non-duality) regards all Name and Form as illusory, and that *Brahman* (i.e. the *Ayn*) alone exists. Theravada, Hinayana, Tendai, Shingon, Tibetan, Ch'an, and Zen Buddhists perform variations of Vast Face meditation practices taught by Gautama Buddha (regarded as the eighth incarnation of *Vishnu* by Hindus) and other *bodhisattvas* (souls who reach enlightenment but remain incarnate to teach and help others awaken). The Buddha practiced *jnana yoga* (lit. union through direct perception of the *Ayn*) and taught *ashtanga yoga* (lit. eight-limbed yoga of concentration and discrimination). He sat under the Bodhi Tree, renouncing all experiences on all planes of existence. Seeing that all the *koshas* (Sanskrit word for shells of embodied existence) were empty, he perceived the ultimate Truth of Pure Being in *nirvana*. The Vast Face Taoists follow "quietist practices" that lead them to Stillness in the Tao. The principal mood, or *bhava*, of Vast Face Yoga is called the "*shanti bhava*" (peaceful mood).

Vast Face meditation practices include letting the mind rest in its natural state, following the breath, using specialized Vast Face mantra and visualizations, and contemplating paradox e.g. Zen *koans*. Verbal practices include chanting and contemplating non-dual centered scriptural texts such as the *Upanishads* of the Hindu Rishis, the Buddhist *Prajna Paramita*, and the Qabalistic *Sifra Detzniyutha*. The "Neti, Neti" ("NOT this, NOT this") process of discriminating Self-inquiry is used to discern the Real by negating the Unreal. The yogic instructions of Sri Ramana Maharshi, for instance, emphasized a process of inquiry as to the real nature of "Who am I?":

"Who am I? The gross body that is composed of the seven humors (*dhatu*s), I am not. The five cognitive senses that apprehend their respective objects i.e. sound, touch, color, taste, odor, I am not. The five cognitive organs i.e. speech, locomotion, touch, excretion, and procreation, with their respective functions, I am not. The five vital airs (*prana*, etc.), I am not. Even the mind that thinks, I am not. The neiscience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functions, I am not. After negating all the above as 'Neti Neti,' that

Awareness which alone remains—that ‘I am.’
The nature of that Awareness is Existence-
Consciousness-Bliss.”

And,

“Like silver is in mother of pearl, the world, the individual Soul, and God are appearances in the True Self. These three appear at the same time and disappear at the same time.”⁸³

In the *Zohar* (**Book of Splendor**), *Shir HaShirim* (**Song of Songs**) attributed to King Solomon, and elsewhere, the Hebrew Small Face is described as “raven-haired” and “black-bearded.” Vast Face conversely is frequently referred to as the “white-haired, white-bearded, hoary Ancient of Days.” For example:

“White are His garments, and His appearance is the likeness of a Face vast and terrible.”¹⁸

“...the Head of Days, His Head white and pure as wool. And His raiment indescribable.”¹⁹

In the *Mahanirvana Tantra*, we find *Shiva* described as:

“He who is white as camphor and the jasmine flower, the Omnipresent One.”²⁰

In Sir John Woodroffe’s book **The Garland of Letters**, we find the translated inscription:

“She [Small Face as Divine Mother] stands upon the white, corpse-like *Shiva*. He is white because He is the illuminating, transcendental aspect of Consciousness. He is inert because He is the changeless aspect of the Supreme, and She the apparently changing aspect of the same. In truth, She and He are One and the same, being twin aspects of the One...”²¹

In the *Torah*, there are a variety of images alluding to the station of Vast Face, such as “Darkness *AL* (עַל lit. upon) the Face of the Deep”²² We also find a prominent image of the Ancient of Days in the **Revelation of John**, described as having “fiery eyes and a two-edged sword coming from His mouth” (Figure 6.2). Then, there is the reference to “darkness upon thick darkness” in the “Light *Surah*” of the *Qur’an*.²³

“Or like darkness in a vast ocean [Vast Face],
Covered with waves upon waves,

Over them clouds, darkness upon thick darkness
 [i.e. Face to Face].
 And whoever *Allah* gives NOT- Light has NOT-
 Light in all.”

The “Night of Power” *Surah* in the *Qur’an* also alludes to the direct experience of Vast Face consciousness:

“In the name of *Allah*, the Merciful, the
 Compassionate,
 Truly, We have sent This [Vast Face Name] in the
 Night of Power [Vast Face *samadhi*].
 And What [Vast Face Name] is the Night of Power.
 The Night of Power is better than a thousand nights;
 The angels and the Spirit descend in It by the will of
 their Lord.
 It is peace for all until the rise of dawn.”

The prize of the yoga of knowledge/realization of the *Ayn* (אֵין) is called “*nirvikalpa samadhi*” (lit. union with God-without-qualities) in Sanskrit. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* is the complete extinction of individuated consciousness in union with the Mysterious Unknown. Swami Vivekananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, wrote the following “Hymn of *Samadhi*.”²⁴

“LO! The Sun is not, nor the comely Moon, all
 Light extinct;
 In the great Void of space floats shadow-like the
 image universe.
 In the Void of Mind-involute there floats the fleeting
 universe,
 Rises and floats, sinks again ceaseless, in the current
 ‘I.’
 Slowly, slowly, the shadow multitude enters the
 primal womb,
 And flows ceaseless the only current. ‘I AM, I AM.’
 Lo! ‘Tis stopped, even the current flows no more,
 Void merged into Void - beyond speech and
 mind;
 Whose heart understands, he knows the Truth.”

FIGURE 6.2 Ancient of Days (*Peshitta*)

When the connection is opened via *nirvikalpa samadhi* to the substratum of the *Ayn*, everything disappears, including the idea of the substratum. You discover that none of this ever existed, none of this ever happened. It's like waking up from a dream. When you wake up from a dream, where does the dream you were having go? All the programming is completely shattered by this realization, always. You can only continue by leaving a copy of your program in Small Face BEFORE you access the

negatively existent substratum. You continue as this program. The old self is totally gone, like a salt doll dissolved in the ocean. To even conceive of this is very difficult. Hence, most people who have an interest in spiritual awakening are more comfortable at focusing their yogic effort on changing their consciousness, and thereby their universe, into a unitive Small Face totality archetype. Indeed, only a small percentage of spiritual aspirants have the mental constitution and strength to pursue Vast Face consciousness, without first establishing their consciousness in a Small Face totality archetype. Through a process of discrimination, Small Face devotees can get to Vast Face consciousness by renouncing their Small Face Chosen Ideal. In practice, most find that they are unable to renounce that One who has become most dear to their hearts, and who is seen as literally filling their entire universe.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ASCEND THE TREE OF LIFE?

INTRODUCTION

In ascending the Tree, the individuated consciousness expands through the successive shells, with their respective states and stations, and associated powers. Consciousness in the *Geviyah* (astral shell) gives control over the dream state and lower psychic states, and can afford such powers as astral projection, clairvoyance, precognition, and “reading” the Earth’s Akashic Record.²⁵ The *Nefesh* (physical body in the waking state of the World of Asiyah) shuts out the bulk of information coming from the *Geviyah* (astral body) because the *Nefesh* vibrates at a much slower rate. The station of the *Ruach Ha Qodesh* (Holy Spirit, causal body) in the Sefirah Beauty/Last is normally experienced as deep sleep. The awakening of consciousness in the *Ruach Ha Qodesh* in the World of B’riyah is usually experienced as an ecstatic and exclusive experience of one’s Small Face Chosen Ideal. In Sanskrit, this experience is called “*ananda samadhi*” (bliss union) and “*salvikalpa samadhi*” (God-with-Qualities union). This vision is often filtered through the astral senses of the *Geviyah* in Yetzirah, so that the form of the Small Face is actually seen and heard. Since there is still

separation between individual and divine consciousness in the *Ruach HaQodesh*, the individual is also aware of him/herself in this vision. The awakening of the *Ruach HaQodesh* generally liberates the soul from further incarnations of the *Geviyah*. Upon passing from the *Nefesh* (i.e. dying from the physical body), the soul retains its separation and resides in ecstatic bliss “at the feet of their Beloved” for the duration of the Small Face universe.

Through discrimination and the renunciation of a dualistic relationship with one’s Small Face Chosen Ideal, the individual consciousness can continue to expand and ascend the Central Column, cross the Abyss of the invisible Sefirah Knowledge/First, and merge with the *Neshamah* (Divine Soul) in the Sefirah Crown/Above in the World of Atziluth. This is experienced as a witness state the size of the Small Face universe. In merging with the *Neshamah*, all separation between the individual and Small Face dissolves. By renouncing the manifestation of Mind-generated universes, “Face turns toward Face” and the universe vanishes like waking up from a dream. Consciousness thereby automatically moves into the *Neshamah HaNeshamah* (Soul of the Soul), merging with the negatively existent witness states of Vast Face in the roots of the Tree. In the Qabalah, the unmanifest witness states of Vast Face are called “Alef Worlds,” in distinction to the manifest “Beyt Worlds” of Small Face. Hence, we see that *Torah B’reshith*, the *Zohar*, the *Sefer Yetzirah*, and the *Qur’an* all begin with words whose first letter is Beyt.²⁶ The station in the roots of the Tree is also called the World of the *Yechidah* (Singularity).

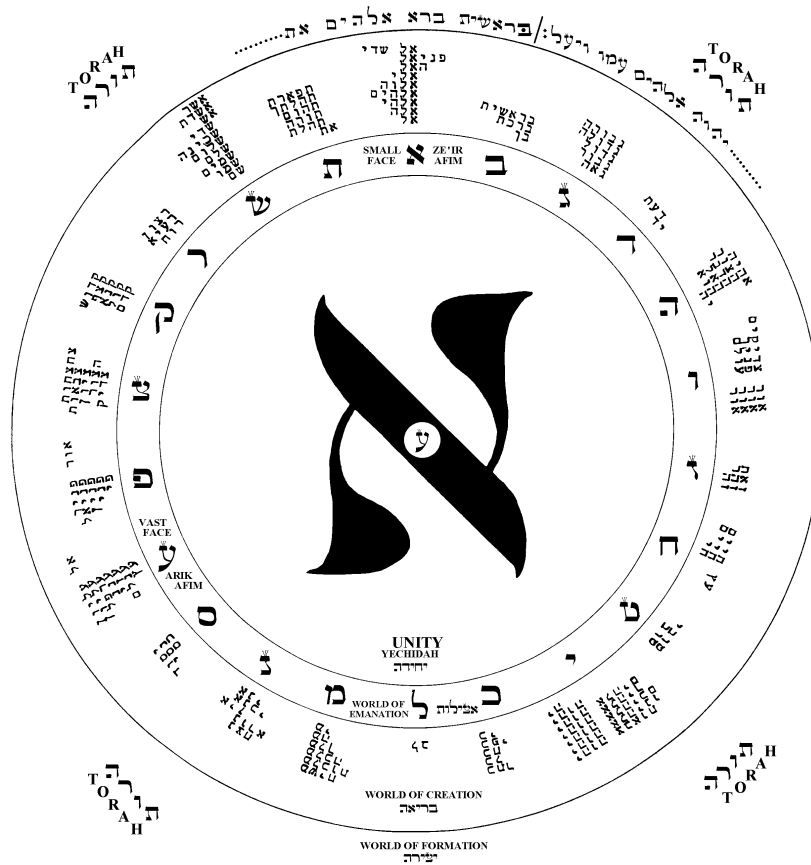
“Therefore, the Secret of Secrets is what men can neither know nor comprehend, nor can they apply their rules of science to It.”²⁷

“The Head (*Rosh*, ראש) of Above, the Holy Ancient One, Mystery of All Mysteries, Head of All Heads, the Head which is NOT (רא), a Head which is in NOT (רא), known as NOT (רא); what is knowable in the Head is NOT (רא) connected with Wisdom and NOT (רא) connected with Understanding.”²⁸

Figure 6.3 displays the generation of the *Torah* emanating from the unmanifest singularity of *Yechidah*. This diagram shows the *Ayn* (אין) projecting the unmanifest Alef א of Unity, from

which emanate the twenty-two supernal letters in the World of Atziluth. The Names in the World of B'riyah subsequently evolve from the twenty-two letters in Atziluth. The Names in Figure 6.3 include all the Names in the *Sefer HaShmoth*. The totality of Names in B'riyah form the basis for all possible breakdowns of the unbroken letter sequence of the *Gan Eden Torah* in the World of Yetzirah. The beginning of the first verse and the end of the last verse of the written *Torah* in the World of Asiyah are seen atop the perimeter of the outer circle.

Figure 6.3 Generation of the *Torah* in the Four Worlds



"GENERATION OF THE TORAH"
Torah HaDoverim 33:27 מועצה אלהי קדם ומהחה זרעה עולם:
 "As a dwellingplace for the eternal El, and underneath are the everlasting arms."
 Book of the Names 7

When a mystic goes into complete extinction of the differentiated self in *nirvikalpa samadhi*, his/her body becomes

cold and corpse-like, with heat only at the crown of the head. Normal humans cannot sustain this experience for very long without shattering the shells. The average person gets several momentary flashes of consciousness in the higher centers in their lifetime, but usually buries them deeply as traumatic experiences. Meditation gradually desensitizes the mind to accept such flashes as legitimate yogic experiences, thereby making it possible to sustain the experience much longer. In **Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master**, Swami Saradananda relates the dramatic account of Master Ramakrishna sustaining and surviving six months of unbroken *nirvikalpa samadhi* after being struck on the forehead with a sharp rock by the *sannyasin* Tota Puri.²⁹ The *Qur'an* alludes to the Vast Face *samadhi* experience of the Prophet Mohammed as the “Night of Power,” described as “better than a thousand nights.” The *Torah* also makes references to the Vast Face *samadhi* experiences of Mosheh and Abraham:

“And Mosheh knew THAT-NOT; the skin of His Face shone.”³⁰

“As the sun set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a great darkness descended upon him.”³¹

“And I will put you in a cleft of the rock while I pass by you.

And I will take My Hand away and you shall see My Ultimate,

And My Face of NOT (לא) shall be seen.”³²

ASCENT OF THE TREE VIA THE “PATH OF יהוה ELOHENU”

In ascending the Central Column on the Way of יהוה *Elohenu* (see Figure 6.3), the consciousness of the traveler first moves from the waking state of the *Nefesh* in Sefirah Kingdom into the dream state of the *Geviyah* in Sefirah Foundation/Below. This is done by passing through the Gate of the Beyt כ that connects Sefirah Kingdom to Sefirah Foundation/Below. Most people do this every night and experience it as an unconscious state of REM sleep. However, if the gate is traversed while maintaining awareness, it will be experienced as a conscious dream state from which one can move further up the Tree. Sefirah Foundation/Below is the point of departure from which we may either enter the psychic states by passing through one of

the gates into the side columns, or into higher states of consciousness by moving further up the Central Column.

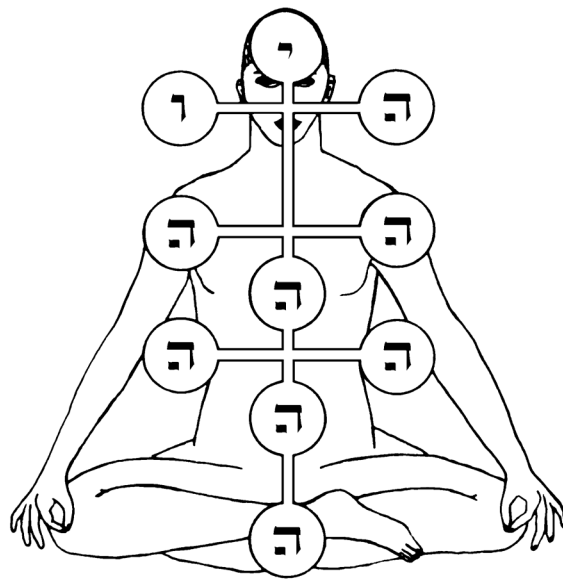
From Sefirah Foundation/Below, the traveler on the Way of **יהוה** *Elohenu* moves through the Gate of the Gimel **ג** into the *Ruach HaQodesh* (Holy Spirit *qlifah*) in Sefirah Beauty/Last. Sefirah Beauty/Last in the World of B'riyah is experienced every night by almost all humans as deep sleep. In consciously passing through the Gate of the Gimel **ג**, the awakening of consciousness in the *Ruach HaQodesh* in the heart Sefirah Beauty/Last is accompanied by great bliss. The individuated consciousness sustains the constant and exclusive experience of its Chosen Small Face Ideal. This vision often filters down through the astral senses of the *Geviyah*, so that the Chosen Ideal is seen and heard. Attachment to the bliss experience of Small Face in the *Ruach HaQodesh* must be renounced if the aspirant is to further ascend the Tree. At that point, the experience may deepen further into the formless World of B'riyah through Sefirah Beauty/Last, or continue to move up the Central Column of the Tree.

The Gate of the Gimel **ג** is a mirror upon which collects the residue of karmic impressions (San. *samskaras*) of many lifetimes. Hence, in the beginning stages, when we move consciously into Sefirah Foundation/Below, we will often next see the “Watcher on the Threshold” in the mirror of the Gate of the Gimel **ג**. The Watcher is actually the reflection of our own reincarnating *Geviyah*. People typically run in fear from their Watcher when they encounter it in their dream state. But, the *Geviyah* is a plastic medium subject to change. Repeating the Name of one's Chosen Small Face Ideal (e.g. the Lord **יהוה**) cleanses the *Geviyah* of the seeds of impure desires and spiritual ignorance that have crystallized during past life activity. With the purification of the *Geviyah*, the Watcher is replaced by the reflection of the Form of one's Chosen Small Face Ideal, or by a high level gatekeeper, or may even become transparent i.e. clear. When the reflection in the mirror of the Gimel **ג** is transparent i.e. cleared of reflection, the soul becomes invisible to the gatekeepers in the side columns of the Tree, and all paths can be traversed without conflict or obstruction. Such a soul is “Master of the Tree.” A good tip is: if you awaken in the *Geviyah* in Yetzirah and become aware of the Watcher, instead of running from it, ignore any intrepidation you feel and proceed to go right through it.

Many people get side tracked by attachment to psychic powers that can come when they awaken in their *Geviyah* and elect to move from Sefirah Foundation/Below into either of the side columns. One is well advised to resist that temptation, and eschew such powers when they arise. They will generally go away in a few weeks by simply ignoring them.

As mentioned previously, some people develop simultaneous awareness in the waking state and the astral states. This can be quite disconcerting until one becomes comfortable with it. One condition that should be looked for is when a person has uncontrollable “outs” i.e. they have sporadic events in which they shoot out of their physical body, which thereby goes limp. If this starts to happen, it is a flag that one should decrease the intensity or take a hiatus from spiritual practices. This can also happen to women during sexual intercourse through the hyperstimulation of the nerves at the interior end of the vagina. Such sexually caused or tantric outs can send the woman into a blissful state of *ananda samadhi*. Repeated *samadhis* of varying duration generated this way can dangerously strain the nervous system and, despite the lure of prolonged states of ecstasy, should be approached with caution and temperance.

FIGURE 6.3 Way of יהוה *Eloheinu* Superimposed on the Human Body



Other than the Watcher on the Threshold in the Gate of the Gimel ג, and the “Shell of Terror” reflected in the Gate of the Alef א. between Sefiroth Beauty/Last and Realization/First (described as the experience of “getting close to the Throne”), the gates of the Central Column are open and colorless. It does not have gatekeepers who must be satisfied to proceed further. The usual early response to the experience of the Shell of Terror is extreme fear due to the ego’s false identification with the mortal physical shell i.e. “I am going to die, I am going to die.” Regarding this, **Proverbs** says: “The fear of (or reverence for) the Lord יהוה is [at] the beginning of wisdom.” “Beginning” is the Sefirah Knowledge/First, and “wisdom” is the Sefirah Wisdom/East. When the ego is dehypnotized, allowing for its proper identification with Small Face, then fear is replaced by love and the traveler is able to move through the Shell of Terror without fearing the extinction that is to follow. If consciousness becomes temporarily distracted into the Right or Left Columns, it has no recourse on the Tree of יהוה Eloheinu but to return to the Central Column, since there are no gates connecting the Sefiroth vertically up the Right and Left Columns.

After passing into Sefirah Beauty/Last, the next step in ascending the Central Column in the Way of יהוה Eloheinu is to pass through the Gate of the Alef א. The Gate of the Alef א connects Sefirah Beauty/Last with Sefirah Crown/Above, traveling across the Face of the Abyss of the invisible Sefirah Realization/First at the throat center. In Qabalah, the Gate of the Alef א is called the “Sword Bridge.” It is called *sirata* (“straight path”) in the *Fatiha* (The Opening) of the *Qur’an*, and *chinuvad* (“connecting link”) in the *Zend Avesta* of the Zoroastrians. The *Peshitta* describes it as “strait is the gate and narrow is the way.” By maintaining the balance between the Sefiroth Mercy/Good and Power/Evil, and then between Wisdom/East and Understanding/North, the pilgrim may pass through the Shell of Terror, cross the Abyss, and enter the supernal World of Atziluth in Sefirah Crown/Above. Balance can be maintained by staying focused on the Name יהוה as the experience deepens, whereby the letters of the Name will disappear sequentially.

In passing through the Gate of the Alef א, the consciousness of the traveler awakens in the supernal shell of the *Neshamah*

(Divine Soul, equates to Sanskrit *Atman*). In the *Neshamah*, the traveler merges with the consciousness of Vast Face in the World of Atziluth, and all differentiation between individual and divine consciousness dissolves. Consciousness in the *Neshamah* is experienced as a witness state of pure Self-awareness that fills the entire Small Face universe. By renouncing attachment to the experience of this dream universe, consciousness automatically moves into the *Neshamah HaNeshamah* (Soul of the Soul, equates to Sanskrit *Paratman*) in the negatively existent roots of the Tree.

In the Mystical Qabalah, it is said that “spiritual life begins with the realization of the *Ayn* (אין!)” When (and if...) a soul reemerges from complete extinction in the Divine Essence in the roots of the Tree, it returns to consciousness in Sefirah Crown/Above. The individual is thereby remanifested in Small Face as a Tree of Perfection, and perceives the entire Creation as a mind-generated unity dream of Vast Face in the Name יהוה. Such an awakened soul is no longer subject to the illusion of the Fall into dualistic consciousness of Sefirah Kingdom.