

## The Universe as a Construct (مشهد-Mashhad)

The Universe as a Construct refers to both a system of building blocks and a theoretical field that has the intention and potential to become a manifestation into the real world of the universe. At the center of this construct is the individual living entity. The interaction of the living entity with the environment determines the lifestyle of the living entity. This interaction is “confined” to the sensations the living entity possesses. Through these sensations the relationship with the universe is constructed. This internment we refer to as a Living Temple (هيكل-Haykal).

The erection of this Temple in all its perfection and beauty reveals the Heavenly Temple which houses the Faithful. The Faithful are those who have recognized and gathered around this Perfection. The Pillars of this Temple stand upon the Foundational Reality which is scattered infinitely across time and space. This Foundational Reality, known as [‘Álam al-Dharr](#) (عالم الذرّ) manifests itself as the Construct Reality (مشهد الذرّ) that we interact with. Knowledge, histories, traditions, science, arts, culture, languages, etc. etc. shape the constructed reality. The Foundational Reality is governed by the Realm of the Divine Command (عالم أمر) and the initial pattern to arise in the Construct Reality is [Prophethood](#) (نبوة). The Pillars of the Temple are constructed and erected according to the principles revealed by the Prophets and Messengers. Those who receive the Message and actively and purposefully carry out the instructions for the construction of the Temple are referred to as Angels. They are taught the Divine Names from the Prophets ([Qur’án 2:33](#)). This terminology is ideal and reasonably refers to an Emissary who accepts and relays a Divine Message. The ancient term Malá’ikah (ملائكة) literally means messenger and has been used to describe prophets, priests, and faithful adherents. In retrospect, this term may refer to any creature who has been spiritually, psychologically, and physically influenced by the Word of God and is executing the revealed principles properly. Imám Ghazalí stated that the powers of the soul, referring to the powers of the soul within the human being (قوة عاملة وقوة عالمة), are in actuality Angels and God has placed them under the command of the soul until the Day of Judgment [[source](#)]. Thus, Angels construct and erect the Temple of the Cause of God as the nexus to assemble the Faithful Servants (عبادة). The completed Temple then refers to Prophethood, Angelic Duty, and Devotional Service ([Qur’án 3:79-80](#)) and becomes the center of the life of the universe uniting the Heavenly, Psychological, and Elemental realms through the Divine Command.

The elements that pervade each realm are earth, air, fire, and water. Each of these elements has a certain quality which exists and influences the others according to the powers and virtues exerted upon it. For instance, in the Spiritual or Heavenly Realm there are only positive or negative qualities exerted upon the elements; in the Psychological Realm there are exceptional and sympathetic qualities exerted; and in the Elemental Realm or Constructed Realm there are proper and mean qualities exerted upon the elements. The combination and commingling of the elements produces certain results which are the cause of the conditions found within each Realm. The amounts of each element and the inherent qualities produced by the commingling found within the phenomena determines the effect the manifestation will have in each Realm as it permeates each subsequent Realm.

### The Qualities of the Elements in the Three Realms

#### Spiritual/Heavenly Realm

##### Positive

##### Negative

I. Earth	stability; balance; steadfastness	indifference; lethargic
II. Air	words; messages; authority	delusion; deceptive
III. Fire	energy; activity; motion	hostility; consuming
IV. Water	mercy; piety; regeneration; purity	compulsive; overwhelming

#### Psychological/Intellectual Realm

##### Exceptional

##### Sympathetic

I. Earth	consciousness	sensation
II. Air	reasoning	hearing; smelling
III. Fire	ability; comprehension	sight
IV. Water	imagination	taste

Elemental/Constructed Realm

Proper

Mean

I. Earth	solid; cold	compressive; heavy
II. Air	gaseous; warm	moist; lightweight
III. Fire	plasmic; hot	dry; lightweight
IV. Water	liquid; temperate	profuse; copious; heavy

The Forces of the Elements<sup>1</sup>

Power

Spiritual

Psychological

Elemental

I. Earth	passive raw material: cooling	firmness	thickening	slowness
II. Air	active wind: domineering	control	powerful	potency
III. Fire	active raw power: heating	motivation	sharpness; fierceness	quickness
IV. Water	passive seminary: refreshing	vitality	subtleness; calm	astuteness
V. Aether (Spirit)	active/passive breath: quickening	presence	enlightening	relaxing

<sup>1</sup> The 5th element added here as a force, but not as a terrestrial element.

Certain compounds are produced by the commingling of the elements which are relative to their qualities and forces. Bahá'u'lláh tasks us to gaze at the celestial spheres and recognize that whatever naturally balances itself persists for a considerable amount of time compared to the smaller, terrestrial realms.<sup>2</sup> There are a finite number of combinations, however considering the quantitative value of the elements and the forces applied there are an infinite amount of combinations across time and space. Each of the combinations produce a by-product in each of the three realms. The results of the combinations in the Elemental Realm form the basis of the understanding that the manifestations have in the Higher Realms. Each evident combination then carries its designation into the Higher Realm. For instance, a tornado has a certain combination of elements and forces. The term “Tornado” then has a particular meaning according to the combination of the elements and forces in the Psychological and Heavenly Realms. Thus the Elemental Realm forms the basis of our fellowship in the Temple and the Realm in which all things are tested and qualified.

بديع الأبهى البهائي ٨ جمال ١٧٨

---

<sup>2</sup> [Commentary of the Verse of Light](#), Section III on Natural Sciences