The Cherubim

What are the mysterious cherubim? Cherubim symbology is found throughout the Ancient Near East and was not limited to Israel. For example, the Babylonians and Assyrians used winged bulls (*Lamassu*) with human faces set at the entrance to guard and protect their palaces.¹

Similarly, the Egyptians had sacred arks or chests with winged guardians who can be seen on Tutankhamun’s shrine not to mention the winged Sphinx found in Egypt (and Greece).

¹ Lamassu represent the zodics, parent-stars, or constellations. They are depicted as protective deities because they encompass all life within them. In the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, they are depicted as physical deities as well, which is where the lammasu iconography originates, these deities could be microcosms of their microcosmic zodiac, parent-star, or constellation. Wikipedia contributors. (2019, February 24). Lamassu. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 11:15, April 4, 2019, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lamassu&oldid=884830938
Cherubim iconography was used throughout the Ancient Near East (ANE) and was therefore not limited to Israel. In Ezekiel the king of Tyre is compared with the “anointed cherub” demonstrating that the Phoenicians originally shared a similar iconography and creation narrative. Historically, Hiram of Tyre assisted Solomon in building the temple and Phoenician worship of Melqart (=king of the city) may have even demonstrated syncretism with Israel until it became entirely corrupted. Melqart is likely to have been the particular Ba’al found in 1 Kings 16.31–10.26 whose worship was prominently introduced to Israel by King Ahab and largely eradicated by King Jehu.

“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezek 28.12-16).
Critics often suppose that Israel “borrowed” from her neighbours but the widespread use of such symbology points to common origins. Of course, the significance of the symbology varied within the theological framework of each nation and Israelite religion demythologized the cherubim. The cherubim were important for what they represented as they were not worshiped. In the Old Testament the encounter with cherubim are visionary or phenomenological,\(^2\) rather than literal. In each instance that cherubim appear they are accompanied by a display of immense power in the natural world. For example, we have storms and whirlwinds, fire (like lightning) and thunderous noise (voices like many waters) as well as earthquakes etc. The Jews call the vision in Ezekiel the Merkabah\(^3\) as it depicts the throne of God in a fashion similar to the cherubim who encompass the mercy seat (throne) on the Ark. However, in the time of Elijah the cherubim are described as a “fiery chariot and horses” that reside in a “whirlwind” (2 Kgs 2.11-12). If one did not know better Elisha might have been describing what is known as a “fire tornado”.

On every occasion that cherubim occur in the OT they are accompanied with an awesome display of power. The first time cherubim are mentioned is in the KJV:

“So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen 3:24).

\(^2\) Phenomenology is the study of experience and how we experience. It studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from a subjective or first-person point of view, along with its “intentionality” (the way an experience is directed toward a certain object in the world). Experience, in a phenomenological sense, includes not only the relatively passive experiences of sensory perception, but also imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition and action. In short, it includes everything that we live through or perform. https://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_phenomenology.html

\(^3\) Merkabah/Merkavah (hebrew: מְרָכָּבָה) mysticism (or Chariot mysticism). The Merkava is also the main battle tank used by the Israel Defence Forces.
The KJV translation of this verse suffers from a number of deficiencies as noted by Harry Whittaker⁴ who offers;

“And he caused to dwell from the east unto the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the (or, a) flame of the sword which turned (or, changed) itself, to keep the way of the tree of life”.

The CLV offers a translation similar to HAW and follows the Hebrew closely:⁵ (see ISA 2.0 screenshot below):

Which the CLV⁶ version renders as;

“After He drove the human out, He made him tabernacle at the east of the Garden of Eden, and He set the cherubim and the flame of the revolving sword to guard the way to the tree of life”.

Whittaker lists a number of observations briefly summarised here 1. The cherubim with article suggests that cherubim were already know (and present) in Eden 2. Placed or tabernacled, from which the later Jewish term Shekina glory (cf. Exod 25.8). 3. Keep = keep open (guard the way) 4. Flame of a sword changing itself is found in Ezekiel 1.4,13 and 5. From the east unto the garden of Eden suggests eastern access like the tabernacle.

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⁴ HAW, Anthology, (Biblia, 1987), 154-5
⁵ ISA 3.0.2 (Interlinear Scripture Analyzer) http://www.scripture4all.org/
⁶ Concordant Literal Version 2.1
In fact other scholars have noted that the creation of the garden sanctuary in Eden is similar to the creation of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The wilderness Tabernacle was a mini cosmos and Genesis creation themes are employed to describe the establishment of the Tabernacle. Weinfeld includes a very useful comparison between particular Hebrew phrases which are identical or nearly identical in each passage, including among others.

1. Gen. 1:31 ["And God saw all that He had made, (kăl 'ašer 'ašah), and found it (wĕhinēh) very good"]; Exod. 39:43 ["And when Moses saw that they had performed all the tasks (kăl hamĕlà 'kāh)—as the LORD had commanded, so they had done (wĕhinēh 'ašū 'ōtāh)"].

2. Gen. 2:1 ["The heaven and the earth were completed (wayěkulū) and all (wĕkāl) their array"]; Exod. 39:32 ["Thus was completed all (watēkěl kăl) the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting"].

3. Gen. 2:2 ["God finished the work which He had been doing (wayěkāl 'elōhîm...mēla 'kēto 'ašer 'āšāh)"]; Exod. 40:33 ["When Moses had finished the work (wayěkāl mōšeh 'et hamĕlà 'kāh)"].

4. Gen. 2:3 ["And God blessed...(wayěbārek)"]; Exod. 39:43 ["And Moses blessed (wayěbārek) them"].

5. Gen. 2:3 ["And sanctified it (wayěqadaš)"]; Exod. 40:9 ["...and to sanctify (wĕqidašětā) it and all its furnishings"].

Crispin Fletcher-Louis sums up the significance of this correspondence nicely when he states that: “Obviously, these correspondences mean that creation has its home in the liturgy of the cult and the Tabernacle is a mini cosmos.” This conclusion follows a series of liturgical parallels and themes that Fletcher-Louis had just summarized in his text as follows: “[There exists] a set of literary and linguistic correspondences between creation (Genesis 1) and the tabernacle (Exod 25-40)....the seven days of creation in Genesis 1 are paired with God’s seven speeches to Moses in Exodus 25-31....Each speech begins ‘The Lord spoke to Moses’ (Exod 25:1; 30:11, 16, 22, 34; 31:11, 12) and introduces material which corresponds to the relevant day of creation. Most transparently, in the third speech 30:16-21 there is commanded the construction of the bronze laver. In the Solomonic temple this is called simply the ‘sea’ and in P it matches the creation of the sea on the third day of creation in Genesis 1:9-11. Similarly, the seventh speech (Exod 31:12-17) stresses the importance of the Sabbath for Israel, just as Genesis 2:2-3 tells us how God rested on the seventh day. In the first speech to Moses Aaron’s garments and his ordination are described and stress is placed upon his duty to tend the menorah at the evening and morning sacrifice (Tamid) (27:20-21;

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30:7-8)....the golden and jewel-studded garments which Aaron wears are, generally, best understood as the Israelite version of the golden garments worn by the gods of the ancient Near East and their statues. This means that Aaron is dressed to play the part within the temple-as-microcosm theatre that God plays within creation. Indeed, the fact that in this first speech Aaron is twice told to tend the temple lampstand and offer the Tamid sacrifice means that he is to police the first boundary—between day and night, light and darkness—which God creates on the first day of creation (Gen 1:3-5). The wilderness tabernacle has many counterparts with the Eden sanctuary—cherubim (on the Ark), a tree (Menorah) a Law (do not eat) and an eastern entrance. These are not coincidental as both Eden and the tabernacle were made after the “heavenly pattern” (Exod 25.9; Heb 8.5) which “pattern” was both cosmological (e.g. seven stars = seven branched menorah) and ontological—in other words heaven was coming down to earth. In symbol the earth becomes a “new heavens” and God is dwelling on earth amongst men. The “lights” or “lamps” in the heavens in the creation narrative in Genesis are used to describe the lamps in the tabernacle (same word). The “lights” are placed to mark times and seasons (e.g. the festal calendar) and the emphasis in Genesis is on setting boundaries (separation) between terrestrial and celestial elements akin to the Leviticus holiness code establishing boundaries between the holy and the profane. In other words, the creation of the cosmos anticipates the creation of Israel.

The Hebrew in Gen 3.24 for cherubim (e-krbim) plays on sword (e-chrb) and the overall impression is an intensity of revolving light—what in modern terms might be described as a “laser beam”. In any case the entrance to Eden was where both Cain and Able brought their sacrifices (Gen 4.7) and the sacrifices were obviously consumed by the “sword” of the cherubim which is alluded to by Hebrews;

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, (revolving sword) piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked (Adam and Eve naked) and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:12-13).

Aaron also represented the people as he wore a breastplate with twelve stones [PW]


A badly translated and corrupted verse; Cain is being encouraged to use the sin-offering brought by his brother Abel (it was lying at the door e.g. entrance to the sanctuary) in doing so he would have dominion (rule) over sin (not rule over his brother).
Note that although the cherubim are associated with the “sword” they are not one and the same but function separately. It seems that natural “lasers” (and masers)\(^\text{11}\) are found in space and in some inter-stellar planetary atmospheres. So a natural phenomenon on earth is (as yet) merely a hypothesis but whatever the “natural” explanation might be the outworking is obviously a super natural display of divine power.

**Seraphim**

Some say that seraphim are angelic creatures along with the cherubim. However, cherubim and seraphim are descriptions of the same “creature” and they are not angels or mythical beings. The Hebrew “Seraphim” denotes something “fiery” or “burning” a characteristic also associated with visions of the cherubim. Moreover, if the vision in Ezekiel and Isaiah are carefully compared (also with Revelation 4) it will become apparent that the visions are describing the same phenomenon. The “fiery ones” in Isaiah had their faces hidden (covered by a pair of wings) so Isaiah describes their “fiery” body (cf. Ezek 1.13) and calls them “seraphims” instead of cherubim. In Ezekiel they have “four” wings but in Isaiah (and Revelation) they have “six” wings but if Ezekiel is understood as describing the two wings on one side touching the adjacent wing-tips of the next cherubim (Ezek 1.11) this would mean a total of four “spread out” wings on each cherubim with the two remaining wings covering the body of the cherubim (Ezek 1.11). In Isaiah two wings cover the face and two wings cover the body and two wings are used for locomotion (Isa 6.1). Both cherubim and seraphim have the hands of a man (Isa 6.6, Ezek 10.8) and the four different faces of the cherubim are not different sides of the same head because the apocalyptic vision describes separate beasts; “And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle” (Rev 4.7). So when Ezekiel says, *“the face of a lion, on the right side”* (Ezek. 1.10) he is referring to the right hand “chariot” not a “head” with a different face on each side (as is sometimes depicted). Furthermore, “they had the likeness of a man” (Ezek 1.5) is most probably describing the driver of the “chariot” rather than the cherub — so four chariots, with four winged creatures (ox, lion, man and eagle faces) and four “chariot” drivers. Therefore Seraphim and the Cherubim describe different aspects of the same visionary phenomena.

**Israel and the ox face cherub**

The cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant are often depicted as having a human face (as in raiders of the lost Ark) even though it is far more likely that the cherubim had an ox face.

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\(^{11}\) An astrophysical maser is a naturally occurring source of stimulated spectral line emission, typically in the microwave portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. This emission may arise in molecular clouds, comets, planetary atmospheres, stellar atmospheres, or various other conditions in interstellar space.
The ox was a beast of burden (Israel under the law) but it waxed fat and kicked (Deut 32.15). The laver (sea) in the temple was supported by 12 oxen (1 Kgs 7.25). Elisha was ploughing with 12 oxen (1 Kgs 19.19). References in the Psalms relate to the great aurochs or wild bulls which are now extinct (translated as unicorns by the KJV); “Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns” (Ps 22.21). In fact, it seems that in Ezekiel’s vision “cherub” became almost synonymous with ox-face; “And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, (e.g. an ox) and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle” (Ezek 10.14). Moreover, their legs and feet where that of a young ox; “and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot” (Ezek 1.7). The ox is therefore a symbol of Israel under the law – a domesticated “beast” (a wild bull that had been tamed) and the cherubim on the Ark had the face of an Ox (not a human face as depicted above).

The Cherubim (Living Creatures) were not an object of worship

The cherubim were not meant to be an object of worship. They were a symbol (to be explained anon). However, one of the first actions of Israel when liberated from Egypt was to make a “golden calf” (cherubim) and to declare; “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exod 32.4). The cherubim were not to be worshiped because they represent the “Living Creatures” (creation itself; more on this anon) causing Paul to remark; “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, (an idol =golden calf) and worshipped and served the creature (Living Creature) more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections (they rose up to play Exod 32.6): for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence (three thousand slaughtered) of their error which was meet” (Rom 1.25-27).
When the kingdom split into the ten northern tribes under Jeroboam and two southern tribes (Judah) under Rehoboam – Jeroboam utilized a similar strategy;

“Whereupon the king (Jeroboam) took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi” (1 Kings 12:28-31).

The two cherubim (golden calves) were set at the extremes of his region effectively “guarding” his territory (under their wings) tantamount to stating that the northern tribes were under divine protection (and holy like the mercy seat). Residing under the “wings” of the cherubim was a euphemism for divine protection; “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2.12). Residing under the shadow of the wings; “Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings” (Psalm 17.8).... “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings” (Ps 36.7).... “Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast” (Ps 57.1). The one who was endowed with the spirit of wisdom to create the Ark was called הֶבְנֵי הָעֵץ (Bazaleel, Exod 36.1) whose name means “under the shadow of God”.

God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2.12). Residing under the shadow of the wings; “Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings” (Psalm 17.8).... “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings” (Ps 36.7).... “Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast” (Ps 57.1). The one who was endowed with the spirit of wisdom to create the Ark was called הֶבְנֵי הָעֵץ (Bazaleel, Exod 36.1) whose name means “under the shadow of God”.

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The Ark of the Covenant is a “resurrection box”

“The cherubim spread out their wings above, and covered the mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat” (Exod 37.9).

The ox or “cherub” faces both look downwards towards the mercy seat (וּכְרֻב kapporeth). The Ark contained within the tokens of New Life:

“...the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Heb 3.5).

1. The golden pot that had manna

Manna was collected fresh every day—it could not be kept overnight because it corrupted very quickly with the exception of the Bread of the Sabbath—“And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein” (Exod 16.24). They were instructed to keep some of this incorruptible manna as a memorial (Exod 16.33). The incorruptible manna was a sign of resurrection life—permanently sustained by heavenly nourishment.

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12 Strong’s Data for 3727. Meaning: 1.mercy-seat, place of atonement 1a) the golden plate of propitiation on which the High Priest sprinkled the seat 7 times on the Day of Atonement symbolically reconciling Jehovah and His chosen people 1a1) the slab of gold on top of the ark of the covenant which measured 2.5 by 1.5 cubits; on it and part of it were the two golden cherubim facing each other whose outstretched wings came together above and constituted the throne of God

13 The items were placed inside the Ark during transportation and it seems they were left outside the Ark when it was stationary. In any case they were meant to be a “memorial” to the children of Israel which means that it must have been possible to view the relics on special occasions. This probably happened on the Day of Atonement with the priests showing the relics to the people outside of the sanctuary.
2. Aaron’s rod that budded

This was a sign of priestly authority necessitated by the Korah rebellion – the dead rod (a shepherd’s staff?) budded and came to life: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not” (Num 17.10).

3. The tables of the covenant

The Ark of the Covenant or Ark of the Testimony (Exod 25.16) was so called because it housed the law tablets (10 commandments). However, these were not the original tablets because Moses broke them. These first tablets were “written with the finger of God” (Exod 31.18) and the second also – Moses was instructed to carve out the blank tablets; “At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark” (Deut 10.1-2). The second law tablets were a renewal of the first tablets.

To sum up.....the cherubim are guarding (protecting) the way to the “tree of life” as they did in the Garden of Eden. The glory of God resides on the Mercy Seat overshadowed by the “Living Creatures”. The Ark is a “resurrection box” that contains symbols of renewal.

The Living Creatures

The cherubim (and seraphim) are called the “Living Creatures” because they are associated with Life. The first time the phrase “living creatures” is used is in Gen 1.21; “And God created great whales, and every living creature” in the Hebrew ים כל נפש הזואים (kāl-nepēš haḥayyāyā) which is literally; of-every-soul (breath) the-living in the Greek (LXX) ψυχὴν ζῶον (psychēn zōōn) from which the English word “Zoo” is derived as a place for creatures (animals) and in Ezekiel 1.20; “for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels” רווח חיות (ruaḥ haḥayyā) or the Greek ζῶον (zōōn) which is literally; spirit of living. Both the Hebrew and the Greek denote “living” e.g. a creature (animal) and the translators supply the ellipses [creature] as in “living creature” rather than translating “soul of living” or “spirit of living”.

The phrase Living creature is first mentioned in Genesis (1.21, 24; 2.19; 9, 10, 12, 15, 16) of particular interest is the mention in Genesis 9 in conjunction with the rainbow covenant; “And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth” (Gen 9.10). Note that the covenant is made with man (Noah e.g. with you) with fowl (eagle) cattle (ox) and beast of the earth (lion). The four “living creatures” are therefore representative of life and they appear in the eschatological vision with the rainbow in the apocalyptic throne
scene (“...and there was a rainbow round about the throne”, Rev 4.3 and Ezek 1.28, “As the appearance of the bow”), which is fitting as in the earthly temple the mercy-seat with cherubim (living creatures) formed the throne. The next mention is in Leviticus 11.46-47 (with regard to food laws) and after that the term “living creatures” occurs extensively in the cherubim visions of Ezekiel 1 and 10.

The Living God

The **Living God** is an unusual Old Testament title it means the “God of the living creatures” it is not an affirmation that God exists or is “alive” but rather that his glory resides (tabernacles) on the mercy-seat between the Cherubim (Living Creatures). Some of the most interesting uses of the title are in Isa 37.4 where Hezekiah (recently “resurrected” from his death bed) entered the temple to spread the letter received from the Assyrian King before the cherubim (vv.14-15) and address Yahweh as the Living God (v.4).

Daniel 6.20 is also instructive; “And when he (King Darius) came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” Daniel was also “resurrected” (from the lion’s den) this being a metaphor for the “resurrection” of the nation because it was under Darius that the temple was re-built and the nation restored. Moreover, Darius could not change or rescind Daniel’s death sentence because the Laws of the Medes and Persians were unchangeable, in contrast the Living God is victorious over the immutable law of sin and death. Refuting the Sadducees who had no belief in the resurrection;

> “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine” (Matt 22.29-33).

The Tetragrammaton יְהֹוָה

Without falling into the fallacy of ‘illegitimate identity transfer’ (Barr, *Semantics*, 218) we can visualize the interrelationship and range of semantic meanings as follows:

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14 Hezekiah (although not a priest) entered the inner sanctum and was not punished (unlike his great grandfather Uzziyah).
15 Cyrus did very little to restore the temple or the nation see the commentary God is Judge by Paul Wyns (2011).
Instead of יְהֹוָה (hyh) a variant form of a theoretical hif'il (causative) verb inflection of the archaic root לְהָוָה (hwh) is thought to lie behind yhwh with a meaning something like “he who causes to exist”\(^{16}\) (the creator deity) or “who gives life” (with the fundamental meaning “to breathe”, and hence, “to live”). As a qal (basic stem) verb inflection, it could mean “he who is, who exists” Therefore the Jews often associated the Yahweh name with breathing\(^{17}\) from the archaic stem לְהָוָה (hwh)\(^{18}\) even though philology points to a closer relationship with the verb “to be” לְהָוָה (hyh) as Driver admits: Even with the rendition “I am what I am” the verb (to be) is to be understood as implying not simply existence as such, or even self-existence, but active self-manifesting existence.\(^{19}\) Elsewhere Driver comments; “But further since לְהָוָה is not mere existence, but emerging into reality, it implies a living and active personality, not a God of the past only, but of the future, one whose name cannot be defined, but whose nature is to ever express itself anew, ever to manifest itself under a

\(^{16}\) It thus probably means “he causes to be, to become,” etc. It has לְהָוָה (h-w-h) as a variant form, The New Brown–Driver–Briggs–Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic by Frances Brown, with the cooperation of S.R. Driver and Charles Briggs (1907), p. 217ff (entry יהוה listed under root לְהָוָה). This supposes that a causative form underlies Ex.3.16 promoted by Albright (170-71) and others (Freedman [151-156]; cf. TDOT 5:513, n.155 for other proponents) however, there is no known example of a hif'il (causative) and the context focuses on redemption and covenant keeping rather than creation.

\(^{17}\) The Jewish encyclopedia entry: In appearance, Yhwh (יהוה) is the third person singular imperfect “kal” of the verb לְהָוָה (“to be”), meaning, therefore, “He is,” or “He will be,” or, perhaps, “He lives,” the root idea of the word being, probably, “to blow,” “to breathe” and hence, “to live.” With this explanation agrees the meaning of the name given in Ex. iii. 14, where God is represented as speaking, and hence as using the first person—“I am” (יְהֹוָה, from יהוה, the later equivalent of the archaic stem לְהָוָה). The meaning would, therefore, be “He who is self-existing, self-sufficient,” or, more concretely, “He who lives,” the abstract conception of pure existence being foreign to Hebrew thought. There is no doubt that the idea of life was intimately connected with the name Yhwh from early times. He is the living God, as contrasted with the lifeless gods of the heathen, and He is the source and author of life (comp. I Kings xviii.; Isa. xi. 26-29, xliv. 6-20; Jer. x. 10, 14; Gen. ii. 7; etc.). So familiar is this conception of God to the Hebrew mind that it appears in the common formula of an oath, ‘ḥai Yhwh’ (= “as Yhwh lives”; Ruth iii. 13; I Sam. xiv. 45; etc.).

\(^{18}\) Rabbinic lore has it that the name of God is not pronounced but rather breathed. The archaic Hebrew root behind be or become הָוָה (ḥāwa) or chawah is thought to be onomatopoeic (when a word’s pronunciation imitates its sound) e.g. inhale (cha) exhale (wah).

\(^{19}\) Driver, The Book of Genesis, excursus i., pp. 402-409, London, 1904, pg.409
Gibson noted that, “The common verb to be (HaYa) has as its imperfect (YiHYeH) יִהְיֶה he will be this is obviously very similar to YahWEH יְהֹוָה. The difference is a change from a yod י (Y) to a waw ו (W) the same shift (from yod to waw) occurs when the verb living becomes the name of Eve (mother of the living). The difference between “Eve” and “Living” is a causal one: in being the mother of all “living”, there is no “living” not descended from Eve, and so it is because of her that there are living ones; she produced them. Hence we see that “Yahweh” has the sense of “he will be”, together with a causal sense that Yahweh is bringing to pass the fulfillment of what “he will be.” The name is an expression of purpose, and that purpose is “God manifestation” in sons and daughters.21

Therefore even if the Tetragrammaton is linked to an archaic root that means “breathing” (existing) it has been transformed through causative verb inflection into a progressive manifestation, however it cannot be solely confined to a future “becoming” as the Hebrew verb “to be” היה (hyh) has aspects (rather than tenses)22 and the LXX of Exod 3.14 reflects this in an “existential” reading, often translated as the self-existent one (LXE) or as I am that I am (KJV). It is therefore not coincidental that a connection is posited (through an archaic root) with “breathing”, which also has an existentialist flavour (living/existing). However, such an etymology is based on association, paronomasia and assonance rather than philology. Nevertheless, without implying anything as radical as semantic transference of meaning it can be said that all these Hebrew words share the same semantic “gene-pool” as they are all linked to living, breathing and existing. In a causal sense Yahweh is bringing to pass the fulfillment of what “he will be” (will become) in an existential sense Yahweh is the ground of all being (cf. Paul Tillich) as, “in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17.28).

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20 Driver comments favourably on Ewald, “I will be” and on Professor Smith, “I will be what I will be” which rings throughout the Bible: “I will be with them.” and the “I will be” paraphrase of Rashi (11 century Rabbi). Driver, on the Tetragrammaton, in Studia Biblica, vol. i., Oxford, 1885, pg. 16


22 The verb in English conveys both tense and aspect—as was/is/will be. Biblical Hebrew does not have tenses they only have two aspects; perfect and imperfect. The past, present and future tenses are related to time, but the Biblical Hebrew tenses, perfect and imperfect, are related to action. Therefore a completed action (perfect aspect) I WAS and an incomplete action (imperfect aspect) I AM BECOMING (WILL BE). This makes translating verbs difficult as there are no equivalent tenses in English. For the most part, perfect aspects are translated into the past tense in English and the imperfect aspect into the present or future tense (as an action may be completed or it may have begun, but not yet completed). See: https://scholars.sil.org/sites/scholars/files/stephen_h_levinsohn/discourse/hebaspect.pdf
The vision in Isaiah 6

The theophanic vision of Isaiah 6 occurred in the year that King Uzziah died (v.1) and it caused the shaking and vibration of the temple lintels; “the posts of the door moved” (v.4) in the same way that the great earthquake shook the land when Uzziah sinned (Zech 14.5) by attempting to force his way into the inner sanctum (2 Chron 26.16-21). The prophet Isaiah is commissioned during this vision and his lips are cleansed by touching them with a fiery altar coal. The fact that Isaiah was in the temple suggests that he was a priest (or that he had been specifically invited into the sanctuary) and the “unclean lip” is a reference to leprosy from which king Uzziah had recently succumbed. The prophet is therefore acknowledging that he is also a sinner and as such identifying with king Uzziah and with the people. However, the prophet may not have been in the “earthly temple” at all because what he experiences is a vision of the “heavenly temple”. After all, the earthly temple was a mere copy of the heavenly one. Isaiah sees the Lord (Adonai) elevated upon a throne (mercy seat) and his train (robe or garment) filled (cf. same word for multitude or many) the temple, moreover, the Lord is surrounded by seraphim (cherubim) calling out his praises (YLT); “The fullness of the earth is his glory” (v.3). The YLT translation has “the fullness” as subject (rather than earth as subject). The YLT suggests that the “fullness” or abundance of the earth (what the earth brings forth) is to the glory of God. This better fits the picture of multitudinous saints (his robe) unfurling among the “living creatures” (Cherubim) as it is a resurrection scenario. The vision is referenced in the Fourth Gospel;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John 12</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Isaiah 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him (v.41).</td>
<td>Preordained and seen by Isaiah</td>
<td>I saw also the Lord (v.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...if I be lifted up from the earth (v.32).</td>
<td>Lifting up – crucifixion and resurrection high and lifted up (v.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified (v.23).</td>
<td>Glorification</td>
<td>...his train filled the temple(v.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father, glorify thy name (v.28).</td>
<td>“Yah saves” (Yahshua)</td>
<td>Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts (v.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...if it (the corn kernel) die, it bringeth forth much fruit (v.24).</td>
<td>Abundant resurrection fruit</td>
<td>The fullness of the earth (v.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H.A. Whittaker expands the connections in John 12 to the rest of Isaiah (Studies in the Gospels, 170, 594):

23 “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean” (Lev 13.45). Was the “lip covering” a type of “surgical mask” to prevent the spread of the disease?

24 ‘Adonay (The Lord or, My Lord) is employed in vv. 1, 8 and 11 and Yahweh in vv.3, 5 and 12. It seems more appropriate to accept the meaning “the Lord” for 6.1 and 6.8 and only “my Lord” for 6.11 where the vocative is employed only after the commissioning of the prophet.

25 Most translations: “The whole earth is full of his glory”.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John 12</th>
<th>Isaiah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3:16-24 Censure of beautifying by the daughters of Zion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4:2 The 'shoot' of the Lord ... the fruit excellent and comely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. 21:12</td>
<td>4:4 He that is left in Zion ... shall be called holy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. 23</td>
<td>5:8-25 Woe unto you (repeated).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,21</td>
<td>Greeks: &quot;We would see Jesus.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Now is the Son of man glorified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>It thundered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The prince of this world cast out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35, 46</td>
<td>Lest darkness come upon you ... should not abide in darkness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jesus did hide himself from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-41 quotes</td>
<td>6:1 The Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:10</td>
<td>Ye are clean, but not all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>I am the true vine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 quotes</td>
<td>5:1 The song of the vineyard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>If I be lifted up ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground ... if it die, it bringeth forth fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I have glorified it, and will glorify it again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20, 46</td>
<td>The Greeks ... I am come a light into the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Where I am, there shall my servant be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Save me from this hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>A voice from heaven (at Passover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jesus departed, and did hide himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>They did not confess him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Whosoever believeth in me should not walk in darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The judgment of this world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I came not to judge the world but to save the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Jn. 12:37-43

37. Compare Is.52:14a, 15c. See also Ex.4:30,31; Num. 14:11. Many miracles before them, Cp. 20:30.
38. John, the most Hebraistic of the NT writers, quotes Is. 53:2 from LXX version.
39. Saw his glory. King-Priest; cp. Is. 52:13b, 15a; Dan. 7:13,14; Jn. 12:15 with 13:3 (and context). The Targum of Is.6:1 has: "I saw the glory of the Lord."
John turns everything on its head. The “shame” of the cross becomes a sign of “glory” and the crucified and resurrected Jesus is a precursor to the “fullness of the earth” (of the harvest e.g., resurrection). The point is that Yahweh is praised by Living Creatures (cherubim) as his “glory” tabernacles (dwell) on the throne (mercy-seat) between the “living creatures” that overshadow the throne and therefore reflect the glory. However it is also reflected by the resurrected (living) saints who fill the temple (draped over the bridegroom like a robe) and who also laud and praise Yahweh. John explicitly says this is what Isaiah saw. Isaiah saw the glory of the resurrected messiah and his saints. This is the whole meaning and purpose of the Yahweh name – the God of the living creatures (existentialism) and causality (he who will be/will become) has finally been revealed in a resurrected multitude but particularly in Christ Jesus. No longer is the name (Father, glorify your name) a promise of who or what Yah will be (become) for now “the fullness” of the becoming has been revealed. The messianic promise to Eve (mother of the living) has been fulfilled. The Father has glorified his name in Jesus (Yah saves) and the glory of God does indeed shine in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4.6) because he is the true image (Heb 1.3).
The cherubim vision and Ezekiel

The visual depiction of the cherubim in Ezekiel 1.16 is enigmatic;

“The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel” (KJV) …as it were a wheel in a wheel (LXE)…a wheel within a wheel (JPS) like a wheel intersecting a wheel (NIV)

ISA renders Ezek 1.16 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>אֵן</th>
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<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to-four-of-them</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>likeness</td>
<td>topaz</td>
<td>as-sparkle-of</td>
<td>and-deeds-of-them</td>
<td>the-wheels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
<th>אֵן</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the-wheel</td>
<td>in-midst-of</td>
<td>the-wheel</td>
<td>he-is-being*</td>
<td>as-which</td>
<td>and-deeds-of-them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wheel

The NetBible comments: Or “like a wheel at right angles to another wheel.” Some envision concentric wheels here, while others propose; “a globe-like structure in which two wheels stand at right angles” (L. C. Allen, Ezekiel [WBC], 1:33-34). The description given in v. 17 favours the latter idea. This is usually depicted as follows:

This looks like a very unusual type of “wheel” and it is difficult to envisage locomotion, especially as the creatures wing-tips are described as touching each other while they moved in unison with the “wheels”. It is obvious that Ezekiel struggled to describe what he saw and we struggle to comprehend. The wheel, אֵן, (ophan,) is from an unused root meaning to revolve or turn.

26 Interlinear Scripture Analyzer (3.0.2) http://www.scripture4all.org/
**Work and deeds**

What does the *work* of the wheels represent? The NIB translates “work” as “structure” pointing to the construction of the wheels but the LXT employs the Greek ἔργον (ergon) meaning work, deed, action; task, occupation, undertaking, equivalent to the Hebrew עַמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם (ûmaʿăšêhem), literally; and-deeds-of-them therefore indicating activity. On this NIDOTTE\(^{27}\) says; “The use of the nominative maʿašeh follows closely on the employment of the verb, describing what is accomplished by the action, literal or figurative, of the verb. It signifies what is done or what is being done.....All kinds of God’s works/actions and all types of human works/actions are designated by the nominative........the word refers to the entire creation (Ps 104:13, 24, 31)....” Psalm 104 has three occurrences of maʿašeh (deed/work) and the psalm alludes\(^{28}\) to the *seraphim vision* of Isaiah 6 -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 104</th>
<th>Isaiah 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment</td>
<td>1. The Lord high and lifted up...his train filled the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The wings of the wind</td>
<td>2. Wings... fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. His ministers a flaming fire</td>
<td>2. The seraphim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The glory of God in all creation</td>
<td>3. “The fulness of the whole earth is His glory”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Thou hidest thy face</td>
<td>2. He covered his face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Thou takest away their breath; they die</td>
<td>1. In the year that king Uzziah died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Thou sendest forth thy spirit; they are created</td>
<td>6,7. A seraph with a live coal in his hand...touched my lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. The glory of the Lord</td>
<td>3. The earth is full of his glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth</td>
<td>4. The posts of the door were moved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. He toucheth the hills, and they smoke</td>
<td>4. The house was filled with smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I will sing praise unto the Lord</td>
<td>3. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Let sinners be consumed out of the Land</td>
<td>11. The Land... utterly desolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. A great forsaking in the midst of the Land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{27}\) NIDOTTE (New International Dictionary of OT Theology and Exegesis, ed., VanGemeren, Pater Noster,1995), #6913 Vol.3 pg.550

\(^{28}\) G. Booker & H. A. Whittaker, Psalms
The “creative” work/deeds (*maʻası*ḥ) of Psalm 104 relate to the organization of the natural world and this is connected with the cherubim (seraphim) vision(s). In other words the creation of the saints is here in view. The Hebrew work/deeds (*maʻası*ḥ) is also used when describing the intricate embroidery work **produced through the Spirit of God** in creating the cherubim; “And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine *twined* linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of *cunning work* (*maʻası*ḥ) made he them” (Exod 36.8). This is rendered as **artistic designs** (NKJ) and **work of a designer** (YLT), indicating that the cherubim embroidery was a complex design (work) made with **twisted** threads. The word *maʻası*ḥ is also translated in Isa5.12 as **“operation (of his hands)”** in the KJV/NKJ/ASV/JPS (rather than **“works of his hands”**).

### Appearance

*מַרְאֶה* (*mar'eh*) translated as **pattern** in Num 8.14 and **form** in Job 4.16 describes the shape or geometry of an object.

### The Gem

The Hebrew for beryl (KJV) is literally **Tarshish stone**. The term has also been translated “topaz” (NEB); “beryl” (KJV, NASB, NRSV); or “chrysolite” (RSV, NIV). The ancient choice of “chrysolite” (LXX) for translating Tarshish stone was probably not solely due to the gem’s origins (Tarshish) but also influenced by the “golden colour” of the stone.

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29 “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exod 31.3).
30 Among other places Spain, Southern India and Ceylon have all been suggested as locations for Tarshish. All these places are major sources for the gem apatite.
31 Wikipedia comments “None of the Hebrew texts give any hint as to the nature of this stone. However, since the Septuagint repeatedly translates the Hebrew word by chrysolithos, except where it merely transliterates it, and in Ezeh., x, 9, since, moreover, the Vulgate follows this translation with very few exceptions, and Aquila, Josephus, and St. Epiphanius agree in their rendering, it can be assumed that the chrysolite of the ancients equates to our topaz. The word tharsis very likely points to the origin of the gem (Tarshish). The modern chrysolite is a green oblong hexagonal prism of unequal sides terminated by two triangular pyramids. Topaz, or ancient chrysolite, is an octangular prism of an orange-yellow colour; it is composed of alumina, silica, hydrofluoric acid, and iron. it is found in Ceylon, Arabia, and Egypt. Several species were reported to exist (Pliny, "Hist. nat.", XXXVII, xlv)...” Wikipedia contributors. (2019, April 2). Gemstones in the Bible. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 12:19, April 8, 2019, from ;
32 Chrysolithos is also known as peridot and chrysolite from the ancients "chrysolithos", meaning "golden stone". Peridot has an oily look which looks something like olive oil. In the ancient world, mining of peridot, called topazos (topaz) by the ancients occurred on St. John’s Island in the Red Sea (opposite Medina in Saudi Arabia) began about 300 B.C. Pliny, XXXV, chap. 22 says that, according to Juba, the island “Topazus [St. John’s] in the Red Sea”, also had mines producing sandarach (realgar) and ochre, “but neither of them are imported to us from that place.” Many modern English translations of the Bible, including the King James Version mention topaz. However, because these translations as topaz all derive from the Septuagint translation topaz[os],...
Although Chrysolite refers to Peridot in modern mineralogy, archaically it can refer to any number of green or yellow-green-coloured gemstones including, Topaz, Chrysoberyl, Zircon, Tourmaline and Apatite; therefore Apatite could have easily been mistaken by the ancients for other gem stones such as Topaz. Moreover, it is apatite that exhibits chatoyancy, or a cat’s eye effect, which is rare and highly sought-after. Chatoyancy is a rare optical phenomenon existing only in a handful of different gem types. It is distinguished by a unique light reflection that resembles the slit eye of a cat. The effect is caused by light reflection from parallel inclusions within a stone, typically rutile needles, fibers or channels. Cat’s eye reflections are best viewed in strong and direct light; when the stone is rotated, the cat’s eye will appear to glide across the surface. The colour of a beryl (KJV) is then more precisely - the colour of chrysolite (such as apatite) but the Hebrew עיִן (‘ayin) translated as colour in the KJV is elsewhere translated (495x) as eye even in the same chapter (Ezek 1.18) ‘ayin is rendered as eye by the KJV; and their rings were full of eyes (‘ayin). The NIB and NIV are probably closer to the meaning of Ezek 1.16 with; they sparkled like chrysolite. Sparkling like chrysolite is an apt description of the cat eye effect. NIDOTTE comments; “The reflection of metal or jewels can be described using ‘ayin (Ezek 1:4, 7, 16, 27; 8:2; 10:9; Dan 10:6) as well as the sparkle of wine (Prov 23:31 || hit’addām, be red) or ice (Ezek 1:22). In addition to the meaning “eye” ‘ayin is found 23x in the OT with the meaning “source,” the majority of these instances being in the Pentateuch. Lexicons in the tradition of Gesenius, such as BDB, separate this root from the root for “eye” but KB and HALAT relate “eye” and “source” to an identical route. Since the eye is the source of tears, it is called a fountain [spring].....”

which referred to a yellow stone that was not topaz, but probably chrysolite (chrysoberyl or peridot). Farrington, Oliver (1903) Gems and Gem Minerals. Chicago. p. 119. For Pliny see; “The Natural History by Pliny the Elder. Vol. VI. Translated by John Bostock and H. T. Riley. Henry G. Bohn, York St., Covent Garden, London, pp. 239-240 and n. 34.

33 The name ‘apatite’ was derived from a Greek word meaning ‘cheat’.
34 Apatite Gemstone Information @ https://www.gemselect.com/gem-info/apatite/apatite-info.php
35 NIDOTTE, #6523, Vol.3, pg.389
The colours of apatite are transparent to translucent, usually green, less often colourless, yellow, from blue to violet, pink and brown. Summarising – this gem stone has an “eye” (personification) and just like an eye it “sparkles” and “flashes” but the eye is also the “source” or “fountain” of something (the secondary meaning of ‘ayin’).

The importance of Apatite

Apatite gems are unique chrysolites as they form part of the Phosphorous cycle (see below) and phosphor is part of every living organism.

The backbone of the DNA strand is made from alternating phosphate and sugar residues. The sugar in DNA is 2-deoxyribose, which is a pentose (five-carbon) sugar. The sugars are joined together by phosphate groups that form phosphodiester bonds between the third and fifth carbon atoms of adjacent sugar rings. The two DNA strands are composed of simpler units called nucleotides. Each nucleotide is composed of one of four bases (cytosine [C], guanine [G], adenine [A] or thymine [T]). So without phosphor no “Code of Life” and note that permutations of only four bases are needed to unite the DNA strand.
A helix is a three-dimensional spiral which winds around an axis like ivy growing up a tree. It may have a constant radius, that is, all the points on it are at the same distance from the axis, or not. A spiral can be a curve in a plane winding around a central point or it could be a helix in space. Viewed from above a helix would appear like intersecting “wheels” and the Hebrew has no other way of expressing it as “wheels within wheels”. So phosphor builds the code of life, and as if that were not important enough, phosphor produces the energy by which we live. The Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) molecule is the nucleotide known in biochemistry as the "molecular currency" of intracellular energy transfer; that is, ATP is able to store and transport chemical energy within cells. Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is a complex organic chemical that provides energy to drive many processes in living cells, e.g. muscle contraction, nerve impulse propagation, and chemical synthesis. Found in all forms of life, ATP is often referred to as the "molecular unit of currency" of intracellular energy transfer. It is not surprising then that apatite is found in our teeth and bones (as well as in the earth). In fact, new research has recently employed apatite to mediate gene transfer and other such exotic things.
Wheels within Wheels

A single Helix
The right-handed helix (cos t, sin t, t) from t = 0 to 4π with arrowheads showing direction of increasing t
RobHar [Public domain]
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/Helix.svg

The Double Helix
A-DNA, B-DNA, and Z-DNA conformations of DNA. 12 base-pair steps composed by 13 base-pairs are show in a side view and top view. The symmetrical features of the double-helix are highlighted with the top view panel. Mauroesguerrot [CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)]

See the revolving 3D image – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ADN_animation.gif
The wheels within wheels are therefore “sparkling” with focal centres (eyes or sources) on the outer rims of the “wheels”. Whereas a similar vision in Ezek.10.12 describes “backs and hands” (KJV) indicating something concave, the RSV describes “their rims, and their spokes”. It is obvious that both Ezekiel and his translators struggle to depict the mysterious vision. The key phrase is in 10.17, “…the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels” (netBible) or, (LXE) “…the spirit of life was in them”.

The “wheels” with all their kinetic energy, focal points, concave connections and interwoven concentric rings represent life; “because the spirit of the living being was in the wheel”(Ezek 1.21). The wheel represents the life-force of the creature. Moreover, the sound of their wings moving (v.24) is like the voice of Shaddai (Almighty) a title intimately connected with fecundity and fertility (the life-force).36

A revised translation of Ezekiel 1.16

“The appearance of the wheels and their work was like the sparkle of topaz, and the four of them had one likeness, their appearance and their work being just like a wheel in the midst of a wheel” (CLV).

“The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel” (KJV).

“This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel”(NIV).

Proposed Revision

“And the four of them are unified, sparkling (eyes) like chrysolite (apatite), their pattern and operation being that of a double helix”.

Conclusions

Ezekiel employed contemporary symbolism and iconography to convey his numinous experience. It is obvious that Ezekiel struggled to find suitable imagery as much as his translators struggle to find suitable terminology. What terms would we use if we had to translate the vision into modern language? We do not have the equivalent modern tools for such an undertaking as the language and symbolism that Ezekiel employed was essentially religious and mythical and widespread in the ANE. Modern language has no counterpart, no rich equivalent symbolism and iconography as it is functional and utilitarian, employed to communicate scientific, social and political theories and ideas rather than numinous phenomena. However, when we sent “our chariot” (Voyager spacecraft launched in 1977) into space it was sent with a “Golden Record” on the outside, depicting (among other things) the two twisting spirals (double helix, rings within rings) of the DNA backbone and the structure of the four bases. These four bases form the letters of the genetic alphabet and are found in all earthly “living creatures”.

The cherubim-chariot in Ezekiel’s vision “turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward” (Ezek 1.9) meaning that they did not deviate from their course which was directed at the four compass points of the heavens as they also represent the **Zodiac constellations**. The Latin term zōdiacus was derived from the Greek, and the Greek term comes from the word ζωδιον (zōdion), which is the diminutive of ζωον (zōon), or animal, living creature. The purpose of God is therefore writ both large and small in both the symbols of the living creatures in the heavens (constellations) and in the code of life hidden within all living creatures; the symbology is therefore multi-faceted.  

Ezekiel’s vision is religious and spiritual not scientific but the idea although expressed in different language is the same – **life force**. God creates and sustains life and his glory is reflected by his image. Ezekiel tells us that Yahweh is the fountain and source of life itself --- the ground of all being ---the Living God--- and his glory is reflected in the fullness of the earth---the living creatures----which move purposely in unison, a community of beings that

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37 Note how many times the word “like”(as) is used (e.g., it was like) – which is the Hebrew preposition 

38 The Zodiac and constellations are also linked with the tribal arrangement around the sanctuary. The arrangement of the tribes around the tabernacle is meant to signify that heaven has come down to earth with God dwelling amongst his people [http://www.biblaridion.info/Digressions/zodiac.pdf](http://www.biblaridion.info/Digressions/zodiac.pdf) For further reading see the chapter on cherubim by H.A. Whittaker, Anthology, (Biblia, 1987).
will reveal his glory---energised, revived and moved by his power --- bringing all the spiritual elements (faces) together, whether in the heavens or the earth - the human (Saints), lion (Christ), ox (Israel) or eagle (angel).

The new Mercy-Seat:

“But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20.11-12).

“For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth” (Isa.38.18-19).

“And this one hath called unto that, and hath said: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is Jehovah of Hosts, The fulness of all the earth is His glory” (Isa 6.3 YLT).

“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”(Rev 4.8).