

Freehold Cosmology



The Heathen cosmos is centred around the World-Tree, called Yggdrasil by the Norse, that contains all the various realms. There are realms existing in the branches of the World-Tree, around where it meets the Earth, as well as within its roots. This roughly divides the realms into Upper-Worlds, Middle-Worlds, and Lower-Worlds. Within the branches of the World-Tree are the realms of Asgard, Vanaheim, and Alfheim; these realms are associated with the gods and elves. Around the base of the World-Tree are Midgard, Jotunheim, and Svartalfheim; associated with humans, giants, and dwarves respectively. Then within the roots of the World-Tree are Helheim, Muspelheim, and Niflheim; the realms of the dead, fire, and ice respectively.

Asgard

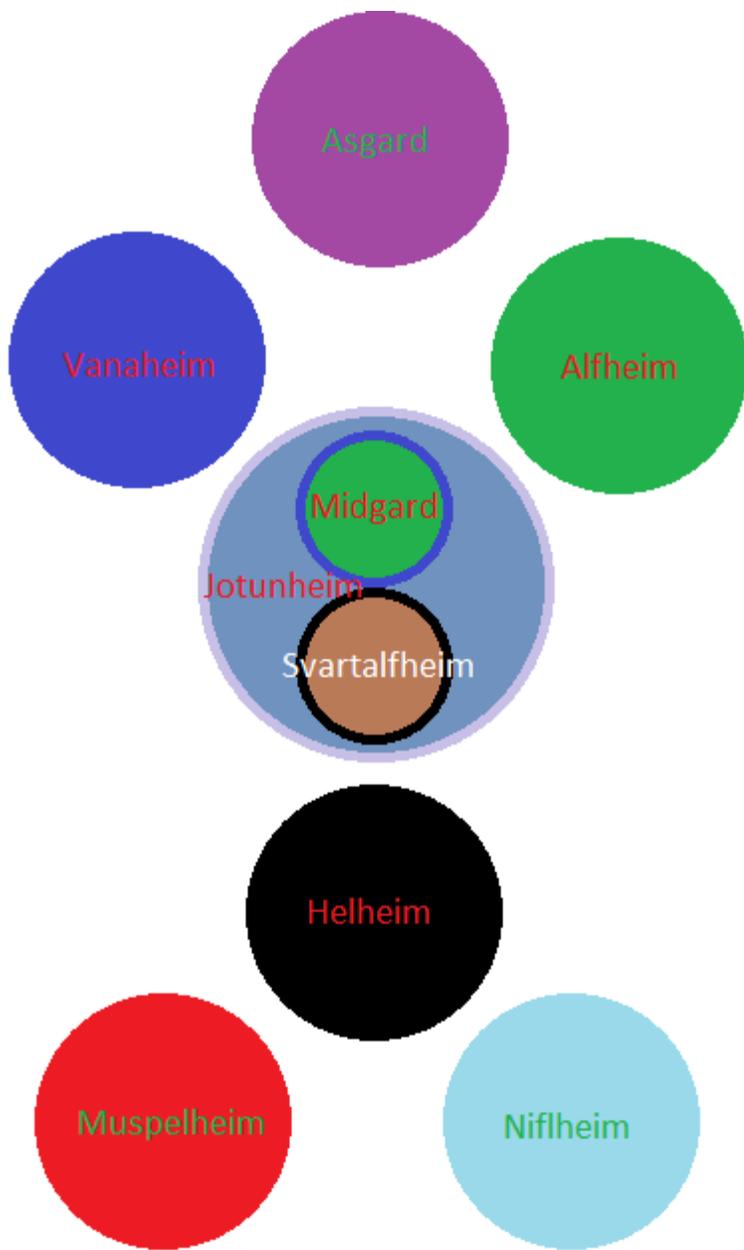
Asgard is the realm of the Æsir, and as such is home to most of the gods. It is here that the Bifrost (rainbow bridge) connects with Midgard, allowing direct travel for those who know how. Filled with the halls of the various gods, Asgard is a peaceful realm where the gods go about the business of governing the universe. It is in this realm that the gods gather in their Thing at Iðavoll field. One of the three wells that water Yggdrasil's roots is in Asgard, the Well of Wyrð.

Vanaheim

Vanaheim is the realm of the Vanir, this is the original home of Njord, Freya, and Ingui-Frey. Very little is known about Vanaheim, and it remains largely a mystery to us. Little is recorded in the myths about Vanaheim, some theorise it to be in the western branches of Yggdrasil.

Alfheim

Alfheim is the home of the Elves, powerful nature spirits who care for the forests, rivers, and hills of our world. Ingui-Frey was given the lordship of Alfheim as a gift. Even less is told of Alfheim than of Vanaheim, some theorise that Alfheim is in the eastern branches of Yggdrasil.



Jotunheim

Jotunheim is the home of the Giants, ambivalent to humanity they largely wish to be left in peace in their wilderness. Jotunheim surrounds Midgard, many of Thor's adventures are set in Jotunheim. The Giants as a group have no interest one way or the other in the proceedings of the outside, they care only to preserve their lands and to have what fun they can think of. Jotunheim is sometimes seen as being far more intimately entwined with Midgard, with the Giants occupying those remote and untameable locations such as Mountain peaks, dense forests, and other locations too harsh for human habitation. Other times Jotunheim is seen as lying to the east of Midgard, the location of Jotunheim is metaphorical and can change depending on the purpose of the discussion. Within Jotunheim is Mimir's Well, from which Odin drank for knowledge and which waters one of Yggdrasil's root.

Midgard

Midgard is home to humanity and is at the center of the World-Tree, acting as its base. The realm of Midgard is the most intimate to us humans, since we live here, yet it is important to remember that it is within Midgard where all the other realms interact. As the centre of the Heathen Cosmos, it is on Midgard where all the interactions between gods, elves, dwarves, and giants play out.

Svartalfheim

Svartalfheim is the home of the Dwarves, the master smiths and miners who are responsible for the creation of some of the finest treasures of the gods and men. Svartalfheim is as mysterious as Alfheim, we know that the dwarves call it home, that it is beneath the surface of Midgard, and that it is possible for the gods to travel there.

Helheim

Helheim is the realm of the dead, it is here where we find the halls of our ancestors after death. The goddess Hel rules this realm and offers comfort and rest to all who pass through her gates. Within Hel's realm there are many halls, each associated with an ancestral lineage, to which the dead are sent to rest. Though it shares a name with the English term for Christianity's eternal damnation afterlife, this is due to Early missionaries co-opting the term for simpler explanation to the Anglo-Saxons they were converting. The two have no similarities besides being "Underworlds".

Muspelheim

Muspelheim is a land of fire, it is one of the primal realms that first formed. It is inhabited by the Muspelli, Fire-Giants, and ruled by Surt according to Snorri Sturluson. Some of Muspelheim's sparks were used to create the Sun, Moon, and Stars. Muspelheim is also described as being to the south.

Niflheim

Niflheim is a land of ice, it is the other primal realm that formed before all others. It is uninhabited by all reports. It is from Niflheim that Auðumbla licked salt blocks for nourishment, before the slaying of Ymir and the creation of the other realms. The only notable location to survive the creation of the other realms is the spring Hvergelmir, which is the third and final well that waters the roots of Yggdrasil. Niflheim is described as being to the north.