

Living The Tree Of Life

by C. Furnace

(dedicated to Sharon, the rose of Arizona, O.T.O. ?^o)

The Kabbalistic diagram entitled The Tree of Life is familiar to most occultists as the foundation of Western Magick. Aspiring magicians tend to shy away from the enormous bulk of material which is called Kabbalah. They are deter_{red} by the difficulty of working in an unfamiliar language, reliance upon cryptic texts of an oral tradition and the multiplicity of correspondences. This resistance is eventually eroded by the NEED for Kabbalah as the language spoken by every teacher descended from the Golden Dawn tradition. Much of Aleister Crowley's work is unintellegable without at least three Kabbalistic keys: the interpenetration of the macrocosm and microcosm, gemantra and The Tree Of Life.

Thus the pursuit of magical understanding brings the student to the Kabbalah, despite personal reluctance. This quest may stop with a superficial knowledge of terminology or continue into wisdom. Most often, this endeavor stalls somewhere in between as the sincere seeker compiles countless texts and memorizes endless correspondences. By its very nature, Kabbalah encourages booklore and conceals its active side. To transmute knowledge into wisdom, one must use it and thus experience it "in Malkuth as in Kether".

A knowledge of Kabbalah is easily available from a number of books on the market (see Suggested Reading List which follows). Some contain

practices for "living the Tree", but their major emphasis is on the structure of the universe and mankind's place within it. After these basic concepts have been absorbed, more benefit is accrued by using them than studying endless examples and correspondences. Once the seed is planted, it takes work to ensure its growth, not theory !

The traditions of the Golden Dawn include traveling the paths of the Tree in astral and ceremonial work. Full instructions are available from F.I.Reguardie in various books, particularly his mammoth collection The Golden Dawn (Llewellyn, 1978). The basic formula is to explore the Tree from Malkuth to Kether, establishing a different base camp in each of the Sephera, traveling from one to the next via the Tarot trumps. The Tree is explored in a balanced fashion, including ceremonial attributions to each center and path as well as trance time to experience and assimilate the 'feel' of each set of concepts. The images of the Tarot trumps become doorways through which one has access to the attributes of different Sepheroth. Once actual personal experiences are associated with the symbolism of the Tree it is easier to remember these attributes and understand their functions.

Another form of working the Tree is explored by Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi^{*1}. and involves visualizing a diagram of the Tree as one walks. Each step is visualized as a sepheroth on the pillars of Mercy and Severity, bringing the whole body up the middle pillar of Balance. In practice, this requires a slow gait if each concept is to be absorbed rather than simply named.

One's spiritual life can be analyzed as the trials, tribulations and rewards of the paths. Each has its own treasure and guardian demon, as well as leading quite naturally to certain experiences in a specific order. By following the Adept's Way up the Tree, progress is

built upon a firm foundation and less energy is wasted on pursuits unconnected to current growth.

Conversely, one can look back upon knowledge and experience gained as the unfolding of the Fool's path towards The Universe. The basic structure of the Tree insures that forces will be balanced by their opposites and harmonized into new levels of existence.

The most convenient way of integrating the Tree of Life into daily existence is to use it as a memory aide. In both secular and spiritual matters, things to be remembered can be classified according to the Sephera which influences them, or under whose sphere of influence they fall. During the day, the Tree can be travelled and messages retrieved from each Sepheroth evoked. This builds intimacy with the whole collection of Kabbalistic concepts and transmutes ideas into experiences. It is also a painless and time-saving method of following Abra Melin's advice to "invcke often". Some may separate practical and sacred matters into a Tree in Assiah and another in Atziluth. Others may collect all phases into a single Tree. Either way, magick becomes an integral part of daily life.

The following example is offered as a guide to this method:

affirm the unity of existance **K** pray the Shema

lock up house
make ice cubes **B**

C explain ideas to a friend
C notice the shared characteristics
of all manifested matter

revise essays
prune bushes **G**

C work 9 AM to 5 PM
C fix broken gate

alone time
introspection **T** meditate
paint

read latest occult
text
file away bills **H**

N water plants
N enjoy sunset in garden

observe face in shaving mirror **Y** select & prepare today's image & role

eat, excrete and **M** exercise

REMEMBER: DO BE A DO BE, DON'T BE A COULD BE !

FOOTNOTE

1. Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi. The Way of Kabbalah, Weiser, New York 1976
pg. 189, though this whole chapter has merit.

SUGGESTED READING LIST AND REFERENCES

- W.E. Butler. Magic and Qabalah. Weiser, New York 1964
- A. Crowley. The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley. Weiser, New York 1975
- Z.b.S. Halevi. The Way of Kabbalah. Weiser, New York 1976
- G. Knight. A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism. London 1976
- S.L.M. Mathers. The Kabbalah Unveiled. Weiser, New York 1974
- I. Reguardie. The Golden Dawn. Llewellyn, Saint Paul 1978
- W.W. Westcott. Sepher Yetzirah. Weiser, New York 1976