

THE QLIPTHOTH

By

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"Two are the methods of becoming God: The Upright and the Averse."
- To Mega Therion.

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During several years the question of a dark path to liberation of the individual, side by side with the one of light, has interested me enourmosly. It all began with that a good friend of mine recommended me to read "Outside the Circles of Time" by Kenneth Grant many years ago. Since then has the interest for the possibility of a western genuine left-hand path equivalent to the hindu or tibetan buddhist tantrik vama marg or left-hand practices wherein negative forces are contacted and utilized as means to liberation interested me.

The occult tradition of the West being hidden for almost 2000 years reached its summit in the creation of the *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* which made a practical synthesis of Magick, Astrology, Alchemy and the Qabalah added to by Enochiana and Geomancy. In the "Tree of Life" of the Qabalah the aspects of Cosmos was classified and coordinated to become the foundation of many forms of magical practice amplified by enochian evocations gathered from the work by John Dee and Edward Kelly in the 14th century. The old grimoire "The Sacred magick of Abramelin the Mage" made out the central theme for the quest: The knowledge and conversation of one's own guardian angel. Inherent in these systems were the magick of the Dark Paths.

The *Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn* trained many adepts, among them maybe the most famous was *Aleister Crowley*. He recreated through the transmission of "Liber AL" and the cult of Thelema the worship of the egyptian Gods Horus and Set. He was one of the first to carry magick into the "New Age" or New Aeon as he preferred to call it.

The New Aeon, the New Age, has manifested in many aspects for different adepts which have themselves embodied this occult current. Crowley's, probably most advanced interpreter today is Kenneth Grant, the OHO of the Typhonian OTO in London, England. It is through his books which the gnosis of the new aeon has taken shape and been brought out to the public. It is he who has lifted the veil of Isis for the occultists of the modern world. Other interpreters of the current are Nema, Michael Bertiaux, Michael A. Aquino, Stephen Flowers et. al. which all bring to light different aspects of what can be called The Mysteries of the New Aeon and their specific forms of Gnosis. It has of course roots i the magical cults of older epochs and cultures of whom especially ancient Egypt has a key-role to play.

1.

To understand the forces of the Qliphot it requires that one knows something about the foundations of the Qabalah itself.

The Qabalah was from the beginning a jewish tradition, but have been transferred to the west through the agency of gnostics, alchemists and rosicrucians. One can today easily differentiate between two separate currents, one purely jewish and one western, and as part of those several sub-currents.

The central structure of the Qabalah is called "The Tree of Life". It describes the creation of the Universe, the Cosmos as a series of 10 emanations

from the limitless light, which in its turn has its roots in negative existence, no-thing, the void.

The ten emanations are called the Sephiroth (which means cypher, or number). They have titles such as "The Crown", "Wisdom", "Understanding", "Beauty" etc. etc. Each Sephira can be contacted through the use of ritual or active meditation in four stages: Physical, Astral, Mental and Spiritual through planetary forces, angelic choirs, archangels and the different names of God (with the magical image).

The "Tree of Life" does not only describe creation and the macrocosm but also the microcosm and the path of initiation, from material existence to pure spirit. It is this path which is named High Magick and through it the true goal of all magick. An advanced form of spiritual psychology and alchemy to transmute matter to spirit ("lead to gold").

The dark or averse aspects of the Sephiroth are called the Qliphot.

2.

"The 'higher' you reach the gods of light, the 'lower' you must plunge to the gods of darkness." - Nema.

In all ages have mankind struggled with the problem of "good" versus "evil". The ideal one wants to attain, the frightening, damaging one wants to avoid. Good and evil are human terms which does not have any function to fulfill on the cosmic arena. One can instead study these aspects as a dynamic interaction between negative and positive forces in the cosmos, Yin and Yang.

Dion Fortune (1) defined two forms of evil: Negative and positive. The negative evil is the cosmic inertia, an inherent resistance against development, against new projects. The positive evil is a willed direction of force against the stream of evolution, back towards earlier forms of consciousness. It is directed, willed negative power designed to harm.

The jewish-christian image of the world has made use of the method of "demonizing" the gods of other religions to make it easier to condemn and through artificial polarization be able to justify its own religious system.

The negative forces of the Cosmos has been looked upon as threatening and one has tried to almost expel them from mankind. An example of this is the Shiva-Set-Shaitan (Satan) godform which is looked upon as the great adversary in the cosmos, whose hordes of demons and small devils wants to take over and rule. This archetype is admittedly destructive, Shiva is the destructive god of the hindus which is the Lord of all Yogis, it is He who destroys the relative reality or existence, the ego of the Yogi, which then reveals the Absolute. Both Shaitan and Set have had their own cults in the past which had their great days with their own esoteric cults, similar to Shiva.

The inner teachings of the jewish religion does also have their own different schools which studied the "problem of evil". The Qabalah looks upon evil as something fundamentally good but on the wrong spot, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. According to the Qabalah nothing exists outside of the Divine and the creation emanated from the first impulse, the thought in AIN SOPH AUR. That is why evil cannot be something self-existing. Qliphot means "shells". As shells they are described as being without content, being empty. That evil has no centre. To find one's own centre is the most important thing for both the mystic and the magician, therein lies the source of will, and without a centre - no will!

The forces of the Qliphot can be looked upon in three different ways (from the point of view of creation or becoming i.e. evolution): 1) They are relative to the Sephiroth and does not have any energy of their own; 2) They are energies of Chaos which have remained from a)older worlds or b)in the process

of creation ("leftovers"); 3) They are a part of the cosmic inertia, the resistance against creation which is self-existent within AIN SOPH AUR (2).

1 has as a consequence that the Qliphot are conditions within a person in relation to the sephira and if the condition is transcended and oneness attained - the qliphot will disappear by itself.

2a states the fundamental understanding that the Qliphot cannot be evil in themselves but are on the wrong place in time, leftovers from earlier cycles of evolution. They have no will of their own but are doing that which they always have done, although it may be "wrong" from the point of view of the present cosmos.

Several modern western interpreters of the Qabalah adhere to 2b, that the Qliphot are leftovers when the sephiroth became equilibrated. Chaos can be described as the primal matter. According to an old alchemical treatise (3) all four elements were separated from chaos. The Qliphot would then not be "evil" but primal forces that never have been put to use (or equilibrated), they would be enormous reserves of energy that one can get creative energy from. One can of course make comparisons with modern Chaosresearch and Quantum mechanics.

When they in modern terminology are looked upon as evil they are described as anti-sephiroth or sephirothic qualities carried out into the extreme:

"...the Contending Heads of Thaumiel are applied to Kether as a denial of Divine Unity; Chokmah is given to Ghagiel - the Hinderers in like manner, and the silence of Binah is perverted into Satariel - meaning 'Hiding'. The benevolent ruling sphere of Chesed has the Smiters, and Geburah, the Flaming Ones, while the Harmony of Tiphareth is shattered by Thagirion - the Litigation. The forces of Netzach are scattered by the Raven of Dispersion, and Falsity, the Vice of Hod, is exemplified by Samael, the False Accuser. The Foundation of Yesod is the Obscene Ass and the overpowering lust of material values is the domain of Lilith - the Woman of Night." (4)

The Qliphot have their roots in the same archetypal forms that the sephiroth themselves but are carried out to their extremes when they become unbalanced and thereby place themselves outside of the cosmic harmony which is described by the Tree. One can also describe them in psychoanalytic terms as complex which have lost the contact with consciousness and act outside of the conscious will and have an effect on the behaviour from an unconscious or repressed level.

3 states that the metamorphoses of the Sephirothic energies describes the hierarchies of forces which guides existence and its different levels of vibration, that the qliphotic powers have their roots in non-being. They are placed on the back of the tree. A modern interpreter of the gnosis of the new aeon has written:

*"It is at the moment of manifestation that the elemental forces are transposed, or evoked, from Space into Time. The Abyss typifies the primal Mother as Space. The stellar universe (space) seeded with with souls (stars) typifies chaos become cosmos by the introduction of periodic cycles of time. The blind forces of chaos in the infinities of space preceded the planets and stars as celestial intelligences, which established order by creating time in the form of aeons etc. The forces of the 'other side', being timeless, were therefore chaotic and existed only in the spaces that were considered dark, disruptive, lawless, **qliphotic**; they were the inverse spaces of the **sephiroth**, or cosmic emanations inclusive of the planets as representing phenomenal law and order in the form of time cycles. (5)*

Horus is a solar godforce in the new aeon. Although he can be perceived as destructive (wargod) He is the Lord over the Sephiroth and the paths on the Tree of Life. The Lord over the caves and tunnels on the back of the tree is the godforce Set. They are the twins, mirror images of each other. The tunnels of Set are passages in and out to other dimensions, other forms of being and worlds. The Gate to the tunnels have traditionally either been Daath or Kether. Daath because it is a hidden Sephirah which has got number eleven. The number of the Qliphot is eleven. Crowley defines this number as: "The general number of magick, or energy tending to change" (6).

Practically it means that one travels up the paths (Horus) to Daath i.e. one confronts the Abyss and the gnosis which that experience gives on the inner planes (where all real gnosis exists, to which, in comparison, all books are but shadows) to be able to tread into the Realms of Night without the risk of madness or getting lost in one of the tunnels of the tree. In *"The Monastery of the Seven Rays"* (7) one walks up to Kether and then down again through the tunnels of reflected light. Michael Bertiaux has developed a specific method to be able to work with the back of the tree so that initiation, magic shall be complete.

Even if one has done lists of correspondences in which the tunnels and the paths correspond they are not so ordered in reality. The Qliphot are not limited to their specific sphere but reaches out to all spheres and reaches into one another. They are chaos. The Sephiroth are cosmos.

According to Dion Fortune (8) it is impossible to isolate the cosmic, positive creative force from the negative, qliphotic. If one works with The Tree of Life one awakens also the negative, dark forces, although in most cases it is unconscious. In the life of a human being there exists a natural "balance of terror" between these forces which in the microcosm reflects the macrocosm. When the forces becomes a part of consciousness the state of equilibrium is lost. That is why it is so important to meet with and work with the Dark Side as well.

The Sephirotic and Qliphotic forces in the different Qabalistic Worlds

World	Hebrew	Sephiroth	Qliphot
Spiritual	Aziluth	Godname	Demons (reflections of negative light i Assiah)
Mental	Briah	Archangels	Archdevils/demons
Astral	Yetzirah	Choirs of Angels	Cohorts
Material	Assiah	Planets	Hells

The initiate must be a wanderer both on the dayside and nightside of the Tree of Life to be able to reach the complete gnosis and control over the magickal forces:

"Our system of cabala does work with both forms of being, and actually it is necessary to work with both lines of pure being. Our system is quite complete in that it is concerned with magical forces which are expressed through the negative (Klipha) and positive (Sephira) aspects of the Tree of Life." (9)

"The initiate will become the master of both the dark and the white lights, and

will be able to command the demons or nether regions as well as the angels of the mental spheres." (10) "He will always allow the negative take the place due to it, and the negative must be as useful to him as the positive" (11).

In the end there is only Maat-Thelema, the True Will, which is the individual's, the Adept's relationship to the Absolute, which does not serve either side but which is beyond both and over which neither side has any power over. "A man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him", says Aleister Crowley in one of his magickal theorems (12).

Practically one can through creative visualization build forms on the astral which vibrates in resonance with the forces (or powers) and thereby form links to their spheres. (A similar process does also take place in the mental and spiritual spheres.) In ritual meditation the forces are contacted which gives energy to the astralbody which get during a period conscious links to all spheres, including the negative tunnels - in the magical cosmos. In the end the magician can, as Shiva, become Lord both in heaven and hell.

Notes:

- (1) Fortune, Dion: "The Mystical Qabalah", Aquarian Press, 1987, p. 297.
- (2) According to Gershom Scholem there was two different forms of AIN SOPH AUR, one with the idea of creation and one without. The one who was without "works against" creation, a form of inertia creating disharmonies. ("Kabbalah", Dorset Press, New York 1987, p 122).
- (3) "The Golden chain of Homerus", Chapter V, published in: "The Hermetic Journal", No. 2, p. 15 (vintern 1978).
- (4) Knight, Gareth: "A practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism", vol 1, p. 232, Samuel Weiser, NY 1978.
- (5) Kenneth Grant: "Nightside of Eden", Frederick Muller Ltd, London 1977, p. 87.
- (6) Crowley, Aleister, 777 revised, p. xxv in "777 and other Qabalistic writings of Aleister Crowley", Samuel Weiser Inc, York Beach, Maine 1982.
- (7) This process of initiation is described shortly in Kenneth Grant: "Cults of the Shadow" p. 169. *The Monastery of the Seven Rays* is the outer school of which *Le Couvre Noire* is hte inner. Michael Bertiaux is the adept who transfers knowledge from other regions to the earthly sphere which gives the energy and gnosis to the sects he leads.
- (8) see (1).
- (9) Bertiaux, Michael: *The Monastery of the Seven Rays*, 4th year course, part one, paper to follow between lessons 6 & 7.
- (10) Edred Flowers, "Fire and Ice", Llewellyn, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1990, p. 40.
- (11) Bardou, Franz: "The Practice of Magical Evocation", Dieter Rüggeberg, Wuppertal, Västtyskland, 1975, p. 14.
- (12) Crowley, Aleister, "Magick in theory and practice", Lecram Press, Paris 1929, p. XIX.