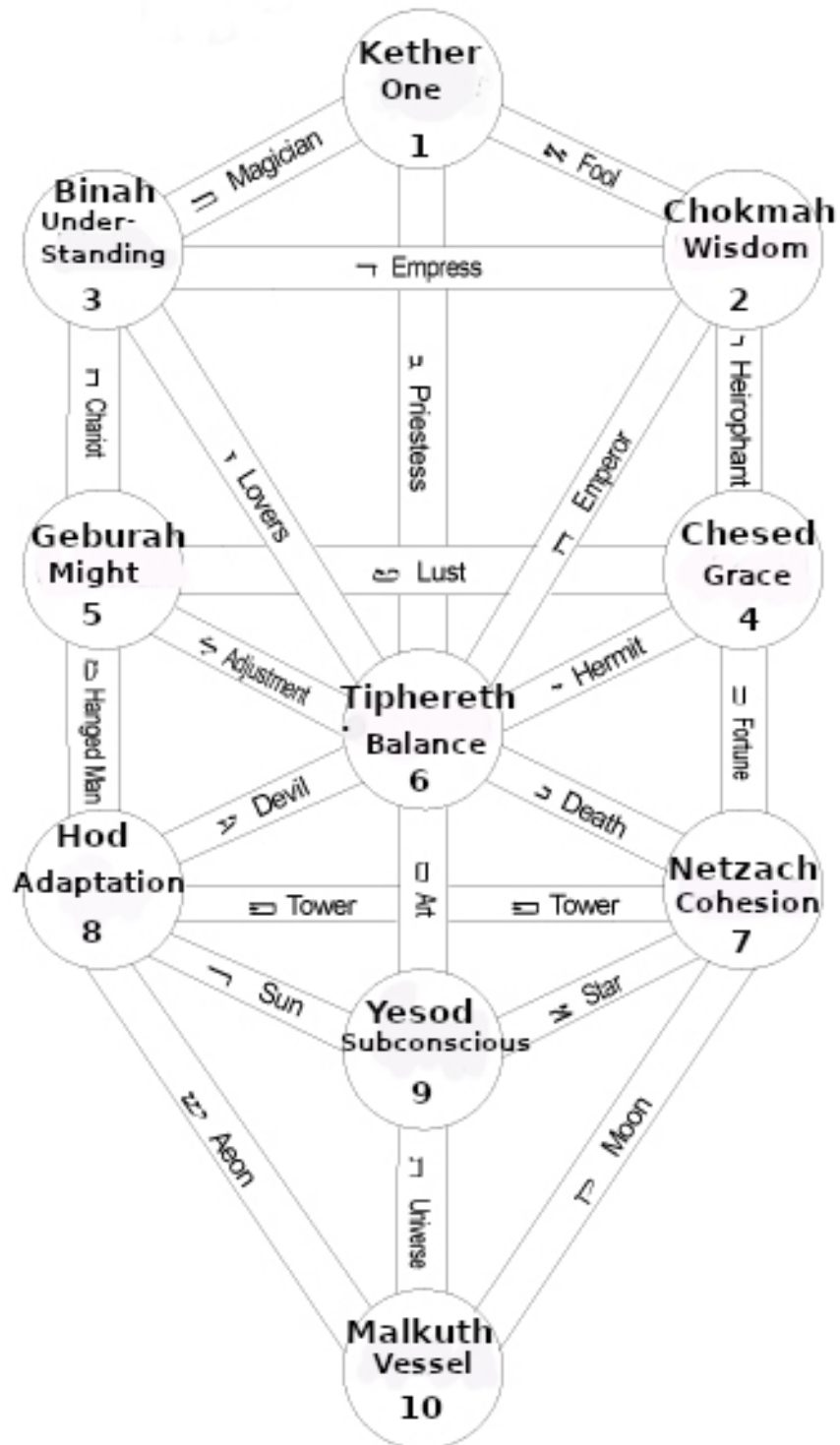


Tree of Life



Practical Application of the Qabalistic Tree of Life

Lesson 1 – Over view of the Tree

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Qabalah is an esoteric method, discipline, and school of thought in Jewish mysticism. Historically, Qabalah emerged in 12th to 13th century Spain and Southern France. In recent times it has been adapted by many outside the Jewish faith as a tool to understand and describe the divine realm using the imaginative and mythic symbols of human psychological experience. An important tool in this system is the Tree of Life composed of ten circles connected by lines. Each circle is called a Sepherah (def: tell, number, border) and embodies a different spiritual/psychological concept. The lines between denote the interaction between two Sepherah.

The Tree of Life has long been a tool for Spiritual growth and understanding but its comprehensive symbolism can be applied to any arena. In this analysis of the Qabalistic Tree of Life with its Sepherotic system we will focus on the subconscious and work through how this ancient system can help heal that dark and rather scary place within all of us.

First, we will overview the Golden Dawn¹ interpretation of the Tree to understand how the various components evolve and interact. We will start from the bottom where the process starts for us as we climb back up the Tree toward Understanding and Wisdom.

It's good to remember that all of these states are in us and active to some extent. The Self, the Soul, needs to progress through each state exploring and infusing itself with each Sepheroth to become increasingly more familiar with its true nature.

We will begin at the bottom of the Tree of Life because that is how we progress through it.

10 – Malkuth, generally thought of as the physical world. It is also the Soul seeking to find meaning in Life. Malkuth is the empty vessel, the blank canvas fashioned by the 'powers that be' represented by the Sepheroth above it on the Tree. We awaken at birth into a world of vibrational chaos, capable of perceiving only a small fraction of the vast soup of potential swirling around and through us, with little help from our elders, teachers or peers to make any sense of it. From this soup we shape a life worth living, finding fulfillment, love and purpose. No wonder we're a mess. But people have been striving to

1 The **Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn**, more commonly the **Golden Dawn** (*Aurora Aurea*), was a secret society devoted to the study and practice of metaphysics, and paranormal activities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Known as a magical order, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was active in Great Britain and focused its practices on theurgy and spiritual development. Many present-day concepts of ritual and magic that are at the centre of contemporary traditions were inspired by the Golden Dawn, which became one of the largest single influences on 20th-century Western occultism.

do just that for many, many thousands of years and their work can help us to build a good life from all this potential.

9 – Yesod is called the Foundation because it is the focal point into which pours all the energy and states of being that flow down from Sepheroth 1 - 8. It is the platform on which we build our lives. The problem is that it is also the Subconscious and the Subconscious is a difficult place to traverse without having at least a map and a few good skills. It is the link between the potential soup of our physical world and our own internal world that is the storage bin of our pains, pleasures, fears and hopes. Here we devise the blueprint of our life, what we build, and how we interact it the world and its inhabitants. How do we come to know what tools we have to work with? As you progress up the Tree situated in Yesod tools will be honed and more doors will be opened in your subconscious. As you progress up the overall Tree your spiritual tools and realms will open up. Yesod is ever growing and becomes more powerful as you progress the overall Tree because it is the funnel through which all that is above it is focused into your physical, mental and spiritual self in Malkuth. Hopefully these lessons will provide at least a starting for this process.

8 – Hod. In Hod, generalities become specifics. The concept of ‘tree’ becomes oak or pine or elm. In my mind ‘elm’ becomes the tree I spent hours in when I was a child. Hod is intellect, computation, words, thinking that is a dialogue. When you have a memory that plays out like a movie, that is Hod. The numbers represent quantity. A word is just a word. A letter is just a letter. Hod holds facts. The intellect is a loyal dog to the ego so the intellect should always be questioned. Why are you thinking what you are thinking? Is this a truth or has your logic been manipulated by other factors? The intellect is a wonderful tool but it needs to be constantly questioned. Once you create your mental world it becomes home. You will do anything to protect it. Your weapon of choice is skepticism. Any new ideas are blocked out with your very dependable logic because a new idea is a threat to the ego. “Was I wrong? No! Of course not. I’m logical.” So your comfortable home is safe from any intrusive alterations. All is well with the world. It’s very easy to get stagnated in Hod, especially if you are brought up in a Western culture.

7 – Netzach Netzach is usually designated as Nature or Emotions. Both of these are manifestations of interactions. Nature is the exceedingly complex interaction of Life with Matter. Matter, at this stage, is merely a soup of vibrations. Life begins that elegant symphony that is physical life as we are able to perceive it. Emotions are the interactions of Souls, minds and egos with others or with the Whole Soul, Mind or Ego. The One, Kether, as it descends down the Tree, finds balance in Tiphereth. This balanced state provides the spark to grow. Growth here is the movement from the One Whole to the individual aspects of itself that are its Observers.

Going up the Tree, you’ve just left Hod all cozy with logic, your logic. You’ve done research of course but it was your logic that makes it meaningful to you. Life makes sense. There’s a comforting order to everything. Then your soul starts itching to move on and Netzach comes over the horizon. The symmetric landscape created by life is so far beyond our senses that it appears as chaos. You feel as though you were plucked from your lovely pristine garden and thrown into a raging sea with no land in sight. Here numbers are concepts. You are forced to redefine everything. But by keeping an open mind you can gradually see the inner connectedness of all things and beings. Empathy grows. Appreciation of the feelings of others starts to temper your own understanding. Fascination of the perfect interaction of all life expands to a deep love of Nature and compassion for all of life. You acquire the strength to float on the chaos you do not yet understand and to find comfort in its constant fluctuation.

6 – Tiphereth is Balance, Balance of all that is above it, balance of all that is below and the balance of both with each other. It acts much as the Sun does to the Solar System, holding all in a moving, balanced gravitational machine. Christians place Christ in Tiphereth. It can be represented as the Higher Self, the Self that has reached the fullness of its unique perfection. The closer you come to accepting and expressing your true self, the closer you are to Tiphereth. It also holds the summation of the morality gleaned from the balance of Geburah and Chesed, Might and Grace, when and how to be strict with yourself or compassionate and lenient. As you are with yourself, so you are with others.

The Soul finds in Tiphereth the balance of Hod and Netzach. Those brought up in Western culture are more attuned to Hod, and the Eastern and Indigenous cultures are more attuned to Netzach. In Tiphereth the Self can augment the Hod mind with the broad vision of Netzach to see a more complete picture of the results of calculations and blueprints and a more humane reason for making the calculations in the first place. Likewise the Netzach Heart is given practical applications to Love and Empathy and a surer path to the fulfillment of ‘As Above, So Below.’

5 – Geburah is commonly thought of as Severity. But it is more appropriately defined as Might or Controlled Growth because 5, and its representation as a pentagram, is based on the Golden Mean, 1.618, the ratio that defines the growth of life². Geburah is Mars – strength, force and control. Chesed says, “I want to love Everybody!!” Geburah says “That’s nice but let’s be practical. What if your expression of Love is not what they need or even want? The road to hell is paved with good intentions. It’s good to feel love but let’s see how it can be best expressed.” Chesed says “Life! Life! Life!”. Geburah says “Ok, but lets give it some pattern, some color. Set some parameters to it to see what Life really is and to watch it grow.” Geburah turns force into power by focus and direction.

4 – Chesed is the bursting dam pouring out Life from the infinite sea above. Life, Love, Mind, Spirit, all cascading through Chesed in a mad chaotic flood. Chesed is more akin to ecstasy than to the Mercy or Grace usually attributed to it. Mercy and Empathy are not born of civil kindness. They spring from the passion of One. We are One. ‘We Band of Brothers.’³ It’s the One that disperses into many and we remember that very deeply in our subconscious. Our greatest passion is when that Unity kisses our conscious minds and beating hearts. Then we Love and we endure and conquer. Only Unity gives us that strength. But it’s a flood in Chesed. It takes Geburah to direct and temper the flow from and back into Unity and turn the force of Chesed into the power that sustains Life.

Supernals - The first three Sepheroth, Kether, Chesed and Binah, are beyond our comprehension. These are the source of aspects of our existence that have no obvious cause. Born full grown. They are Mind, Movement and Form.

1 – Kether Is One. All that Is is the One. What seem to be parts, planets, persons, protozoa, Angels, frequencies, flies, are just aspects of the One. So the only way to understand One is to look around.

2 The golden ratio plays an important role in the geometry of pentagrams. Each intersection of edges sections other edges in the golden ratio. Also, the ratio of the length of the shorter segment to the segment bounded by the two intersecting edges (a side of the pentagon in the pentagram's center) is ϕ . The pentagram includes ten isosceles triangles: five acute and five obtuse isosceles triangles. In all of them, the ratio of the longer side to the shorter side is ϕ . The acute triangles are golden triangles. The obtuse isosceles triangles are golden gnomons.

3 *Henry V* Shakespeare Act 4 scene 3 line 61

Which is what the One did. It looked at itself. It wanted to see itself. It was, therefore, Mind. This perception defined the Observer. The Observer is the vehicle by which the One sees Itself.

2 - Chokmah is Two. There is the One and the aspect of the One that is the Observer, creating at that point duality and the definition of Chokmah as Wisdom, Clear Perception. The Observer is, as far as we are concerned, the primary individuation within the One, the first I AM, the first consolidation of a concept out of the One Whole. This coalescence into the first focus is vibration or the Movement of Understanding between the Observer and the Observed.

3 – Binah, is the individualization of the Understanding between Kether and Chokmah. It is the sea that pours through the little chink that is Chesed in the wall that is the Abyss (the Void between Binah and Chesed). Binah is the Womb. The conceptual vessel. Binah is the concept of Form. The form is the interaction of the One and the Observer. It is what the Observer perceives and the knowledge thereby attained. Binah is the I Am That I Am.

In the next lesson we will delve into Yesod, the Subconscious. With the tool of the Tree that resides in this Sepheroth we can start to make sense of the various influences that make us crazy or happy, productive or stagnant from a Qabalistic perspective.