

Kabbalah, Time and Evolution

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This contribution presents some ideas that form a new approach to understanding the processes of time and evolution. Esoteric study looks not only at the higher worlds but also at the everyday world in which history unfolds over time. Kabbalah attempts to explain why events occur as they do and how they fit in to the overall divine plan for the universe. The basic Tree of Life is essentially static and acted upon by astrological forces which determine when and how each Sefirah shows its effect, the passage of time being denoted by planetary cycles. There is no concept of time-dependency within the tree itself or within the four worlds of Jacob's Ladder. However, the planets have not always existed in their physical form. Evolution brought them about and will continue long after they have ceased to exist. Time-dependency, therefore, must be inherent within Kabbalah itself, a dynamic process within the Tree of Life that acts as a substrate on which astrology provides the fine tuning.

To determine the form of a time-dependent tree, we may examine everyday life in which activities relating to the various Sefirot take place at different times. Each Sefirah may be said to have an attractive force, and they can be "visited" in turn. Civilisations are similar: they may be at peace (Hesed), at war (Gevurah), etc. These situations arise as a result of decisions taken by individuals in response to the external environment. History proposes various reasons why decisions are taken, such as the personal ambition of the decision-maker and the necessity of the moment, all of which influence free-will. These influences are associated with the Sefirot, and free-will can therefore be said to be exercised by choosing which Sefirah to visit at that particular moment. This approach to the tree resembles, in physical form, a board-game like chequers with paths and resting points. In such a game there are rules of play and an ultimate goal. The tree also has rules (progress is only along the paths) and a goal represented by Keter. The process of evolution within the environment portrayed by the tree is the drive to attain the goal of the moment, which may be that of an individual or, in a civilisation, a spiritual/religious aim or a political conquest. The tree embodying a current situation may be termed the Tree of Today, where "today" may be anything from an instant of time to many years. By embodying the time dimension, a tree of this type does not match any of the traditional four worlds of Jacob's Ladder. It provides a special model for studying history and evolution.

If there is a tree for today, there must also be trees for yesterday and tomorrow, and the "days" before and after, differing in their goals and ways of expression of the Sefirotic principles. It is proposed that these trees are related to one another by exactly the same principle of interlocking trees as in Jacob's Ladder, but in the time-dimension there are a potentially infinite number of trees stretching from the beginning of creation to ultimate divine unification. This is a model for evolution in time as it is experienced and a representation of "that" in "I am that I am". While the principle of each Sefirah remains the same whatever tree it is in, its quality varies from one time period to the next. For example, the first and second world wars were similar as far as the principles of conflict were concerned, but very different in what was being fought for and defended. Tomorrow's goal will not be the same as today's. This underlies the principle "history repeats itself" - the same processes acting in different environments ultimately produce similar results. In Jacob's Ladder some Sefirot are unique to one tree, others are common to two or three trees. In the ladder made up of time-dependent trees, this system is replaced by a transformation over time of the principles of the Sefirot of the old tree to those of the new tree. Figure (i) entitled "Table of Transformation" shows in detail how this takes place. Daat is included as if it were a Sefirah as its position is integral to the pattern. Malkhut, Yesod, Hod and Nezah disappear and are recreated from Tiferet, Daat, Binah and Hokhmah respectively. Tiferet is transformed into Malkhut and reforms from Keter, so this Sefirah position is the only one common to three trees and represents the three stages of the passage through time of the main principles in evolution. This process can be viewed as corresponding to the Hindu principles of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, representing creation, preservation and destruction respectively. Gevurah and Hesed disappear and are recreated afresh for each time period; this is significant as they show that the qualities of the forces governing major free-will decisions are specific to one time-period. Daat, Binah, Hokhmah and Keter are transformed into Yesod, Hod, Nezah and Tiferet respectively and created anew by the Universal force. This scheme represents the creative process; the quality of the force-field of a new Sefirah is different from that of the corresponding old one. That quality is essentially unpredictable to us, though it forms part of the process initiated in the

world of Azilut, and it determines the future course of events. The subtlety of the evolutionary process is in the combination of the interaction of forces in the tree for today, with the fact that it is gradually being replaced by the tree for tomorrow.

This explains how the natal astrological chart operates in life. At the moment of birth, planetary influences come through at the Daat of the tree for that point in time. As the individual develops, that Daat becomes the Yesod of the next tree and so these influences become incorporated into the ego and affect his/her life. In an adult the life-goal (Keter) may be the summit of a career path and actions will be directed to that end. But as the current tree is replaced by that for the next stage of life, this Keter is gradually transformed into Tiferet and a new Keter is created. If this is appreciated, achievements to date will be used to attain the new goal, whatever form that may take. If not, life may become static and aimless.

SEFIRAH	OLD TREE	NEW TREE
Malkhut	Disappears	Forms from Tiferet
Yesod	Disappears	Forms from [Daat]
Hod	Disappears	Forms from Binah
Nezah	Disappears	Forms from Hokhmah
Tiferet	Transformed into Malkhut	Forms from Keter
Gevurah	Disappears	Created
Hesed	Disappears	Created
[Daat]	Transformed into Yesod	Created
Binah	Transformed into Hod	Created
Hokhmah	Transformed into Nezah	Created
Keter	Transformed into Tiferet	Created

These concepts can help to clarify the process of human evolution using examples from history. The subdivisions of time which lend themselves most neatly to the treatment just described are the astrological ages of approximately 2000 years, which are recognised as having different aspects and qualities to them. Around 2000 years ago the Age of Aries gave way to the Age of Pisces, which is now in turn giving way to the Age of Aquarius. There is much discussion as to the precise date of this latter transition; the principle of a gradual substitution of one active time-tree by another shows that the transition period is considerable. Figure (ii) entitled "Time Ladder of the Ages" illustrates this process and also includes the next Age, that of Capricorn. There have been, of course, many more age-trees in the past and will be in the future, these are denoted by the broken- line extensions in the diagram.

To illustrate the principles outlined, the Age of Pisces will now be examined in some detail, followed by a look at how the transition to that of Aquarius is acting itself out.

The scope of the tree for Pisces is Western humanity, the world of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This is because the impact of Eastern and other religions on Western thought has not been great until very recent times; they will become

relevant in the Tree for Aquarius. The following shows how the external (exoteric) forms of various religions have affected world events. Their esoteric forms have, of course, continued in the background during this period, and will be referred to in more detail later. The portrayal of historical events is necessarily selective and simplified. The main thrust of history during this period has been the interaction of the three religions mentioned. The goal, the Keter of the Age of Pisces, was the establishment of the principle of monotheism which each religion attempted to do in its own way. The overall pattern has been the alternation of periods of toleration and repression, of quiet periods and warlike ones. The guiding principle, which may well be unconscious in much of humanity, is for a closer access to God. This is a result of the basic Kabbalistic principle of unification acting itself out. To achieve this, each religious grouping has its own laws, customs, rituals and rules for living. The time-tree system invites an association of religious and ethnic groupings with the Sefirotic principles, and a possible basis for this linkage may be found in the Ten Commandments. Each Sefirah traditionally has a commandment associated with it. This represents, in its everyday, exoteric form, a pattern of behaviour that exemplifies the correct or appropriate way to act out that Sefirotic principle. The time-dependent tree is based on the behaviour of individuals and communities over periods of time, and this gives especial significance to the commandments associated with the Sefirotic positions. A strong, even exaggerated adherence to a particular commandment is an indication of a particular religious or ethnic grouping being drawn to the force-field of that Sefirah. Figure (iii) is a Tree with the Ten Commandments shown in their corresponding Sefirot positions.

As mentioned earlier, the time-tree may be regarded as a physical map like a board-game, with the Sefirot corresponding to resting-points like cities and the paths to routes of access between them. These cities can be thought of as having been "occupied" in turn through history by forces representing the main religious groupings, and processes having taken place akin to strategic campaigns such as fortification, defence, siege and attack. There have been continual attempts to take over others' Sefirah positions, and as these occupations are based on the Commandments, so is the method of taking over. This is either by deliberately breaking the Commandment of the Sefirah position to which one aspires or to accuse those already there of breaking their own Commandment, attacking their Achilles' heel, so to speak. For instance, the commandment of Tiferet is "Do not Murder" and therefore the way of "capturing" the Tiferet position, is either to kill those who already occupy it, or to accuse them of killing those who are outside it. History may now be examined under this system.

In the Age of Aries from 2000 B.C. to the year 0, Judaism may be put at Keter. The Commandment here is "No other Gods". Judaism at that time was the original monotheistic religion and, according to Kabbalistic tradition, the one privileged to have received the divine teachings given to Abraham. Other religious groups at that time consisted of warring tribes, each with their own patron deities. Monotheism was the one movement with the potential to unify humanity and thus advance civilisation. In the transition from Aries to Pisces, this Keter position becomes transformed into Tiferet. The path to the Divine now involved moving through the upper face, and the Covenant between God and Abraham represented the Path of Awe between Tiferet and Keter. The Commandment of Tiferet is "Do not Murder" (or destroy the spirituality of others) and this has generally been adhered to by Jews. Judaism has considered its role as being to tolerate and set an example to the rest of humanity. However there was never any wish to include others in the place of Tiferet. On the contrary, Judaism "fortified" its position and resisted outsiders by not proselytizing and retaining, as far as it could, ethnic purity. It clung to its monopoly of the path via the central Pillar to Keter. Examples of this in the Age of Pisces were the mass suicide at Masada, and the ghettos of later periods, which were not entirely imposed from outside. An example of "attack" by accusing the Jews of breaking their own commandment is the mediaeval blood libel.

The Keter position of the moment represents the desire to reach the Divine, and the paths to this position are either by the central pillar or by one of the side pillars of force (right) and form (left). As a result of Judaism clinging to the central pillar path, the remainder of humanity, finding this route "blocked", had to choose between the side pillars, or a combination of them which give balance if not harmony. However there was also a wish to "dislodge" the Jews from Tiferet and gain access to the central pillar. When Jesus of Nazareth appeared, he took it upon himself to lead a section of humanity to the right-hand pillar position of Hesed. In order to resist the influence of Judaism, Christianity had to be able to accuse it of breaking its own Commandment, that is of murdering the new Messianic figure in which it believed. The Commandment of Hesed is "Sanctify the Sabbath", and Christianity therefore chose as its Sabbath the day when it believed Jesus' resurrection took place. This was the day Jesus "cheated" death and thereby cheated the Jews. Jesus literally died to save the Christians by enabling them to establish their identity in this way, and this may go some way to explain why Christianity spread as it did. It was adopted by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 313 when he realised that it was the only path that would unify all peoples in the Roman Empire. Had it adopted a different strategy, Judaism could have been in this position. It chose not to

become a world religion by concentrating on the central pillar and ignoring the fact that others were drawn to the principles of the side pillars. When Christianity had spread as it did, a balancing took place with a move towards the energy of Gevurah, the corresponding Sefirah of the left-hand column. The Commandment of Gevurah is "Honour thy Father and Mother (or honour your own ancestry)". From this side of the Christian tradition the Jews were attacked for both religious and racial reasons, and this culminated, as will be seen, in such events as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the subsequent Inquisition, and, in this century, Hitler's concept of the Aryan master race, depending as it did largely on anti-Semitism

It was in 630, a few centuries after the birth of Christianity, that Islam evolved and came under the influence of this Tree. Finding Hesed and Gevurah "occupied", it progressed higher up the tree, occupying Hokhmah on the right hand pillar. The Commandment here is "No graven Image", and this is one of the main tenets of Islam. However this is balanced by Binah, "No name of God to be taken in vain", which expresses itself in the extreme sanctity in which the name of Allah is held, leading to the concept of Jihad or Holy War against any who do not invoke his name.

The three main monotheistic religions now have their own positions on the tree, and the main events in subsequent history show the struggle between them being played out from these respective points. Islam's blockage of the Christian path from Hesed to Keter at Hokhmah led to the Crusades, the attempt to liberate the Christian holy places which represented the physical association with Jesus' life, the Christian "graven images". The Crusades lasted from 1096 to 1291 when the Moslems captured Jerusalem, and Christianity thus failed to free its path to Keter, which left the situation unresolved. The next point of culmination in time was the Spanish Inquisition which started with the 1492 expulsion of Jews and Moslems from Spain. This corresponded to the left-hand pillar route to Keter. From the position of Gevurah, Catholicism mounted what was essentially a holy war against the Binah of Islam and a campaign of religious purification against the Tiferet of Judaism by first expelling, and later killing, those Moslems and Jews who would not convert to Christianity or relapsed subsequently into their original practices.

The European Holocaust from 1941 to 1945 represented the extreme form of this process. Although it came basically from Christian roots no conversion option was made available. It involved the invocation of the racial doctrine derived from the perversion of the commandment of Gevurah, an extreme attachment to so-called Aryan ancestry, and the use of murder to break the Commandment of Tiferet. By involving the destruction of the Jews it represented the physical aspect of this struggle and heralded the process by which Judaism gradually ceases to occupy the position of Tiferet as the Tree of Pisces gives way to the Tree of Aquarius and Tiferet becomes transformed into the Malkhut of the new tree. The foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 continued this process by bringing Jews back to their original land, the physical root (Malkhut) of the tree. By the rather painful peace process with the Arabs, Israel is gradually becoming accepted as a nation and Judaism is losing its special status in the world view. The hostility towards Israel as a political entity shown by very orthodox Jews illustrates their awareness of this process and their desire to retain the old order. It is interesting to note that the Commandment of Malkhut is "Do not Covet" and the Palestinian coveting of land, which Israel feels is hers by historical right, is the way Israel is being attacked at the moment. By showing some willingness to give up land and power, Israel is adhering to this commandment.

The transition to the Tree of Aquarius will now be examined in more detail. This process involves the replacement of Sefirotic principles higher up the tree by ones lower down in the new tree. This is reflected in the fact that much of humanity is now dominated by commercial materialism which has often, temporarily at least, ousted religious observance in the lands where it predominates. Materialism has already shown two aspects, the right-hand pillar of Capitalism where anything more-or-less is allowed economically, and the left-hand pillar of Communism where tight control is exercised. Binah and Hokhmah, represented by Islam, are transforming into Hod and Nezah respectively, and it is noteworthy that much of the world's oil, which fuels materialism, comes from the Islamic lands of the Middle East and has brought great wealth to these areas. The commandment for Hod is "Do not Steal", and mankind may be said to be stealing from future generations by using oil so profligately. The Commandment for Nezah is "Do not commit Adultery (or mix what should not be mixed)", and some of the worst examples of environmental pollution to date have been from oil spillages. These are the two ways in which materialism is being shown to have limited viability. Hesed and Gevurah disappear in the transition from one tree to the next, suggesting perhaps a change in the part to be played by Christianity in the future, especially in areas such as the role of the Papacy in the Roman Catholic church. These ideas represent possible developments in the exoteric forms of religious practice and organisation. The esoteric aspect is represented by Daat, through which the input of divine knowledge

comes. This becomes Yesod whose Commandment is "Do not bear false witness", in other words, be true to knowledge received, and this is a primary precept of esoteric groups such as Kabbalists whose traditions evolved during the Piscean Age. It corresponds on a global scale to the earlier example of natal astrological influences being incorporated into the ego of an individual.

The Tiferet of the new Tree of Aquarius comes from the Keter of the Tree of Pisces, the monotheistic goal. Each religious grouping struggled to attain this common goal in its own way, and perhaps the mystics came closest to realising it when they acknowledged what they all had in common. All three religions have survived in both exoteric and esoteric forms. To understand the Tree for Aquarius more fully, it is necessary to look briefly at Eastern religions, which have not been subject to the same forces as Western. Hinduism and Buddhism include a more personal path to the Divine by meditation and spiritual practice, and enable individuals to occupy the place of Tiferet themselves. The influence of the Western tree for Pisces has scarcely affected them, but two processes are now taking place. One is that the countries in which these religions are practised are becoming more and more influenced by Western thought. The other, basically the reverse process, is an increasing interest in Eastern religions being shown by Western individuals who no longer feel bound by conventional religious authority. Their paths frequently involve a synthesis of Western and Eastern concepts. The Tree of Aquarius includes all of humanity. If the mystics of the Age of Pisces represented the Keter of that Tree, they are becoming the Tiferet of the new tree as they are joined by many newcomers to mysticism. The nature of the Keter of Aquarius, the new common goal taking humanity further along its path, is yet to become fully apparent.

This brief and necessarily simplified outline has presented a new Kabbalistic viewpoint from which history and evolution can be viewed. This approach may perhaps help to answer some of the "why" questions which arise when looking at events both historical and in the present day. Time could even perhaps be defined as the dimension in which the creation, transformation and destruction of Sefirotic force-fields take place. Kabbalah has a dynamic, continuously evolving aspect which offers a model for events and phenomena in human history. This is a tool that may even be predictive in its widest sense, and yet also embodies the element of mystery. The Age of Capricorn has been included in the time-ladder and a bold attempt could be made to make tentative predictions as to what the world may be like at that time using this model. By using these principles, it is possible to begin to foresee the processes that will unfold in the future.

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