

Kabbalah: Its Relevance to Modern Life

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In the midst of life there is the tree of life, which bares all manner of fruits, continuously: and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (adapted from Revelations, 22:2)

That Kabbalah flourishes depends upon its relevance in the modern world to political and social issues as well as for individual development and healing. The central principle of the Kabbalah is respect for oneself and equal respect for others. This respect depends upon the acceptance of oneself and others for being as we are. We may intend change but we do not require it. From this ground of mutual respect a deep relationship can happen, a relationship of equals, rather than relationship built upon hierarchy (someone's better than you and someone's worse), or prejudice (you are the right colour and she is the wrong one). Deep relationships built on a ground of mutual respect are the basis of healing.

The key to understanding ourselves is through the nature of relationship. The tree of life, built as it is upon correspondence and relationship, provides the structure for this key. The work we then do with the Tree is equivalent to putting the key in the lock and turning it. As souls with a personality, a body, thoughts, feelings, sensations, touch, and so on... all the things we have which enable us to relate to the world - we are the hands that turns the key. The relationships between us and the world, in all their different facets, are what provide restriction and freedom, peace and war, all the different manifestations of harmony and discord we experience in our world. This is equally true intrapersonally and interpersonally.

It is not that we need to become more free, or more harmonious, What we need is to recognise our part in the interaction between polarities and take responsibility for our actions that move the balance one way or the other. This is the respect for which the Qabalah provides a framework - the tree of life. When we stop trying to be better (hierarchy) or believing we are better or worse (prejudice), and accept ourselves and others for what we all are - equally humble and equally powerful human beings - we free up our ability to interrelate, to understand others for their similarities and differences to us.

For freedom to exist we have to include all the interplay between our different subpersonalities, all the different parts of us. Through including them all, we can respond both to our inner and outer impulses better. This makes us more effective

in our relationships in the world. To attempt to include all the different parts and aspects of ourselves is a tall order. Using the tree of life helps this process because it is a map both of connections and how we make those connections. As well as that, the structure and pattern of the basic Tree of Life diagram is an energetic replica of how such connections are made in the brain.

When we connect with the tree of life, it is as if everything becomes brighter, warmer, stiller, because we are no longer confused, we are free. In this state we relate to others in a more appropriate way. That doesn't mean we all go round radiating love and harmony and light and 'isn't it wonderful' feelings. Sometimes we will feel awful, some days will be filled with conflict, boredom, distrust. There will be differences between us still, but we will glorify the differences between us because we are able to understand these differences also as part of ourselves.

I'm not trying to 'sell' you the Kabbalah or persuade you to join up to a Tree of Life cult. I am sharing my experience because it seems worth sharing. Whether you find anything in it for yourself is your business not mine. I could have lived my life so far without the Kabbalah and I may well have been successful. Anyone can live without knowing about or using it. And using it does make a difference. The Kabbalah makes life easier and brings more meaning to it. This isn't because of a magical trick, spells or sorcery. The Kabbalah can improve our lives through attunement and correspondence. With all the correspondences to the tree of life, the more you know how to use them, how to relate everything you experience back to this central, core structure, the freer your consciousness becomes to hear the inner voice of soul and reconcile its manifestation through everyday events.

The essence of the Kabbalah, however, is simply attuning oneself to the tree of life. We can easily get caught up with details, but if we step back, the correspondences come second. First and foremost is the shape of the tree and understanding what the different spheres represent. The key then is living with that image. You do not even have to think about it or imagine it every day. Some while after you start working with the tree of life, it 'lights up' connections inside your brain in the pattern that matches the tree of life. Everything corresponds. Everything is clearer.

It does not matter what we believe, what religion we belong or don't belong to, we can image the tree of life and make our own connections. That way we build up the tree of life in us, and then we become part of an overall pattern. A Buddhist who has connected with the tree of life and a South American shaman who has connected with and understood the tree of life are going to have a much better understanding of one another's ways. A politician who has learned and connected with the tree of life will similarly have a better understanding and ability to respond to differing political viewpoints.

Perhaps the Kabbalistic vision is too radical to apply to politics. We could arrive at a time when the majority of people, or a large enough number of them were working with the tree of life. Perhaps it only needs ten per cent of people, or some such

figure, as described in the 'hundredth monkey theory'. If enough people were holding the tree of life in consciousness, it would cause a relatively very large change to the political and social scene. Then it would not be relevant to talk in terms of what a right wing or left wing politician might do, because that would not be the way the system would be operating anymore. In that context, the shining image of the tree of life is really just one facet of a bigger plan, a bigger tree of life!

There are so many different aspects to the changes that are happening so clearly to everyone on every level - political, geopolitical, physical, social, climatic, socio-political, social, and so on, and including the esoteric concepts of cyberspace, quantum physics and such like. All these changes at all these levels make up a tree of life that is part of a much bigger scheme that in Kabbalah we ascribe to the veils of containment. There are three of these veils and what happens behind or beyond them is probably amazingly interesting. Kabbalists say, however, let's concern ourselves with what we've got to deal with here, the work here and now on this side of the veils.

In terms of healing, the tree of life helps to make us whole, to heal, to include more of ourselves in the whole picture of life. We need to be whole in ourselves to be able to combine with another 'whole being' to create a greater inclusion and synthesis. The more of us move towards wholeness in this way, with or without the tree of life, the more of us there are to work together in the common goal of planetary harmony. We do not even have to work together: knowing and understanding this togetherness exists in itself releases vast potential. Once we are healing ourselves, the best next step in this healing is healing others. The tree of life is an ideal agent for this change.

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