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THE ESSENCE OF THE PRACTICAL QABALAH

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It is not our present intention that this essay should represent a complete exposition of the Mysteries of the Holy Qabalah, but rather to give a brief outline of some of the principal doctrines which may lead the student to a clearer conception of the value of the Qabalistic System as a method of drawing the Infinite within.

The plan of the Ten Sephiroth, or Numerical Emanations, forms the basis of the work, for, by erecting upon this foundation the scaffolding of our Temple, we may learn to restore our lost Equilibrium thus canceling out the "Pairs of Opposites" which ordinarily obsess us.

Briefly, this process may be described as follows: Prior to any manifestation, the Supreme was NOT. This, being inconceivable, may yet be slightly apprehended if we consider the Ain Suph or Infinite Space, followed by the potential existence of Infinite Light.

Only when we conceive this Infinite Light as concentrated upon a Central Point does the first positive Idea arise. This Concentrated Light is called Kether—the Crown—the First Sephira. From this all else proceeds very much in the same way that light may be broken up into the colours of the spectrum.

The next highest idea is that of Wisdom, represented by Chokmah—the Second Sephira or Emanation. This is equivalent to the idea of the Logos, the Word of Creation which was in the Beginning with God and which was God. This is the great Creative Word—the Divine Fiat—and represents the highest intelligence of the archetypal world.

Next, coequal with Wisdom, is Understanding—Binah, the Third Sephira—the highest intuition, which is capable of interpreting the Word correctly and of transmitting it to the lower spheres. This is the creative world of the Qabalah, the Great Mother Substance, energized by the Divine Will and Life.

There three—Light, Life, and Substance—are the Supernal

Triad, one and indivisible. For Life is the substance of Light, and the Second and Third Sephiroth are but aspects of the Living Substance which is Light itself.

Next we come to the formative world, composed of the following six emanations:

Chesod or Mercy, balanced by Geburah or Severity and forming thus two great pillars which support the arch of the Trinity. These balanced Ideas are harmonized in a third, the Sixth Sephira—Tiphereth—which equilibrates them and is itself called Beauty or Harmony.

Following this we find the triad of Victory—Netzach—the Seventh Sephira, balanced by Splendour—Hod—the Eighth Sephira, and equilibrated by the Foundation—Yesod—the Ninth Sephira.

All the above are summed up in the material world, the Tenth Sephira, which is called Malkuth or the Kingdom. This sphere is pendent to the others, it is in reality one with Kether, for all proceedeth from the One and is within the One. Yet in order that we may learn to comprehend the nature of unity, we must first contemplate the diverse and apparently complex. The limitations of time, space and circumstance make this necessary to us at our present state of development.

But the ideal before us is to return to the Pure Conception of the Unity, thus ridding ourselves of the illusion of duality and accomplishing what is called the Great Work.

Had the Qabalistic Plan ended with the production of Malkuth, the Kingdom or material universe, we should have been forced to admit that the creative process was one of degeneration. And so it must appear to us from our limited viewpoint, until we have learned the Plan of Redemption and profited by it.

Chokmah, Wisdom or the Higher Will, is called the Father; Binah, Understanding or Intuition, represents the Great Mother; the next six Sephiroth are centred in Tiphereth, the Son, and represent the Intellect; while Malkuth—the Kingdom or Animal Soul which perceived and feels—is called the Daughter.

The Daughter must marry the Son and so become the Mother—true mate of the Father—before all is reabsorbed into the Crown of Light. In other words, by means of intellect we may control our animal nature and eventually understand through intuition, which in turn is capable of receiving the Wisdom of the Father and thus making us true representatives of God upon earth, capable of doing His will as it is done in heaven.

The Qabalists further postulate a series of Graded Intelligences higher than man. These are the Celestial Intelligences, the rulers of the Sephiroth. They reflect and reproduce the Divine Ideas, and also actively transmit them for the illumination of man and the control of Nature. Thus each is in itself both active and passive.

The human reason is also active and passive. The reason proper is the active aspect, the passive side is usually termed intuition. This intuition is capable of absorbing truth from above and below. The active reason is capable of forming a thesis, antithesis, or synthesis in regard to the truths presented to it by the intuition.

The nature-reason is to be found in the intelligibility and order of all natural things, according to their form and the material of which they are composed.

All corporeal things may be said to have a threefold existence. They exist as Ideas in the Mind of the Logos: materially they exist in themselves, and spiritually in the minds of Created Intelligences. It is important that we should grasp this threefold idea of existence, as it makes many things clear that would otherwise be obscure to us.

If, for instance, we perceive a table, we should remember that since we are of the order of Created Intelligences, the table exists spiritually in us. What a table is in itself we do not know, nor are we able to comprehend with certainty its nature as an Idea in the Mind of the Logos.

Thus things may appear imperfect to us, while in truth they are perfect but for our limited idea of their nature.

The Great Work consists in correcting our distorted vision, thus making us capable of perceiving all things in the White Light of Truth, uncoloured by the limitations of our narrow outlook.

This may only be accomplished by our obtaining what may be termed a world-view or vision, free from distortion. The aim of all the Great Teachings is to give us such a view of the whole Creation, so that we shall be enabled to co-operate consciously in the fulfilment of the Divine Purpose.

Every Celestial Intelligence is said to be interiorly united with all things and to contain them in a spiritual manner. Thus the Great Work is to unite the Microcosm with the Macrocosm.

It is also said that every mundane intelligence is *capable* of taking all things into itself in a spiritual manner, and that in proportion to the extent to which this is accomplished does it become *one with them*. Here we have the key to the use of

"The Tree of Life" or Qabalistic Plan of the Sephiroth and Celestial Intelligences. As we travel up the "paths" of this "tree" we must gradually absorb and so become one with all things in the universe in a spiritual manner. This must be accomplished by gradual steps, represented by the grades of the Great Order. Each step taken must be fully mastered ere we proceed to the next. We must learn to balance and equilibrate all things as we go, for there may be no false summits in our Mystic Pyramid or missing spokes in the Great Wheel.

The Daughter—the nature-will—must be united to the Son—the personal will which makes man more than mere animal, and gives him the power of choice. What is more, the Intellect—or Son—is naturally above time and space and is capable of *containing* time and space and all that is within time and space.

Thus, by means of Dhyana, does the mystic transcend these limitations and, becoming one with them, absorbs them into himself. But the little "self" is no more, for he comprehends the nature of the Higher Self or Holy Guardian Angel. This is what is meant by the destruction of the ego; not a lessening of the conception of self but a recognition of the nature of self in its wider aspect.

The little self sees nature as extremely complex, there are so many things to know that the task seems endless and impossible. The Qabalah teaches us to group all ideas according to their fundamental nature and correspondences; thus, as we proceed, we are able to know a *greater and greater number of things* in the light of a *smaller and smaller number of ultimate ideas*. The thirty-two Paths of Wisdom enable us to classify all things in the universe in terms of thirty-two; from that we go on reducing our ultimate ideas, and increasing the field they cover, until Unity is reached.

The formula of $5^{\circ} = 6^{\square}$ (that of the Adeptus Minor in Tiphereth is represented by the Pentagram and the Hexagram. Man, the Microcosm, is symbolized by the Pentagram composed of the Four Elements crowned by Spirit. The solar system is summed up in the Hexagram with its planetary correspondences, and this represents the Macrocosm.

Man must learn to draw the Macrocosm into himself, to absorb spiritually the Ideas represented by the Planetary and Solar Intelligences, thus may this part of the work be accomplished. He obtains the knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel or Higher Self. Beyond this, again, is the great star universe, wherein every man and every woman is a

star. He must absorb the Ideas of this sphere, and at the same time recognize that every atom is a star in its own being. Thus at last will he come to Understanding, the Throne of the Great Mother.

Then will he, who is called NEMO, absorb the wisdom of the Father, the Logos, so that in turn he may not only understand, but will and create according to the Divine Plan. He will then become illumed by the One Light of the Crown upon his head; yet this, too, he must absorb, so that selflessness becometh self and the final stage of the Solvé formula of the Great Work is accomplished. This LIGHT must then penetrate deeper and deeper into matter till the Plan of Creation is fulfilled.

Remember these words: Man ascends from things to Ideas; God descends from Ideas to things.

Thus have ye the keys of the Great Gateway in your hands.

Now it is well that we should consider once again the very essence of the Qabalistic Process and the nature of its mystery of Number as the basis of all Ideas.

If we can succeed in reducing our Ideas to a numerical basis, we are better able to deal with them and to bring them back to Unity.

The Ten Sephiroth give us a basis of the decimal scale for all our main Ideas, which must be grouped accordingly. The Twenty-two connecting Paths, based on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which is itself numerical, enable us to link those Ideas and to travel from one set to another with perfect ease and certainty. The Plan of the Four Worlds—the archetypal, the creative, the formative, and the material—enables us to increase the number of things known by considering the Sephiroth and Paths as existing in all of these simultaneously, yet at the same time to classify all elemental ideas in terms of four. These, crowned by Spirit, make the true Microcosm, man the Pentagram. Our main Universal Ideas are to be summed up in the Hexagram as before said. Unite the Pentagram and the Hexagram, and an Eleven-pointed Star gives us the Key of the Æon with its word ABRACADABRA as our magic formula. Thus we unite with the WORD—the Logos—and finally with the Divine Breath which produced it.

Remember again the Qabalistic means of reducing all words to their numerical basis: for in Hebrew every word is also a number. Thus we may discover the word and number of our own being, and our place in the Creative Scheme. The correspondences between words of a similar numerical value will help us to form galaxies of stars—which are men and women—

traveling in groups in a common direction, without friction, each in his proper orbit. Thus shall we come to comprehend the mystery of the Starry Heaven, the body of Our Lady Nuit. For as every atom in our bodies is itself a little solar system, so are we in the body of the Mother of Heaven, and she is energized by the Invisible Point which is not, yet which is the Life of All.

Remember too, the more universal the ideas and reasons to which we attain, the nearer we approach to *thinking the God-thought, which is the Universe itself*. There is but one true Thought, the ultimate Thought which is All Things. Normally, that which can be thought is not true—as the Hindus tell us—for until we reach the Smooth Point all things are but relative, and so is truth.

But the Highest Reason, which is in God and which is God, is absolutely ONE. God knows all things by One Idea, which is identical with His Being.