

## 04 Tarot and Qabbalah, Part B

In the Jewish tradition religious teachings were transmitted in the form of the Hebrew Old Testament scriptures as well as other writings in Hebrew. The Hebrew language itself became a very mysterious business, because even most Jews did not speak Hebrew as an everyday language. They spoke the local language of the country they lived in or a dialect of their own that they developed. Hebrew became a “dead” language.

Ordinary Europeans also did not understand Hebrew and could not read it. The dominantly Christian society of Europe continued to use Latin as their liturgical language into the Middle Ages long after the Roman Empire had faded and people generally just spoke their local idioms and did not know how to read or write.

If you wanted to become literate, you could hire a special tutor if you were wealthy, but otherwise you pretty much had to learn Latin from a priest or a monk. Latin remained the language of diplomacy throughout the Middle Ages and even into the early modern era. The Catholic Church continues to use Latin widely as its international language for communication among the clergy. Jews learned enough Hebrew for their religious purposes, but that was usually learned from a rabbi at a temple or synagogue and not used in daily life.

The Qabbalah had its own special educational system that was not usually open to the public or even to many literati. It was based on scriptures in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. The Jews called the first 5 books of the Old Testament the Torah, and many believed that the Torah had been written by Moses, even though it records the death of Moses at the end of Exodus (the second book of the Torah). Moses was a traditional patriarch in the tradition of the Qabbalah. The Jewish tradition also traced its origins back to Abraham, his son Isaac, and his son Jacob. From Jacob’s 12 sons supposedly there arose 12 tribes of Israel, “Israel” being a name that Jacob took on the advice of God.

The Book of Genesis told the Jewish traditional story of how Jews believed God created the Heavens and the Earth. Over a period of seven “days” (which we might call eras), He brought about all forms of

life on the planet, including at last Mankind and then rested, presumably to let his creations carry on by themselves. The first two humans in the myth were called Adam and Eve. God put them into a beautiful and pleasant natural garden called Eden.

In the center of this Garden there was a special place with two special trees. One tree was called "Knowledge of Good and Evil", and it had a delicious-looking fruit. If you ate the fruit of this tree, you would be able to distinguish good from evil, what is good and what is bad. The second tree was called the "Tree of Life". The Bible did not describe in any detail what this Tree of Life was all about, but it also had fruit on it. The one special rule in Eden was that you were not supposed to eat the fruit on those two trees.

In the myth a snake, who for some reason could speak human language, and in fact initiates the first conversation in the Bible (and came to be associated with Satan), told Adam and Eve that, if they ate the fruit from the Good and Evil tree, they would become intelligent and able to distinguish all things. They would become like gods. In Genesis God actually speaks first, but he only talks to himself, saying things like "Let there be Light!" And after he created things he apparently would say to himself, "Hey, that's good." Perhaps the serpent overheard God saying things like that and thought it would be effective propaganda to sell the "Good-and-Evil" fruit as an opportunity to become like God. We might wonder what his agenda was.

In any case, Eve's curiosity was aroused and she ate some of the G&E fruit and found it tasty and enlightening. So she persuaded Adam to try some also. Soon God, or his representative angel in charge of Eden, discovered that someone had been eating the G&E fruit and questioned Adam about it. He said, "Eve told me to do so." When the angel questioned Eve, she said, "The serpent told me to do so." The snake had no excuse, so he was punished to wiggle about with no hands or feet, and Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden and had to start working for a living by the sweat of their brow. The angel then put a burning sword by the Tree of Life that would prevent anyone in future trying to eat its fruit.

Having eaten the G&E fruit, Adam and Eve fell into the maze of moral judgments, and the endless blame game. Many people think their

problem was that they broke God's rule, but nobody questions why God would make such an arbitrary rule and then blame Adam and Eve for being "bad" when He Himself called his creations "good". The whole thing put that way sounds like a set up. My understanding of the story is that the problem of Adam and Eve was that they did not take responsibility for their own decisions and actions. They passed the buck and blamed the situation on someone else. Maybe the Creator also passed the buck onto his own creations.

God's "rule" was not so important. They could have said, "You told us not to eat this fruit, so we decided we wanted to find out why, and so we tried it. You said everything you made was "good", so why exclude this fruit? In that sense, the serpent was not "bad" for recommending the fruit, because you made him too, so he must be "good".

The problem faced by Adam and Eve and God was the creation of separation. Why should "outside" of Eden be avoided? Why should certain fruit be avoided? Why did God put a wall around Eden and then added a flaming "wall" around the Tree of Life with an angel guarding it?

The problem boils down to Adam and Eve were afraid to ask God for permission to eat the fruit when they knew of the "rule", so they cut themselves off from God. It had nothing to do with the fruit. The "wall" was not a real barrier. All you had to do was ask permission and go through the appropriate procedures. You see, Heaven is a bureaucracy just like Earth.

Nobody ever asks why they did not eat the fruit of the Tree of Life first. Then they would live forever and not have to worry about eating G&E fruit or being kicked out of Eden. The Chinese figured that one out when they had the mischievous monkey Sun Wu-kong eat the Peaches of Immortality before getting himself in trouble. Then he did not have to worry about getting sick or dying. He also learned a lot of clever gong-fu so he could get himself out of trouble.

The story of Eden is the beginning of esotericism, because Genesis does not clearly tell us anything about the Tree of Life. In Qabalah we begin to learn details about the Tree of Life. It turns out to be based on mathematics, and in particular, something called Sacred Geometry. The idea is that the universe is constructed from a precise system of

geometry out of which flows all of mathematics, physics, engineering, and eventually biological life. Hence we have a Tree of Life. The fruits on the Tree are practical lessons in life, so they are worth studying.

The Tree of Life has a precise structure with 10 spheres on it that represent 10 fruits. The structure is roughly tree-like, and plants are the foundation of the ecosystem of our planet. Each “fruit” on the tree represents a fundamental quality of life, and when you “eat” that fruit, you experience that quality of life as a reality.

The structure of the tree is like the trunk and limbs of the tree that connect the fruits all to one system. These limbs and branches on the tree form 22 pathways in the network of the tree’s structure. The Tree of Life is a core concept of the Qabalah, and so we want to learn about the 10 fruits and the 22 pathways on the Tree as an introduction and foundation of the Qabalah teaching. There are a lot of complex and esoteric teachings in Qabalah, but, if you understand the Tree of Life, you can grasp all the essentials. So we will begin with the 10 fruits.

The topmost fruit on the tree is called the “Crown” [Kether in Hebrew]. This is like a king’s crown. It represents the highest spiritual realm. The second fruit is called “Wisdom” [Hochma]. The third fruit is “Understanding” [Binah]. The fourth fruit is “Compassion” [Chesed]. The fifth is “Strength” [Geburah]. The sixth is right in the middle and represents “Beauty” [Tipheret]. This means that every aspect of the universe is exquisitely beautiful. The seventh fruit is Victory [Netzach], and that means success in life. The eighth fruit is Glory [Hod], which we can understand as recognition in society for one’s brilliant performance and contributions. The ninth fruit is Foundation [Yesod]. The solid Foundation of a society is a stable family structure and lifestyle. The tenth and final fruit is called “Kingdom” [Malkut] and represents a civilization and physical environment that sustains life. This includes the entire biosphere and experience of reality.

Each of these ten fruits is essential to fulfillment in life. The first fruit is on a purely spiritual level and the tenth fruit is on the practical physical level. In between are the elements that make the whole of life a rich and fulfilling experience. Each fruit is a vital component of life, and the questions about good and bad are not very relevant, so there is a lot of leeway for the expression of life in the enjoyment of its fruits.

On the Tree the ten fruits are all connected together into a network of relationships and a hierarchy. But there is a mysterious and secret aspect to the Tree of Life structure. It seems out of balance. Up toward the top there is a space above Beauty that seems empty, as if a fruit had fallen out. The drawing that is the commonly found representation of the Tree has this imbalance as if a fruit from the upper portion had fallen down by the root of the Tree to become a fruit that represents what we call the “external” or “physical” plane of existence.

In my research into the Tree of Life I discovered that the ancient form of the Tree of Life is different. It is a perfectly symmetrical mathematical structure based on Sacred Geometry. It consists of two interlocking hexagonal shapes that combine to form a unified structure.

If we take the fruit that is down at the bottom by the “root” of the Tree and place it back in the center of the upper portion, it becomes like the driver’s seat in a vehicle that moves upward toward some destination. That is where you, the driver, sit. So what you think of as your environment and surroundings is actually you sitting on a seat of Beauty and flanked by Strength, Compassion, Understanding, and Wisdom as you ascend through your spiritual Crown into an unbounded space of possibilities.

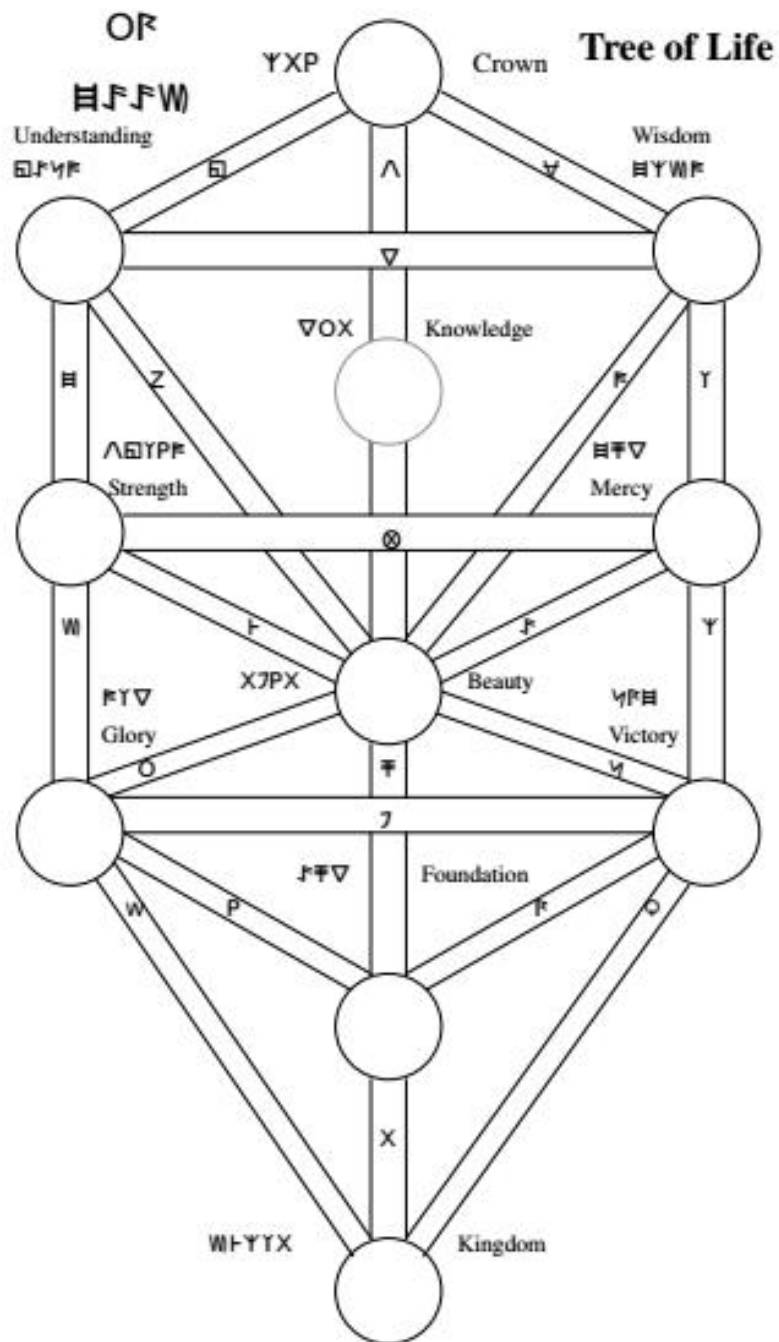
You do not separate from your environment. People do not understand this principle. It is as if your basic nature fell out from your Self and became an alien environment in which you have to “survive”. We are surrounded by people with different viewpoints, with issues we judge as good or bad, and problems we “have” to deal with, and it turns out that these are nothing more than aspects of your Self that have fallen from you and seem to become separate things that have to be “handled”.

So the Tree of Life is Qabalah’s most fundamental lesson. This is how the Hebrew people encoded their wisdom of life into a simple diagram. All the aspects represented by the fruits are parts of your Self that you master as you grow in life. The fruit that fell is like the apple that fell onto Newton’s head and gave him a profound intuition into how life works. Most people do not know about Newton’s real mission in life. He was a famous scientist who clarified some of the basic laws of physics.

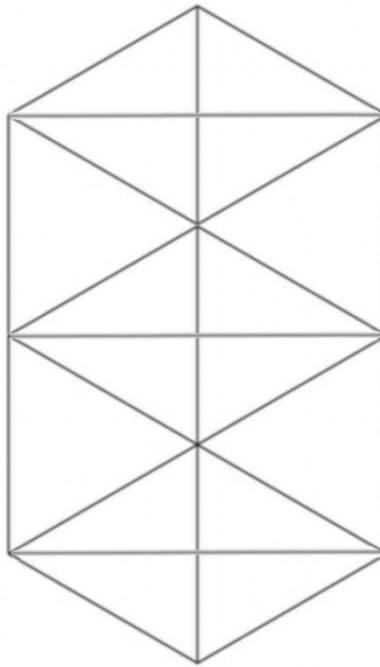
He was also a master of managing wealth. We have recently discovered from his notebooks that Newton's real mission in life was to master the Qabbalah. He even translated from an earlier Latin version one of the basic early texts of Qabbalah called the Emerald Tablet -- a document we will discuss later on in the material.

But there is still an important aspect of the Tree of Life we have not discussed, and that is the structure and content of the 22 Pathways. That we will discuss in the next article.

### A Traditional Diagram of the Tree of Life



Sacred Geometry Mathematical Tree of Life  
The Upper Middle Intersection is Called "Knowledge" [Daat]



2 Interlocking Hexagons or 2 Transparent Stacked Cubes

A line between any two fruits is a path.

Fruits only occur where 2 diagonal path lines meet or intersect.

The 2 diagonal path intersections are in the central column.

We do not count as "Fruits" the "intersections" where horizontal and vertical Pathways appear to cross (on either version of the Tree).

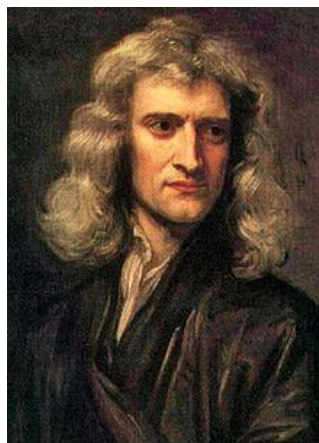
[Fruits on the unbalanced traditional tree violate these rules.]

The horizontal paths merely connect the Fruits on the left and right columns.

The central vertical lines are paths between fruits at the diagonal meetings and intersections.

The Fruits appear at 7 layers on the Tree.

There are 22 paths between fruits.



Isaac Newton



## 04 Study Questions

- \* What was the primary language of liturgy and diplomacy used in Europe during the Middle Ages?
- \* What was the role of Hebrew as a language in the Middle Ages?
- \* What is the Torah?
- \* What story is told in Genesis that became one of the foundations of the Qabbalah tradition?
- \* Discuss some of the questions that come up in the Genesis story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. What do you think about them?
- \* What is Sacred Geometry?
- \* According to Qabbalah, what does the Tree of Life represent?
- \* What are the “fruits” on the Tree of Life? Is there an order to the fruits on the Tree? Do you think there is a “priority” to them?
- \* What is the difference between the “traditional” drawing of the Tree of Life and the timeless “original” version that is based on Sacred Geometry?
- \* Isaac Newton was a famous mathematician and physicist. Few people know what his primary interest was. What was it?

OVERVIEW QUESTION: What does the information in this article have to do with the Benty Light Garden and the Series Overview?