

Tikkun -The Practical Essence of "Kabbalah"

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Kabbalah (Cabala) is a word derived from the Aramaic word QwabIa which means "to receive." The Random House Dictionary, College Edition, identifies the word as 'Cabala' - "a system of esoteric theosophy and theurgy developed by Rabbis from about the 7th to 18th centuries, reaching its peak about the 12th and 13th centuries, and based on a mystical method of interpreting the Scriptures to penetrate sacred mysteries and foretell the future.

For centuries Hassidic Jews have practiced a form of mysticism known as Kabbalah. Its origin is not known for certain. Some trace it back to the time of Moses. Others say it began in the 13th century with the primary work Zohar ("the Book of Splendor"). Kabbalah is not one unified and normative system but rather a way of looking at the universe through a Jewish mystical perspective. Over the years many occult distortions have influenced thinking on Kaballah. Regardless of its origin and the many distortions that are practiced under the name Kabbalah, it has had an impact on Christianity and many seekers of wisdom have endeavored to study its depths. I have found much wisdom in it when it is preceded and balanced by the authentic study of Torah (Aramaic: Oreta which means Enlightenment).

This study will cover the Kabbalistic concept of Tikkun - literally meaning, "repair" or, in its expanded form - fixing the world. The background material was gleaned from a variety of Jewish and Christian sources as well as through personal experiences in life. It is important to note that the material presented in this writing on Kaballah is typical of most Kabalistic works in that they include mystical and metaphysical concepts that illustrate truth. They are to be considered seriously but are not all to be taken literally. They utilize symbols to illuminate our minds beyond rigid and linear thinking patterns.

In addition, it is important to point out from a Christian perspective, these concepts are not intended to replace the unique work of redemption already completed by Jesus Christ. These concepts can assist us as spiritual, physical, and mental disciplines that lead to a higher level of understanding of self in relationship to God.

Each human living is believed to have a special tikkun as his or her unique and divine mission in the overall redemptive process of God. In the overall redemptive and restorative process of creating a paradise on earth, each human act either aids or impedes this process.

We will generally be blind to the area we need to correct. We need a mirror to see, recognize, and understand our blind spots. There is no situation in life that is not part of our Tikkun process. The Hebrew words, etzer keneged, used in Genesis to refer to a wife, are usually translated "helper." These words literally mean, "helpful against" and relate to the soulmate role that a spouse has in challenging as well as helping us in our growth through life (our tikkun). This same concept is carried over to other areas of life. For me it relates to my parents, my wife, teachers, coaches, Marine DIs, managers, Karate senseis, and TaeKwon Do sabunims as I was nurtured, loved, taught, coached, trained, conditioned, lead, and even instructed in the martial arts. All of these relationships had to be challenging as well as supporting for growth to occur.

According to Kabbalah everything we truly desire is Energy - spiritual Light (emanating from God). The purpose of this Light is to remove our limitations and give us fulfillment. Getting what we really need (from the Light) is of a higher purpose than getting all that we want. We need to undergo true internal change. In seeking fulfillment we must not trust the five physical senses alone because they only reveal 1% of creation in its chaotic form while the 99% of orderly creation is in the spiritual realm. The basic principles involved here are:

- Our senses always filter the cause
- We must cultivate spiritual intuition
- "As above, so below" is the principle upon which the physical universe is regulated

There are two energy intelligences within us:

- our soul consciousness
- our body consciousness

The soul consciousness is concealed within and its intelligence is to behave like the Light. The intelligence of the body consciousness is to the desire to receive for oneself alone. The subtler soul consciousness is higher in authority.

The most important step is to identify the area where tikkun is needed and the rest will be automatic. To consciously act upon this principle we must prepare our self as a Vessel to Receive

The only creation that has ever occurred is that of the Vessel and desire (note that "de-sire" comes from Latin words meaning "of the Father") is the Essence of the Vessel (the "Infinite" Soul) and the fuel to fulfillment

The essential nature of the Light (godliness, truth, enlightenment) is first, being creative (the cause when it comes to receiving fulfillment) and then, sharing

From a practical standpoint this means that we are to use emotional and spiritual strength from the Light (spiritual energy emanating from God) in the endless energy to control our behavior

The Light is all we really need, contains everything, possesses no lack, and has no desire to receive. When the Vessel is prepared spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically more Light will enter

The Vessel desires to be an active force in creation. There are two kinds of active forces:

Reactive
Proactive

Kabbalah uses the DNA of the Universe- the 22 letters of the Hebrew/Aramaic alphabet. Hebrew/Aramaic is an intrinsic language. Like the language of chemistry, the 22 letters of the alphabet are elements of creation. These letters can be used in three primary ways.

1. Visual (seeing)
2. Auditory (hearing)
3. Meditating (concentrating)

-According to Kabbalists, prayer using the letters is powerful, ie. Ana B'Koach - praying with strength (according to some Kabbalists the first six letters of this prayer are pre-Satanic) and the letters yod, kof, shin remove energy/life from Satan

By using the Hebrew/Aramaic letters skillfully we can move from REACTOR to CREATOR in our approach to life. Proactive is being the cause of things. It is being in control, sharing, and being a Creator of situations. It involves emulating and mirroring the very attributes of the Creator, right down to the very core of your soul.

Reactive means being the effect, being controlled by, receiving damage from, and being a reactor to situations

We will only receive lasting fulfillment when we are Proactive --by receiving and sharing the Light. Sharing is the cause and desire to receive is the effect. In the Aramaic language there is no distinction verbally between mental and physical or between cause and effect. The same words signify both the cause and the effect. The axiom of Light (cause) and Vessel (effect) in order to manifest sharing is the secret to this relationship. They become one through spiritual growth. Since this relationship is concealed in our world, we see the world differently and perceive the opposite relationship. By receiving Light we become the Cause behind our receiving and thus, we remove "Bread of Shame" (the guilt and harm caused by our sinful actions). By sharing, we behave like the Light. In order to reveal something, it must first be concealed. There can be no coercion or forceful receiving (it would not be real sharing). Therefore, there is no coercion in spirituality.

It is always a mistake to blame others for our shortcomings, pain, and suffering. If I am unfulfilled and dissatisfied the first place that I should look to find both the root cause and the solution is within my self. Only I can change my world in order to bring fulfillment to my self. We must look deeply to go beyond the symptoms in order to discover the root causes of our restrictions. When we do this we will find enlightenment. This Light has only one purpose and that is to provide us with the desires that we have within us. In order to effectively use this light we must do it with love for first, our Creator and secondly, for everyone we know or ever have known.

Kabbalah uses the illustration of Filament theory:

1. Positive - Sharing
2. Negative - Receiving

Resistance - Proactivating



Resistance theory: Resistance between positive and negative equals Fulfilment. All else equals chaos.

Another component of this is Tzimtzum - Restriction or Resistance to the inflow of Light.

Consider this: The Bigger the Restriction, the more Light in your Life. We didn't come to this world to be good – we came to better! This involves constant and never ending improvement – especially in the area of spiritual growth. Therefore, what looks like failure may be really resistance that leads to success. Also, we must beware of what looks like success - especially if it comes easily. Things may not be what they appear to be.

NOTHING FAILS LIKE SUCCESS

Our character is developed as we overcome the resistance in our lives. To light up our lives God blesses us with resistance. . . but never more than that which we can handle.

Therefore we are to be Proactive (creative, innovative, and taking the initiative) and to beware of the Reactive mode (following orders, resistance, etc.) as well as Complacent mode (giving up) because Restriction plus Proactivity equals Success

Negative situations of life are called to us because we need them as opportunities for constructive change. Until they are ultimately removed we must use every source of discomfort and illness as part of the cleansing process and as agents of change.

The Proactive Formula:

1. When a difficult situation arises acknowledge that it's from the Light
2. Identify your reaction
3. Restrict, ie. stop reacting; the Light is coming in. Now deal with the situation

Believing in the Semitic sense (Aramaic: Haymanootha, ie. faith, from the root word Amen which is related to truth and trust) means that there is no doubt because the matter is settled and we will act on it accordingly. But when we use the word believing in English we already have an element of doubt. We need to know the laws of life - the secret of success is to know them - not to merely "believe" them. We need to see, feel, and understand how these laws relate to our tikkun. Identification is feeling with our heart as well as knowing with our intellect.

Satan operates off of our negative activity and uncertainty is one of Satan's key weapons. Thoughts are broadcast to our minds. We are able to activate restriction to cut off Satan's signal so that the Light's signal is now free to fill that space.

NOTE: The word 'Satan' is derived from the Aramaic word sata which means slide, miss the mark, go astray. "I saw Satan falling down" means Jesus saw light driving out darkness and His truth triumphant over the power of evil (Luke 10:18, Lamsa, p 256 Gospel Light).

We are created and designed to live under the Tree of Life - the realm of life where there is no Satan (lack of Light). To live abundantly and overcome Satan we must live balanced and harmonious lives. The principles of balancing our attitude are:

- When you are frightened, doubtful, or uncertain about a very difficult situation and it's outcome, inject certainty
- When you are certain about positive situations to the point of cockiness, overconfidence or complacency, be cautious. Inject a small dose of healthy uncertainty into yourself.
- Unsuccessful people avoid obstacles at all costs. Successful people have trained themselves to embrace and tackle obstacles.
- We did not come into this world to be Right. We came to this world to reconnect to Light. The concept of Right and Wrong is the most deceptive of all Satan's weapons. Our reaction is the key. Our reaction should be our sole focus -- not whether the other person is right or wrong.
- Remember that all is ultimately for good and remember that the important thing is how you think and act (avoid judging others or the present situation)
- The solution to any problem is contained within the problem itself (an example is the Japanese method of flood control which uses plastic water bags) and within oneself (rather than the other person)
- Desire when controlled connects to the seat of energy

Kabbalah is like a game, ie. life is like a seduction game, our "help cards" are TORAH (HOW) and KABBALAH (WHY); play the game to win (when you lose play again using "help cards")

Tikkun is correction and restoration

TIKKUN

The spiritual goal of restoring the full structure of one's spiritual potentialities is the process of tikkun, restoration. The Kabbalistic Tree of Life can provide a valuable framework for open and honest self-examination. It will enable us to fulfill our tikkun "a task that belongs to no other" - our particular unique divine mission in life. This personal mission almost invariably involves other people in close relationship with us.

The holiness laws instructed us how to live with a conscious sanctuary in our midst. Living in accordance with God's law brings harmony while disobedience brings chaos. That is our model for tikkun (redemption) in history. Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav prescribed the reciting of Ten Psalms for Complete Recovery from Depression. These psalms are 16, 32, 41, 42, 59, 77, 90, 105, 137, and 150. They are to be recited in that order, in their entirety, and with a pure heart. The greatest sense of tikkun is when we begin to wake up. Take dreams seriously as a path to higher consciousness and share them with people that you trust. We must connect with consciousness and will to transform and heal ourselves.

We must become aware of the variety of different parts of our total self through acceptance and integration of all of the parts. Then we will form a coherence of the multiplicity of ourselves. The process of tikkun helps to refine and balance the world (tikkun ha olam). The healing of the world begins with the healing of oneself (tikkun ha nephesh).

Spiritual practices help us with our tikkun: obedience and submission to God's law, prayer, fasting, acts of charity, teaching spiritual truths, forgiveness, mercy, and sacrifice. It is useful to meditate on what sacred attributes we need for balance. Awareness is a tikkun that helps us shape our lives. Rest and sleep are important for our health and growth and help us to achieve our tikkun. Visions and dreams are useful spiritual experiences and should be studied. The ability to for-give (let go) is essential if we are to receive. Forgiveness, overcoming, and restoration are key concepts in both Judaism and Christianity and most of us have much personal growth needed in these areas.

In the universe of tikkun, Holiness is released and restored through:

Acts of loving kindness and charity
Sacrifice of self for the sake of others
Being in harmony with creation
Cultivating higher awareness (spirituality)

We have the potential in each moment through our choices and interactions to do spiritual work mending, fixing, repairing, and healing our souls and the souls of others while drawing closer to God.

Our body is not our essence. It is simply physical matter. It is the caretaker for the source that gives it light. The soul is the vital force that gives existence to physical matter.

Tikkun ha nefesh is mending the soul bringing our holiness to new levels as we commune with our source God. We enter into an integrated and holistic frame of reference complete in and connected with God.

Tikkun ha olam is mending the world. We can mend ourselves and others in many ways. Keeping the commandments, acts of loving kindness, prayer, forgiveness, peacemaking, study of Holy Scripture, contemplation, meditation, thanksgiving, and awareness are some of them.

A few closing thoughts:

Be truly proactive

Eliminate complacency through challenging status quo with innovation and creativity

Remember that we never are given resistance or obstacles beyond our ability if we persevere in faith (trust)

Keep at it until you succeed because the resistance will remain until you no longer need it to produce Light

Cultivate desires that are in harmony with the Light

What we fear to lose the most is our area of Tikkun and understanding our lack leads to growth

The ultimate formula is letting go of desire for myself alone

Do not be judgmental of individuals as much as the processes involved

How can we tell what our TIKKUN is? . . . by looking at the people in our environment! . . . by asking, "why am I in my present circumstances?"

SHALOM

Recommended for further reading:

Ashlag, Yehuda, Gift of the Bible; Jerusalem: Research Centre of Kabbalah, 1984.

Cooper, David, God is a Verb; New York: Riverhead Books, 1997.

Franck, Adolphe, The Kabbalah; New York: University Books, 1967.

Hoffman, Edward, Opening the Inner Gates; Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995.

Sheinkin, David, Path of the Kabbalah; New York: Paragon House, 1986.

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