

The History of *The Miracle Tree*:

Modern developments in Qabalah in the work of R J Stewart, 1974-2009.

Including: *A short history of the key diagrams for the Tree of Life/ the Path attributes of W. G.Gray/ the Three Wheel-World-Ring system of R .J. Stewart/an excerpt from the privately circulated Tree of Life Course/ two practical exercises from The Miracle Tree.* © R J Stewart Books 2009

The Miracle Tree is part of a series of books upon the Tree of Life in the western esoteric tradition. The series begins with R.J. Stewart's widely acclaimed and revolutionary book *The UnderWorld Initiation* (first circulated privately in Britain during the late 1970's, and published in 1985), which contributed to a shift in understanding of the foundations of the western esoteric tradition. Becoming a minor classic, the book was reprinted in several editions by Aquarian Press/Harper Collins, and still remains in print today. The metaphysics of *The UnderWorld Initiation* was demonstrated by an original master diagram of the Tree of Life in the OverWorld and UnderWorld, which had not been previously published, describing the true relationship of the Tree of Life to the Three Worlds and Three Wheels. This unique illustration, (**figure 1**) was created by R.J as the hidden basis

for the cover icon of *The UnderWorld Initiation*, (see **figure 2**) and for further illustrations in his later work, especially the *Merlin Tarot* and associated books (1988 see **figure 3**) . The “Merlin” books explore the metaphysics of the medieval Merlin texts transcribed from bardic tradition by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century. Further expositions are found in 2 vols of *Magical Arts* (1986/1988), and *The Miracle Tree* (2003, see **figures 4 and 5**). The most advanced work on this theme is found in R.J.'s recent book *The Sphere of Art* (2008) and its companion volume, *The Purifying Fire* (forthcoming early 2010)

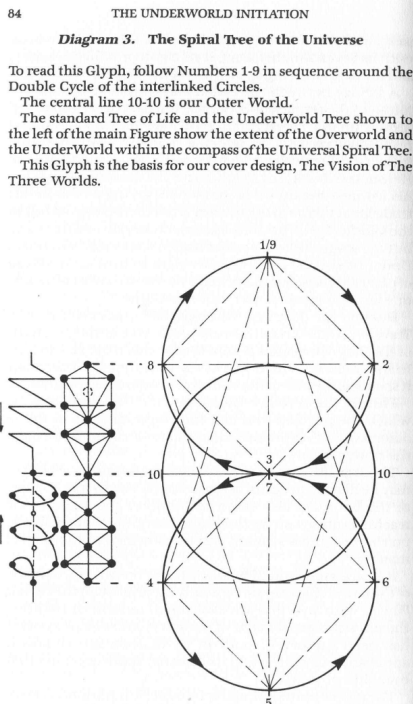
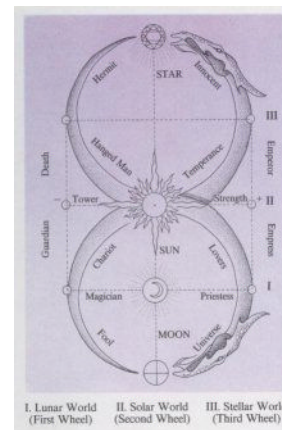
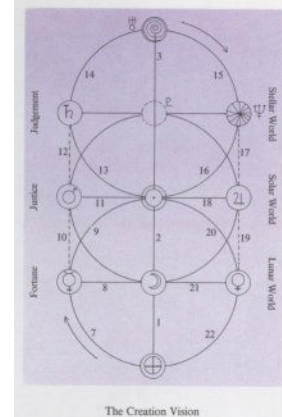
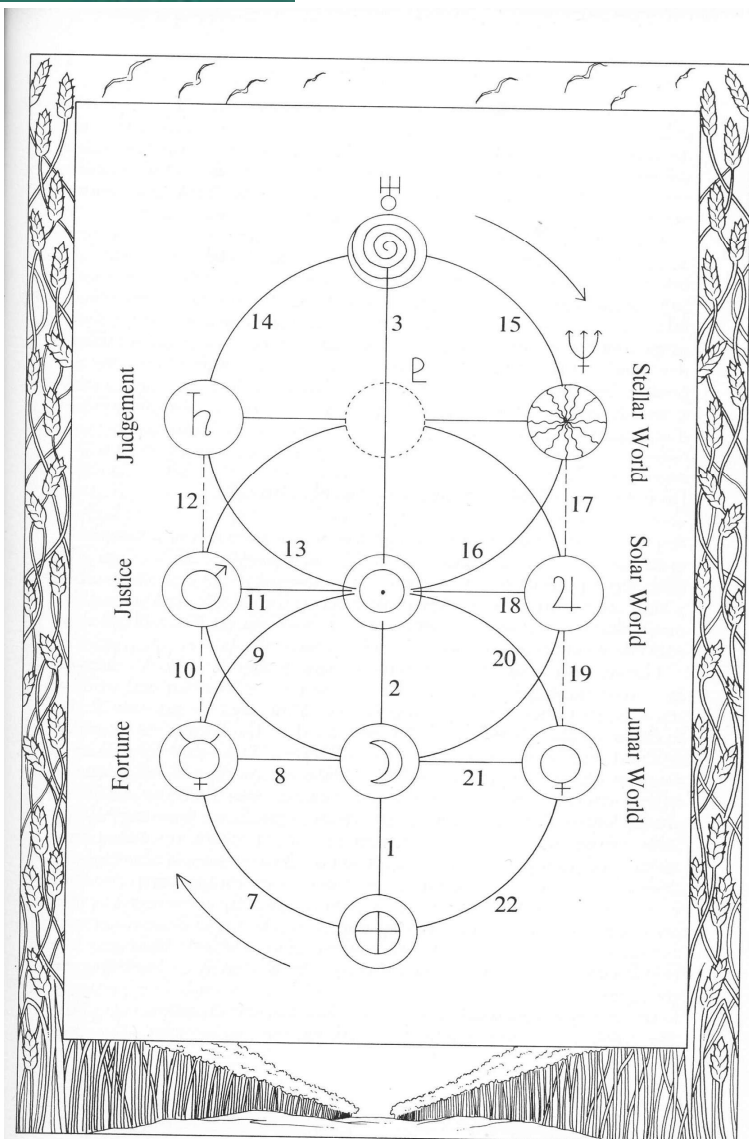


Figure One: from *The UnderWorld Initiation*, Aquarian Press, 1985. This master Key is the basis for the Tree of Life diagrams in later books.



Figure Two: icon, cover of *The UnderWorld Initiation* 1985. This icon uses the Three Ring/Sphere map of **Figure One** for its proportions, and fills it with imagery of the OverWorld, Middle World, and UnderWorld Tree of Life. Original icon designed by R J, and painted by Heather Brown in 1984.

Figure Three (below) : Three Rings/Spheres from *The Merlin Tarot*, Aquarian Press, 1988. This master figure also uses **Figure One** as its key, adding the planetary attributes, numbers, and Paths of the Tree of Life.



The two smaller images are Key Cards included in the deck of cards.

The new approach to understanding the Tree of Life, described first in *The Under-World Initiation* and forming the basis of *The Miracle Tree*, demonstrates how the standard “ladder” image of the Tree is, and always has been, contained within three rings or spheres, comprising the Lunar, Solar, and Stellar Worlds. The concept of the Three Worlds/Spheres/Rings has been central to R.J.’s work for the last 35 years, and is at the foundation of many of his books, classes, and workshops.

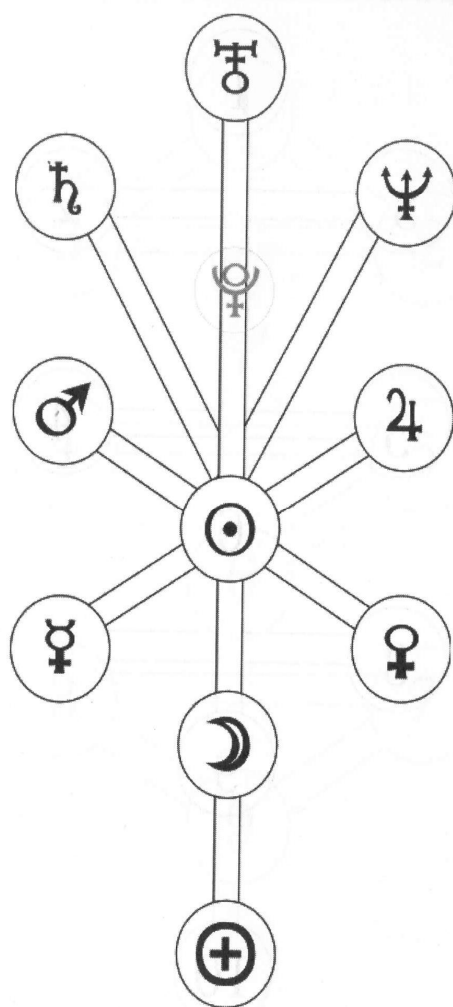


Figure 6. Radiant Paths

Figure Four:

From *The Miracle Tree*, 2003.
The Radiant Paths.

This is a simplified version of **Figure 3**. The reader or mediator can visualize the Three Wheels/Rings/Spheres, as shown in Figure Three, upon this figure, or visualize an overall Sphere, encompassing all three, centered upon the Sun. This is also based upon the more complex interactive patterns shown in our **Figure 1**.

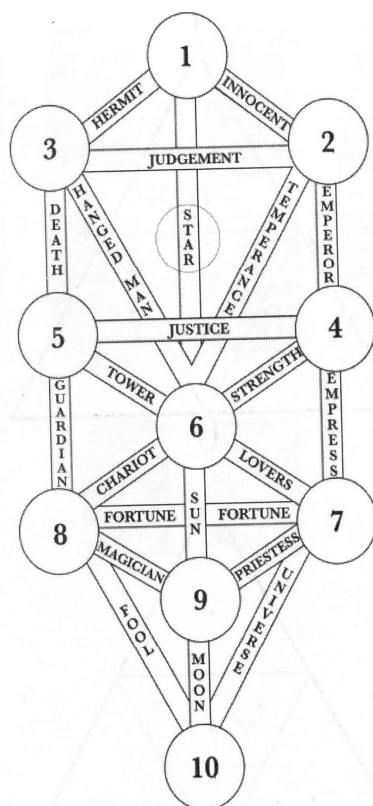


Figure 12. Paths on Tree

Figure Five: the harmonic paths upon the Tree of Life. In this figure the connecting rings or wheels are omitted, giving the standard Tree that is found in many books. The Path attributes are those first published by W. G. Gray in the late 1960's, and developed by R .J. Stewart after his research into the cosmology and sacromagical psychology of the 12th century Merlin texts transcribed from bardic tradition by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

See *Merlin: The Prophetic Vision and Mystic Life* originally published by Penguin Arkana in 1986, with a revised expanded edition published in 2009.

An extract from the privately issued Tree of Life Course (2001-2009):

The Origins of the Three Wheel/World illustrations

“After studying and meditating on W G Gray’s tarot trump attributes for the Tree of Life, in the late 1960’s, it became clear to me, as Gray’s student at that time, that here were clues to a different way of understanding the Tree of Life, one that was not incorporated into the popular modern literature on Qabalah dating from the 19th century, which has been endlessly copied in so many books.

Over the next few years I was fortunate to have a series of Qabalistic insights leading to the approach illustrated in my books. While Bill Gray remained with

his original interpretations, and due to his unremitting focus was not interested in giving them a wider context, I discovered a remarkable pattern in the 12th century medieval texts about Merlin, transcribed from Welsh bardic tradition by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

This pattern, which I defined as the Three Rings/Worlds/Wheels is a variant of the Axis Mundi concept, found in the metaphysical philosophy of the classical world, and reappearing in Renaissance magic and theosophy: it can be traced back to ancient sources, including the psychopompic *vision of Er*, in Plato's *Republic*.

No surprise, therefore, that it should be loosely concealed in the medieval Merlin texts. It seems that W G Gray, with his cosmological Path attributes had, perhaps unwittingly, tapped into a tradition far more enduring than that of the 19th and 20th century occult orders.

While W G Gray inspired my insights through his path attributes on a *standard* Tree of Life, the bulk of my published work and associated illustrations showing *other ways* to present the Tree visually are my own, and were published after my work with Gray concluded around 1974. The Path attributes are Gray's, the key diagrams and concepts that I have published are mine. I retained Gray's numbering and lettering, for which I am deeply grateful.

The Diagrams of various Tree of Life forms

When I created the early diagrams for *UnderWorld Initiation*, and later for the more detailed *Merlin Tarot*, no one had published anything like them, and at first they were ignored, or at best created mixed reviews. The idea of an UnderWorld Tree, especially, pushed people's post-Christian buttons, as if they had forgotten that all trees must have roots. The master key for the Over and UnderWorld Tree of Life has no Path attributes, numbers, or letters, but it is the hidden foundation for all the subsequent illustrations for the Tree of Life in my books. (See Figure One).

Many reviewers were unable to see beyond the 19th century Golden Dawn path attributes, even though an undeniable authority, Israel Regardie, had stated that the GD paths on the Tree of Life were intentionally scrambled. Over the years, my diagrams and interpretations have quietly spread into broader practice, as a result of my books and teaching widely in the USA, Britain, and Canada.

For my series of books exploring the Tree of Life and Hermetic or western magical arts, I substantially developed the Path revision that was first published by Gray in 1969, wherein he used a standard “ladder” Tree of Life with his attributes based on the sequence of Moon/Sun/Star, then Fortune/Justice/Judgment.

This Axis Mundi approach, as I discovered, could be expanded to reveal some profound interactions upon the Tree of Life. This expansion, which was based on original material *not* found in Gray, revealed that the “ladder” tree is a geometric segment, a partial view, of a greater conceptual model. Furthermore it demonstrated insights into the Tree of Life that were supported by both classical metaphysics and medieval, albeit unorthodox, mysticism. This was the basis of the master-pattern used in my *Merlin Tarot*, and for the later UnderWorld deck, *The Dreampower Tarot*. Both derive from the original key illustration first published in *The UnderWorld Initiation*. In this sense, I am following the earliest Hermetic Qabalists, who derived their illustrations from their meditative insights into the cosmos, rather than from printed literature.

The Tree of Life is composed of Three Wheels or Rings: Fortune, Justice, and Judgment, and has long been traditionally defined by those three trumps in a tarot deck. The three rings embody three levels of interaction. The Three Wheels encompass the Three Worlds, of Moon (Earth/Moon), Sun, and Stars. All tarot trumps and paths constellate within the Three Wheels or Rings, and the Three Worlds that they circumscribe.

The Three Rings are, in fact, nested spheres that correspond to our relativistic sense of place in the cosmos: the Earth nested with the Moon, The Earth/Moon nested within the Solar System, and the Solar System nested within the starry Cosmos. When these Rings or Spheres are opened out for visual meditation, they reveal the Tree of Life, reaching from Earth to Stars. This opening out is shown in the various diagrams that I have published over the years, with the Three Wheels/Rings/Spheres.

This foundation of three rings and three nested worlds or concentric spheres has been the basis of my books and my teaching for the last 30 years and more, and I believe it gives us many valuable insights in meditation, ceremony, and visualization. Additionally it enables us to understand the conceptual world of the early Qabalists mystics and metaphysicians of Europe and the Middle East in a way that bridges between their thought-processes and our own.” (*excerpt from Module Three of the Tree of Life Course*)

Excerpts from *The Miracle Tree*

The following text and two Qabalistic Forms are excerpts from *The Miracle Tree* by R J Stewart, published February 2003 by New Page Books, Career Press, New Jersey, USA. Text illustrations designed by R J Stewart drawn by Jacquelyn Archer. All text and illustrations are copyright © 2003. In these excerpts two Qabalistic Forms are described: *Walking Participation*, and *Entering Stillness*, and some insights are offered into the way that the Tree of Life works in meditation, vision, and spiritual enlightenment.

The Body of the Tree

In the last thousand years or so, there have been many changes in the way in which the Tree of Life is conceived and represented, especially in literature and in the teaching methods from the 19th century to the present day. One of our aims, with these simple but powerful exercises, is to return to primal Qabalah; the other is to work with the Miracle Tree in a way that is utterly contemporary, and so to lay a foundation for future work. In this book we explore Qabalistic forms that appropriate for the 21st century, bridging between past and future. Such aims are not incompatible, for the Tree of Life is a state of being, and our participation in that state is based on what we are, rather than what we think, read, or discuss. I say participation, for taking part, being consciously aware, is everything in Qabalah.

Yet, contrary to popular dogma about meditation and spiritual arts, it is not solely about “higher” consciousness. Through our practices with the Tree, we do indeed come into a deeper and altered awareness, but not by bootstrapping our consciousness, elevating ourselves astrally, or seeking to escape to higher planes and flee from the mundane. The mundane is the most sacred, in all Qabalistic traditions, for it is the manifest shape and presence of the divine Being that is the source of all things. How can we flee this presence? The answer is that we cannot, for to do so would be to deny our very being. Yet we try to flee it in so many ways, day by day: in this flight we reject and deny ourselves.

One of the most valuable Qabalistic axioms is that the greatest mystery of spiritual truth is present already, in the manifest world. This concept was central to the idea of the *Philosophers’ Stone*, the pivotal quest of the medieval alchemists and Qabalists, which was described as common and omnipresent, yet hidden from all but the most dedicated seekers after wisdom. As we are such seekers, here and now, the Stone will become apparent to us.

Qabalah is physical

The Tree of Life works through the human body: all Qabalah is physical. Anyone who denies this has not practiced Qabalah, as the subtle forces always flow through our entire organism. We could say that although we use the words physical and metaphysical in discussion, both aspects of Being are at one through the body, and are not divided. Only the isolated and disconnected mind makes such divisions, such dualisms, for the body knows them not.

This simple truth is extremely helpful for us, for, if we can grasp it and work with it, it enables us to side-step much of the accumulated junk of magic and metaphysics, and so begin to remember our true nature, as participants in the planet, as beings who embody the Tree of Life. That is how miracles of transformation begin, though they are, in truth, our normal state of being. Remember that the way we live is only habitual, and not necessarily our normal or our true potential state.

The most powerful way to work with the Miracle Tree

Contrary to much that we have all learned, tried, practiced, in our spiritual lives, the most powerful way to work spiritually is while walking around with eyes open. When we do this, we are consciously participating in the holism of our planet, moon, and solar system. We do not need to withdraw into a trance or a vision, though visionary work is often used in Qabalah, and can be helpful.

Our contemporary spiritual revival, however, places an unhealthy overemphasis on the vision, the guided meditation, and the withdrawn consciousness. Though we are perhaps unwilling to admit it, this emphasis on inner vision in the last 30 years is closely connected to our visual technology, television, the computer screen, film, video and so forth. The visual dominates our culture, but it is the artificial visual in so many examples, in the very rhythm of daily life. So the visual has come to dominate much of our spiritual revival (in Western modernist cultures), just as it dominates advertising, entertainment, and media of communication.

In practical work, a simple exercise goes a long way to prove this truth: you can participate fully in the Tree of Life while walking in everyday surroundings with eyes open. This exercise has been done by many of my students in recent years, with excellent, and often surprising, results.

Indeed, this walking exercise or form is one of the most powerful, most advanced forms of Qabalistic practice, with a long history of practice rooted in ancient sources. We can never outgrow it, no matter how much our awareness changes

through magical or spiritual arts.

So rather than discuss the concept further, here is the exercise for you to try. If you do this once or twice a day, while walking somewhere, it will have a deep transformative effect at all levels of your being. You do not need to focus on this for long periods of time: “more” is not necessarily better when you work with the Tree of Life. A few minutes each day is enough, and those minutes will deepen, strengthen, and clarify, with regular practice.

Walking Participation

1. While walking outdoors (anywhere) first prepare yourself, by being calm and still as you walk. This should not be a strenuous effort, but a simple acknowledgment that you are still, and are ready to change your awareness. This moving into stillness is greatly enhanced by the form called Entering Stillness, which is described at the close of this chapter

2. Walking normally, look towards the horizon. If you do not have a horizon, as is often so in the city, look to the distance. Many people walk looking downwards, and this can be a difficult habit to dissolve at first. The traditional teaching is “let your eyes rest upon the horizon”. We do this so seldom, that when we work with it, it has a powerful effect upon our awareness and our vitality.

3. As you walk, sense your body through your feet, loins, heart, and head. This is a simple sensory practice, beginning with the feet, and moving upwards. It is a matter of feeling rather than concentrating. Too much effort will disperse this subtle feeling, which is really about recovering an awareness that we have habitually rejected, rather than building a new form of awareness through willpower or repetition.

4. As you sense the body, make the following connections: My Feet are in the Earth, my Loins are in the Moon, my Heart is in the Sun, my Head is in the Stars. This is the point at which we focus on the physical and not the metaphysical. As you participate, think very simply and directly that the physical zones of the body (feet, genitals and hips, heart and chest, shoulders and head) are literally and physically connected to the physical earth, moon, sun and stars. Not symbolically, not through colors or attributes, but literally and physically. This connection is greatly enhanced by being aware of the general location of earth, moon, sun, and stars. Does this seem simplistic? Then consider, that while the earth is always beneath us, and around us to the Four Directions, the moon, sun, and stars move

ceaselessly. There is an entire cycle of meditation and understanding that springs from this concept of movement and relationship, but initially it is the Walking Participation, and nothing else.

5. Continue with the connection and participation, linking earth, moon, sun, stars through your body. If you drift into the symbolic and metaphysical, simply reaffirm the physical connections to physical earth, moon, sun, and stars. A litany, which you recite silently, can help: “My feet are in the Earth, my loins (genitals) are in the Moon, my heart is in the Sun, and my head is in the Stars”.

6. After some minutes of this, return to being calm and still as you walk, letting your eyes rest upon the horizon.

If you wish, you can keep a daily journal of what you experience with this form of physical Qabalah. Eventually you will not need the journal, but it is helpful initially to formulate the experiences that you will have.

You will recognize connections between this form and others, such as the Rising Light, but do not strive to combine them together in practice. Each form should be practiced simply, directly, uniquely. Only when you have done that, experienced the transformations that it brings, can you begin with combinations of forms. Some, such as Entering Stillness, which is a major form (with variants in all spiritual traditions worldwide), can be used before and after any other form, as an opening or closing phase. We will return to this idea of combining forms again. Before then, go for a few walks.

Entering Stillness

This is the classic form, found in various presentations in every spiritual tradition worldwide. If you do nothing else in your life, do this. You will never “outgrow” this form, never advance beyond its potential. This is the first and last form, the shift of consciousness within us that mirrors the universal creation, whereby Being comes out of Unbeing, creation flows out of the Void. With repeated practice it deepens: use this form before any other, in addition to working with it in its own right.

When we try to discuss Entering Stillness, the words are inadequate. But when we participate, employ the form, and enter into stillness, we all recognize that state. It is a form of going home, to the source of our beginning. By stilling time, space,

and movement, we come into our full potential.

Sit with eyes closed, free of interruption. With practice you will be able to enter stillness with eyes open, even while moving.

TIME: withdraw your involvement in time...find yourself time-free, then time-less.

SPACE: draw in your awareness from all directions, releasing your involvement with space. Rest on a simple point of being, within you.

MOVEMENT: Cease all outer and inner movement, but for breathing in and out.

2. Reach within yourself to the Un-Being out of which your Being comes. The Stillness that precedes movement, the Silence between each Breath. This is the Void that is within all things, the source of all Time, Space, and Movement.

3. Let yourself Un-Be.

4. Affirm the Four Directions, Above, Below, and Within. (Begin any meditation or ceremony now, or return to your outer awareness).

During the rest of this book, assume that all forms begin with *Stillness*, and practice accordingly. In some forms, described in our later chapters, you will find Stillness indicated at key moments in your practice. Once you have discovered how to enter Stillness, through repeated practice, you will find that this form is invaluable, not only as itself, but as a component of your spiritual work overall.

The three forms given in this chapter comprise an entire Qabalah of themselves, and you could, if you so wished, make them your main practices for some time, before you begin to explore the later forms. The more practiced you are at Stillness, then at the Rising Light and Walking Participation forms, the more effective the other Qabalistic forms and related arts and skills will be for you.

In our next chapter, we will begin our exploration of the emanations of the Tree of Life...

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For *The Miracle Tree* book and CD, go to www.rjstewart.net