

contemporary jewish practice. embodied prayer.

– RABBI DAVID ZASLOW

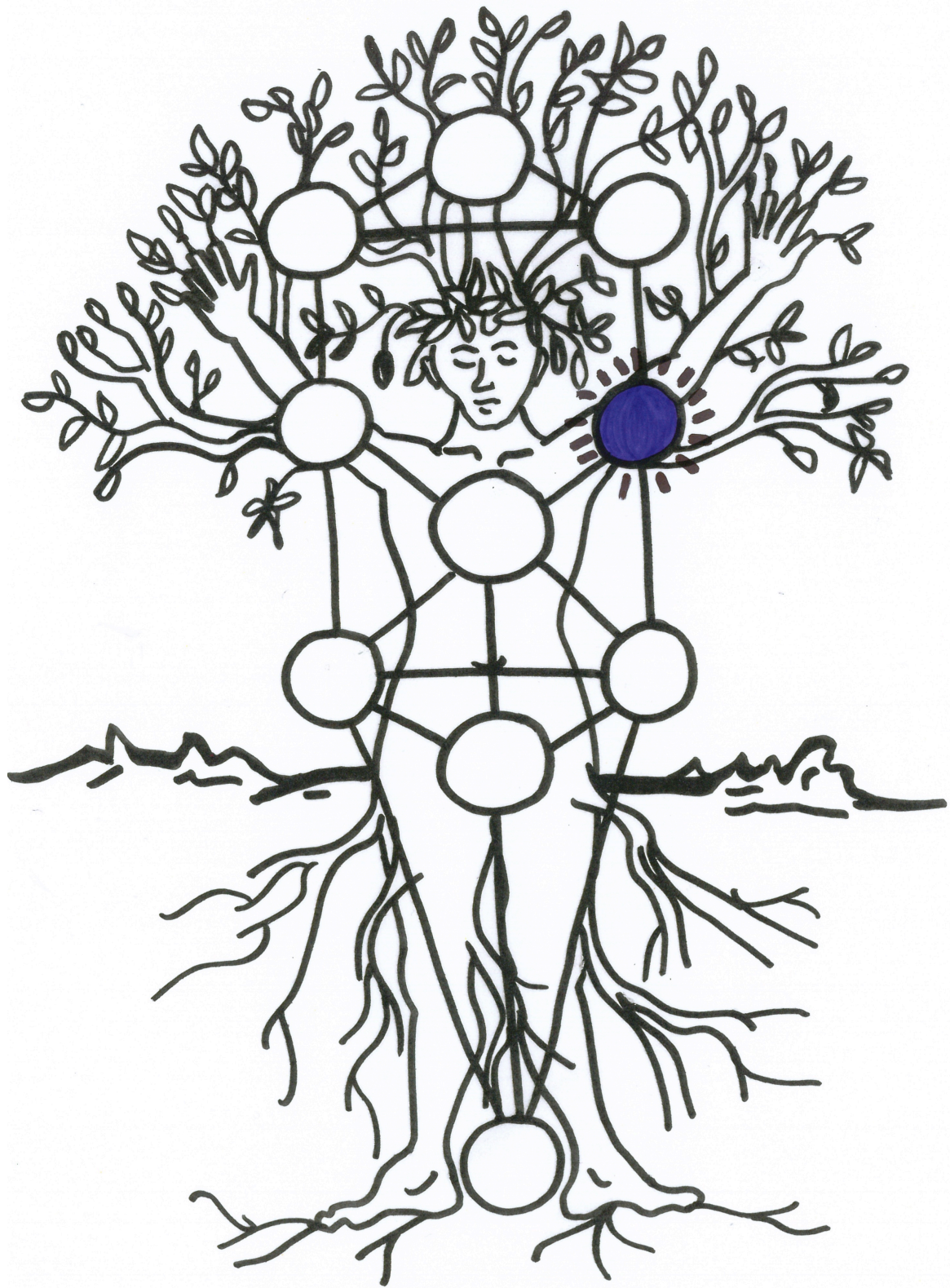
Holy Body, Holy Ground

Seven Days with the Kabbalah Tree of Life

The Alchemical Marriage of Sacred Time and Everyday Time



RACHAEL R. RESCH, PT



DAY I
CHESED
Lovingkindness Day

Loving Kinship • Compassion • Grace



SATURDAY NIGHT*
Eve of Lovingkindness

*In this beginning, God is creating Heaven and God is creating Earth.
Earth is barren, with no life, and darkness covers the face of the deep. Now
the Breath of God is moving over the water. Now God is singing, “Let there be Light.”
And there is Light! God sees that the Light is good, and separates Light from darkness.
God names the holy Light Day and God names the holy darkness Night.
Now there is evening, and there is morning – a first day.
– Genesis 1:1-1:5*

Good evening, Lovingkindness.
I bow to you. I welcome you tonight into my body and into my dreams.
Thank you, *Chesed*, for illuminating my
body and the Body of the World.



SUNDAY
Day of Lovingkindness

Today is the first day of the Universe. Today is Lovingkindness Day. In the holy timelessness of mythological time, every Saturday evening and every Sunday day the Universe begins – again. And God sings to the Universe – again – “Let there be Light!” In the sacred anatomy of Kabbalah, the first Light of Creation is Lovingkindness, and Lovingkindness lives in the upper

right branch of the Universal Tree of Life. In the Tree of Life of your own body, the branch of Lovingkindness is your right upper limb. In Hebrew, the eminence of Divine Lovingkindness is called *Chesed*.

Today, all day, God is saying, “Let there be the Light of Lovingkindness.” And today, we answer the call, and co-create the world with Love. As Psalm 89 says, “*Olam chesed yibaneh*.” The whole world is built with Love.

On this day of Lovingkindness, step into the holy sphere of the *sephira* of *Chesed*. Reach forward with your right upper limb of Lovingkindness and part the veil. Cross the threshold and enter the world of Compassion, the world of Grace.

Step into that which you Love.

* * *

Good morning, Light of the World!
Good morning, Lovingkindness.
Good morning, Chesed.
I welcome you into my body and into my life.
Thank you for enlightening the Universe.
How may I serve you today?

* * *

SIGHT

Seeing with Eyes of Lovingkindness

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

How do we receive the Light of the World? Through the pupils and irises of our eyes. “Iris” is the golden-winged Greek goddess of the rainbow. The word “pupil” means “student.” The sacred anatomy of the body helps us see that by nature we are disciples born of the Light of Lovingkindness.

I am so small I can barely be seen.
How can this great love be inside me?
Look at your eyes. They are small,
but they see enormous things.

- Jellaludin Rumi
Version by Coleman Barks

COLOR OF THE DAY: Purple

The color of the vessel / *sephira* of Lovingkindness on the Tree of Life is purple. Sunday is Purple Day. The Latin word, *purpura*, means “purple-dyed cloak” and “splendid attire.” Today is the day to clothe ourselves royally.

How does G-d create the world? She wraps Herself in a garment of light and it begins to shine. In the Beginning, invisible ultra-violet Light emerges out of darkness. It enters the first branch of the Tree of Life, *Chesed*, and becomes visible to our eyes. The color we see is purple.

EMBODYING THE SIGHT OF LOVINGKINDNESS

Adorning

Wrap yourself today in a garment of Purple, in a garment of Divine Light to welcome the first day of Creation. You could wear purple clothing, jewelry (like amethyst or purple beads), a purple scarf or purple socks.

TOUCH

Being In Touch with Lovingkindness

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

In sacred neurology, the touch of Lovingkindness transmits healing. When we feel pain, we intuitively touch that body part. We spontaneously reach out to hold or touch another who is in pain. This is the Compassion of the nervous system in action. Touch nerve signals travel faster to the brain than pain signals. Loving touch relieves pain. When we receive healing touch from ourselves, or others, we are renewed through the Light of Lovingkindness.

EMBODYING THE TOUCH OF LOVINGKINDNESS

Touching with Compassion

Try an experiment today: Touch everything with which you come into contact with Compassion and Lovingkindness. Sense quality of the touch of your hands, the touch of your gaze, the touch of your feet on the Earth. How might you care for your body and the Body of the World by being in touch with Lovingkindness? Your right hand is the flowering of the branch of Lovingkindness in the world.

MOVEMENT

Grace in Action

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

The body is in love with movement. No matter how constrained or expansive your body's movements, every cell, every heartbeat, every breath – even when you're asleep – is a movement

toward the Beloved, a movement toward the Divine. When we engage in movement practices we Love – maybe dance or yoga, swimming, walking or martial arts – the brain says, “I love that!” and makes the feel-good neurotransmitters, endorphins and serotonin.

EMBODYING LOVINGKINDNESS

Gestures of Compassion – The Hand of Lovingkindness Moving in the World

Blessing the World: Lift your right hand and turn your palm outward. Bless the World with Lovingkindness.

Blessing Yourself: Turn your right palm toward yourself. Bless yourself with Lovingkindness.

Renewing: Turn your right palm up to receive the energy of Lovingkindness.

Grounding: Turn your right palm down to calm and relax. Let go of what is no longer needed with Lovingkindness.

SOUND

Giving Voice to Lovingkindness

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

When we hear music we love, or any music, the whole brain – not just the inner ear – vibrates at the exactly the same frequency as that sound. If a piano plays in the key of C, our brains are also “playing” the key of C. If an orchestra is playing Mozart, our brains are also playing Mozart. Language centers for speaking and hearing the spoken word are generally located in the left brain. However, music lights up the whole brain, and therefore the whole body. As neuroscientist Daniel Levitin puts it, “This is your brain on music.”

EMBODYING THE SOUND OF LOVINGKINDNESS

Singing with Love

What songs awaken Lovingkindness in your heart and in your body? Sing or hum yourself, to other people, animals, plants – and to Lovingkindness itself. Feel that Holy Being sing with you.

Speaking with Love

Speak with Kindness and Compassion to your body today. Even when – especially when – you might be sick or injured or you don’t feel Love toward your body. You could say, “Body, I love you.” You could say, “Body, I know we might not always get along, but I love you.” If you stub your toe or strain a muscle, express Compassion. “I’m sorry, Body.” “Body, holy Body, I’m sorry for your suffering.” Ask your body aloud, “Body, holy Body, how can I give you Love today?” Then, with Lovingkindness, wait for the answer.

TASTE

The Flavor of Compassion

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

In the sacred biochemistry of the World Tree, purple pigments are among the heroic rainbow of anti-oxidants who nourish healthy brains and bodies by decreasing inflammation, that devious purveyor of modern health problems. “Inflammation” means “to kindle the inner flame or inner light.” Seeking out the Light of Lovingkindness through the foods we eat is a precious way to balance modernity’s overzealous metabolic fire within the Tree of Life Body who has been entrusted to us.

EMBODYING *CHESED*

Feeding God and Eating Purple

Before we eat, we can feed the Holy. All our Indigenous ancestors understand food is a gift of Lovingkindness from the Earth. Place a little food on a spirit plate or in an offering bowl to thank the holy photosynthesizing Light of Creation from which all plants and animals – and our own lives – continually sprout. *L’Chayim!* To Life!

Some purple foods include: plums, blackberries, eggplant, purple cauliflower, purple cabbage, purple potatoes, figs, purple asparagus, purple carrots, purple kale, acai berries, purple corn and tortillas, purple yam, purple grapes, passionfruit, purple kohlrabi, purple basil, black soybeans and black beans. Yum!

SMELL

Sniffing Out Lovingkindness

SCIENCE OF THE SACRED

More than any of our other senses, the sense of smell awakens memories and emotions. For many, the smell of cookies or bread baking brings up childhood memories and feelings of Love. That’s because smell is hard-wired directly from nose to brain. What we smell goes right to the limbic system, the part of our brains that carry emotions and long-term memory.

EMBODYING THE SCENT OF LOVINGKINDNESS

What smells do you Love? Get a whiff of Lovingkindness sprouting in the world through fragrances of foods, plants or essential oils that you Love. If lavender or roses grow where you live, collect some to put in your home or to give to a friend or stranger.

TAKING SANCTUARY within the TREE of LOVINGKINDNESS

Am I feeling loved? Am I feeling loving toward myself? Toward my body? Do I feel loved by and loving toward others?

These are some questions the Tree of Life invites us to reflect upon. The sacred anatomy of the Tree of Life says we have Lovingkindness living in our bodies irrespective of circumstance. Everyday the Tree provides refuge for our personal healing and for *tikkun olam*, the healing of all Worlds. Today, on Lovingkindness Day, we receive an extra measure of Love. We partake of the fruits of Lovingkindness. We are sheltered under the Tree of Lovingkindness and under the Tree of Life.

INTUITION *Your Body's Wisdom*

Mantra of Lovingkindness

Stand tall in your Tree of Life Body. Let your crown rise to the center of the Heaven. Let the roots of your feet sink into the center of the Earth. Drop your mind all the way down your body into Holy Ground. Place your right hand on your heart. Keeping your body center low and connected to the Earth, now stretch the right upper limb of your Tree of Life Body, palm open, to the Heavens in a mudra of *Chesed*.

When you feel ready, ask your body for one word about Lovingkindness. Take the time you need to receive your body's wisdom. When you receive the word, open your eyes. Look and see the path before you, the path that Love and Compassion are inviting you to follow. When you're ready, say your word, and step onto a path of Grace.

*Lovingkindness is at my side.
Grace is always at hand.
Compassion is branching out in my body and my life.
I am the Body of Lovingkindness.
I embody Lovingkindness.*

THANK YOU, LOVINGKINDNESS

Lovingkindness Day draws to a close late Sunday afternoon before the Sun sets and the evening of a new day begins. As the Light of Creation sinks toward the horizon and the *sephira* of *Chesed* returns home to Source, we offer our gratitude to the Divine Being of Lovingkindness.

“Thank you, Lovingkindness, for your many blessings today, known and unknown, named and unnamed. Thank you for being the Light of my body and the Light of the Body of the World. Go in peace. Shalom. Salaam.”

SUMMMARY

Vessel: *Chesed* – Lovingkindness

Ecosystem: Light

Outer Nature: World Body of Light

Inner Nature: I am a Body of Light / Human Body of Light

Nature: World Body of Light. Human Body of Light.

Day: Sunday

Sacred Anatomy:

Right upper branch of the Universal Tree of Life

Right shoulder and arm of your Tree of Life Body

Color: Purple

Sight: Seeing through the Divine Eye of Lovingkindness.

Movement: Reaching right upper limb to Heaven.

Touch: Touching and being touched by Lovingkindness.

Sound: Hearing and speaking with Lovingkindness.

Taste: Savoring purple foods. Eating with Lovingkindness.

Smell: Breathing in Lovingkindness. Breathing out Lovingkindness.