

Kabbalah of Light



By Catherine Shainberg

How can the ancient Jewish mystical traditions help us answer our most urgent questions and transform our lives? In the *Kabbalah of Light*, Catherine Shainberg provides a step-by-step guide that helps readers tap into the subconscious to activate powers of manifestation and creativity using a practice passed down over centuries.

The book, and Shainberg's method, which she calls Saphire Imagery, is based on the 800-year-old work, the *Kabbalah of Light*, originated by Rabbi Isaac the Blind of Posquieres, France (1160 to 1235). The Sheshets of Gerona, Italy, passed the Rabbi's knowledge and practices through the generations. Now, Shainberg's book draws on this ancient work to help readers discover their path to transformation.

Shainberg has worked globally with thousands of clients and students of all faiths using her contemporary techniques and practices. The *Kabbalah of Light* includes 159 short experiential exercises and practices to begin dialoguing with the subconscious through images. Through inner gazing, readers will access images, dreams, and imagination in new ways that serve as both a creative force and a direct path to transformation. Fast and simple, the practices can help readers discover their areas of "stuckness," release past traumas and ancestral patterns, free the imagination, and open the way to the bliss promised by ancient traditions.

Beginning this productive dialogue with our inner world leads us to uncover our soul's purpose and manifest our dreams in the outer world.



Do we really need to travel out of our bodies, or do we simply let the unconscious rise and submerge our conscious minds, thus giving us access to hidden knowledge?

When Sigmund Freud coined the words "unconscious mind," he may not have realized that the concept of a vast unconscious part of ourselves, submerged like an iceberg beneath the surface of what we commonly call the conscious mind, has existed since time immemorial. The ancients were well aware of an unconscious realm populated by dangerous or godlike characters, fierce animals, hybrids of all sorts, and mind-boggling obstacles; what Freud understood as the unconscious mind was a store of memories, repressed emotions, and other mental complexes that remained trapped in a no-man's-land and could negatively affect our everyday life and behavior. He believed that these repressed emotions and memories should be brought to conscious awareness in order to be cured. He interchangeably used both terms "unconscious" and "subconscious" until he finally settled for the word unconscious. Today psychologists are still debating the differences between the two, but the word subconscious is rarely used. The preferred term is "unconscious" for all of our "other than conscious processes." Yet I propose to you that the term subconscious, coined by French psychologist Pierre Janet (1859-1947), is more accurate. Janet believed that there was a storehouse of the information below our conscious mind that could be accessed through focused awareness.

Kabbalah of dreaming is also called the Kabbalah of light or Sapphire. Sapphire is unique among other forms of Kabbalah in that it limits its practice to the imagination and visualizations to access higher levels of consciousness.

The ancient world had many names for the realm that lies below our awareness. They called it the other world, the world of the dead, the Happy Isles, Olympus. Heroes' journeys involved crossing the "val" to the other world: Perce la vallée, pierce the valley, is the meaning of Perceval's name in the Arthurian legends. An Ivri, or Hebrew, means the one who crosses over. Shamans the world over speak of journeying out of their bodies to seek hidden knowledge and wisdom; alchemists had a funny way of illustrating their relationship to the unconscious: a man sitting in a vast cauldron, a fire burning under the pot. Likewise, in China, the oldest book in the world, the I Ching, has a hexagram named the cauldron. Here is what the hexagram says: "The image suggests the idea of nourishment . . . The supreme revelation of God appears in prophets and holy men." In other words, without resisting, sit in the cauldron of natural forces, and the information from your unconscious will rise up in you, nourishing you and flooding you with prophecy and holiness.

Do we really need to travel out of our bodies, or do we simply let the unconscious rise and submerge our conscious minds, thus giving us access to hidden knowledge? Here is another way it is described: "And God hovered over the p'nei tehom (the face of the abyss)" and created the world in seven days. Read p'nei tehom as God's unconscious realm. Can we, like God, hover over the void of the unconscious and bring forth new creations? We do it every night when we dream. Kabbalists call this maneuver the plunge--yeridah--the drop of the conscious mind into the unformed substance of the unconscious mind to elicit new formations.

At the deepest part of the ocean, the old story goes, lies hidden the great serpent, Leviathan. Raising the Leviathan is what happens when, having cleared the subconscious of its garbage, the subconscious and the conscious minds meet in an explosion of light, a revelation. This

co-creation is what I call the manifestations of the third mind, the superconscious.

To think of the mind as comprised of three levels fits what ancient stories tell us about heroes exploring the three levels of Earth, the underworld, and the sky. Descending from the Earth level into the underworld, the hero Herakles meets Cerberus, who guards the entrance to the underworld. To be sure we don't miss out on the deeper meaning of the myth, the story tells us Cerberus has three heads, three levels that Herakles must master (which he does with his bare hands) to ascend to Olympus, the heaven of the Greek gods, and become immortal, a god or a star in the firmament. Osiris, Isis, and Horus are the Egyptian trinity, Father, Mother, and Son, the active, the receptive, and the holy breath that must be mastered to reach enlightenment. The same theme reemerges in the Christian trinity of Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Jesus of Galilee dies and resurrects in three days. In medieval times, Dante's journey takes him through hell and purgatory to paradise. The Tarot's High Priestess wears the three-tiered crown to remind us that this is what we must aspire to. To escape the imprisonment of duality, we need the movement illustrated by the number three. Call these three levels the conscious, the subconscious, and the superconscious. In the myth of Noah's ark, God, infuriated by the villainy of people on Earth, sends a great Flood to annihilate them. He warns Noah, whose name means rest or comfort, to build an ark, a place of refuge against the chaos and subsequent flooding of the people's untamed unconscious forces.

According to the midrash, the ark has three levels, one for the beasts, one for the refuse, and one for the humans. Each level must be tamed, cleared, or visited for creation to reemerge, whether in the form of a new world, a new life, or a transformed personality. In either case, insight from the superconscious--in a brilliant flash zigzagging past the refuse into consciousness--can change the course of one's life.

Leviathan, we are told, is the flash of insight. He rises at the call of the holy ones, the ones who dare to plunge. His scales spark colors radiant with rainbow hues and brilliant white. He offers himself up, like truth, on a platter for the sages' delectation. The Leviathan's scales of rainbow light are reminiscent of the flaring multicolored brilliance of the Holy Grail or of the alchemists' philosophical stone. It is he--the body-mind that "knows"--that rises up in response to threats to your survival, whether external or internal. When Leviathan rises, the place is flooded with light.

And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Here is no place for anything UN-conscious. Keep using that word, and your mind will subliminally hear "unconscious" as meaning unreachable, even by focused awareness. And since the subconscious is so powerful, this will block the light from rising.

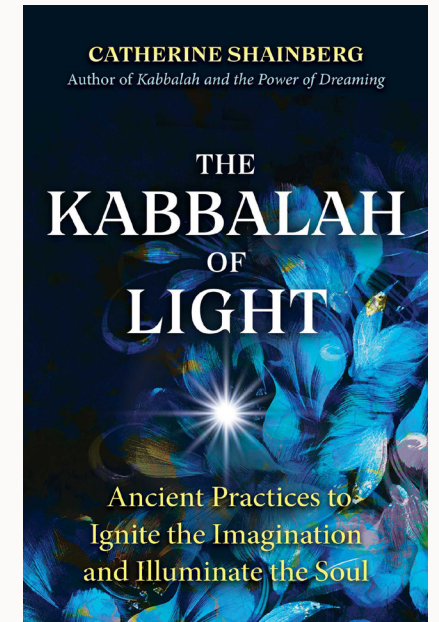
Because the subconscious and the superconscious often appear together in a mixed state, I am choosing to use the word subconscious from now on to refer to both. The aim, of course, will be to clear the subconscious garbage so as to reveal the superconscious in its clarity and give it free range to act in our favor, for our survival, and for our joy.

Like the heroes of old, the restful ones, the holy men and women who dare, can you also plunge into the underworld where creation is awaiting the jolt of your presence to emerge, like the great beast from *tohu vavohu*? How do you provoke the information hidden in the magma of the chaos? My goal here is to prove to you that you can do what the old ones did. The Book of Kabbalah of Light will guide you through your inner subconscious landscape's swamps, jungles, and deserts. Like Herakles, you will find the tools and resources to deal with your Nemean lion, your Augean stables full of excrement, and your Stymphalian birds screeching in

your ear. You will learn to respond to the necessity of the images that surface in your mind, thus clearing the path for the superconscious to emerge. Will you find the light? Yes, you will.

This is a tried and true path to enlightenment, based on the knowledge of thousands of years of studying the plunge and verified by many initiates' successes in attaining light and what Jewish sages call *dveikut*, the cleaving of the self to the divine. This Kabbalah of dreaming is also called the Kabbalah of light or Sapphire. Sapphire is unique among other forms of Kabbalah in that it limits its practice to the imagination and visualizations to access higher levels of consciousness. Whereas other schools use letters and chanting or meditations on the void, Sapphire only works with dreams, day visions, waking dreams, and guided imagery exercises to climb the ladder to *dveikut*. While the practice incorporates Jewish concepts, you do not need to be a Kabbalist or even Jewish to do this practice, everyone dreams.

What does this book offer you? Food for both your conscious and your subconscious minds. You will be led step-by-step through the methodology and tools to tap into your subconscious, thus satisfying the needs of your conscious mind. Simultaneously, through practicing the visual exercises you will find in this book, you will be plunged into the wondrous experience of your subconscious mind. There are no words, save a poet's, that can come anywhere close to describing the experience of the inner light. I will not even attempt to express its power and wonder. Each of you has a unique version of the interior world, like an individual sign the world has been waiting for. By activating your inner vision, you make your outer world more real, alive, and exciting. Try the exercises, and you will fall in love with your creative power to transform yourself and--oh, surprise, to change your world.



Catherine Shainberg, Ph.D., is a renowned teacher, healer, psychologist, and dream and imagery expert. She is the lineage holder for the *Kabbalah of Light*, as transmitted to her by Colette Aboulker-Muscat, revered kabbalist and teacher whose mother was a Sheshet and with whom Shainberg spent ten years of intense study in Jerusalem and an additional 20 years in collaboration. In 1982 she founded the School of Images, dedicated to teaching the techniques of this ancient tradition. The author of *Kabbalah and the Power of Dreaming* and *DreamBirth*, she conducts imagery and dreaming workshops internationally, and at the nine International Schools of Imagery she created around the world.