

MAGICK AND THE WAY OF THE EMPTY HAND

By David Cherubim
(Fratr Aurora Aureae)
Copyright (c) 1994 e.v.
The Order of the
Thelemic Golden Dawn.

“Choose ye an island!
Fortify it!
Dung it about with enginery of war!
I will give you a war-engine.
With it ye shall smite the peoples;
and none shall stand before you.
Lurk! Withdraw! Upon them!
this is the Law of the Battle of Conquest:
thus shall my worship be about my secret house.”
(Liber Legis, III:4-9)

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

There are a number of techniques in the arts of Magick and Karate which are very similar in nature. Magick and Karate are, however, two separate systems of training dedicated to two separate types of activity. Nevertheless they share some common techniques, as well as certain goals of a spiritual and psychological kind.

For example, Kiai, the Karate Shout of Power, is very similar to the magickal art of vibrating Divine Names. Kiai, however, is not really a shout of power, nor is the shout of power the object of Kiai. Kiai signifies the meeting of body-mind and spirit. “Ki” is the symbol for spirit or energy, and “ai” is the symbol for a meeting or union. The shout of power is but the product of this union of body-mind and spirit. The same is true in Magick with regard to the vibration of a Divine Name or Word of Power. The name or word is not the true source of power, but rather is it the union of the body-mind and spirit of the Magician.

Kiai is done from Hara. Hara is “The Center”. Hara is located two inches (three fingers) below the navel. It corresponds to the lower abdomen in the body. But Hara is not just the center of the body; it is the center of our being, a central point of energy which is both inside and outside of the body. In the center of Hara is a vital point of equilibrium where the body-mind and spirit of the Karateka meet. A Karateka is a practitioner of Karate. Ki is a psychophysical energy (spirit). Ki is released through Kiai which originates in the diaphragm and is forced up to the throat by the muscles of the lower abdomen or Hara. This is very similar to the vibration of a Divine Name, which is done from the Central Self of the Magician, where his/her body-mind and spirit are one. And just as the Karateka must move from Hara twenty-four hours a day, so must the Magician always move from the center of his/her being, letting all actions flow out to the periphery from this central point of consciousness.

Let us also think of the Kata, which is a Budo Ritual. (Budo is the name for the Japanese Martial Arts.) Kata is a sequence of forms or movements in which the Karateka fights several opponents in his/her imagination. Kiai is applied at certain points of the Kata when the body-mind and Ki meet in the Hara. Such is very similar to the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, which is also a sequence of movements (kata) in which the Magician banishes (fights) the elemental demons (opponents) and vibrates (shouts) certain Divine Names at certain points in the ritual (kata) while s/he is united with his/her spirit (ki) in the center (hara) of his/her being.

Just as the Magician attains perfection through Ritual Magick, so does the Karateka attain perfection through the Kata. Both Kata and Ritual Magick are forms of Moving Zen, or active forms of meditation. Karate itself is called “Moving Zen”. The word Zen is a Japanese transliteration of the Sanskrit Dhyana (Meditation). The aim of Zen is Satori, which is an instantaneous awakening or inner experience of enlightenment through intuition. Satori is attained through the art of non-attachment, by living in the Spirit of Emptiness. Karate instructs us to move fearlessly and freely through intuition without attachment to anything. Karate literally means “empty hands”, which not only signifies “empty-handed combat”, but it also represents the power of detachment, which constitutes the Spirit of Zen. Such is the nature of Karate-do (Way of the Empty Hand). In Magick we are also instructed to live fearlessly through intuition and to do our Will without lust of result, that is, without attachment.

The Karateka must perform his/her art without interference from the mind. This same principle applies to the Magician, whose Magickal Will ultimately identifies itself with his/her whole being, so that it becomes an unconscious or natural part of his/her personality. In both Karate and Magick we ultimately transcend the need to think about the techniques of the art. Ergo, it becomes an artless art, growing out of the unconscious.

Ultimately the goals of Karate-do and Magick are the same. It is the integration of body-mind and spirit, the central unification of microcosm and macrocosm, and the consequential development of the whole WoMan which constitutes the perfection of his/her soul. This makes for the ultimate form of enlightenment called, in Karate, the Eye of the Storm. It is the attainment of moving Zen, or active meditation, in the center of the battle of life. It is freedom from the enemy within -- the self. Both Karate and Magick constitute a personal battle with the self, so as to transcend that very self. Karate-do teaches us that the only enemy is within, that the true warrior or Budoka must only conquer him/herself if s/he would conquer the so-called enemy without. The same is true of Magick, which teaches us that the only demon (enemy) is inside of the Magician, that it is only by defeating (resolving) this internal demon (complex) that the Magician can overcome all obstacles, to do his/her True Will in freedom, and to accomplish the Great Work.

Love is the law, love under will.