

Drawing the Tree of Life and Jacob's Ladder diagrams

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Drawing the Tree of Life on Acrylic Canvas

Your working acrylic canvas will need to be no less than 50 cm wide. The length is usually one metre but can be as little as 80 cm. The actual drawn tree is 72 cm high and 40 cm wide.

Make a point halfway across the top and bottom edges and draw a straight line between them. (You will need a long straight edge for this - the easiest to find may be the dowling (cylindrical length of wood) for the fixings at the top and bottom of the Tree as these tend to come in lengths of upwards of two metres). Keep this line and the succeeding lines faint as they will be erased subsequently.

With a pair of compasses draw a circle of 16 cm radius with the centre halfway down the vertical line. This is the centre of Tiferet.

Draw two more circles of 16 cm radius centred on the upper and lower points where the first circle intersects the vertical line (Centre of Yesod and Da'at)

The centre of paths Keter-Tiferet, Tiferet-Yesod and Yesod-Malkut are already in place. The final paths will be drawn by means of lines either side of the centre. Before that the guides must be drawn for the remaining paths. Draw paths Malkhut-Hod and Malkut-Netzach by joining the bottom of the lowest circle to the two points at the side where the two lower circles intersect.

Draw paths Yesod-Hod and Yesod-Netzach by joining the lowest point of the middle circle to the intersection of the middle and lower circles.

Draw paths Netzach-Tiferet and Tiferet-Gevurah by a line from the right hand intersection of the middle and lower

Drawing the Jacob's Ladder on Acrylic Canvas



Your working acrylic canvas will need to be no less than 25 cm wide. The length is usually 1 metre (acrylic canvas is usually bought in 1 metre lengths). The actual drawn tree is 84 cm high and 20 cm wide.

Make a point halfway across the top and bottom edges and draw a straight line between them. (You will need a long straight edge for this - the easiest to find may be the dowling for the fixings at the top and bottom of the Tree as these tend to come in lengths of upwards of two metres). Keep this and the succeeding lines faint as they will be erased subsequently.

With a pair of compasses draw a circle of 8 cm radius with the centre halfway down the vertical line. This is the centre of the sefirah Da'at of Yezirah/Yesod of Beriah. You may wish to locate this point slightly below centre to allow more room for the writing above the Ladder (see later).

You can probably drop this start point by up to 6 cm although that will leave the bottom of the drawn Ladder very close to the edge - 3-4 cm. is better.

Draw eight more circles of 8 cm radius centred on the succeeding upper and lower points where the first circle intersects the vertical line so that you have a series of nine overlapping circles.

The following guidelines are based on drawing from lowest

circles to the left hand intersection of the middle and upper circles.

Draw paths Hod-Tiferet and Tiferet-Hesed by a line from the left hand intersection of the middle and lower circles to the right hand intersection of the middle and upper circles.

Draw paths Hod-Gevurah and Gevurah-Binah with a line from the left hand intersection of the middle and lower circles through the left hand intersection of the middle and upper circles and finish the line when it reaches the far edge of the upper circle.

Repeat the previous step on the right hand side to create paths Netzach-Hesed and Hesed-Hokhmah.

Draw paths Netzach-Hod, Hesed-Gevurah and Hokhmah-Binah being horizontal lines between the intersection of the lower and middle circles, the intersection of the middle and upper circles and the points where the side vertical lines meet the top of the upper circle.

Draw paths Binah-Tiferet and Hokhmah-Tiferet from the centre of the middle circle to the tops of the side vertical lines.

Draw paths Hokhmah-Keter and Binah-Keter from the tops of the side vertical lines to the point where the upper circle meets the central vertical line.

Draw the Sefirot plus Da'at with a pencil and compass with a radius of 4cm.

Draw the paths with parallel lines 1cm either side of the guide lines already in place. Begin with the three horizontal paths which run right across the Tree (Hokhmah-Binah, Hesed-Gevurah and Netzach-Hod)

Next complete the three vertical paths marking the 1cm width at top and bottom - leave spaces where these vertical lines meet another path or Sefirah.

Complete the remaining paths.

Erase the pencil markings from the middle of the paths and in the Sefirot.

Colour the triads as desired.

Although there are no set colour schemes for a Tree the following is offered as a suggestion since it corresponds with the chakra system and the colours of the rainbow.

world to highest world but it can be done from highest to lowest if preferred.

The centre of paths on the central column are already in place. The final paths will be drawn by means of lines either side of the centre. Before that the guides must be drawn for the remaining paths. Draw paths Malkut-Hod and Malkut-Netzach at the bottom of the Ladder by joining the bottom of the lowest circle to the two points at the side where the two lower circles intersect.

Draw paths Yesod-Hod and Yesod-Netzach by joining the lowest point of the circle which is one from bottom to the intersection of that circle and the lowest circle.

Draw paths Netzach-Tiferet and Tiferet-Gevurah by a line from the right hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" circle and lowest circles to the left hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" and "second from bottom" circles.

Draw paths Hod-Tiferet and Tiferet-Hesed by a line from the left hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" and lowest circles to the right hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" and "second-from bottom" circles.

Draw paths Hod-Gevurah and Gevurah-Binah with a line from the left hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" and lowest circles through the left hand intersection of the "one-from bottom" and "second-from bottom" circles and finish the line when it reaches the intersection of the "second-from bottom" and "third-from bottom" circles.

Repeat the previous step on the right hand side to create paths Netzach-Hesed and Hesed-Hokhmah.

Draw paths Netzach-Hod, Hesed-Gevurah and Hokhmah-Binah being horizontal lines between the intersection of the lower and middle circles, the intersection of the middle and upper circles and the points where the side vertical lines meet the top of the upper circle.

Draw paths Binah-Tiferet and Hokhmah-Tiferet from the centre of the "one-from bottom" circle to the top of the vertical lines as they have been drawn so far.

Draw paths Hokhmah-Keter and Binah-Keter from the tops of the side vertical lines to the point where the upper circle meets the central vertical line.

Now draw two lines that are additional to an ordinary Tree. These are from Hokhmah to Da'at and from Binah to Da'at.

Scarlet - Hod-Yesod-Malkhut and Netzach-Yesod-Malkhut

Orange - Hod-Netzach-Yesod

Yellow - Hod-Netzach-Tiferet

Blue - Hokhmah-Binah-Tiferet

Purple - Hokhmah-Tiferet-Hesed and Binah-Gevurah-Tiferet

The central part of Hokhmah-Binah-Tiferet between Tiferet and the Hesed-Gevurah line is sometimes colored as a mixture of blue and purple to signify the quality of freewill which the individual can exercise at this point.

Keter-Hokhmah-Binah - white.

Paint the Sefirot and paths white.

Using a black marker pen or similar redraw the edges of the paths and the Sefirot to give a clearer definition.

Paint the surround of the diagram in black which represents the infinity in which the universe is created.

Draw three circles of 20 cm. radius centred on Da'at, Tiferet and Yesod - the middle three Sefirot on the central column. Use a silver marker pen for this which will fit into the extended compass arm. You will need to make sure you have the Rotring attachment which allows you to insert a pen into the compasses rather than the carbon lead.

Label the Sefirot and other parts of the diagram with appropriate names and qualities.

It usually takes two coats of acrylic paint to get a good finish, perhaps three for some areas. The blue paint can sometimes be particularly difficult to work into a smooth appearance.

Do not despair if the finish doesn't look perfect. You are working on the canvas at very close range and when it is hung on a wall and viewed from a distance of a metre or more these apparent blemishes will disappear.

Be particularly careful when re-working the paths and sefirot with a black pen that you don't drag the ruler (which will have taken up some of the ink) over the clean paintwork. Similarly, label the sefirot from top to bottom to avoid smudging what has been written with an unwary nudge of the

Repeat this pattern to the top of the Tree. Beware of spacing out as you ascend the unseen worlds! This particular exercise requires considerable concentration. As a check, the side Sefirot (you only have the points in place at this stage) should alternate between having two paths and four paths leading from them in addition to the vertical paths which connect them above and below on each side.

Draw the Sefirot plus Da'at with a pencil and compass with a radius of 2cm.

Draw the paths with parallel lines 0.5 cm either side of the guide lines already in place. Begin with the horizontal paths which run right across the Tree.

Next complete the vertical paths marking the 0.5 cm width at top and bottom - leave spaces where these vertical lines meet another path or Sefirah.

Complete the remaining paths.

Erase the pencil markings from the middle of the paths and in the Sefirot.

Colour the triads as follows: Azilut - upper and lower faces both white. Beriah - lower face (same as upper face of Yezirah) plus upper side triads (Tiferet-Binah-Gevurah and Tiferet-Hokhmah-Hesed) blue. Lower face of Yezirah (same as upper face of Assiyah) plus upper side triads - purple. Lower face of Assiyah plus upper side triads - scarlet. The colour scheme follows that laid out for the construction of the Tabernacle in Chapters 25-28 and 35-39 of Exodus.

Using a black marker pen or similar redraw the edges of the paths and the Sefirot to give a clearer definition.

Paint the surround of the diagram in black which represents the infinity in which the universe is created.

Draw two semi-circles of 10 cm. radius centred on the top and bottom Sefirot of the central column but halt the semi-circle when you reach a point equivalent to the top and bottom of the Ladder. Draw nine circles of 10 cm. radius centred on the remaining nine Sefirot of the central column. Use a silver marker pen for this which will fit into the extended compass arm. You will need to make sure you have the Rotring attachment which allows you to insert a pen into the compasses rather than the carbon lead.

Label the Sefirot and other parts of the diagram with appropriate names and qualities.

hand.

For attaching rollers it is suggested to use 2cm diameter dowling for the base and 2cm beading for the top. Saw these to the length which fits the canvas and apply two coats of black paint. Use some strong glue to fix them to the front of the Tree. Using drawing pins, pin a piece of picture cord to the rear of the top beading through the canvas, hammer a picture hook into the wall and voilà!

The following can be written in Hebrew above the Ladder on the black border.

At the top - Ain - nothing

Below that - Ain Soph - without end

Below that - Aur Ain Soph - the endless light.

Attach rollers as described in instructions for making the Tree of Life diagram.

Notes on Materials

You will need a large pair of precision compasses to work on this scale - Rotring or similar. These cost around £20 (June 1998) together with the extension arm which is used for the final circles) and the converter for the penholder (another £6).

Any good art shop will advise you on paint and materials - I use Liquitex Basics Acrylic Colours or Windsor and Newton which is better quality but more expensive. You only need a small tube of each colour except for the black.

Brushes - one large (2 inch or similar) brush for the black surround. Something like a 3cm brush will cover most of the rest of the painted areas with a finer brush for filling in the corners.

Pens - choose Eddings or Unipin fineline according to preference and availability.

Acrylic canvas is usually available in three thicknesses - the thicker the canvas the more difficult it is to apply the paint and lettering can be particularly tricky. The middle thickness is usually OK and means that the Tree is more durable than the thinnest canvas.

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