



Assyrian Church Of The East - Los Angeles

St. Mary's Parish Gift Shop Online

TREE OF LIFE candle holder

\$19.76

The Assyrian concept of God, which defined Assur (Ashur) as "the only, universal God" as "the totality of god". Assur himself was beyond human comprehension. Man could know him only through his powers pervading and ruling the universe, which, though emanating from a single source, appeared to man as separate and were accordingly hypostatized as different gods.

The idea of God as "the sum total of gods" is attested in various parts of the ancient Near East already in the 6th c BC, and later in several religions. It certainly also was part and parcel of first-millennium BC Jewish monotheism, as shown by the biblical designation of "God," elohim, which literally means "gods".

The concept of god seated on his throne, presiding over and conversing with a heavenly council or court not only recur in most major biblical prophets and Job. But in later Jewish and Christian traditions as well. The fundamental unity of all divine powers is, however, basic to Judaism, and is encoded in its central symbol, the menorah, now well established as derived from the Ancient Near Eastern sacred tree or "Tree of Life". Its precise symbolism was long kept secret from the masses and therefore surfaces only in medieval Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah.

The Tree of Life of Kabbalah is a multi-layered symbol in which the metaphysic structure of the universe (macrocosm) and the model of the perfect man (microcosm) converge as the "image" of God. It is composed of ten divine powers called sefirit ("[primordial] numbers," lit., "countings"), defined as aspects or attributes of God and systematically associated with parts of his "body," so as to constitute an anthropomorphic whole. It thus effectively depicts God as the "sum total" of his divine powers, "gods." From the viewpoint of Assyrian prophecy, it is of crucial importance that the tree with its entire associated doctrinal apparatus can be shown to be based on a Mesopotamian model perfected in Assyria in the 2nd Millennium BC.

The Assyrian sacred tree, which occasionally takes an anthropomorphic form, can be analyzed as consisting of the "great gods" of the Assyrian pantheon and taken as a schematic representation of the "divine assembly," with Ishtar occupying the "heart" of this divine "body." Like the sefirot, the "great gods" making up the tree were prominently associated with numbers. This fact gives the tree important mystical diminution.

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