Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition Vol2. No. 3, Autumnal Equinox 2002

# Path-working on the Qabalistic Tree of Life by Alex Sumner

### Introduction

"Path-working" is a comparatively new phenomenon in the Western Mystery Tradition, as it does not seem to have existed as an occult practice prior to the occult revival of the late nineteenth century. Yet nowadays it is an established practice amongst many schools of magical thought. Pat Zalewski reveals that it is part of the curriculum for a Theoricus Adeptus Minor of the Golden Dawn<sup>[1]</sup>; it is described in the writings of Dion Fortune<sup>[2]</sup>, Israel Regardie<sup>[3]</sup>, Melitta Denning and Osborne Phillips<sup>[4]</sup> to name but a few.

Simply put, "Path-working" is the art of clairvoyantly investigating the Paths of the Tree of Life. Path-working as a technique seems to have developed from the clairvoyant practices of Adepts in the Stella Matutina - one of the off-shoots of the Golden Dawn:

Another technique, making use of this faculty<sup>[5]</sup>, was described in a paper recording a lecture by Frater Sub Spe. [6] The idea was to re-read the rituals, and then endeavour to re-tread the Paths astrally. One example given, was that the Seer should formulate in imagination a vast pylon, and within its gates he should visualise the Hebrew Letter Tau, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Path. This should be preceded by a study of the Ritual of the Theoricus Grade, especially the Rite of the Kerubic Stations. Then imagining himself passing through this Letter Tau, and entering the Pylon, he should make the appropriate Pentagrams and Hexagrams, and vibrating the Divine Names appropriate to that plane. The resulting vision should be similar to the passage of the Path in the ceremony, but whereas this latter was purely symbolic, the former may be real and dynamic, and may develop into an initiation in the true sense of the word. The same technique may be applied to every Path and to every Sephirah. [7]

However, one should not imagine that when, nowadays, different people in the Western Mystery Tradition refer to Path-working they mean exactly the same thing. For example, in the Aurum Solis, Path-working is a means of raising ones consciousness from a lower Sephirah, to a higher one. The actual Path-working consists of a "guided meditation": the leader or facilitator tells the Path-workers what to experience, rather than leaving it to their own imagination.<sup>[8]</sup>

Dion Fortune, on the other hand, is in favour of such guided meditations up to a point, but advises that the leader of the session (the Hierophant) should leave spaces where the Path-workers can engage in silent reflection, and

thereby come up with their own individual insights. She also recommends her own particular method for the "composition of place", i.e. the creation of the astral scene one experiences at the start of the vision. [9]

Again, one must assume that the Path-working envisaged by Zalewski is different to that attributed by Regardie to Brodie-Innes: the Path-workings required by a Theoricus Adeptus Minor is all 22,on the Tree of Life - a Th.A.M would only have been initiated into 9 paths by that stage of his progress through the order.

Nevertheless, we can express some generalities about all forms of Pathworking: they all concern learning from astrally experiencing the Paths of the Tree of Life; and they almost always feature the Tarot Trumps heavily. This is because Path-Working, being a visual exercise, needs some sort of visual focus: hence the images of the Tarot Trumps are the most convenient for this purpose, and often serve to frame the type of vision that ensues.

I should here point out that in talking about the Paths of the Tree of Life, and Tarot Card attributions, I am mainly referring to the "Golden Dawn" attributions, which are the ones used by the majority of practitioners in the Western Mystery Tradition today. However, a significant number of people have argued for a different set of attributions, for example, Aleister Crowley. Although in his 1907 reference book 777 he published the Golden Dawn attributions, his later work on the Tarot, The Book of Thoth departs from this scheme in that "The Star" and "The Emperor" are placed on (what were) each others' paths - and [10]

This points to a field of what I am certain would be a fruitful field of future research, namely, to what extent does arbitrarily changing the symbols involved affect the nature of the Path-working.

A different, though slightly related question is whether it matters if one uses the traditional Kirscher Tree of Life; or whether some version such as that designed by Isaac Luria is equally or more conducive to Path-working. This will be answered at a later date by my colleague J. S. Kupperman.

# Path-working and the Active Imagination

It seems unlikely that what began as an obscure reference in a secret Magical order would have become a popular practice in the Western Mystery Tradition, had it not been assimilated into Analytical Psychology by C G Jung. Jung developed a technique called "Active Imagination", which is similar to Path-working in that it seems to be mightily similar to Clairvoyance:

...[Y]ou choose a dream, or some other fantasy-image, and concentrate on it by simply catching hold of it and looking at it. ... You then fix this image in the mind by concentrating your attention. Usually it will alter, as the mere fact of contemplating

it animates it. The alterations must be carefully noted down all the time, for they reflect the psychic processes in the unconscious background, which appear in the form of images consisting of conscious memory material. In this way conscious and unconscious are united, just as a waterfall connects above and below. [11]

Jung goes on to say that instead of merely observing the sequence of events, the individual takes part in the scene, as if he is not the controller of the fantasy sequence, but a participator or character therein.

Although, to a certain extent, he looks on from outside, impartially, he is also an acting and suffering figure in the drama of the psyche. This recognition is absolutely necessary and marks an important advance.<sup>[12]</sup>

The ultimate effect of this is, according to Jung, to assimilate lessons from the Unconscious into Consciousness - it thus plays a vital role in the process of "Individuation" - i.e. Jung's term for the process of psychic healing, and the integration of all parts of the psyche.

Active Imagination does not make use of the Tree of Life, nor does it make use of the Tarot Trumps. Yet I believe there is a still a subtle connection. Firstly, Path-working does indeed rely on the Path-worker to "choose a dream, or some other fantasy-image, and concentrate on it" - it so happens that the fantasy-image in question is arbitrarily determined by the symbolism of the Tree of Life in general, and perhaps the appropriate Tarot Trump in particular. Moreover, the process of Path-working requires the Path-worker to recognise, just as in Active Imagination, that he is a character participating in the vision he is experiencing, not merely an observer, and certainly not its detached creator.

Secondly, Jung himself first developed the Active Imagination technique by practising it himself, when he was going through a time of crisis in his life - he had been traumatised by his break-up with Freud. We may guess the extent of this trauma because Jung said, describing the importance of being involved in the vision as opposed to merely an observer, that it is meant to integrate the statements of the unconscious, to assimilate their compensatory content, and thereby produce a whole meaning *which alone makes life worth living and, for not a few people, possible at all* (my emphasis). [13] Could Jung have been speaking impersonally about himself?

During Jung's Active Imagination sessions, he noticed two types of fantasies recurring: one type was related to images from his own past, but another type were "mythological, archetypal, spiritual, and religious". [14] Jung did not understand how these were connected to his own past, although he did recognise that they were symbols of basic drives common to Mankind across the world and throughout history - this was how Jung began to form his theory of the Collective Unconscious.

The irony here is that the symbolism of the Paths of the Tree of Life is "mythological, archetypal, spiritual, and religious" - because this is exactly with what the Hermetic Qabalah concerns itself. Primarily this is through its connection with Astrology, which has preserved the symbolism of the old Greek and Roman religions in an unbroken tradition for over two thousand years. Moreover, I believe that many of the Tarot Trumps are direct representations of Archetypes of the collective unconscious. Take for example, "Death". Death has long been anthropomorphized as "The Grim Reaper", and the thirteenth Tarot Trump (which represents the twenty-fourth path, from Netzach to Tiphereth) reinforces that symbolism. Just how powerful is this as an archetypal image? I received this account whilst researching this article: a woman, who at age five, experienced a series of vivid dreams whilst critically ill. Note that according to her, she had never at that age heard of any of this "Death" imagery.

The dream garden was quite large and I remember that if I stretched my neck up a bit that I could just see over the wall. There were burnt fields of wheat outside.

But my attention was strictly focussed on the stone slab (bier) on which I sat swinging my legs. At the top end of the stone were 2 pillars - one black, one white. The white pillar had red roses twined around it and meeting as a canopy with the white roses from the black pillar. I could smell the perfume as it always seemed to be a warm sunny day when I was there ...

There was someone else in this "garden" too. Sometimes "he" was there when I arrived, sometimes "he" just materialised onto the stone. Imagine if you will, a small child happily sitting at the feet of a skeleton, listening to what Death had to say. And "talk" we did. Well - I chattered/listened and Death placed thoughts in my mind. It worked. The word "transformation" came into it a lot. Sometimes Death would "laugh" (that translated as a ripple/warp in the garden space) over some private joke - like the one about not being able to go through the same door twice. "He" found that one very amusing. I remember always being confused which caused more ripples... [15]

When I asked her what she felt she had learnt from these dreams, she replied:

This "facet" of Death communicated in riddle/oracular form which intrigued the child me. This seems to be the natural medium for the subconscious as seen in works of inspiration and humanity's holy books. it is a powerful imprinting medium methinks. I learnt that Death was a process, much like Life is seen to be. I learn that everything exists in a state of change. As a child I learnt that focus was my only reality. And all of this was very private and sustaining. [16]

Hence, whereas it seems that with the Active Imagination, Jung was drawn inadvertently to the archetypes of the Collective Unconscious; in Pathworking, the Hermetic student is deliberately given a set framework within which to explore those archetypes him- or herself. If we continue the Jungian comparison, we can infer that just as in Analytical Psychology Active Imagination is a vital tool to effect "Individuation", in the Qabalah Pathworking effects a similar kind of process - it is an aid to help the Path-worker progress along the initiatory path.

But do the Paths of the Tree of Life really represent a valid set of Archetypes? It is possible to test this, by seeing how different individuals' experiences of Path-working compare. Let us assume that these individuals each explore a given path, each relying on their own "clairvoyant faculty" (or Active Imagination) to provide their data, and not passively indulging in a completely guided meditation. If the Paths are indeed Archetypal, we should expect to see that the visions produced all share common characteristics, which go beyond what is suggested by the conscious imagery of those Paths. In a series of surveys over the past 6 months, I did see *that this was in fact the case*.

Let us take, for example, the Thirty First Path of the Tree of Life, which is associated with Fire, and with the Tarot Trump "Judgement". I present three excerpts from Path-workings - the first, by myself, which I did approximately two years ago. The second two are accounts which I discovered much more recently: one is from the Aurum Solis, and the other is by the writer J. L. Williams.

...[W]hy associate Fire with Judgement? In a flash of inspiration the answer came - the Trial by Ordeal. In olden times fire was used as a means of trying a person. Whilst the literal use of real fire is obviously crude, yet the metaphysical equivalent is still valid. It is part of the Spiritual path to undergo a Trial by Ordeal - although it is painful, the truth (i.e. the constancy of ones commitment) will eventually ensure one wins through.

Alex Sumner

...We become aware of a throng of beings therein, a throng scarcely perceptible even to our new consciousness, beings of a nature more entirely spiritual than we have previously encountered. The united gaze of great brilliant eyes is fixed silently upon us as we pass through their ranks. We are to be in some unknown manner put to the test, proved by the fire."

Aurum Solis<sup>[17]</sup>

What is meant by this "redeeming Fire"? To many, this sounds overwhelmingly oppressive. However, nestled firmly in this evasive language is an important thought: When we release our worries, both corporeal and ethereal, to the process (that which is the tide of life, of the forces of the cosmos and that which gives

us momentum, motivation and divine inspiration), we do not release our responsibilities - instead, we release all predestined thought, all guilt, all blame, all expectancy (no lust for result), and in the process we find ourselves empty and ready to WORK."

J. L. Williams<sup>[18]</sup>

The first thing we notice is that in each of the three passages, the Pathworkers get the idea of a Trial by Fire, or Proving by Fire. The sense is that the Thirty First Path is encountered at an early stage of an Initiate's career (it joins Malkuth to Hod): hence, it represents an initiatory phase that the young aspirant has to go through. Specifically, it feels like a burning away of redundant aspects of the personality.

Space prevents me from giving details from all the Path-workings I have surveyed, both mine and other peoples. But I have seen much evidence to indicate that generally, the symbolism of the Paths of the Tree of Life is such that different people tend to obtain similar results when working them. In my experience, the paths take on some of the nature of the Sephiroth which lie at their upper-most end, corresponding closely with my ideas of the grades to which those Sephiroth would be attributed. For example:

- The paths , , , . P Basic initiatory challenges for the aspirant;
- ¬, ¬, -qualities of the Personality;
- "," the conflict between materialism (Sensuality) and asceticism (Spirituality) (N.B. these are the paths which form the bridge between the Personality and Individuality);
- م, خ, ح, ط qualities of higher Adeptship;
- 1, 7, 3, 7, 1- ways of making the transition to Supernal consciousness (these are the paths which "Cross the abyss");
- 7, 3, \*- highest, most abstract Theurgy.

All in all Path-working tends to make the Tree of Life far more personal to the individual. At first, the initiate probably only looks on the Tree of Life as a set of correspondences to be memorised: but after Path-working, i.e. experiencing the Tree at a psychic level, the correspondences are connected together in the Initiate's mind through the memories of the astral adventures. It thus becomes easier for the Initiate to invoke those forces in the future, because now they will stir his imagination vividly whereas before they would not.

Furthermore, the experience of Path-working seems to be that the Path-worker goes on a quest to find the lost parts of the self, and finds them through investigating the symbolism of the Tree of Life. When this is viewed

in light of the use of the Major Arcana therein, it reinforces the pre-eminence of the Tarot as well - not just as a method of mere fortune-telling, but as a set of symbols of deep psychological significance. One of the side-effects of Path-working must inevitably be that afterwards, a given Tarot Trump is linked to the mystical revelation which the Path-worker experienced when investigating its corresponding Path. Hence the Path-worker cannot look at the Tarot again in the same light: before it was an arbitrary set of symbols; now they stir memories of great psychic import.

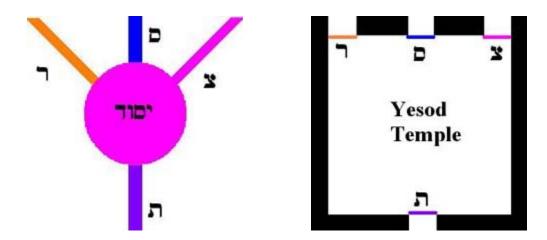
## Path-working: A Suggested Method

The structure of the Path-working session will therefore follow the following lines:

- The preparation of the physical temple, and the Path-worker(s), by a suitable opening;
- The Composition of place. This will itself consist of
  - 1. The visualisation of the starting-point for the path-working;
  - 2. The invocation of the magical forces involved.
- Projection into the visualised scene;
- The main vision, which contrives to reveal to the worker the mysteries of the Path;
- The arrival at the destination-point;
- The closing.

The preparation of the physical temple will be involve furnishing it in the manner indicated by 777 - for example, one should use appropriate colours, incenses etc. The opening in the very least will include the Lesser Banishing Rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram.

The starting point for the Path-working is the Sephira at the "lower" end of the Path. Hence, the composition of place begins with astrally forming a Temple which symbolically represents that Sephira. The Sephirothic Temple is aligned east-west, east being the direction of Kether, and west the direction of Malkuth. There are portals in the walls, corresponding to where the paths which connect to that Sephiroth would be on the glyph of the Tree of Life. For instance, Yesod:



A vital part of the Composition of place at this point consists of populating this temple with the appropriate God-forms. Among these will be the God-form that presides over the Temple (Hierophantic); those that represent the Officers of the Temple; the Kerubic forms which guard the four quarters; and the guardians of the Paths leading to and from the Temple.

The Path-working begins by Opening the Temple, and by propitiating the Hierophantic God-form - to demonstrate that one has the right to be in that Sephira in the first place. At the very least this propitiation will consist of saluting with the appropriate grade-sign, and vibrating the Grand Name of that Sephira (e.g.: Yesod - "Shaddai El Chai").

Then, the Path-worker will need to propitiate the God-form who is the Guardian of the Path that they to work - to demonstrate that they are worthy to enter that Path. I suggest that this itself will at least consist of the Pentagram or Hexagram Ritual (or both) which is associated with the astrological or elemental forces of the Path.

The following three tables give the correspondences - from a "Golden Dawn" point of view. For Zodiacal signs, the Hexagram ritual may be performed in addition to the Pentagram ritual, as the influence of the planetary can often be "felt" just as much as can the Sign's Triplicity.

Path	Tarot Trump	Supreme Pentagram Ritual of	(Supreme Hexagram Ritual of )
15	The Emperor	Aries	Mars
16	The Hierophant	Taurus	Venus
17	The Lovers	Gemini	Mercury
18	The Chariot	Cancer	Moon
19	Strength	Leo	Sun
20	The Hermit	Virgo	Mercury
22	Justice	Libra	Venus
24	Death	Scorpio	Mars

25	Temperance	Sagittarius	Jupiter
26	The Devil	Capricorn	Saturn
28	The Star	Aquarius	Saturn
29	The Moon	Pisces	Jupiter

Path	Tarot Trump	Supreme Hexagram Ritual of	(Supreme Pentagram Ritual of
12	The Magician	Mercury	
13	The High Priestess	Moon	
14	The Empress	Venus	
21	The Wheel of Fortune	Jupiter	
27	The Tower	Mars	
30	The Sun	Sun	
32	The Universe	Saturn	Earth

Path	Tarot Trump	Supreme Pentagram Ritual of	(Supreme Pentagram Ritual of
11	The Fool	Air	
23	The Hanged Man	Water	
31	Judgement	Fire	Spirit

With the Planetary paths, only the Hexagram Ritual should be performed. Conversely, with the Elemental Paths, only the Pentagram Ritual should be performed.

However, one should note that according to 777, two of the Paths have double attributions: path 31, "Judgement", to both Fire and Spirit; and path 32, "The Universe", to both the planet Saturn and the element Earth. To be safe, I did two sets of Pathworkings for each of these paths. So in the case of Path 31, Shin, on the one occasion I worked exclusively with the Fire Pentagram and Fire Attributions; on the other, I worked exclusively with Spirit. Likewise with Path 32, Tav in its Saturn aspect, and Tav in its Earth Aspect. [19]

Therefore, with these two paths, the italicised Pentagram or Hexagram Ritual is meant to be an alternate ritual to be carried out on a *separate* occasion - **not** a complementary ritual to be used on the same occasion.

When the Guardian of the Portal to the Path in question has been satisfied, the Path-worker then passes through the Portal into the Path itself.

Here one should again vibrate the Divine (and Angelic) names associated

with the Astrological or elemental powers to which the Path is attributed. The Divine Names will have been used already in the appropriate Pentagram or Hexagram Ritual. Pictures of a landscape corresponding to the forces of the Path will arise before the mind's eye - perhaps a three dimensional version of the scene represented in the Tarot key. Alternatively, the Path-worker may get a strong impression of a scene which fits with the attributions of the Path, but is unlike the Tarot card. In any event, the vibration of the appropriate names - and the foregoing rituals - should serve to call forth a scene which is at least appropriate to the Path.

The first act of the Path-worker, on vibrating the names and establishing the scene is to remain still and call for a Guide to appear. The Guide will be a personification of the Path in question - in name, appearance, and demeanour. The Guide might be the character or one of the characters depicted in the Tarot key; it might be a God-form corresponding to that path; or it might be an Angel or Spirit qabalistically associated with the path. The Guide might also be a figure which defies easy classification but which nevertheless proves to be appropriate. In any event, the Guide will announce that it recognises the Divine and Angelic names which the Path-worker has been vibrating, and will give the correct sign in salute, where appropriate.

A figure which appears but does not admit to recognising the Divine Names, or the correct Names, nor gives the correct sign, is not a proper Guide. It should be Banished immediately, and the Path-worker should again try to attract a real Guide.

The main part of the Path-working will then consist of the Path-worker exploring the scene, accompanied by the guide. All the while, the Path-worker is attempting to discover, at the mystical, intuitive level, the innate meaning of the path. Practically, this will consist of trying to elicit answers to questions such as:

- What is the symbolic significance of the scenery I am observing? What about the characters I can see in this vision?
- How does what I am experiencing relate to this Path's Tarot correspondence? To its Astrological or elemental correspondence? To its correspondence in the <u>Sepher Yetzirah</u>?
- How do each of these correspondences relate to each other?
- What about the magical power or powers associated with this Path? What do I need to know in order to exercise them properly?
- How do I make the transition from the mode of consciousness represented by the Sephira at the beginning of the Path, to that of the Sephira at the end?

The last question is particularly important, as it is the one that enables the Path-worker to enter the destination-Sephira, and thus bring the Path-working

to its natural conclusion.

Ideally, the combined effects of the invocations, the visualisations, and the consideration of all the Qabalistic data regarding that Path will cause the Path-worker to have a flash of intuition which transcends the merely astral phenomena experienced during the Path-working session. This flash of intuition will not merely answer the Path-worker's questions, but will be a source of inspiration for him or her long after the Path-working session has finished.

Assuming that this has happened, the Path-worker may then enter the destination-Sephira, in the form of another Sephirothic Temple. The Path-worker should now propitiate the Hierophantic God-form of the destination Temple - by vibrating the Divine Name associated therewith.

The Closing of the session will then consist of closing the Destination-Sephirothic Temple - in the sense that the Path-working is essentially an initiation into the destination-Sephirah. The Path-worker should thereafter astrally return to Malkuth, so that the energies raised in the session become fully grounded. Only after this has been done should the Path-worker attempt to return to normal consciousness.

#### Index

# Appendix: The Paths of the Tree of Life

The following table gives the Paths of the Tree of Life, according to the "Golden Dawn" system of classification.

Path Number [20]	Hebrew Letter	Links	Tarot Trump	Astrological/Elemental Correspondence
11	*	Chokmah - Kether	The Fool	Air
12	л	Binah - Kether	The Magician	Mercury
13	п	Tiphereth - Kether	The High Priestess	Luna
14	٢	Binah - Chokmah	The Empress	Venus
15	Æ	Tiphereth - Chokmah	The Emperor	Aries
16	٢	Chesed - Chokmah	The Hierophant	Taurus
17	7	Tiphereth - Binah	The Lovers	Gemini
18	Ľ	Geburah - Binah	The Chariot	Cancer
19	ם	Geburah - Chesed	Strength	Leo
20	ŕ	Tipheret - Chesed	The Hermit	Jupiter
21	_		The Wheel of	* **

21	n	Netzach - Chesed	Fortune	Vırgo
22	5	Tiphereth - Geburah	Justice	Libra
23	Д	Hod - Geburah	The Hanged Man	Water
24	ח	Netzach - Tiphereth	Death	Scorpio
25	D	Yesod - Tiphereth	Temperance	Sagittarius
26	ע	Hod - Tiphereth	The Devil	Capricorn
27	ค	Hod - Netzach	The Tower	Mars
28	и	Yesod - Netzach	The Star	Aquarius
29	٦	Malkuth - Netzach	The Moon	Pisces
30	٢	Yesod - Hod	The Sun	Sol
31	Ð	Malkuth - Hod	Judegement	Fire <i>or</i> Spirit
32	Д	Malkuth - Yesod	The Universe	Saturn or Earth

## Index

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all the members of the MSN Community "Pathworking Symposium", some of whose contributions to that forum I feature in this article.

http://communities.msn.com/PathworkingSymposium/

Index

# **Bibliography**

Crowley, Aleister: 777

Crowley, Aleister: The Book of Thoth.

Crowley, Vivianne: Jungian Spirituality, Thorsons, 1998.

Denning, Melitta and Phillips, Osborne: The Sword and the Serpent

Fortune, Dion: The Mystical Qabalah New Edition, Thoth.

Jung, Carl Gustav: Collected Works, Volume 14.

Regardie, Israel: The Art and Meaning of Magic, Helios 1969.

Regardie, Israel: <u>The Golden Dawn</u>, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, Llewellyn Publications 1989.

Williams, J. L.: <u>The Rites of Life: Pathworking, Tarot and the Qabalistic Tree of Life, 2001.</u>

Zalewski, Patrick: <u>Secret Inner Order Rituals of the Golden Dawn</u>, Falcon Press 1988.

#### Index

### **Notes**

- [1] Thoth Hermes Temple Study Course for Adeptus Minor 5=6, p.21, Secret Inner Order Rituals of the Golden Dawn, Patrick Zalewski.
- [2] Chapter 28, The Mystical Qabalah, Dion Fortune.
- [3] The Meaning of Magic, The Art and Meaning of Magic, Israel Regardie.
- [4] Book 1 Appendix C, The Sword and the Serpent, Melitta Denning & Osborne Phillips.
- [5] I.e. Clairvoyance.
- [6] J. W. Brodie-Innes.
- [7] Regardie, The Golden Dawn, pp. 463 464.
- [8] Denning & Phillips, op. cit.
- [9] Fortune, op. cit.
- [10] For Crowley's reasoning as to why this swap is made, see *The Book of Thoth*, *III The Roman Numbers of the Trumps*.
- [11] Jung, The Conjunction, Collected Works, Vol 14, par. 706.
- [12] Ibid., par. 753.
- [13] *Ibid.* par. 756.
- [14] Jungian Spirituality, Vivianne Crowley, p.45.
- [15] Posted by "Sat Anpu" to the site http://communities.msn.com/PathworkingSymposium/.
- [16] *Ibid*.
- [17] Dennings & Phillips, op. cit.
- [18] The Rites of Life: Pathworking, Tarot and the Qabalistic Tree of Life Life, J.L. Williams, 2001. See also http://www.dragonflycreative.com/bookexcerpts.html

[19]

There are therefore two letters of the alphabet which have to do double duty.

The element of Fire is very close kin to the idea of Spirit; so the letter Shin, belonging to Fire, may be taken to mean Spirit as well. There is a special reason why this should be so, although it only applies in later ages, since the introduction of the dogma that Spirit rules the four elements, and the formation of the "Pentagram of Salvation" connected with the Hebrew word IHShVH, Yeheshuah.

"With regard to Earth, it was considered adequate to make the letter Tau, belonging to Saturn, correspond also to Earth.

"These additions are clear evidence that the Tarot took definite and arbitrary steps to assert the new discovery in Magick some two thousand years ago; for no system is more rigid than a Hebrew system. And the system of the Sepher Yetzirah is the deepest rooted of all the elements of the Hebrew system, the most dogmatic of them all."

The Book of Thoth, Aleister Crowley, III The Atu of Tahuti.

[20] The Path Number corresponds to the Path of the Sepher Yetzirah, and to the row in 777.

Index