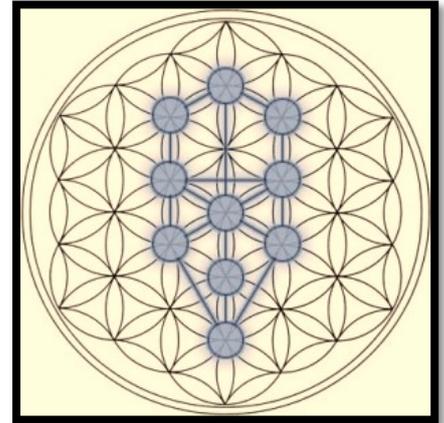


KABBALAH

The Tree of Life:

The 22 paths of The Tree of Life ("Etz Haim") in Kabbalah reflect the 22 primeval vibrations that formed the Hebrew Alphabet. Thus, sound, form and meaning are all coordinated in one cohesive whole. Each is a different manifestation of a singular profound essence. As you see in the image, the Tree seamlessly embeds within the geometrical form known as the Flower of Life, which is evident throughout living systems and represented in countless ancient cultures. *Take a moment to feel the significance of this universal recognition of coherence.*



The Paths and the Alphabet:

The 22 letters/vibrations/paths within the Tree of Life connect the Sephiroth (the spherical points of the Tree): these key vibrational patterns are "emanations" and represent the powers of the soul. Each of the 10 Sephira is defined and acts as a chain of emanation, with each unfolding and evolving the next: each Sephira relates and mediates the influence of the others. They are: Kether ("crown"), Chokmah ("wisdom"), Binah ("understanding"), Chesed ("kindness/mercy"), Geburah ("severity"), Tiphereth ("beauty/harmony"), Netzach ("victory"), Hod ("glory/spendor"), Yesod ("foundation"), Malkuth ("kingdom").

The 22 paths connecting the Sephiroth consist of:

- 3 "Mother Letters" (Aleph, Mem, Shin): These represent *Awareness*.
- 7 "Double Letters" (Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Pe. Resh, Tau): These represent *Space*.
- 12 "Simple Letters" (Hey, Vau, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, Ayin, Tzaddi, Qof): These reflect the 12 constellations of the zodiac and represent *Time*.

The Pillars:

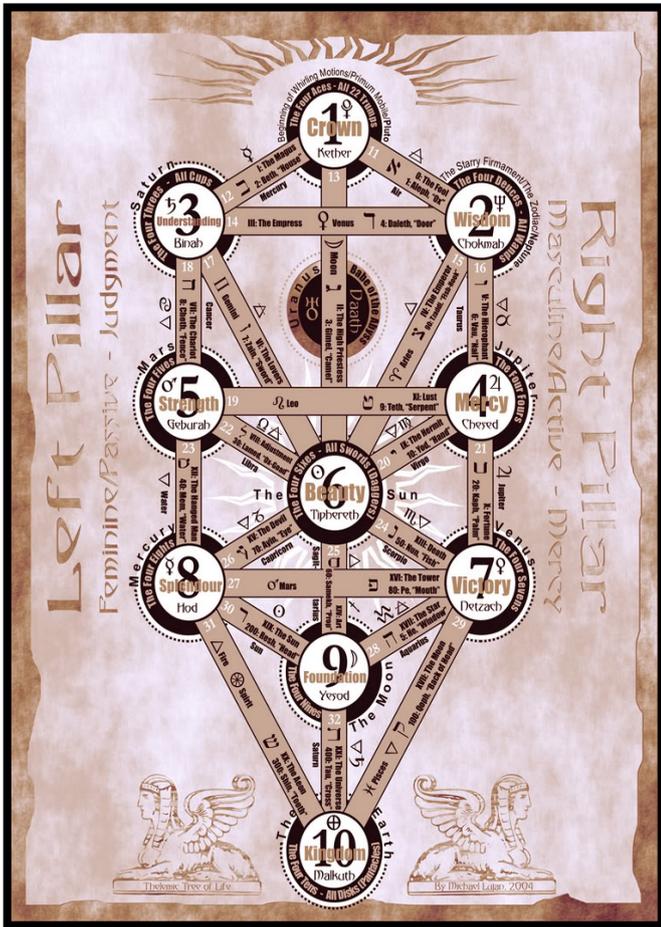
Three vertical pillars comprise the Tree of Life. The Pillars are a diagrammatic representation of the 3 fundamental forces of life: positive/+, negative/-, and neutral/0.

- The LEFT Pillar is the pillar of SEVERITY-DESTRUCTION. This is the black feminine pillar of passivity, form, contraction, restriction, matter, and is the negative pole of the Tree. The Sephira Binah, Geburah and Hod comprise this pillar.
- The RIGHT Pillar is the pillar of MERCY-CREATION. This is the white masculine pillar of activity, force, expansion, movement, energy, and is the positive pole of the Tree. The Sephira of Chokmah, Chesed and Netzach comprise this pillar.
- The MIDDLE Pillar is the pillar of MILDNESS-HARMONY. This is the central pillar that has no charge. It is cosmic awareness, consciousness, equilibrium, stillness, and the neutral "present moment" pole of the Tree. The Sephira of Kether, Tiphereth, Yesod and Malkuth comprise this pillar. The non-Sephira Da'ath is also on this Pillar.

You are walking The Path of Lamed.

Lamed is the 12th path within the Tree and the 12th letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. (It is also recognized as "22" when all elements of the Tree are considered, including the 10 foundational Sephira: this is known as "The 32 Paths of Wisdom".) Lamed, meaning "ox goad" and also "to learn" and "to teach", connects the 5th Sephira of Geburah (meaning "strength" and which is associated with the planet Mars) with the 6th Sephira of Tiphereth

(meaning "beauty" and which is associated with the sun). The numerical value of Lamed is 30, and the meditations associated are "The Woman Justified" and "By Equilibrium and Self Sacrifice is the Gate". This is a diagonal path, with the Lamed journey representing "adjustment", balance, and evolution. Additionally, the number 30 contains the meaning of "he/she will be": the allowance of opposites and the unification to evolve the wholeness of the soul.



You as Lamed are here to connect Mars and Sun, action and soul, will and morality. The path of Lamed is a path of strength, knowledge, and evolving the capacity emanate the beauty of your soul. Tiphereth (*Beauty*) is inherent to your journey as it is one of your Sephiroth, and one that importantly lies at the heart of the Tree and which connects 6 paths. It represents myriad things, but primarily it is about the core of what it means to be human: it is about the soul's evolution and expressing its beauty (balance, grace, will, humility, wholeness, authentic empowerment). As with some other paths, Lamed leads the journeyer back to the heart of the tree; however, Lamed is identified as a uniquely important path, one which has occult significance and connection to the "Divine Mystery" even though the depth of this Kabbalistic meaning remains hidden as it can only be known by those who have walked into and experienced The Mystery.

With Lamed embodied, your path is about acquiring knowledge and teaching. You are the "ox goad", the prod, here to lead others. Your growth edges lie in accessing wholeness and tempering willful "base metal" and evolving it into "gold". In fact, gold is a symbol of Tiphereth, reflecting the profound alchemical journey inherent on this path.

22 Kabbalah Paths and 22 Tarot Archetypes:

The Kabbalistic wisdom tradition and the Tarot are inextricably linked by the form, function, enigmatic meaning, and quantity of "22". There are 22 Kabbalah paths and 22 major arcana Tarot archetypes. Although the origination portal providing this link can be glimpsed and intuited, what we know for certain is that a (natural, inherent) alignment between the two exists that speaks to the evolutionary processes of life.

The Path of Lamed is directly linked to the Tarot archetype of "Strength".

According to Ann Skea:

“The Path of Lamed is one of the most important paths on the Cabbalistic Tree. Like some earlier paths, it leads the journeyer back to the heart of the Tree and to the revelations of Tiphereth, but its occult significance and its closeness to the Divine Mystery of enlightenment is such that much of its Cabbalistic meaning remains hidden. Only initiates who have been suitably prepared and have experienced the Mystery may know the secrets.



All who approached the Mystery at Eleusis, for example, were required to have certain knowledge and to undergo special rituals. The revelation of the Mystery “opened their eyes” and they were enlightened, but the exact nature of that mystical revelation was so secret that still, after some two-and-a-half thousand years, it remains unknown. We know that the worshippers purified themselves in the sea and made a ritual sacrifice to the Goddess Demeter, and that their journey to the Sanctuary was made with much ceremony, with dance and with the cry, “Iaccus!”. Enlightenment, which marked initiation, was different for each individual. But, in any case, a vow of secrecy protected the Divine Mystery.

The same is true of many Cabbalistic, Hermetic, Alchemical and Magical associations, where to break the vow of secrecy is regarded (metaphorically) as the death of the initiate. Aleister Crowley, an initiate of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, therefore wrote of the Path of Lamed and the Tarot card of Strength in riddles, and in exhortations with obscure references to “rapture and vigour”, “ecstasy” and “grave mysteries”: “Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.” “I am the Snake that giveth Knowledge and Delight and bright glory, to stir the hearts of men with drunkenness..”... “Love one another with burning hearts... ”.

More plainly, he describes this card as “the most powerful of the Zodiacal cards, [it] represents the most critical of all the operations of magick and of alchemy”. (*The Book of Thoth*).

...the Path of Lamed is specifically associated in the Mysteries with Woman (with Demeter and Persephone, with the Shekinah, and with the Scarlet Woman) and with the relationship between human and Divine energies. At this stage of the journey, the Male energies of the previous Path are given form in the Divine passions embodied in the Female which, through the strength and judgement derived from Sephira 5 (Gevurah), may be brought into equilibrium at Sephira 62. Through control will come enlightenment and a rebirth which will release the Initiate’s full potential. But Lamed, the Ox-goad, indicates that the necessary strength for rebirth on this path will only be learned through the prick of pain.

In some respects, one approaching initiation on this Path is still the Fool and, so, may express his or her passions too freely. And uncontrolled passions, and especially uncontrolled love, commonly bring exploitation, abuse, censure, rejection, jealousy and hatred to the Foolish.

The sorrow which results from this is the spur of pain, the ox-goad, which should teach understanding and restraint. But control of the Wolf energies is not an easy or comfortable lesson to learn."

Lamed is your path.

