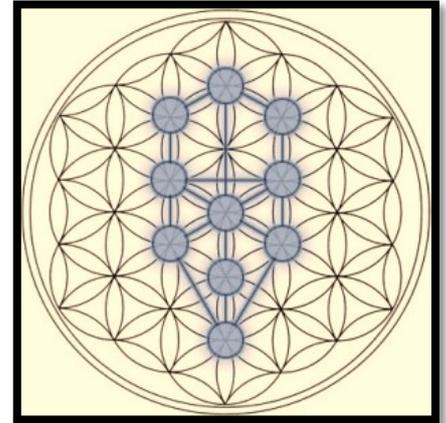


KABBALAH

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 Qoph/Qof.

Qoph is the 19th path within the Tree of Life and the 19th letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. (It is also recognized as "29" when all elements of the Tree are considered, including each of the 10 foundational Sephira: this is known as "The 32 Paths of Wisdom".)

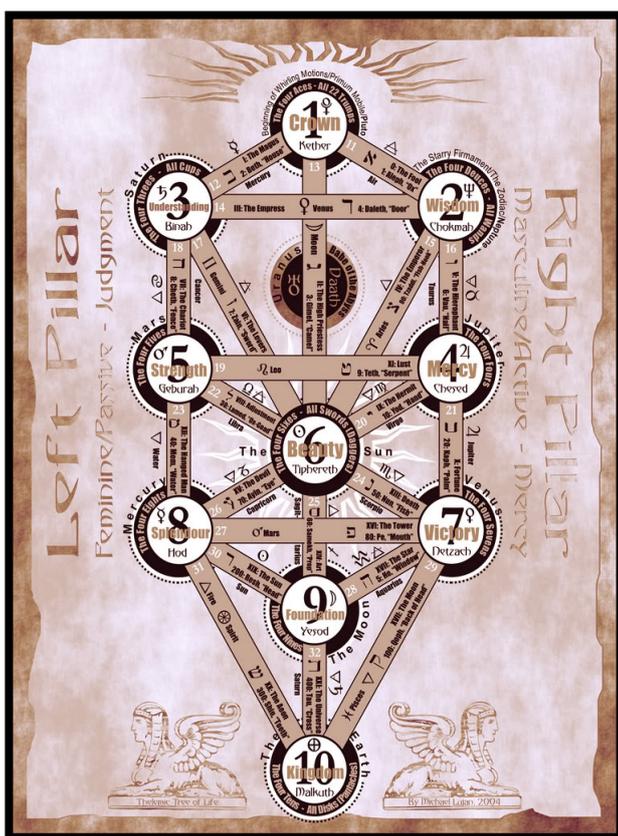
Qoph, meaning "back of the head" in Hebrew, is the path of perfecting life force.

Qoph connects the 7th Sephira of Netzach (meaning “victory/endurance/eternity”) with the 10th Sephira of Malkuth (meaning “kingdom”). Qoph is the threshold between the spiritual realm and the earthly realm. Strong sensitivity, deep imagination and excellent psychic abilities are encoded. This is the path of mystics. Although inherent difficulties exist, those who successfully navigate the hurdles of this life journey open new realities for themselves and for the world as a whole. Qoph, and the three letters that follow it (resh, shin and tau) represent humankind’s perfected state. Thus, Qoph is the embodiment of the perfected channeling and use of life force.

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 Qoph is directly linked to the Tarot archetype of “The Moon”.



According to Ann Skea:

“The Path of the Moon joins Netzach (Sephira 7) to Malkuth (Sephira 10) at the very bottom of the Tree. It takes the journeyer far from the Divine Source, into the wholly material world of Malkuth, The Kingdom, where all the accumulated energies of the Tree take fixed form. On this Path, the Moon is at its darkest and little of its reflected light remains to guide the traveller through the waters which are the governing Element here. Pisces, the last sign of the astrological year, rules these waters, and the all-embracing, formlessness of this sign is governed, now, by Mars.

The Goddess associated with Netzach is Venus-Aphrodite, still in her role of Hag, Hecate, ‘Ruler of flux and reflux’, Goddess of Death and Life. But the Goddess of Malkuth is the Inferior Mother, the Moony reflection of the All Mother, Binah, in whom all form is potentially present and who, now, brings about the realization of that potential. In Malkuth, she has a terrible aspect but she is the Indwelling Female Spirit of the Divine in all matter; she is the Soul of the World, the Shekinah, Gaia.

The unity of the Divine is expressed through her in material diversity – ‘As above, so below’, in Hermetic terms – but with this separation and fixity comes imbalance. Our own fallibility in the discrimination of differences between things also results in misjudgment and error. So, Malkuth is Maya, the World of Illusion, and it is the World of Shells in which the Divine Spark is present but exiled from the Divine Source: it is a fallen world in which our own Souls lie buried.

Malkuth, however, is the ‘Gateway of Resurrection’. It is a place of endings and beginnings: the Moon wanes and waxes and the endless cycles of Nature continue. The Cabbalist’s Soul can

begin to move from here towards the pure light of the Source: the female and male potencies of the Divine may be reunited in balance and harmony, and wholeness regained, and the Inferior Mother, the Shekinah, may return from exile and become The Bride.

The Hebrew letter of this Path is Qoph, which is variously translated as 'The Back of the Head', 'Monkey' or 'Ape'. In the Sepher Yetzirah, Qoph is associated with the Corporeal Intelligence, the potencies of the cerebellum, the most primitive part of the human brain, the involuntary matrix which we inherit from our earliest ancestors and which co-ordinates all our movements. Through the cerebellum we are linked to our animal origins and, thus, to Nature. Cabbalists believe that the Tzaddi on this Path can find and unearth the buried Divine Spark and reunite it with the Source; that the Soul acting through the cerebellum can restore order to Nature. This for Alchemists too, is the seat of 'Anima', the place where memory and motion are joined, the place where The Golden Chain of Homer links us to Heaven² and where the spirit of the Moon, the imagination, acts as the medium through which Nature's order may be restored. This is the place where, in Ted's words, "those prehistoric feelings and satisfactions" (PIM 76) reside; it is "the dark hole in the head" ('the Thought Fox', THCP 21) where our imagination can make us one with Nature.



The shape of the letter Qoph, combines two letters: Resh (meaning 'Head' or 'Beginning') and Zayin ('sword' or 'Weapon'). In this combined group, Zayin, significantly, is written so that it descends below the line of text, signifying that Qoph takes the journeyer (and the enlightened Tzaddi fishing for Divine Sparks) down into the sunless depths of Malkuth, where the only light is the reflected light of the Moon.

On the Traditional Tarot card, the mask-like face of a waning moon hangs over a bare landscape onto which Yods of Divine Spirit are falling. Two dog-like creatures (sometimes identified as Anubis and Ap-uat, the Egyptian gods which guide the soul through the underworld) howl at the moon and guard the way to the open skyline. And two towers (like the Pillars of the Sephirothic Tree) stand on the distant horizon on either side of the open way. In the foreground, taking up almost half of the card, is a lake the waters of which, as on the Path of the Star, are the Waters of Life, the Bitter Sea of Binah, and, most importantly for a shamanic poet, the waters of the human subconscious. Dominating these waters, is a crab-like creature with its pincers and legs outstretched. It



is a creature native to these waters, a creature with jointed legs, simple eyes, devouring jaws and a protective armour which it sheds as it grows and metamorphoses, so that these waters are littered with shells. It is a creature of nightmares, but it is also a symbol of transformation and rebirth.