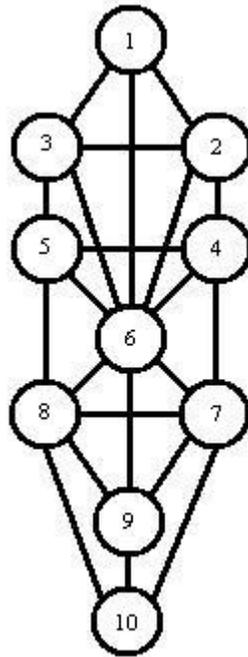


# The Decad of Creation

## Sacred Geometry upon the Tree of Life

Aaron Leitch



One of the foundational texts of the Hebrew Qabalah is entitled the *Sepher Yetzirah*- the Book of Formation (or Creation). Likely written sometime near the dawn of the Common Era, it is a particularly Pythagorean interpretation of the Biblical formation of the universe. It describes God as manipulating both number and sound to accomplish the Creation. Keep in mind that sound- especially in the form of musical scales- is itself an important mathematical study.

The numbers used by God to create are, of course, the same decad (numbers 1-10) contemplated by Pythagoras and which form the basis of our own number systems to this day. This is actually more cultural than actual, as other base-number systems are possible. We use our base-ten mathematical system to illustrate the underlying principals of the universe- such as physics- therefore we assign special significance to the ten numbers that compose that system.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* associates the decad with a Qabalistic concept called the ten "Sephiroth"- or Divine Sayings. The name likely originates with the ten instances of "God said..." found in Genesis I. Each Sephirah embodies one particular aspect of God during the act of Creation.

As we will see below, the *Sepher Yetzirah* personified the Sephiroth as super-celestial Archangels.<sup>1</sup> They are also presented as the embodiment of the mathematical decad. According to the text, God created the universe via "Number, Writing and Speech." Of Number, we are told in the first chapter:

2. Ten are the numbers, as are the Sephiroth...
3. The ten numbers formed from nothing are the Decad: these are seen in the fingers of the hands, five on one, five on the other, and over them is the Covenant by voice spiritual...
4. Ten are the numbers of the ineffable Sephiroth, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Learn this wisdom, and be wise in the understanding of it, investigate these numbers, and draw knowledge from them, fix the design in its purity, and pass from it to its Creator seated on his throne.
5. These Ten Numbers, beyond the Infinite one, have the boundless realms, boundless origin and end, an abyss of good and one of evil, boundless height and depth, East and West, North and South, and the one only God and king, faithful forever seated on his throne, shall rule over all, forever and ever.
6. These ten Sephiroth which are ineffable, whose appearance is like scintillating flames, have no end but are infinite. The word of God is in them as they burst forth, and as they return; they obey the divine command, rushing along as a whirlwind, returning to prostrate themselves at his throne.

In time, these Sephiroth would become associated with the Qabalistic Tree of Life, which is itself divided according to the Pythagorean decad. (See the diagram at the head of this essay.) In this model, the Sephiroth are treated less like Archangels, and more like classifications of the ten aspects of God during the Creation. Each has its own

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<sup>1</sup> The *Sepher Yetzirah* likely modeled its concept of the Sephiroth upon the Gnostic Aeons. The Aeons are also super-celestial beings who embody aspects of the Mind of God.

Hebrew Name of God, Archangel, Angelic Choir and various astrological correspondences.

When the Tree of Life is studied in this way- specifically as a model of the Creation outlined in Genesis- it is called *Mahaseh Berashith* (the Work of Creation). It is a contemplation of exactly *how* the universe was fashioned via the decad of Sephiroth. Such contemplation can take many forms, and one of the most common is to consider how God utilized Number (and thus Geometry) in the architecture of All.

This essay is an example of a *Mahaseh Berashith* contemplation. I will focus upon the ten verses in Genesis containing the words "God said...", and elaborate upon them using Number and Geometry to illustrate each aspect of the Creation. This is not intended to be authoritative or definitive. In fact, there are *many* directions one might take these same meditations, and I encourage each student to do so.

## 1. Kether (Crown)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let there be Light.' and there was Light." -Gen. 1:3**



The first Sephirah is entitled "Kether" (the Crown). It is the first and highest of the Sephiroth, closest to the realm of God. In fact, from our position here on Earth, it is hardly separate from God. It is the Highest Divine Light and the Source of All.

At this particular point in Genesis, nothing has actually been created yet. Everything still exists strictly as potential within the Mind of God- the realm of pure Idea. It predates the dual (masculine-feminine) processes of creation- which would take the ideas into the blueprint and then building stages. I tend to relate Kether to the "Cosmic Egg" of the Big Bang Theory. The Cosmic Egg, too, contained the entire physical universe within it, yet was in a state of Unity prior to its explosion.

Thus, we can see how the number One embodies this concept. It is a single digit-Unity; yet it is from the number One that all other numbers will arise. Sacred Geometry associates the number One, called the Monad, with the geometric point. The point has no

mathematical dimensions of length, width or depth, and therefore does not "exist" in any tangible sense. It is hypothetical, accepted merely on the strength of logic, and faith in that logic. The line- length, the first dimension- can not exist without a point at either end. Therefore, the geometric point is a nothingness from which everything manifests.

This description also fits Kether as the pure potential that pre-exists any actual creation or manifestation. The point itself is something of a mathematical paradox- how can one join together two "nothings" and end up with one "something"? This is the same paradox of Creation- how did Something manifest out of absolute Nothingness? This *ex nihilo* birth of the Tree of Life from the Divine Source is embodied in Kether, the Crown (and root) of the Tree.

## **2. Chockmah (Wisdom)**

**"And Elohim said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the Waters, and let it divide the Waters from the Waters.'" - Gen. 1:6**



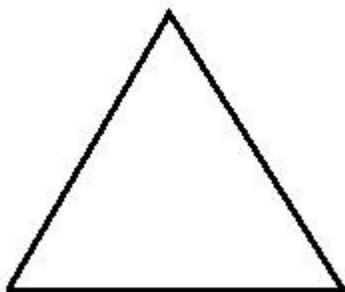
The second Sephirah is entitled "Chockmah" (Wisdom). The sphere of the Zodiac is found here, because the belt of fixed stars represents a great barrier that separates the Divine Realm from the manifest universe. As such, this Sephirah represents division and duality- represented by the separation of the Waters of the Deep into upper and lower.

As the Cosmic Egg represents Unity, the universe that sprang from it represents Duality. Magickal theory has long described the universe as essentially dual in nature. The most immediate example would be the "As Above, So Below" tenet of Hermeticism. The Yin and Yang of Eastern mysticism, the Masonic Pillars of Solomon's Temple and the King and Queen of Alchemy are further examples. In the Qabalah, we find this duality represented by Aima (Mother) and Abba (Father). All that exists- either physical or merely conceptual- must also have its equal and opposite. Positive and negative- also called active and passive, or male and female- are the two building blocks of reality.

Numerology reflects these ideas. The number One leads naturally to Two- Unity is split into Duality. Remember that it takes *two* geometric points to form the line. Therefore, the Line is the geometrical shape of Chockmah, the second sphere- representing the first mathematical dimension. The only thing in physical reality that is truly first dimensional is energy- as it can travel from point A to point B (length) yet has absolutely no width to measure. Therefore Chockmah also represents the energy used in the Creation.

### 3. Binah (Understanding)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let the Waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so." - Gen. 1:9**



Binah is the Sphere of Saturn- the slowest of the Planets, which also marks the upper barrier of the Seven Heavens. Saturn is known to astrologers as the force of Limitation. In the first chapter of Genesis, this is shown by the restriction of the Waters into one area- the confining of the waters of the Abyss. At the same time, Binah is the Great Mother (Aima) impregnated by the Father (Abba), and from whom the lower Spheres of the Tree will emanate.

At this point the Numerology begins to take on some depth. Three is born from two, just as Mother and Father create Child. In this case, the Children are the lower seven Sephiroth of the Tree. Three is a number of much mystery: Duality is, indeed, the essential Law of the Universe- but Duality naturally produces Triplicity. For every Thesis there is an Antithesis, and for each pair of these there is a Synthesis.

In the realm of geometry, Binah brings us to the second dimension- the plane (length plus width). Incidentally, the most basic form a plane can take is the Triangle- corresponding to Binah's natural number of Three. In this case, the plane in question is

the plane of manifestation. No physical matter is involved at the stage of Binah, but the "space-time continuum" has been established. This may be exactly why the Triangle is classically associated with the evocation of spirits to visible appearance.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Chesed (Mercy)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let the Earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth.' And it was so." - Gen. 1:11**



Chesed is the Sphere of Jupiter, the Force of Mercy and Abundance- especially the abundance of vegetation- as shown in the above Genesis verse. This Sphere brings forth the life that was germinated in Binah.

Chesed is the fourth Sphere, and here an important numerological turn is taken. Four is not simply progression from three. Considering the law of Triplicity, we can view the number four as a new beginning arising from the completion of the previous three stages. A great example of this can be found in the four Philosophical Elements. The *Sepher Yetzirah* describes only three Elements proper- those of Fire, Water, and Air. Earth is something of a hypothetical fourth Element, and is actually a combination of the other Three. Thus it is that Chesed is also a creative force, beginning anew the process initiated in Chockmah, only upon a lower level.

Four also indicates the geometry of this sphere, which may be represented by the Square or the equal-armed Cross. This is a symbol of fixation and stability, representing all four Elements as the basic building blocks of reality. They are not physical matter so much as the *qualities* that physical matter will possess, or the *conditions* that will give rise to matter.<sup>3</sup> They are an environment within which the physical can manifest- thus

<sup>2</sup> As we see in such magickal texts as the *Goetia* and derivative works.

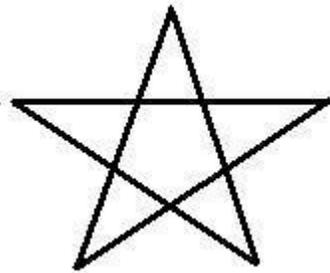
<sup>3</sup> The four Philosophical Elements are described in Alchemical texts as various combinations of the qualities of heat and moisture. Fire is hot and dry, Water is cold and moist, Air is hot and moist and

adding a third mathematical dimension of depth to the length and width.

Thus, rather than an actual square, it is properly a *cube* we find here. This is the third dimension in which you and I live; yet it is important to understand that nothing is manifest at this stage upon the Tree. This Sphere might be likened to the quantum realm of physics, which contains all the basic components of reality, but still exists in a state of perceived Chaos.

## 5. Gevurah (Strength or Severity)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.' And it was so." - Gen. 1:14-15**



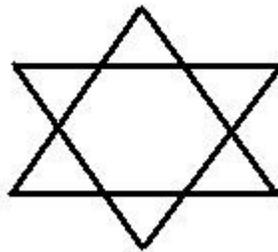
Gevurah is the sphere of Mars, associated with Divine wrath, warfare and iron-fisted rule. It represents the trials by fire that meet us in life, which are called "ordeals" in mystical terms. I might add that ancient kings often regarded war as such an ordeal. They felt war to be a necessary thing by which the Gods settled disputes between kingdoms.. It is thus that Gevurah is upon the Holy Tree of Life, rather than relegated to the demonic *Qliphoth* beneath the Tree.

Gevurah's number is Five, which relates to the points of the Pentagram. This is a direct continuation of the Four Elements concept of Chesed. Now, however, the Fifth Element of Spirit has been added to rule over and bind the others. It is the Spirit that reigns-in the Elements and forces them into an order that will allow manifestation. If Chesed was the establishment of the quantum realm, then perhaps Gevurah is the sub-atomic realm- where we find the first elements of matter measurable to modern science.

All of this is embodied in the Genesis verse by the symbolism of the Luminaries: The Sun, Moon and stars are traditionally seen as rulers of the world, as well as the sources of the Divine Spirit that shines upon the Earth. This view arises from the study of astrology, where the Sun and Moon are described as the rulers of a horoscope. Thus, they are fitting symbols of the "Rule of Spirit over the Elements"- or the Pentagram.

## 6. Tiphareth (Beauty or Majesty)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.'" - Gen. 1:20**



Tiphareth, the Sphere of the Sun, is a very special sphere indeed. It is the lower manifestation of Kether, the center of *LVX* (Latin for "Light") in the universe, and the Heart of the Tree over-all. Though Kether is the source of energy to the Tree, it is Tiphareth which meters that energy to the other Spheres. Notice, in the diagram at the beginning of this essay, that Tiphareth is connected by pathways to *all* of the central Sephiroth of the Tree. This sphere embodies the concept of the Sun as the center of the Solar System and Source of Light unto the world. Just as the Moon is a reflection of the Sun, so too is the Sun a reflection of the Divine Light of Kether.

The Genesis verse for Tiphareth speaks of the first life in the world arising from the sea. Tiphareth is often described as the Son of the Father and Mother (Chockmah and Binah). Therefore, Tiphareth properly embodies the life that sprang from the Sea of Binah.

The natural processes and cycles necessary to life become apparent here, as illustrated by the Sun's rising and falling through the Day and the Year. These solar cycles represent the death and rebirth of the Forces of Life: the Sun descends into the

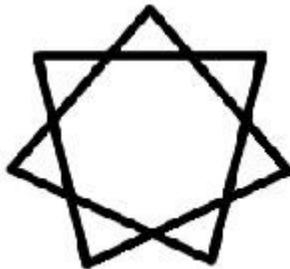
underworld each night, and rises the next morning; upon each summer solstice the Lord of the Waxing Year gives way to the Lord of the Waning Year, and returns to the world at the Winter Solstice. Tiphareth embodies both of these Forces because it is the very center, and balancing point, of the Tree.

Its shape is the next step from the Pentagram- the Hexagram. The Golden Dawn uses this symbol to represent the six Planets orbiting the Sun (implied in the center of the figure)- once again indicating the Cycles of the universe. Also keep in mind that the Hexagram is formed of two interlocking triangles, which are common symbols of the primary Elements Fire and Water. In the *Sepher Yetzriah*, Fire and Water are the two primary Elements of Creation- the Fire above and the Waters below.<sup>4</sup> This further indicates the interaction of the Elements that produce physical cycles- like the heat of the Sun evaporating water, which then rains down in storms, etc.

If we consider Gevurah the establishment of the sub-atomic realm, then Tiphareth must be the atomic realm- where completed atoms are first set into their cycles of motion.

## 7. Netzach (Victory)

**"And Elohim Blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.'" - Gen. 1:22**



Netzach is the Sphere of Venus- the seat of passion, inspiration, expression, creativity, and insight. It is the manifestation of Gevurah after passing through the Majesty of Tiphareth. Therefore it is the sphere of the passions of both love and war; embodying the mating rituals as well as the battle and hunting rituals of the animal kingdom- including the human animal. Thus we see in the Genesis verse a reference to

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<sup>4</sup> This is related to the first verse of Genesis, which states: "In the Beginning, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Deep."

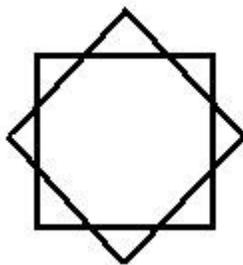
the natural proliferation of all the creatures of the earth, through the ritual of mating.

Netzach's geometrical shape is the Heptagram- or seven-pointed star. Seven is the number of the classical Planets, including both the Sun and Moon. In the study of astrology, the seven Planets act as rulers and shapers of the "astral weather" depicted by a horoscope. The Planetary forces mediate the output of Tiphareth. We might view Netzach as a seven-faceted lens through which *LUX* from Tiphareth is projected into the structural Sephirah of Hod (see below). Exactly how that *LUX* will manifest depends on the influences of the Planetary forces- like film in front of the bright white light of a movie projector.

Netzach, then, represents the *results* of Tiphareth's cyclic processes in nature. Viz- the cycle of the Sun = life on Earth. This is where the newly-quickened atoms from Tiphareth bond to become molecules. On a less microscopic level, think of Netzach as pristine Nature as yet untouched by mankind.

## 8. Hod (Splendor)

**"And Elohim said, 'Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'" - Gen. 1:26**



Hod is the sphere of Mercury. This is the Sphere of language- both speech and writing. It is the seat of practical invention, as opposed to the inspiration found in passionate Netzach. Hod is the seat of the scientific process, classification and knowledge, technology and communication.

Because Hod embodies logical order and classification, it also represents the mystery of the "True Name." Shamanic and occult legends have long insisted that possessing some thing's- or someone's- True Name was to have some degree of control

over it. All forms of exorcism and evocation known to the West are ultimately dependent on that very principle. Scientists also influence nature via knowledge of True Names- some by understanding its atomic and molecular structure, others by classifications and accumulated knowledge, and still others through understanding mathematics and physics.

The Biblical Adam, as described in the Genesis verse for this sphere, embodies these principles quite well. He is described as the manifest Image of God. In other words, an icon.<sup>5</sup> He was also charged with giving names to "all the beasts of the field"- depicting the birth of names and classification among human society. Along these same lines, Hebrew legend tells us that Adam created all languages and sciences while in Eden.

Hod is the result of Chesed's passage through the Majesty of Tiphareth. (Similar to Netzach's relationship with Gevurah- see above.) Thus, its geometrical figure is the shape of Chesed reflected upon itself: two interlocking Squares, forming the Octogram or eight-pointed Star. In this view, the number eight represents the Four Elements- first born in Chesed- manifesting in both their positive and negative physical extremes:

Fire(+) and Fire(-)

Water(+) and Water(-)

Air(+) and Air(-)

Earth(+) and Earth(-)

Remember that Duality is the most fundamental law of nature. This duality creates a stabilized environment necessary for manifestation and the cycles of nature. The waxing and waning forces pull between one another, and the mid-point between them is where Reality exists. This illustrates the Hodic process of giving Form to Energies.

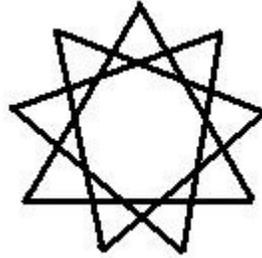
In the physical sense, the molecules that formed in Netzach are structured into specific "strings" of matter through the operations of Hod. At this stage upon the Tree of Life, we are finally viewing the world as seen on a microscopic level. This is where any given Spiritual pattern is expanded into the "thing" it is to become- a new idea, or a tree, or a human. Hod takes the untouched natural landscape produced in Netzach, and transforms it into an ordered agricultural project. In this sense, Hod is the intellect applied to natural processes.

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<sup>5</sup> Iconography falls partly within the sphere of Hod, and partly within Netzach. It is a symbolic method of representing intangible concepts (Hod), but it also involves art and inspiration (Netzach).

## 9. Yesod (Foundation)

**"And Elohim blessed them and Elohim said to them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'" - Gen. 1:28**



Yesod is the sphere of the Moon. It exists at the lowest junction of all the higher Sephiroth, and is thus properly named the Foundation of the Tree of Life- even though it is not the final Sephirah.

The geometry of Yesod is the Enneagram- or nine-pointed Star- formed of three interlocking Triangles. This shape- and the number nine- refers to a "trinity of trinities", or three groups of three. Of course, each triangle can represent one phase of the Moon: the one which leans toward the right is the waxing Moon, the one which leans toward the left is the waning Moon, and the one standing upright is the full Moon. Because these are three triangles, it also indicates a triple aspect (a waxing, full and waning) for *each* lunar phase.

As indicated by the Genesis verse, Yesod is also the sphere of sexual reproduction. It aligns with the reproductive organs when we display the Tree of Life in the human aura- as seen when Adam is depicted as the Image of God-, and is considered the seat of the Lower Self. This is the instinctual and habitual aspect of the mind, or subconscious; traditionally associated with the Moon in astrology. The hard-wired instincts that drive sexual reproduction exist here. Even a woman's natural ability to reproduce life is governed by her Lunar cycles.

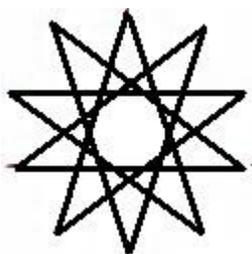
In the creative process, the Moon of Yesod (feminine in nature) is impregnated by the Sun of Tiphareth (masculine in nature), and gives birth to the natural tides of the Earth. In other words, it is the function of Yesod to receive all of the energies from the

higher Spheres of the Tree, filter them, and finally pass the product onward to Malkuth. She mediates the *LVX* and dispenses it to Earth as would a nurturing mother.<sup>6</sup> By reflecting the *LVX* into the universe, Yesod is responsible for the physical manifestation of all of Tiphareth's cycles or "natural laws."

The sphere of Luna is associated with visions, dreams and the Astral plane. The Astral plane is further associated with the "final stage" of creation, where matter is given its apparent form before manifestation in the physical. In Hod, molecules were bonded together into physical matter, but Yesod is where they take the shapes we perceive. This is why, for example, a chair appears to us as a "chair"- rather than the mass of writhing molecules and empty space it really is. The "chair" is primarily an illusory form that arises from the Astral- applied by the human brain because the chaotic reality is too difficult to perceive.

## 10. Malkuth (Kingdom)

**"And Elohim said, 'Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.' And it was so." - Gen. 1:29-30**



Malkuth is the Earthly Kingdom, the final destination and result of all the above Spheres of Manifestation. This is the manifest *Shekhinah*, the Presence of the Divine within the created universe. Hermeticism knows Her as the Soul of the World. As the above Genesis verse indicates, Malkuth is the finished product of Creation, given to

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<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, if this energy were to descend unchecked from Tiphareth, the universe would be an uninhabitable inferno.

mankind to govern.

Its geometry is the Decagram, or ten-pointed Star, composed of two interlocking Pentagrams- one upright and one inverted. It operates much like the double-square of Hod in relation to the square of Chesed- a doubling of the Forces. Malkuth is the Four Elements plus the Spirit which rules them, in both positive and negative polarities. It is the final balance of all the Forces of the Tree operating together.

Further, it represents the Spiritual Forces of the Tree (the Pentagram) meeting head-on with the Kingdom of Shells beneath the Tree (the Inverted Pentagram)- making possible manifested reality between the Light and Darkness.

The number ten also represents an obscure Qabalistic axiom: "Kether is in Malkuth, and Malkuth is in Kether." In our decimal numbering system, the number Ten marks the end of the first cycle of numbers (1-10) and the beginning of the next cycle (11-20). Malkuth, then, embodies a second beginning of the Tree- a new Kether of another Tree of Life.

This indicates that Creation and Life is not a one-way trip, but a cycle which ends where it began- and thus has no end or beginning at all. Jewish legend also indicates this with the fact that the Archangel associated with Kether (Metatron) is described as the twin brother of the Archangel of Malkuth (Sandalphon). In the Golden Dawn, these two Angels are the balancing forces on the Arc of the Covenant, and the Angels of the twin pillars of the Temple of Solomon. Metatron and Sandalphon are two sides of the same coin, the Alpha and the Omega (the Beginning and the End).

With that, I will bring this essay to a close. Remember, however, that what you have read here is merely one example of such a contemplation, and many further mysteries can be discovered within this same material. For one example, there are often several ways to draw the geometric shapes- such as drawing polygons rather than polygrams.<sup>7</sup> Some sources stick with lineal figures only- being figures drawn with a single continuous line- where I have employed several "interlocked" shapes.

If you would like to read more about the sacred geometry of the Tree of Life, I suggest looking into *The Golden Dawn* by Israel Regardie and *New Millennium Magic* by Donald Tyson- both of which include sections on this subject that may give you further ideas and directions in which to study.

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<sup>7</sup> As in the difference between a Pentagon and a Pentagram.

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