

Concerning the Energy Forms in the Sephirotic Halls

James French

Embarking on the Path of Initiation begins an encounter with both sense and nonsense. The "map," as it were, seems scrambled, abstruse, filled with what appear to be incoherent symbols from a dozen faiths that most believe long buried. There often seems no "reason," in the philosophical sense, for this symbol to be attributed to that force or entity. However, when we strip it all back, and look at the "ground," the patterns at the core, the maelstrom of seemingly barbaric absurdity starts to look coherent and even profoundly meaningful.

The rituals of the Golden Dawn are prime examples of this. The liturgical material is syncretic in the extreme. Qabalah is juxtaposed with Egyptian mythology. Alchemy gets thrown in for good measure. For some reason, the Kabiri, characters from an obscure Samothracian Mystery Cult that no one knows anything about show up for one ritual, then never appear again. The initiate is introduced to a number of diagrams, many of which seem to be the products of dangerously obsessive minds with hours of free time, and some of which don't have much relevance to anyone besides these very lunatics.

Still, literally beneath the feet of those participating in the rituals, is a coherent system that both transmits a key part of a given rituals inner message, and alludes to what will come next. The forms of Sacred Geometry, some basic elements of Alchemy, and the symbolism of the Qabalah find a unity at this level that the bewildering layers of outer symbols liturgy perhaps obscure.

For our purposes, we will focus on one energy form in each of the Outer Order rituals. This will avoid redundancy, as well as show how a given form alludes to the Grade ritual after it. Hopefully, when we are done, we will understand that, while the rituals themselves may be in a sense a palimpsest, where many have drawn over the same page a thousand times with similar intent, the pattern of that intent reveals a set of mandalas of transformation that are both consistent and deeply significant.

0=0: The Cross of the World

The end is the beginning, but at a higher level. Much later in the Initiate's career, she will bind herself to a cross, and swear an Oath to work for the liberation of all beings. The base energy form of the Neophyte Hall, another equal armed cross, conveys the procedure of *solve et coagula* which is necessary for the harmonization of her psyche that hopefully will lead her to the wisdom and strength needed for the undertaking. It also embodies the formula of Light in Extension, the manner in which this liberation can be effected.

The cross itself extends the length of the Hall from East to West and North to South. Each point represents an opposing Element, and the opposition of Light and Dark. At the center is the point of balance between these extremes.

In his recondite essay on the Hieroglyphic Monad, Dr. John Dee gives

a fairly thorough description of a cross's attributes in general, many of which seem pertinent here. Firstly, it contains (along with others) the ternary, or three, the quaternary, and the decad.

The ternary is formed when the cross is considered as two lines with a common meeting point. Dee calls this the "copulative center." In sacred geometry, three symbolizes force. The dyad, two, creates by its "antagonism," (or copulation) the third, harmonizing element. Before that, the dyad is simply in opposition and conflict, unable to act in the real of manifestation below the Abyss. Later, when she crosses the Portal into the Second Order, the initiate will learn that the triangle on the Hierus's lamén is the key to her Path. As we proceed, this will begin to make more sense.

The quaternary is, plainly enough, formed by considering each of the four angles as a separate line. Four represents form, since it provides dimension to the surface created by the action of three.

From an alchemical point of view, the cross represents corrosion or dissolution. Dee says that "geometricians teach that a line is created by the displacement of a point." The general idea is of a central unity being disbursed into a multiplicity, in this case the four Classical Elements. The center, of course, is Spirit, the synthesis of the others.

The decad is derived by simple mathematics. As stated, the cross can be viewed as a quaternary. Ten is the sum of the numbers one through four.

The cross, being a two dimensional union of three and four as shown

above, alludes to the three dimensional marriage of force and form, surface and dimension, the tetrahedron. It is with this form, temporary and fleeting, that the three principal officers empower the initiate after her circumambulations and purifications.

With the tetrahedron and the cross, we have the formula of *solve et coagula*. Breaking the cross into four pieces attributed to the elements, we get the Tetragrammaton. The tetrahedron is a symbol of Fire in its higher aspect as Spirit, symbolized by the letter Shin. With the addition of the Shin to the letters of the Tetragrammaton, the Hidden Name is created, and blind matter is divinized. So, in a very real sense, the pattern of the Great Work is given in full at the beginning.

Which leads us to the formula of LVX. The four is, of course, united at a point, making it in fact a five. Dee gives us a somewhat circuitous route to get from this five to the letters LVX. It is not quite as difficult as he makes it. The letters L, V, and X are all present graphically, the X in the form of the entire cross, the L and V in the right angles, depending on which vantage point you look at it from. These letters are all Roman numerals for multiples of five. The X and V are also the factors of the L.

One could look at the relationship in the following fashion. The L represents the Light, the V and X the entrance of the light into manifestation through the division of the Monad into a Triad. X represents the final manifestation and distribution of the light in the cross, also a glyph of Malkuth. Hence, in an almost literal sense, the cross represents Light in Extension.

This last aspect of the cross, as part of the glyph of Malkuth, alludes to the next hall, that of Earth.

1=10: The Temple of the Stars

The spinning, solar Fylfot cross constitutes the base energy form of the Zelator Hall. This is a swastika, formed of 17 squares. One arm begins at the extreme northeast of the Hall's floor, the crook of its arm running horizontally before the Banner of the West, the station of the Emperor, to the Hierophant. At the Hierophant's station, it takes a vertical turn, until it reaches the West, where it turns to the right and terminates in the extreme south-west. The Fylfot's second arm begins in the southeast, before the solar banner. From there it takes an opposite course from its sister.

This is the Earth Grade, and relates to the Sephirah Malkuth. The shape of the Fylfot is basically the cross with extra appendages on the arms. Graphically, this could be taken as a way to depict the glyph of Malkuth with its cross or X surrounded by a circle. The extensions allude to the curves at the glyph's edge. They also suggest movement. For this is not just the planet earth, but also the material universe in general, and the Hall is the Temple of the Stars.

I have not found it generally fruitful to consider the attributions

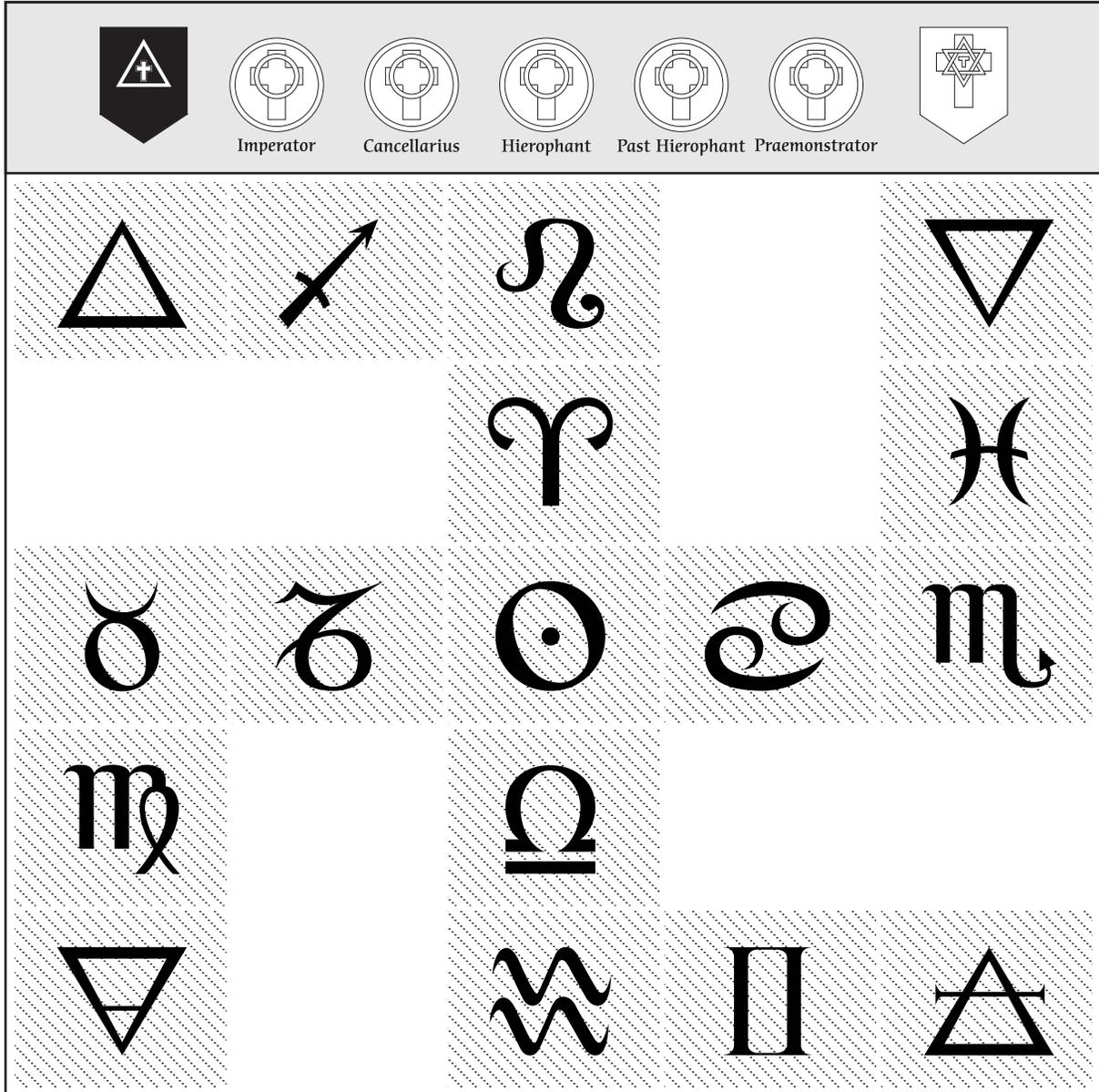
The 1=10 Hall of the Zelatori

center projection

ש

ת

ק



This shading indicates the energy form of the hall, the Fylfot Cross of 12 Squares.



of the individual squares of the various badges that echo the energy forms when looking at the Halls attributed to various *Paths*. In the *Sephirotic* halls, however, these attributions yield some very interesting material. The 1=10 is perhaps the most fascinating.

Each of the Fylfot's squares is attributed to an astrological symbol, with the exception of the tips, which contain the symbol of the Elemental Triplicity. The first thing we notice when looking at the placement of the officers along the swastika is that they aren't in squares that relate to their usual attributions. The Stolistes isn't on an attributed square at all, but in the negative space between the Earth symbol and the square for Aquarius. This isn't so odd, as Earth can be considered, in one sense, as a more concrete manifestation of Water.

Our placements only really become strange when we come to the Dadouchos. She is stationed, in the first Hall, on the square attributed to Mutable *Air*, Gemini. In itself this is only moderately strange, considering the dual aspect that this officer's tool, the censer of incense, plays in the rite. In the second half, this becomes the Air of the Altar. It is also not much of a stretch to think of Mutable Air as at least potentially Fiery.

In that same second Hall, however, the Dadouchos moves to the square of *Scorpio*, or *Fixed Water*. This seems utterly bizarre, until it is remembered that in it's higher, alchemical Aspect, Scorpio is also a ruler of Air. What I think is happening is that the Dadouchos is symbolically grounding the Aspirant's Nephesh. Before initiation, this was chaotic, chattery, and unstable, much like Gemini can be. The

Dadochous's motion places it into the care of the energies of Scorpio, which as Fixed Water also has an Earthy Aspect, as well as the aforementioned rulership of Air.

The movement of the Stolistes mirrors this on the level of the Guph. She moves from the negative space (from forgetfulness and necessity, perhaps...) to the very stable Taurus. So, in this ritual, one thing that happens is that the Aspirant's Guph and Nephesh are stabilized.

That being said, we have yet to consider two of the principle officers, the Hierus and the Hegemon. Taking the attributions of the squares, they sit on Cardinal Earth and Water respectively. This, too, seems somewhat strange. If the placement is intended to say something about the basic nature of the officer in this hall, it makes little sense. However, if it describes the action of the officer, it presents an interesting possibility.

Let us take the left half of the Hall to be representative of the Aspirant's Guph, the right for her Nephesh, as hinted at above. If this were the case, then the Hierus would be responsible for the former, the Hegemon for the latter. Cardinal signs begin things, and, like all signs, can either do their job poorly, or well. At the beginning of an endeavor, an unfocused, agitated, moody tendency can be disastrous.

Capricorn can either be industrious and disciplined, or random and domineering. The Hierus, in this ritual Nuit, helps point the Aspirant toward the former more than the latter by providing context. Likewise, the Hegemon as Hadit helps the moody, overly sensitive aspects of Cancer become perception and compassion, by shedding light into what can be a

somewhat dark place.

The message of all these motions, I feel, is "ground and center." This is also alluded to by the temporary arrangements of the officers. At the beginning, they form a Hexagram at the Earth altar. Then they resume places along two triangles, which do not meet, the Fire and Water triangles. In the second half, the move into a large hexagram, completing again a *solve et coagula*.

Besides these messages, the Fylfot also alludes to the next Hall, or Yesod. First, its arms trace more or less the same path as the Ida and Pingala of the Caduceus of Hermes, which undergirds the final 2=9 Hall. Also, the swastika itself alludes in form to the letter Aleph, attributed to Air.

So, in this ritual, the Aspirant's Guph and Nephesh are symbolically stabilized, and prepared for the future awakening of her Ruach. Naturally, this is only a jump-start for the work the Aspirant must do on her own.

2=9: The Serpents and the Prince of Air

When the Aspirant enters the Hall of Yesod in the 2=9 rite, her psyche encounters an energy form unlike those which have come before. The Caduceus of Hermes is related less to the cross, and more to the Tree of Life as a whole. It consists of a Latin cross, surmounted by an orb,

with wings serving as the horizontal. The orb and wings form the letter Shin. Two serpents twine the shaft, alluding as they do so to the letters Aleph and Shin.

As the energy form of the Hall, the Caduceus begins at the Hierophant, its central shaft running down to the Hierus in the west and just beyond his station. The serpents cross twice around the Cubicle Altar, forming the Aleph, and the tails surround the western gate, forming a Mem. The Pillars occupy their customary positions in Hod and Netzach. When the Aspirant is brought through them, she thus symbolically occupies Samekh. This being the Path of Art, the first Alchemical Trump encountered when ascending the Tree, this is quite appropriate, as we shall see.

In the Hierus's speech, the officer tells us that, through the Caduceus, the Tree is grasped as a whole. It's not exactly clear how the Tree could be *grasped*, rather than simply depicted, by this symbol if we take it at face value. Through a consideration of the Caduceus's various elements, as well as its geometric properties, the notion of grasping and comprehending the Tree becomes more plausible.

At the top, we have the winged orb. One association is with Hadit, the center aggregate of One from Nuit's Nothing. Another would be the Supernal Triad itself. Besides these, there is an association of wings with arms. In a document called the *Wings and Kavanah of Five Loves (appended)*, wings are compared with arms, and arms with five powers or loves, which permeate the six directions of the body. These directions relate to the six Sephiroth of the Ruach or Zaur Anpin. The document

then tells us to use various holy names to cause the loves to fly upward, ascending to Yetzirah. This is pertinent to the 2=9 Grade, as the rite and the subsequent work are intended to fortify the connection of the Aspirant with Yetzirah in Assiah.

The serpents are what make the Caduceus the Caduceus. Their story begins with a walk taken by the god Hermes. This god was given a staff by Apollo. One day, when Hermes was walking to Arcadia, he saw two serpents in deadly combat, and threw his staff between them. Whether because of a fetish for winged sticks, or because the rod had in it an equilibrating power, the snakes stopped fighting and entwined themselves around the shaft.

We are told in the Hierus's speech of the serpents' association with the Ida and Pingala of the Chakra system. In this aspect, they represent the twin polarities, active and passive, "sun" and "moon," which twine about the spinal column and meet in the *Ajna* Chakra. This chakra, oddly enough, is often depicted as a shining orb with wings. In the Tree, the lunar and solar serpents course between the two extreme pillars, uniting their forces and balancing them. This keeps both pillars from becoming rigid and one sided. The central shaft of the Caduceus represents Air as all pervading Spirit. The symbol represents, therefore, a certain interpenetration of energies and worlds.

One can take a compass and draw over the Caduceus three interlocking circles. The result is two Vesicas sharing a common center. These represent, among other things, the Aspirant's Nephesh, Ruach, and Neshamah. They also form the ubiquitous ternary. The intersections also

create four small crescents, representing the Four Worlds and the equally venerable quaternary. All these overlap, none totally distinct from the region lower or higher than it.

The three letters formed by the tails of the serpents and the crowning orb, Aleph, Mem, and Shin, also represent the three Higher elements of Air, Water, and Fire. These can further be mapped to the Alchemical elements of Mercury, Sulfur, and Salt. On the floor of the Hall, the Altar is in the center of Air/Mercury. This acts in the traditional manner as the mediator between Fire/Sulfur and Water/Salt. It also stands as the symbol for the Aspirant's Ruach, and the 2=9 could be considered a "neophyte" ritual for that part of the soul. While Yesod itself is still part of the Guph/Nephesh complex, this rite is clearly meant to continue the preparations begun in 1=10, and also to fortify with the Supernal Fire.

Here we also see the *solve et coagula*, but in a different fashion. The intertwining Worlds, Pillars, and Elements show us that, in a sense, these things are already one thing objectively. The world is already perfect, we simply haven't attuned with it yet.

3=8: The Chalice and the Flame

As the Aspirant enters the Hall of Hod, she at last enters Yetzirah of Malkuth and experiences the awakening of her Ruach. The energy form of the Hall makes it a Temple of the Grail, but this is not a cup for

drinking. It is a cauldron for boiling and purifying.

The Cup of the Stolistes glyph is composed of a triangle, surmounted by a circle, which is crowned with a crescent. In the Hall, the triangle is in the west, before the Water altar. The circle is directly above it, the Pillars on either side. Through the middle of the Hall runs the crescent, cradling in its bowl the Hierus, Hegemon, and the Altar.

The speech concerning the Cup tells us that it "partakes in part of the symbolism of the Laver of Moses and Solomon's sea." What this refers to is the bronze bowl at the entrance to the temples erected by or in honor of these figures. When the priests entered the temple, they were to wash their hands and feet with the water in these vessels. So the Cup can be considered a symbol of purification.

This is born out by considering the Elemental attributions. Mem/Water has switched places from the last Hall with Shin/Fire. Between them Aleph/Air remains stable. Think of a large bowl, with a fire burning underneath, and the hot space of air between them, and you'll have the general idea. Above broods the Supernal Fire of Kether, shedding a different kind of Light into the mixture from above. This aspect of the glyph reminds me of Liber AL, 1:50.

The crescent is a shape that we haven't encountered yet (at least not explicitly). It is, of course, a Lunar symbol, and a symbol of Water. If we look at the glyph from the top down, the crescent receives the light, transmits it through the air, and this ignites the fire below. So the symbol is, in a sense, representative of a recursive cycle. Its presence in the rite signifies the formal introduction of the

Aspirant to their Ruach. They are shown that this part of their Soul works best when the Light has tonified the Guph and Nephesh, and when it is receptive to the higher wisdom that its dependence on language perhaps makes difficult to accept.

It is fitting that the essay on the *Guidance and Purification of the Soul* be introduced in this Grade, with its injunction to be persistent. For the circle and crescent together form the symbol of Taurus, the most persistent sign in the zodiac, but which can also be as stubborn as the intellect when it latches on to tightly to a set of ideas.

The crescent also ties in to the symbol of the Tetractys, which is introduced in this ritual. Ancient philosophers held to the concept of the "Music of the Spheres." There were said to literally be musical proportions between the planets, and the harmonic relationships between these were represented by a crescent with three smaller ones inside. These match up with the harmonic proportions indicated by the progression of the Tetractys. So, in the crescent, part of a symbol of the whole, we find another symbol of the whole.

It seems almost tautological to point out the relationship of the Cup of the Stolistes to the *solve et coagula* formula. The entire symbol screams this. Though it is true that the message here seems to be more "solve" than "coagula." The latter is mostly symbolized in the aforementioned Taurus. This also sets the stage for the next Grade, as Philosphus is attributed to Venus, which rules Taurus.

The message the Aspirant should take with her from this ritual is "refine your Ruach to its finest point, eliminating all that is

superfluous to the Work." The exercise of the Dissolution into Sunyata fulfills this injunction nicely, I think.

4=7: The Seed of the Rose Cross

After the complexity of the preceding images, the energy form of the Hall of Netzach may seem like a bit of a regression. In fact, the Latin Cross of Six Squares represents the culmination of the other Halls. It returns, in a sense, to the beginning, but at a higher level of integration.

The name says much. The six squares are filled with the symbols of the Elements with Spirit. Just below Spirit is the Hexagram. Air is above Spirit, Earth below the Hexagram. To the left of Spirit is Fire, and to the Right is the triangle of Water. The symbol overall represents the Zaur Anpin, or Microprosopus.

In the Hall, the Cubicle Altar is in Spirit. The Hegemon is in Water, the Hierus in Fire. Being in spaces opposite to their general nature, these officers are counter-charged. This forms a kind of "hidden hexagram," which alludes to the complete Hexagram from which the Aspirant receives the last of the First Order teachings.

This Hall shares with that of Hod an almost complete lack of ritual drama. Virtually nothing happens at that level besides marching the Aspirant about the Hall, showing her diagrams. It is my feeling that

this allows the rather intense energies "settle in," aided by the particular form. The Cup allows for a good softening up, the Cross for a coming together of the diverse Elements it represents.

This cross has another potential aspect I find interesting. It could be considered, in one sense, the small cross at the center of the larger Rose Cross. After the rituals, it is a seed, its various components having been broken apart and put back together again in a form ready to be divinized. It is up to the Aspirant to care for this seed, and that is the "inner message" of the Grade: "care for the seed that will blossom into the Great Rose Cross." So it is well that she is shown the Four Immeasurables as the special practice.

It is with this ritual that the First Order ends. All that can be done for and to the Aspirant has been done. After she crosses the Portal, she will have to repeat the process, at a still higher level, on her own.

Conclusion:

I have endeavored, through words, which, being mere words, must fail, to express what I consider to be part of the coherent core of the First Order rituals. Where the outer drama of the rites can be confusing and abstruse, the energy patterns I have described and partly analyzed (no symbol can be fully analyzed) provide a clear message to those who can read it.

This message can be expressed in the following way:

0=0: Wake up, and embrace the Light within and without.

1=10: Purify and tonify the concrete part of your being, grounding and centering in the process.

2=9: Imbue your subtle being with the symbols of holiness that the greater reality might be able to communicate with you.

3=8: Boil away all that interferes with this communication, and be constant in your efforts.

4=7: Care for the seed of your Liberation, which by these efforts you have created.

While the elements, which make up these messages may be heterogeneous to a large degree, they nevertheless partake directly of the Western Mystery Tradition. Qabalah, Alchemy, and the philosophical/sacred geometry of ancient times, may not on their face seem related. However, hundreds of years of practice have brought them together into an active synergy. These rituals and their inner message are an example of this. Others, with equal or greater facility, could, and undoubtedly will, find a different message. This is the nature of the symbols themselves: to reveal what needs to be revealed according to the ability of the individual providing the revelation.

It is my hope that this first attempt at a core analysis not be the last. There is so much more to uncover. The Path of Initiation is difficult and strange. Let us all work together to help the Aspirant discern between what is important and central, and what is decoration or deliberate obscuration.

Bibliography

The Outer Order Rituals of the Open Source Order of the Golden Dawn; collection, various authors, 2001-2006

Monas Hieropglyphica; John Dee, Antwerp, 1564; Trans. J.W Hamilton Jones, 1947.

A Beginner's Guide to Constructing the Universe; Michael S. Schneider, Harper Perennial, 1995.

The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library; various authors, compiled and translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, edited by David Fiddler.

Appendix: *Kevanah of Wings and Five Loves*

Contemplate on the mystery of Wings. Through Wings, man can fly and ascend on high. A bird cannot fly except with its wings. Paralleling the wings of a bird are the arms of man.

There are five loves (Chasadim). These permeate the Six Directions of the Body [which parallel the six Sefirot, Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod].

In the arms and the upper third of the torso, these Loves are concealed. In the lower part of the body, they are revealed.

It is for this reason that man flies with his arms, which are his Wings,

and not with his legs or other limbs.

The Loves in the arms are concealed and cannot expand or escape. They therefore exert pressure and oscillate in their effort to escape. This causes the arms to vibrate.

The upper Root of these loves is Da'at-Knowledge, and this is their source. The Loves that permeate [the body] are lights that are produced by [the ones in Da'at-Knowledge].

[The Loves that pervade the body] therefore attempt to fly upward. Since they cannot escape, however, they elevate the man along with them. It is for this reason that the Wings parallel the arms more than any other limbs.

This is the Kavanah upon which you should meditate. Every ascent is through this Name of Forty-Two.

Meditate on your right arm (Chesed). Contemplate that this is the name ABG YThTz.

Then meditate on your left arm (Gevurah). Contemplate that this is the name KRE ShTN.

Finally, meditate on the upper third of your torso, where [the Loves are] hidden. Contemplate that this is NGD YKhSh.

Through these three names, the Loves [that are in the arms and upper torso] fly upward to their root, which is Da'at-Knowledge. When they ascend they also take along the man and elevate him to the Universe of Yetzirah. You will then be like a bird, flying in the air.

If you wish to strengthen your power of light, meditate to bring down new Loves from the Da'at-Knowledge of the Partzuf (countenance) of Zer Anpin for the purpose of Union. Through this, you will add strength to the Loves. This will bring you to fly with greater strength, and you will be able to ascend from Asiyah (World of Action) to Yetzirah (World of Formation)."

- Chaim Vital (Sha'ar Ruach ha-Kodesh transl. Aryeh Kaplan)