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# SHAMANIC QABALAH

A Mystical Path to Uniting the Tree of Life & the Great Work

## Ritual Process Guide – Pathworking

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This guide is a step-by-step model for ritual process when engaging in pathworking on the Tree of Life. I have listed the ritual steps that me and my colleagues used when undergoing our own pathworking initiation. This is by no means an official process used in the Western Mystery Tradition, but it does share elements with rituals from other Mystery schools. *So, what is the point of this ritual process?*

### PATHWORKING!

Pathworking is the process of using the symbols in the Tree of Life to journey from the conscious state of mind to the unknown states of mind. Ritual helps us to separate this process from the outer world of phenomena with the inner, noumenal worlds within. Ritual creates a patterning that enacts our consciousness accordingly to receive the symbols on the Tree of Life in such a way that our unconscious mind will assimilate them and incorporate them into our daily patterns of thought. This acts much the same way as a computer program: the ritual is the code which will inevitably result in the desired functionality. *And what is our result?*

### GNOTHI SEAUTON!

*Gnothi Seauton* is Greek for “Know Thyself,” which is the prime maxim for the Mystery schools. The goal of pathworking is mysticism: to grow into a deep relationship with God (Great Spirit, the Divine, etc.) and we can only do that truly by knowing ourselves as deeply as possible. Because it is through our own consciousness which God manifests and is made known. So, to seek out the mysteries of the universe we must travel inward, rather than outer space.

### Preparation

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As in any important endeavor, one must appropriately prepare themselves before a ceremonial process. Make sure you are not too quick to jump into any mystical experience without first being ready by following these steps:

1. **Ritual Items:** Review the **Ritual Item Guide** PDF I have provided. You will need to ensure you have the necessary tools to begin your foray into pathworking.
2. **Ritual Space:** Be sure to have a ritual space available to set up your altar and do your Work. The ideal location would be a space separate from the rest of your life, such as a spare room or basement.
3. **Ritual Health:** Before engaging in ceremony, refrain from alcohol and greasy foods. Make sure you had plenty of sleep and exercise a few days before hand. The body should be in fit shape and able to process energy well, physically or spiritually. Eat light and preferably raw foods the day of ceremony.

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4. **Ritual Timing:** Be mindful of when ceremony is performed, honoring both the cycles of the moon and the seasons of the year. My fellow pathworkers and I started our foray into the Tree of Life on the Spring Equinox, which is a time of new growth and beginnings. You are of course free perform your ceremonies whenever you wish.
  5. **Ritual Cadence:** When pathworking, it is good to allow an adequate amount of space between ritual sessions to allow time for integration of the material into consciousness. Live it a little. Don't get ceremonially addicted! My pathworking group generally kept our ceremonies 2 sometimes 4 weeks apart, depending on the intensity of the experience.

## Opening the Space

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Opening the ceremonial space is like opening a door into the other side. This will distinguish experience between the material world and the spiritual world. Follow the steps thus:

### Getting Ready

1. **Position Yourself:** Stand at your altar. Make sure your back is straight, feet shoulder width apart, and arms down to the sides.
  - a. If you are using a traditional altar from the Western Mystery Tradition (WMT) stand at the west of your altar, facing east. If you are using a mesa altar from the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition (PMT) stand at the south of your altar, facing north.
2. **Breathe:** Allow your body to settle to into rhythmic breathing, do not force any particular kind of breathing pattern. Just make it natural and comfortable.
3. **Relax:** Using your breathing, allow each exhale to drain any tension within your body. Imagine your muscles becoming lighter and any discomfort slowly dissolving into nothingness.

### Calling in the Elements

4. **Intone the Directions:** Use the **Ritual Process Guide – The Mesa** PDF instructions to call in the directions of the PMT accordingly. OR, if you do not wish to intone in this way, you can also call in the elements using a prayer I utilize in my daily practice, as shown in the next step.
5. **Recite the Seven Directions Prayer:** I wrote this prayer to honor the sacred number 7 and the directional attributes of that number, minus the Quechua words normally used in the PMT. It is important to be aware of directions as we call in these powers, as they are the compass with which we have our experience as conscious beings.

*“I honor Mother Earth behind me, for your protection and teaching me the ability to work hard this day and every day. I honor Grandmother Moon to the left of me, for your purification and teaching me to love others even when they are unloving. I honor Great Spirit before me, for your guidance and teaching me to remember my spiritual heritage. I honor Father Sun to the right of me, for your strength and teaching me to practice wisdom with every action and decision. I honor the Upper World above me, for inspiring me with faith to evolve beyond my present state. I honor the Lower World below me, for sustaining me with grace to accept my present state. I honor my heart, my center within me, for the unity in which these seven directions may find expression.”*

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6. **Note:** Feel free to come up with your prayer or cosmology of directions/elements to call into the ceremonial space and altar. What matters is that it is important to you. The goal of this practice is to welcome the powers of the universe into your space and infuse their function and potential into your altar and the corresponding ritual items.

### Preliminary Rituals

7. **Perform the Qabalistic Cross:** Use the outlined ritual in *Shamanic Qabalah, Chapter 9: Psychonautics in Practice*. You may use either the WMT or PMT version. This ritual is meant to tune one's body to the prime forces of the universe on the Tree of Life.
8. **Perform the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram:** Use the outlined ritual in *Shamanic Qabalah, Chapter 9: Psychonautics in Practice*. This ritual will banish any unwanted energy within your altar space and heighten your senses to receive any visions on your pathworking.
9. **Perform the Light Body Exercise and/or the Middle Pillar:** Review the **Light Body Exercise** PDF and/or the **Middle Pillar Exercise** PDF instructions from the *Additional Practices and Resources* section. The Middle Pillar is specific to the WMT lineage and the Light Body Exercise specific to the PMT. Either ritual will strengthen and enliven the energetic body for reception of information coming from the unseen realms.

Once these rituals are performed you have, in a sense, turned on and tuned in your consciousness to ceremonial awareness. The outside world should no longer be a concern; only what you have before you now in this time and space is what should be the focus. You may now begin your pathworking journey.

## The Pathworking Journey

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Pathworking is the process of astrally exploring the various pathways and emanations of the Tree of Life. Treading the paths, as it were. Your pathworking can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be, but overall it is contingent upon your ability to relax into the imaginative realm of consciousness. Imagination is key. You must use your imagination to psychically explore the many road and destinations on the Tree, the universal map of both the macrocosm and microcosm combined.

The order of exploration for you pathworking is laid out in *Shamanic Qabalah*, Chapters 10 – 12. Though it does not have to always be done in this way, I recommend for beginners to follow the prescribed recommendation. Pathworking can be daunting to the psyche at time and the symbolism of each path and Sephiroth is constructed as such to assist the initiate in a designated manner that supports a process of achieving balance and equilibrium within the Self. Always approach things as a beginner, even if you've trodden the paths before. Otherwise (as we often say in the Ozarks) you might find yourself up shit's creek without a paddle.

Always start from Malkuth, the Kingdom, the 10<sup>th</sup> Sephiroth. Even when you have ascended higher upon the Tree, always start at the base, and work your way up the Foundation, every time. This will help keep your experience grounded, rooted in what matters most: the real world.

Before you start each path—again, starting with Malkuth—read each Chapter of Chapter section on the designated Sephiroth or path. Study the symbols of that path: the Hebrew letter, the Tarot card, etc. I recommend that whatever Tarot deck you have chosen to accompany your pathworking to pull out the card(s) associated with the path or Sephiroth and set them on your altar. Gaze at the image(s) for a good 5 to 10 minutes before you begin your ritual work, allow the imagery to impress themselves upon your

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conscious awareness. You can even draw out the Hebrew letter on a piece of paper and place it on your altar as well. Be creative, maybe draw out other symbols you have gleaned from the reading, the animal totem, whatever it is that draws your attention. Draw it, write it, sing it, dance it, however it is you express yourself. Put that energy into your altar space. When you do this, you are charging your altar (which is a reflection of you, your psyche) with the energy and symbols of the path or Sephiroth. This will enhance your pathworking experience ten-fold.

Remember, only do one path or Sephiroth at a time and allow a good two week (or more) period between each ceremony, to allow an appropriate amount of time for integration.

You are now ready to begin the pathworking proper. Follow these steps:

1. **Relax & Breathe:** Since you have completed the preliminary ceremonial exercises, get back into a relaxed state. Breath steadily and rhythmically. Close your eyes and allow yourself to be submerged into a tranquil state.
2. **Connect with your altar:** Feel the charge of energy within and throughout body after having completed the **Light Body Exercise**. Bring your awareness to your crown. You may feel some tingling or slight electrical feeling. Use the momentum of that charge, and the power of your imagination, to extend a cord of light from your crown to you're the center of your altar. Sit for a few minutes in silent connection and communion with your altar, the mirror of both the universe and yourself.



3. **Travel into Malkuth:** This cord of connection will act as a luminescent tunnel through which an image of yourself (sometimes referred to as the “astral self”) will travel. Use your will. Imagine that an image or shade of your body rises up out of your physical body and travels either through or along that cord of light, across the threshold between you and your altar, and into

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the center of the altar itself. The center of your altar is *axis mundi*, the *Mesa Conionctio* as it is referred to in *Shamanic Qabalah*, Chapter 5. Harmonizing all of the elements, the *axis mundi* acts as a sort of opening or portal from this world into the Other. Travelling through the center of your altar, you will find yourself within the temple of Malkuth.

4. **The Temple of Malkuth:** Imagine the Temple of Malkuth around you. As described in *Shamanic Qabalah*, Chapter 10, it is a square temple with black-and-white checkered flooring and an altar in the center (more details in the book). From there you should see three doors that lead to the other paths on the Tree of Life, respectively Path 31 (to the upper left), Path 32 (straight ahead), and Path 29 (to the upper right). You will see these correspond to the paths as they extend from the Sephiroth Malkuth. So, in effect, you are literally traversing the Tree as a map! It is from here that you will use your imagination to then open one of these doors to continue your journey onward to the respective path or Sephiroth that is the focus for the ceremony. Remember, first start with Malkuth! Do not move forward until you have built up an intimate relationship with this temple/Sephiroth. Call out to the Archangel Sandalphon to guide and assist you. Listen. While in the temple (as you would in the other paths when you move forward in later ceremonies) bring forward the imagery of the Hebrew letter or Tarot card(s) and meditate upon them. Call forth the totemic animal guide and ask for its wisdom to be shared. Pay attention to any other imagery or sensory input that may come forward. Be aware and do your best to focus and recall these experiences so that you can record them afterward.
5. **Imagery for Pathworking:** Doing your homework before hand is critical. The **Imagery for Pathworking** document in the Additional Resources section will be an invaluable tool for you to guide your pathworking experience. Within this document you will find imagery you can draw forward while in the pathworking journey-state of consciousness that will focus your intention in the journey, help rid or banish any unwanted experiences, and ensure that the information you are receiving in your journey is genuine input coming from the Tree of Life rather than your own unbridled subconscious. To recall any of this imagery while in your pathworking journey, just have your astral self draw one of these symbols in the air as if your index finger were a pencil or pen. Yet, have the lines extending from your finger exude a white or light blue sheen of light. You may also draw the symbol on the ground or an object, or can even display them to any beings or entities you may encounter on the path. These symbols will help clear away any illusion and set your pathworking back on target.
6. **Returning to waking consciousness:** After you feel you have had a sufficient amount of time in your pathworking, give gratitude to any beings or entities you have encountered, gratitude to the entirety of the Universe, and make your way back to the temple of Malkuth. Give a bow of gratitude to the altar and then have your astral self lift yourself off the floor of the temple and through the ceiling. Phasing through the ceiling you find that you are coming back through the center of your altar, through or connected to that luminous cord of light connected to the crown of your physical body. Make your way back to your physical form, through the crown, and allow your astral body to fit itself back into your physical body accordingly: aligning your astral arms with your physical arms, your astral legs with your physical legs, torso, fingers, toes, pelvis, head, etc. Once you feel completely aligned with both bodies, bring awareness to your breathing again. Extract the cord of light from your altar and bring the cord back into your crown. Still attentive to your breathing, begin wiggling fingers and toes, bringing awareness back to your physical form. When you are ready, go ahead and open your eyes to the waking world around.

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## Closing the Space

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Closing the ceremonial space is just as important as opening the space. There needs to be a strong delineation between the material world and the spiritual world. Follow the steps thus:

1. **Reciprocity:** As described in *Shamanic Qabalah*, *ayni* is the sacred reciprocity that comes from giving gratitude to unseen forces of the universe for what is provided to us. We will gain nothing by ignoring the web of relationship that exists around us. Not a single shaman, mystic, or magician has any power without the support and reinforcement of the natural forces that provide the experience of consciousness we are a part of. After your pathworking five an offering to the beings and entities that you met on your pathworking experience, as well as to the elemental forces you called forward in your altar space for providing the foundation of your experience. What form of expression you decide to use, above all your intention is what is more important. Here are some ideas for reciprocity:
  - a. **Incense:** Many intelligences in the world of spirit appreciate the burning smoke of incense as a symbol of gratitude for their work and support. Copal, frankincense, myrrh, or any other form of scent that you feel aligns with your unseen allies is appropriate.
  - b. **Plant Offerings:** In many indigenous traditions, offering the full or shredded leaves of a plant is an acceptable contribution to spirit world. Using the breath which supports your life, you may blow a prayer of gratitude into the inch full or hand-full of plant material and offer them either directly on your altar or plate next to or on your altar (this way the offerings will have time with your altar and can then be taken outside to a tree or garden at a later date). Sprinkling some even on the land of where you live is another option. Examples of traditional plant offerings are:
    - i. **Tobacco:** Usually offered in cut shreds, dried tobacco is an offering used most all indigenous cultures.
    - ii. **Coca Leaves:** Normally a traditional offering in Peru (but illegal in the U.S.) coca is a plant full of medicine which the spirits respond highly to. For a substitute, you can also use rose or bay leaves.
    - iii. **Cornmeal:** Corn is the main source of nourishment for many indigenous cultures, therefore dried corn kernels or cornmeal is an acceptable source of nourishment to provide to the spirits.
  - c. **Flowers:** Setting a vase of flowers at your altar in gratitude is a gift of beauty to the unseen powers that is always appreciated. Allow the flowers to live out their limited life at the altar so the altar can soak up and enjoy the loveliness of the natural aroma and aesthetic allure the flowers provide. When they have dried up, offer them to the earth outside at a tree or creek.
  - d. **Waters:** There are an abundance of floral or scented waters that exist in which one could spray onto their altar, so immerse your ritual objects with the glorious scent of prayerful gratitude and life. You can either spray it over your altar with a spray bottle or *phukuy* the waters, which means to spray it out of your mouth. Word of warning, some waters on the market have alcohol base to retain the floral essence to it may burn the mouth. Some of the waters available for this exercise are *agua de florida*, rose, carnation, sandalwood, orange, jasmine, lavender, and more.

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- e. **Artistic Expression:** Just as when you empowered your altar with the symbols of the designated path, you can also give back to supporting powers of unseen world by expressing yourself through your own craft. There is no right or wrong here. Use music, visual art, poetry, however it use you can express with the highest quality of your soul that you are grateful for the wisdom received. Imagine the spirits of your experience and your altar enjoying your expression as an audience might.
  2. **Perform the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram:** Again, use the outlined ritual in *Shamanic Qabalah, Chapter 9: Psychonautics in Practice*. This ritual will banish any unwanted energy, sealing the experience of the pathworking into your altar space.
  3. **Perform the Qabalistic Cross:** Again, use the outlined ritual in *Shamanic Qabalah, Chapter 9: Psychonautics in Practice*. You may use either the WMT or PMT version. This is your final prayer of sealing the intention of the overall Great Work into your body.
  4. **Intone the Directions:** Use the **Ritual Process Guide – The Mesa** PDF instructions to intone the directions of the PMT one time each. OR, if you do not wish to intone in this way, you can also call in the elements using a prayer I utilize in my daily practice, as shown in the next step.
  5. **Closing Prayer:** I wrote this prayer to close and honor the sacred directions:

*“Thank you, Mother Earth, for your protection behind me. Thank you, Grandmother Moon for your purification to the left of me. Thank you, Great Spirit for your guidance before me. Thank you, Father Sun your strength to the right of me. Thank you, Upper World for inspiring me from above. Thank you, Lower World for sustaining from below. I honor my heart, my center within me, for the unity in which these seven directions may find expression.”*

6. **Clap or Snap:** The final sealing is usually done with a clap or a snap, which is like closing the lid on the entire ritual. This has been done to close ceremonies of initiation for many ceremonies, a continued tradition that we can carry easily to this day.

## A Final Word

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The important thing about ritual is that repetition is important (in order to engrain the information into one's being) but so is keeping it fresh. Your mind will often find ways to distract or lose interest, so feel free to improvise. This is where shamanism is like jazz, take the original formula and don't be afraid to give it another spin, add your own flavor to it. Turn left one day instead of turning right. You have to shake it up so your brain doesn't kink out on you. Plus, the spirits themselves may get bored because you are. It is up to you to make the ceremony meaningful and fun to you, otherwise even the most ancient and esoteric practices will have no meaning. Intention is everything.