

RETURNING-LIGHT MEDITATION

This picture is inspired by a foundational spiritual principle of Kabbalah called *Tzimtzum*.

This principle explains that we experience the limitless pleasure and divine goodness that we were created to experience to the extent that we desire to give.

The line coming down from the top of the picture represents the divine goodness and pleasure that is flowing from God every moment. The divine light shines in a state of pure giving.

The small rectangle near the center of the picture represents our desire to receive. Since desire to receive is the exact opposite of God's attribute of pure giving, this disconnects us from experiencing God's light.

The horizontal line above the small rectangle represents striving to transcend our desire to receive. This is the spiritual work of Torah and *mitzvot* — spiritual learning and practice.

The white space above the horizontal line represents attaining the state of unconditional love and pure giving. This evolution of consciousness brings us to experience the divine goodness.

The circles in the painting represent a Kabbalistic concept called *Or Makif* or Surrounding Light. This concept explains that the divine goodness is always present. Since we can only experience the goodness to the extent that we desire to give, the revelation of the goodness awaits only our inner transformation of consciousness. This means that we are not waiting for God to finally reveal goodness in the world, but rather the already present divine goodness is waiting for us to develop the consciousness of pure giving and unconditional love that can experience it.

Experiencing God's love and goodness is direct light. Returning the love is returning light. A basic principle of Kabbalah is that returning light is the vessel for direct light. This means that we experience God's giving and love to the extent that we give and love.

This picture is a meditation on this foundational spiritual principle of Kabbalah. The principle is simply: In every moment of life, the more we desire to give, the more we are in union with God.

Our inner transformation towards attaining divine union in the elevated consciousness of pure unconditional love is the subject of Kabbalah.

The spiritual principle of *Tzimtzum* in relation to our inner spiritual development is discussed in great detail in the holy writings of the master Kabbalists Rabbi Yehudah Leib HaLevi Ashlag *z"l* and Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag *z"l*. For more information see *A Tapestry for the Soul* by Rabbi Ashlag.

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