

## UNIFICATION

This painting is a meditative map of many spiritual concepts of Kabbalah.

At the center of the painting are four Hebrew letters **א ה ו ה** meaning LOVE. The more we develop spiritually, the more we become able to experience the always present divine love that is the source of all reality.

In the next circle is:

**אין סוף** INFINITE      **אור** LIGHT      **כלי** VESSEL

The Kabbalah describes our spiritual progression towards becoming a vessel that is able to experience the infinite light of divine goodness and pleasure that we were created to experience.

At the top of the next circle are the letters **אה**. This holy divine name corresponds with unconditional love and experiencing the divine presence. These two letters are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalah explains that every Hebrew letter represents a particular spiritual energy. In the rest of the circle is an ancient script of the Hebrew alphabet.

The next circle contains a star of David. A star of David is made of a triangle going down and a triangle going up. The triangle going down represents “direct light” and the triangle going up represents “returning light.” Experiencing God’s love and goodness is called direct light. Returning the love is called 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. The union of the two triangles also represents the unification of physical and spiritual reality.

The six points of a star of David and the seventh space in the center represent seven aspects of spiritual consciousness. These aspects and one way of translating their meanings are:

<i>Chesed</i>	Loving Kindness
<i>Gevurah</i>	Humility
<i>Tiferet</i>	Balance
<i>Netzach</i>	Eternity
<i>Hod</i>	Thankfulness
<i>Yesod</i>	Unity
<i>Malchut</i>	Unconditional Love

The six points of the star also represent the six weekdays and the center of the star represents Shabbat. Every Friday night before sundown the celebration of Shabbat begins with lighting candles. Until after sundown the next night, Shabbat is celebrated as an elevated spiritual day. The Jewish people have been celebrating Shabbat every week for thousands of years.

Inside of the star is:

**שבת קדש** SHABBAT KODESH / SHABBAT OF HOLINESS

In the top triangle of the star are three Hebrew letters *yud* י - י - י. This is one of 72 three letter divine names discussed in Kabbalah. Each divine name corresponds with a particular spiritual energy. This name corresponds to a very holy blessing of peace from the Torah. In Israel, *cohanim* chant this ancient blessing during the traditional meditation prayer every morning at sunrise. There is a beautiful tradition for parents, on Shabbat evening, to place their hands on their children's heads and bless them every week with this special blessing.

The blessing and one possible translation is:

יברכך ה' וישמרך

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND PROTECT YOU

יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחנך

MAY GOD'S GOODNESS AND GRACIOUSNESS SHINE ON YOU

ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום

MAY GOD'S GOODNESS ARISE IN YOU AND MAY YOU BE BLESSED WITH PEACE

At the top of the circle above the star is:

אדנ-י שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך

GOD! OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH WILL SPEAK YOUR PRAISE.

This verse is from the Psalms of King David and has profound mystical meaning. These words are the opening to the traditional silent meditation called *Amida*. This ancient meditation takes place three times a day: sunrise, sunset and nighttime. The focus of the meditation is being intimately in the presence of God. The meditation begins with whispering this verse, reminding ourselves that God is the source of everything, including our thoughts and prayers.

At the bottom of the circle is:

ביום ההוא יהיה י-ה-ו-ה אחד ושמו אחד

GOD'S ONENESS WILL BE REALIZED

This mystical verse from the ancient prophet of Israel, Zechariah, is recited at the end of each of the three traditional daily meditations. This verse is a prayer for our personal awakening and the awakening of the entire world to our divine oneness.

To the right of the circle is:

בדחילו ורחימו IN AWE AND IN LOVE

To the left of the circle is:

ורחימו ודחילו IN LOVE AND IN AWE

Kabbalah discusses LOVE and AWE as two “wings” with which we spiritually ascend. The development and harmony of these aspects of our inner consciousness elevates our divine awareness. A Kabbalistic meditation for preparing our consciousness before performing a *mitzva*, a spiritual practice, begins: “*For unification of the Divine Giving Blessing and our experience of the Divine Presence, in awe and in love, and in love and in awe, to unify in complete union . . .*”

In the left of the circle is שסה. In the right of the circle is רמח.

Every Hebrew letter represents a number and the numerical equivalents of these two divine names are 365 and 248. Together this comes to 613 and reflects the 613 spiritual practices of the Torah called *mitzvot*. 365 *mitzvot* focus on developing our ability to overcome receiving in a way that is only self-serving. 248 *mitzvot* focus on developing our elevated consciousness of pure giving and unconditional love. Each of the 613 *mitzvot* corresponds to a particular aspect of our souls and our physical bodies. The spiritual practice of *mitzvot* purifies our bodies and souls to be in spiritual alignment with the flow of divine energy.

Continuing outwards, the blue square surrounding the circle contains the names of the twelve Hebrew months of the year. The Hebrew months correspond to the cycle of the moon. When the moon appears at sunset as its smallest crescent, it is the first day of the new Hebrew month. When the moon is full, it is the middle day of the month. When the moon reappears again as a tiny crescent, it is the first day of the next month. Each month corresponds to a particular spiritual energy and aspect of consciousness.

The Hebrew months each have associations with specific planets, stars, and spiritual energies of Hebrew letters. The twelve months also correspond with the twelve tribes of Israel. The four small white squares next to each month depict the tribe, planet, stars, and Hebrew letter that correspond with that month. The square on the left contains the first letter of the tribe. The next square contains a mystical symbol of the planet. The next square contains the first letter of the star sign. The last square on the right contains the Hebrew letter that corresponds with the spiritual energy of the month.

MONTH	TRIBE	PLANET	STARS	LETTER
ניסן <i>Nisan</i>	Yehudah	Mars	Ram	ה
אייר <i>Iyar</i>	Yisachar	Venus	Bull	ו
סיון <i>Sivan</i>	Zevulun	Mercury	Twins	ז
תמוז <i>Tamuz</i>	Reuven	Moon	Crab	ח
אב <i>Av</i>	Shimon	Sun	Lion	ט
אלול <i>Elul</i>	Gad	Mercury	Maiden	י
תשרי <i>Tishre</i>	Efrayim	Venus	Scales	ל
חשוון <i>Chesvan</i>	Menashe	Mars	Scorpion	נ
כסלו <i>Kislev</i>	Binyamin	Jupiter	Archer	ס
טבת <i>Tevet</i>	Dan	Saturn	Goat	ע
שבט <i>Shevat</i>	Asher	Saturn	Bucket	צ
אדר <i>Adar</i>	Naftali	Jupiter	Fish	ק

About 3500 years ago the twelve tribes of Israel traveled in the Sinai desert for forty years in a majestic encampment. The tribes camped in alignment with spiritual energies in an exalted state of divine awareness. Kabbalah explains that each of the twelve tribes corresponds to a different aspects of every person's inner consciousness, and that the encampment contains deep insight into our personal attainment of inner spiritual alignment. The encampment reflects a microcosm of spiritual design in the universe as well as a macrocosm of our inner consciousness. The position of each tribe in this painting is that tribe's position in the encampment.

A foundational teaching of Judaism is oneness, so why individual tribes? Judaism's perspective of oneness is not that we are all the same, but rather that we are each unique reflections of God's light. Every single person has a unique and important role to play in the world that nobody else can do. The goal is not for us all to be the same, but rather each of us, as well as every tribe and nation, spiritually developing to shine our own special light in the world. The encampment gives us insight into oneness as an inter-dynamic relationship of many integral parts, each attaining its unique spiritual expression, working together harmoniously.

The top of the painting is the eastern direction of the encampment. At the top of the blue circle is מזרח meaning EAST. East is the direction of the sunrise and symbolizes our awakening to the divine light.

The Jewish people have been praying every day for 2000 years to return from exile to the land of Israel. The ingathering from all over the world of the twelve tribes of Israel, millions of people, is miraculously happening before our very eyes, in accordance with the ancient prophecies.

Continuing outwards, at the right, left, top and bottom of the thin white circle is:

מים WATER אש FIRE רוח WIND עפר EARTH

In the spiritual language of Kabbalah, right, left, above and below are code words that represent states of consciousness:

Right corresponds with giving and appreciation.

This is associated with water.

Left corresponds with receiving and lack.

This is associated with fire.

Kabbalah discusses the spiritual work of balancing these opposing aspects.

Above and below, associated with wind and earth, represent another dimension of these aspects of our inner selves that we strive to unify through spiritual practice.

Kabbalah explains how the letters of the holy divine name י-ה-ו-ה represent aspects of spiritual reality and aspects of our inner consciousness. There are twelve possible permutations, ordering of the letters, of the divine name. In the thin white circle that contains the four elements are the twelve permutations of the divine name. Each of these permutations corresponds to the spiritual energy of a particular month.

The four letters of the divine name י-ה-ו-ה are very similar to the four letters of the word א-ה-ב-ה LOVE. The two letters ה are the same in both. The letter י represents a single point, like א that is the number one. The letter ו and the letter ב have similar sounds.

Above and below the thin white circle is:

אתערותא דלעילא AWAKENING FROM ABOVE

אתערותא דלתתא AWAKENING FROM BELOW

Awakening from above is a term used in Kabbalah that expresses our being gifted with divine experience. Awakening from below is when we strive to return the love. Shabbat is an example of awakening from above. Lighting Shabbat candles is an example of awakening from below. Every awakening from below brings us to experience an awakening from above more deeply.

On the outer left is a quote from the holy Kabbalah master Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzzato ז"ל:

לא יתקיים שום דבר אלא טובו

NOTHING EXISTS EXCEPT FOR GOD'S GOODNESS

Kabbalah explains that God created the world to give infinite goodness and pleasure to all creation. This pleasure is temporarily concealed from us while we are undergoing inner transformations of consciousness preparing us to experience the goodness. When we complete our spiritual evolution, we become able to experience the divine and eternal goodness at the root of all reality. We come to see how all the events of our lives, even the most difficult and painful ones, were hidden blessings divinely designed to help our souls develop in the most ultimate way.

On the outer right is:

רצון לקבל בעל מנת להשפיע

DESIRE TO RECEIVE IN ORDER TO GIVE

Our spiritual development towards being able to receive God's goodness in a state of giving and divine union is discussed extensively by the holy Kabbalah master Rebbe Yehudah Leib HaLevi Ashlag ז"ל.

At the bottom of the painting is a verse from the Torah:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה  
LOVE YOUR FRIEND AS YOURSELF, I AM GOD

At the top of the painting is a verse from the Torah:

ואהבת את ה אלקיך  
LOVE GOD

Kabbalah explains that striving to love others as we love ourselves is essential to attaining the exalted spiritual level of divine experience and love for God.

In the upper center of the painting is **ישראל** ISRAEL with the letters **י** and **ר** written twice. The holy Kabbalah master the Arizal explains that a secret of the word **ישראל** is that it is the first Hebrew letters of the names of our holy ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak, Yakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah. Kabbalah explains that each person in the Torah represents a different aspect of our spiritual psychology. The stories, conversations and happenings in the Torah are not just historical events, but are actually describing what is happening within ourselves this very moment. An inner dimension of the Torah is a map of consciousness describing the path of spiritual awakening and inner transformation. Every verse of the Torah provides different details of the same story: our spiritual journey towards unconditional love and divine union.

The word **ישראל** ISRAEL is comprised of two Hebrew words: **ישר** means connection and **אל** is a divine name associated with giving and love. When we are striving to connect with our divine source through giving and love, we are in the spiritual land of Israel. The Torah describes the journey of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. This journey can also be understood in an inner way as the collective journey of all humanity — the spiritual awakening of all consciousness to unconditional love and divine awareness.

Recommended introduction to Kabbalah books:

*Jewish Meditation* by Aryeh Kaplan & *A Tapestry for the Soul* by Rabbi Ashlag

**Tzfat Gallery of Mystical Art**

[www.kabbalahart.com](http://www.kabbalahart.com)