

## UNIFICATION

A foundational principle of Judaism is that all of what is seemingly differentiation, is in its ultimate reality- oneness. The Kabbalah explains that we are presently in the process of becoming conscious of our true nature of unity. It is explained in the Kabbalah that our present experience of separation is a temporary stage which is followed by the complete realization of oneness in the universe. The Torah describes for us the pattern through which we can realize the infinite goodness and unconditional love which is the One source of our every moment.

The form of the painting is an interplay between the form of the circle and the form of the square. The form of the square is associated with differentiation, as it has 4 different sides. The 4 sides are symbolic of 4 primary stages of spiritual development that are discussed in the Kabbalah. The shape of the circle is associated with unification and the experience of oneness. The shape of the circle is associated with the consciousness of loving our neighbor as ourselves- the realization that every point is in oneness, and that on a deep level, our neighbor is our self.

The white circle in the center of the painting contains a Star-of-David with a smaller Star-of-David depicted at each of the 6 points. The Star-of-David is a triangle going up and a triangle going down- a symbol of unification: spiritual and physical, within and without, woman and man, give and take, creator and creation. It is explained in the Kabbalah that the number 6 represents the physical world, as the physical world contains 6 directions of space: North, South, East, West, Up, and Down. 7 represents the point in the center, the spiritual essence of our physical reality. The space in the center of the 6 points of a Star-of-David symbolizes our spiritual reality.

We have 6 days of the week and then Shabbat. The 6 days of the week are associated with our working towards the revelation of unity, while Shabbat is associated with the revelation itself. It is taught in the Kabbalah that as we have 6 days of the week and then Shabbat, we likewise have 6000 years of our present reality leading to the 7th millennium which is the Shabbat of the universe. This represents the messianic age of the world attaining peace and deep spiritual awareness, in the realization of our Divine oneness.

If we translate the Hebrew counting of the years into the cosmic week, we are presently after mid noon on Friday. As Shabbat begins Friday evening before sundown, we are presently at the dawning of the world attaining its spiritual realization. It is taught that every Shabbat an additional aspect of our unification is revealed in the world. There is also an idea of bringing in the Shabbat early. Inside of the 6 points of the Star-of-David is written:  
 שבת קדש SHABBAT KODESH / HOLY SHABBAT.

In the circle near the center of the painting is depicted the ancient Hebrew alphabet. At the top of the circle is written אַת in modern Hebrew, and the ancient Hebrew alphabet is depicted counterclockwise starting from the left of אַת. The Kabbalah explains that the Hebrew letters represent spiritual energies at the root of all creation.

The Torah begins: בראשית ברא אלקים את  
 IN THE BEGINNING G-D CREATED אַת  
 אַת = the letters א to ת -the Hebrew Alphabet.

The Hebrew letters can be understood as a spiritual DNA of the universe that interfaces between our physical and spiritual reality. The Kabbalah explains that the Hebrew letters are spiritual energies which, on one level, all physical reality exists.

At the top of the large white circle in the center of the painting is written:

אדני שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך

G-D! OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH WILL SPEAK YOUR GLORY.

This verse is from Tehillim (51:17), the Psalms of King David, and has profound mystical significance which is discussed in great detail in the holy books of the Kabbalah. This verse is recited as the opening to the Amida, The Silent Prayer, the climax of the Jewish prayer service. The Amida is prayed 3 times a day: at sunrise, sunset, and nighttime. In the meditational practice of the Amida a person prays standing with ones feet together. The focus of the meditation is directed towards the consciousness of standing intimately in the Divine presence of G-D. The opening of the meditation is the realization that G-D is the source of everything, including our prayer.

At the bottom of the circle is written:

ביום ההוא יהיה י-ה-ו-ה אחד ושמו אחד

ON THAT DAY G-D WILL BE ONE AND G-D'S NAME WILL BE ONE. (Zecharia 14:9)

This is recited as the final line in the prayer service. The Kabbalah explains that we are all the name of G-D. G-D will be one and G-D's name will be one, reflects our coming to a state of unity with G-D.

At the left of the circle is written שסה which is the number 365, and at the right of the circle is written רמח which is the number 248. Together this comes to 613 and reflects the 613 mitzvot or spiritual practices of the Torah. 365 mitzvot focus on the development of our ability to overcome receiving in a way that is only self serving. 248 mitzvot focus on developing our ability to attain the elevated state of pure giving and unconditional love.

It is explained in the Kabbalah that everything in our physical reality reflects a deeper spiritual reality. Although our spiritual self transcends time and space, our physical body is in some way a reflection of our spiritual form. Each of the 613 mitzvot corresponds to a very particular part of our physical body and a corresponding aspect of our spiritual being. The spiritual practice of each mitzva works to purify a particular aspect of our self-desire, enabling us to experience an aspect of Divine revelation in the transcendental state of unconditional love.

To the right of the circle is written:

בדחילו ורחימו IN AWE AND LOVE

To the left of the circle is written:

ורחימו ודחילו IN LOVE AND AWE

The spiritual practice of the Kabbalah works to attain a level of consciousness where our experience of G-D is in a harmony of LOVE and AWE. There is a Kabbalistic meditational prayer to prepare consciousness before performing the spiritual practice of a mitzva which reads: "For the sake of the unification of The Holy One and the Divine Presence in AWE and in LOVE and in LOVE and in AWE, in order to unify י-ה and ו-ה in complete union י-ה-ו-ה . . . "

In the light pink circle on the inside of the ancient Hebrew alphabet is written אור LIGHT and כלי VESSEL and אין סוף WITHOUT END. The Kabbalah works within the metaphor of light and vessel- our striving to become a vessel which can experience of the infinite light of Divine goodness.

In the top triangle of the large Star-of-David are depicted 3 times the letter י yud. י-י-י is one of 72 three letter Divine names discussed in the Kabbalah. Each of these 72 three letter holy names is associated with a particular spiritual energy. The name י-י-י corresponds to the blessing of the

Cohanim. This blessing is recited in Israel by the Cohanim every morning. There is a beautiful and ancient tradition for parents, on Shabbat evening, to place their hands on their children's heads and bless them with these holy verses from the Torah.

The blessing and one possible translation is:

יברכך י-ה-ו-ה וישמרך  
MAY G-D BLESS YOU AND PROTECT YOU

יאר י-ה-ו-ה פניו אליך ויחנך  
MAY G-D BECOME REVEALED TO YOU IN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WAY

ישא י-ה-ו-ה פניו אליך וישם לך שלום  
MAY G-D RAISE UP YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS TO EXPERIENCE PEACE

The Jewish Nation spent 40 years in the Sinai Desert after coming out of Egypt before entering the Land of Israel. During this time the Nation of Israel encamped around the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary, in a majestic formation of 12 encampments. It is written in the Torah that each of the 12 Tribes of Israel was Divinely instructed to camp in a particular array. In each of the 4 directions surrounding the Tabernacle are the encampments of 3 tribes.

A first question which comes to mind, is if the teaching of Torah and Judaism is one of unity, why is the encampment divided into 12 encampments?

The teaching of the Torah is not that we are all the same, but rather that we are each unique reflections of G-D's glory.

Our striving to reach the consciousness of unification does not mean trying to be the same. The 12 Tribes camp with love for one another, surrounding the Tabernacle which represents the experience of our Divine source. By each tribe being the highest aspect of its unique self, and having love and true respect for the unique aspects of all the other parts, the Israelite formation works as a united whole with many integral parts. As a human body has many parts that work together to form one body, unity also requires many different parts, each playing its unique role, working together through love. The encampment of the 12 Tribes gives us insight into unity as a dynamic relationship, the harmony of which is one being.

The structure of the Israelite encampment, as described in the Torah, is a physical manifestation of primal spiritual forces within which the universe is balanced. The encampment is a microcosm of the universe's spiritual structure as well as a macrocosm of the workings of human consciousness. Each of the 12 Tribes corresponds with one of the 12 months of the year. Each of the 12 Tribes also represents a different aspect of our personalities. On an inner level of consciousness, there exists inside of every person the spiritual equivalent of the Tabernacle and each of the 12 Tribes.

The square in the very center of the painting represents the Tabernacle in the center of encampment. The 4 Hebrew letters in the corners of the square representing the Tabernacle, spell אהבה LOVE. The Tabernacle represents our striving to build a place for the Divine Presence to rest in ourselves and the world. Our experience of the Divine Presence is in the spiritual consciousness of pure unconditional love.

In the light blue square outside of the painting's large white circle are depicted the 12 months of the year. Each month is depicted in the position where the corresponding tribe of that month camps in relation to the Tabernacle. Outside of each month are 4 small white squares with black letters and symbols. The 1st square depicts the 1st letter of the tribe which corresponds with that month. The second square depicts the symbol of the planet which is associated with that month. The 3rd square depicts the 1st letter of the stars which are associated with that month. The fourth square depicts the Hebrew letter that has spiritual energy associated with that month.

| MONTH                | TRIBE                  | PLANET  | STARS   | LETTER          |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| ניסן <i>Nisan</i>    | יהודה <i>Yehudah</i>   | Mars    | טלה     | ה <i>hey</i>    |
| אייר <i>Iyar</i>     | יששכר <i>Yisachar</i>  | Venus   | שור     | ו <i>vav</i>    |
| סיון <i>Sivan</i>    | זבולון <i>Zevulun</i>  | Mercury | תאומים  | ז <i>zayin</i>  |
| תמוז <i>Tamuz</i>    | ראובן <i>Reuven</i>    | Moon    | סרטן    | ח <i>chet</i>   |
| אב <i>Av</i>         | שמעון <i>Shimon</i>    | Sun     | אריה    | ט <i>tet</i>    |
| אלול <i>Elul</i>     | גד <i>Gad</i>          | Mercury | בתולה   | י <i>yud</i>    |
| תשרי <i>Tishre</i>   | אפרים <i>Efrayim</i>   | Venus   | מאזניים | ל <i>lamed</i>  |
| חשוון <i>Chesvan</i> | מנשה <i>Menashe</i>    | Mars    | עקרב    | נ <i>nun</i>    |
| כסלו <i>Kislev</i>   | בנימין <i>Binyamin</i> | Jupiter | קשת     | ס <i>samech</i> |
| טבת <i>Tevet</i>     | דן <i>Dan</i>          | Saturn  | גדי     | ע <i>ayin</i>   |
| שבט <i>Shevat</i>    | אשר <i>Asher</i>       | Saturn  | דלי     | צ <i>tzadik</i> |
| אדר <i>Adar</i>      | נפתלי <i>Naftali</i>   | Jupiter | דגים    | ק <i>kuf</i>    |

The word **מזרח** EAST is written above the month **אייר** Iyar. The top of the painting corresponds to the eastern direction of the encampment. As the sun rises from the east, this represents looking towards the coming of the light -the anticipation of our unification.

The Kabbalah explains how the Divine name **י-ה-ו-ה** , describes our spiritual reality and aspects of consciousness at the root of all creation. There are 12 possible permutations, or orderings of the letters, of the Shem Havaya. Each of the 12 months of the year corresponds to one of the 12 permutations of the Shem Havaya that reflects the aspect of our spiritual transformation which is associated with that month. The Kabbalah discusses the spiritual energies of each particular month, and gives deep insight into how to use this energy in terms of our spiritual development. In the thin white circle outside of the word **מזרח** EAST are depicted the 12 permutations of the Divine name.

The Divine name **י-ה-ו-ה** is reflected in the word **אהבה** LOVE. The letter **א** is the number 1 and is interchangeable with the letter **י** which represents a single point. The letter **ב** is interchangeable with the letter **ו** as they make a similar sound.

Each one of the 4 elements corresponds spiritually to one of the 4 directions. The turquoise words in the large thin white circle depict the 4 elements in their corresponding directions. The top of the painting is the East and corresponds to **רוח** WIND. The bottom of the painting is the West and corresponds to **עפר** DUST or EARTH. The right of the painting is the South and corresponds to **מים** WATER. The left of the painting is the North and corresponds with **שא** FIRE.

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

Right corresponds metaphorically with thankfulness and giving, and is also associated with the element of water.

Left corresponds metaphorically with experiencing lack and receiving, and is also associated with the element of fire.

The Kabbalah discusses the spiritual work of consciously balancing these opposing aspects within ourselves. Above and below, corresponding to wind and earth, represent another dimension of these same aspects of our inner self that we are working to spiritually balance and bring to unification.

Above the thin white circle to the right and left is written:

אתערותא דלעילא

AROUSAL FROM ABOVE

Below is written:

אתערותא דלתתא

AROUSAL FROM BELOW

AROUSAL FROM ABOVE is a Kabbalistic term associated with our experience of the Divine love. AROUSAL FROM BELOW is when we try to return the love. It is explained in the Kabbalah that every AROUSAL FROM BELOW enables us to experience an AROUSAL FROM ABOVE.

Another dimension of AROUSAL FROM ABOVE would be the sacred day of Shabbat which comes every 7 days. Lighting candles in honor of Shabbat would be an AROUSAL FROM BELOW.

When we are joyful as a result of our external situation, this is an aspect of AROUSAL FROM ABOVE. When we work to reveal our true source of joyfulness within, this is an aspect of AROUSAL FROM BELOW.

It is explained in the Kabbalah that G-D created the world only in order to give infinite goodness and pleasure to the creation. If so, how can we understand our world in which there is so much suffering?

It is explained in the Kabbalah that our present reality is a temporary stage that interfaces with our eternal reality. This stage of transition is called the stage of Tikkun. Every experience of our lives in every moment of this stage of reality, is cosmically designed to enable us to spiritually evolve to the state of pure unconditional love. The Kabbalah explains that what is happening on the deepest level of our present reality is nothing other than our eternal spiritual beings learning to truly love.

When we complete our spiritual transformation and have attained the consciousness of pure unconditional love, we will be able to experience the infinite Divine and eternal goodness at the root of our every moment. We then come to see that all the sufferings in our lives were in the deepest reality all hidden blessings, as everything was designed to allow our souls to spiritually develop in the most ultimate way. The inner understanding of how infinite unconditional love at the root of all creation becomes manifest in our present experience, and how to practically work with the notion that everything is for the good, is the heart of the spiritual learning of the Kabbalah.

On the outside left of the painting is a quote from the great spiritual master and teacher Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzzato:

לא יתקיים שום דבר אלא טובו

NOTHING EXISTS EXCEPT FOR G-D'S GOODNESS

On the outside right of the painting is written a concept discussed extensively by the great spiritual master and teacher Rav Yehudah Leib HaLevi Ashlag:

רצון לקבל בעל מנת להשפיע

DESIRE TO RECEIVE IN ORDER TO GIVE

Rav Ashlag explains that the 613 mitzvot of the Torah can be seen as 611 mitzvot that are the spiritual path to the 612th mitzva, which brings us to the 613th mitzva. The 612th mitzva is the mitzva of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Rav Ashlag explains that the spiritual practice of the 611 mitzvot of the Torah brings us to the ultimate expression and embodiment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Rav Ashlag goes on to explain that it is only by embodying the mitzva of loving our neighbor as ourselves, that we can merit to attain the 613th mitzva of loving G-D.

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

ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה  
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, I AM G-D

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

ואהבת את ה אלקיך  
LOVE G-D

In the upper center of the painting is written יִשְׂרָאֵל ISRAEL with the י and ך written twice. One of the secrets of the word יִשְׂרָאֵל is that it is the 1st Hebrew letters of Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, and Leah- the 4 Mothers and the 3 Fathers. In the inner spiritual understanding of the Torah, the Mothers and Fathers, as well as every other character in the Torah, represent different aspects of our spiritual psychology. Every story, conversation, battle, etc. in the Torah, is on a deep level, a description of the inner workings of our consciousness. The whole Torah, on this inner level, is a spiritual map of human consciousness. Every verse of the Torah is providing different details of the same story: the transformation from desiring to receive, the limitation of consciousness, to entering the infinite expanded consciousness of pure giving. The transformation of human consciousness from limitation to unification as described by the inner understanding of the Torah is happening in the personal level as well as in the transformation of global and universal consciousness.

The word יִשְׂרָאֵל ISRAEL is comprised of two Hebrew words Yashar and E'l. Yashar means connection and E'l represents the Divine state of loving kindness. When our motivation is not rooted in what we desire to receive for ourselves, but we are rather striving to connect with our Divine source in the state of loving kindness, then we are within the Spiritual Land of Israel. The story level of the Torah describes the journey of the Jewish people coming to the Land of Israel. On an inner level, the Torah is describing the transformation of all human consciousness from the limited consciousness of self-desire, to the expanded consciousness of unification.

The spiritual learning of the Kabbalah, the inner learning of Torah, involves the details of this universal spiritual transformation that is bringing us to the experience of infinite goodness and unification.