

**Program Title: Kabbalah Religion**

**Category:** Jewish Learning

**Author(s):** Shana Karp- NFTY-MAR PVP

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**Touchstone Text:** *“Above the heads of the creatures was a form: an expanse, with an awe-inspiring gleam as of crystal, was spread out above their heads ...”* (Ezekiel 1:22)

**Goals:**

1. To familiarize PP’s with basic theological concepts and historical beginnings of Kabbalah
2. To learn the basic concepts of Gematria and learn how to use it
3. To become knowledgeable about Isaac Luria and his concept of Repairing the World through Tzimtzum, Shevirat HaKeyeem, Tikkun Olam

**Objectives:**

1. PP’s will be able to recognize the 10 Sefirot as part of Kabbalistic thought
2. PP’s will have fun using numerology
4. PP’s will be more excited to be Jewish because they will learn about parts of Judaism they did not know about previously

**Materials:**

1. Paper plates with explanations on back
2. Gematria handouts
3. Pens/ pencils

**People:**

1. Group Leaders: TBD
2. Clergy to wrap up
3. PPs

**Time Table:**

00:00-00:05 Intros/PPs settle in

00:05-00:07 Split into groups

00:07-00:27 First Rotation (Groups start each in a different rotation, leaders teach the same thing three times, rotations can be done in any order)

00:27-00:29 Rotate Groups by moving PP’s

00:29-00:49 Second Rotation

00:49-00:51 Rotate Groups by moving PP’s

00:51-01:11 Third Rotation

01:11-01:15 Gather in Classroom Wing Social Hall

01:15-1:30 Conclusion/ Clergy Closing

**Method:**

- 0:00-0:05     *Settle in: 15 PPS will get a card with a Factoid about Kabbalah on it upon entering.* PPs should already know what groups they are in based on nametags received at registration. Group leaders should be trying to quiet PPs down so we can get started.  
*Intro:* PL will ask the 15 PPS with cards to stand up and read their factoid about Kabbalah
- 0:05-0:07     *Break into groups:* This should give PP's a chance to find their groups and settle into them.
- 0:07-0:27     *Rotation #1: Sefirot*  
00:00-00:03 Names. GLs read the brief explanation of the Sefirot aloud.  
00:03-00:08 GLs gives each PP a place with one of the Sefirot on it, with an explanation on the back. PPs draw instinct ideas of how each sphere applies to his or her own life on the front of the paper plates.  
00:08-00:14 GLs asks PPs to put the plates into an order as a group based solely on the fact that each sphere connects to the next, that one side of the diagram is Feminine, one side of the diagram is Masculine, and there is one sphere in the center of the diagram.  
00:14-00:20 GLs reveal the real order of the Sefirot, hand a copy to the group. PPs discuss the actual design, how it differs from theirs and which of the Sefirot applies to their lives the most.
- Why did the Kabbalists choose this order for the Sefirot, in their minds mirroring the universe and our selves?
  - Why would you do it differently?
  - Which of the Sefirot is most meaningful to you, and why?
  - How can the idea of Sefirot make someones life more meaningful?
- 0:27-0:29     *Rotate*
- 0:29-0:49     *Rotation #2: Gematria*  
00:00-00:04 Names. GLs give out handouts on Gematria and make sure PP's understand how to apply Numerology, based on explanation and letter to number diagram.  
00:04-00:12 PP's use Numerology and a handout with Biblical names and other words to connect their names to names found in the Bible and other important words.  
00:12-00:20 PP's will discuss thoughts and opinions about Gematria
- What is the purpose of the numerology and spending the time with these connections?
  - Does it seem "out there" and inaccessible, or meaningful to you? Can it be taken too far?
  - How can we use it or any part of it in our lives as Reform Jews?
- 0:49-0:51     *Rotate*

- 0:51-1:11     *Rotation #3- Tikkun Olam:*  
00:00-00:05 Names. Everyone receives the Luria handout, and take turns reading out loud within the group.
- 00:05-00:12   GL leads PPs in discussion about Tikkun Olam
- Before reading this theory, how did you view Tikkun Olam? Does this theory change your view?
  - Does this idea motivate us to want to do more Tikkun Olam?
  - What aspects of the world are “out of place”?
  - What do we think should be focused on more in the way of repairing the world?
  - What can be done to fix these aspects of our lives?
  - How can there be opportunities every day for Tikkun Olam?
  - If everyone has a different view of how the world should be repaired, how can the world actually be repaired?
  - Can people themselves be shevirat hakeyleem, shattered pieces? How can people work together to repair the world .... Especially if they have different religions and cultures?
  - What motivates us to perform mitzvot?
- 00:12-00:20 GLs will pass out construction paper, markers, glue. PPs will make Thanksgiving cards to send to the Volunteers at Camp Jacobs who are still helping with the Gulf Coast rebuilding, thanking them for their continued hard work.
- 1:11-1:15     *Regroup*
- 1:15-1:30     *Clergy Closing*

## GEMATRIA HANDOUT

One relatively late offshoot of the Kabbalists' belief that each letter of Torah is holy is called gematria. Gematria grows out of the fact that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical equivalence. For example, א = 1; י = 10; ק = 100; א"י = 10 + 1 = 11; ב"י = 10 + 2 = 12, etc. The only exceptions are numbers 15 and 16, which are written ט"ו = 9 + 6 = 15 and ט"ז = 9 + 7 = 16 --- so as not to write yod and hay or yod and vav, which might be confused for names of God. By comparing the numerical values of different words and phrases, we can gain new insight into the meaning of the text.



The assumption behind this technique is that numerical equivalence is not coincidental. Since the world was created through God's "speech," each letter represents a different creative force. Thus, the numerical equivalence of two words reveals an internal connection between the creative potentials of each one. (see *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*, chapters 1 and 12.)

Using the chart on the back, find the numerical equivalence of your Hebrew name. To do this, simply add the value of each letter. What names in the Bible have the same value? Remember, different Hebrew names can be numerically equivalent! Perhaps some hidden connection exists between you and that biblical character.

From: *The Invisible Chariot* by Deborah Kerdeman and Lawrence Kushner

### Gematria Hebrew Letter Table

Hebrew Letter	Letter Name	Absolute Value	Ordinal Value	Reduced Value
א	<i>alef</i>	1 or 1000	1	1
ב	<i>beit</i>	2	2	2
ג	<i>gimmel</i>	3	3	3
ד	<i>dalet</i>	4	4	4
ה	<i>hei</i>	5	5	5
ו	<i>vav</i>	6	6	6
ז	<i>zayin</i>	7	7	7
ח	<i>chet</i>	8	8	8
ט	<i>tet</i>	9	9	9
י	<i>yud</i>	10	10	1
כ ך	<i>kaf or final kaf</i>	20	11	2
ל	<i>lamed</i>	30	12	3
מ ם	<i>mem or final mem</i>	40	13	4
נ ן	<i>nun or final nun</i>	50	14	5
ס	<i>samech</i>	60	15	6
ע	<i>ayin</i>	70	16	7
פ ף	<i>pei or final pei</i>	80	17	8
צ ץ	<i>tzadik or final tzadik</i>	90	18	9
ק	<i>kuf</i>	100	19	1
ר	<i>reish</i>	200	20	2
ש	<i>shin</i>	300	21	3
ת	<i>tav</i>	400	22	4

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**Jacob - in Hebrew "Yaakov" spelled yud-ayin-kuf-bet** Yaakov is called so because he was born holding the heel of Esav. Thus the root of Yaakov is *ekev* which means "heel" (in Hebrew.) Since the heel is the lowest point on the body it symbolizes humility and submission; Yaakov was submissive to the will of G-d.

In *gematria* Yaakov equals 182, which is 7 times the name of G-d (yud-heh-vav-heh):

yud-heh-vav-heh:  $10+5+6+5 = 26$

yud-ayin-kuf-bet:  $10+70+10+2 = 182$

The number seven represents harmony and completeness. Seven notes make a complete musical scale; seven days, a complete week. Thus Yaakov represents the complete and harmonious expression of G-d's name.

**Daniel/Daniella - in Hebrew "Daniel" spelled daled-nun-yud-aleph-lamed** The name Daniel (meaning "G-d is my Judge") alludes to the harmonious combination of two opposite divine powers: *Din* (Strict Judgement) and *Chesed* (Kindness). The first three letters of Daniel can be arranged to spell daled-yud-nun, *Din*. The final two letters spell Aleph-lamed (E-I), a name of G-d that represents His *Chesed*.

The *gematria* of Daniel is 95, equal to the *gematria* of *hamelech*, the king, and *yafeh*, handsome.

daled-nun-yud-aleph-lamed  $4+50+10+1+30 = 95$

heh-mem-lamed-chaf  $5+40+30+20 = 95$

yud-fey-heh  $10+80+5 = 95$

These traits fit the Biblical Daniel, who, due to his royal ancestry, wisdom and physical beauty was chosen to become the adviser of the Babylonian King Nevuchadnezzar (see Daniel 1:3-4).

**Rebecca - Rivkah in Hebrew spelled resh-bet-kuf-heh** The name Rivkah comes from the root resh-bet-kuf, which denotes binding or connecting. The letters of Rivkah can be rearranged to spell *boker*, "morning" in Hebrew. This indicates Rivkah's quality of Kindness (*Chesed*), a quality that is associated with light and with the beginning of the day.

The *gematria* of Rivkah is equal to that of the word *ishah* (wife in Hebrew) with the *kollel* (the addition of the number 1 to a *gematria* for purposes of comparative analysis). This teaches that Rivkah's traits are those of the wife who completes her husband.

Resh-bet-kuf-heh  $200+2+100+5 = 307$

Aleph-shin-heh  $1+300+5 = 306$ , plus 1 (for the *kollel*) = 307

## ISAAC LURIA'S THEORY ABOUT TIKKUN OLAM: **Issac Luria's Account of Creation**

**Issac Luria** was a Rabbi and Kabbalist who lived in the town of Sefat during the middle of the sixteenth century. Luria's symbolic account of creation contains three basic ideas:  
*Tzimtzum, Shevirat HaKayleem and Tikkun Olam.*

**Tzimtzum:** Ordinarily, when we think about "creation," we imagine a process of *expansion*. A new creation not only expands the world. In a sense, it also enlarges the creator, because it represents an extension of him or her. But, since G-d's power is infinite, and G-d is everywhere, there cannot be a place which isn't already G-d! In Luria's vision, creation is the result of a divine contraction. In order to make room for the world, G-d withdrew into G-d's self, separating out a space from within.

**Shevirat Hakayleem:** Into the void made possible by tzimtzum, G-d set vessels like bowls, intending to fill them with creative light. But the cascade of light was so powerful, the vessels could not contain it, and they shattered in a great explosion. Some light was scattered and became trapped in the strewn shards which now littered creation. These shards are the stuff of our material world.

**Tikkun Olam:** All the connections of the World System were thrown out of order. All the pieces are there- just not in the proper place or time and not equally distributed. Food, for example, is one "piece." But some people waste food and other people starve. The task of humankind is to repair this cosmic catastrophe by putting the scattered pieces back in order. Making food equally distributed which

According to the Kabbalah, our way of repairing the broken pieces is fulfilled when we perform mitzvot. For the Kabbalists, mitzvot also constitute a system of "Super Adjustments" to the world machine. Since mitzvot apply to every act of living in Kabbalistic tradition, each day provides us with countless opportunities to repair the world. All is out of balance, and it is left to human beings to correct this state of affairs. When we perform mitzvot, therefore, we not only repair the world, we help G-d, too.

*The Invisible Chariot by Deborah Kerdeman and Lawrence Kushner*

## Explanation of Sefirot – for GLs to read

The idea of Sefirot, is that the Kabbalists wanted to find the closest thing to defining and drawing the idea of God. They needed a “map” to be able to see all aspects of God in the world and in us.

Sefirot are like a map of God’s internal system. It ALSO turned out to be a good representation of each of us ... thus confirming the idea that we are created B’tzelem Elohim, in the image of God.

The Kabbalists explain, that the system which is you, and the system which is creation, and the system which is God, all correspond. This is no accident. In a world of infinite interconnection, each component is integral to the entire network and ultimately affects all others.

## EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM (for Back of Sefirot Diagram Hand-out)

Malchut – Majesty. Power. (One would think at top, but it's at the top of our world, but bottom of God's world – we should be humble in our self-importance. )

Yesod – Foundation. (Union of Male and Female. Balance of male and female characteristics in each of us)

Hod – Splendor. (Dependance, Vulnerability, the child within. Thoughts and Emotions, need to learn from others)

Netzach – Victory (Leadership, confidence, dominance. Also Emotions, recognizing them)

Tiferet – Beauty (Balance, Harmony. At the center. Balance between people, making peace, with vulnerability and confidence)

Gevurah – Strength (Desire to obtain, to aquire, ambition – with restraint and moderation. It is also creative energy, discovery)

Hesed – Loving Kindness (compassion, unconditional love from God, and to give to others, healing the world)

Binah – Understanding (differentiation, repentance, examining what we've done to harm others, encourages meditation, Binah is highest we can reach, were there is no "I")

Hochma – Wisdom (Pure-thought, connectedness – understanding our connection to everything above and below, to God and the rest of the world. If we feel connected to all things, we will treat things not as if they were separate from us, and will have compassion for all beings and all creation. Hochma is the first to receive from Keter.)

Keter – Crown (Will, Selfless-ness. Teaches humility. No "I", there is only No-thing, because the world is bigger than you or me. Not to BE nothing, but to abandon persona, throw away ego, to get at core of who you really are. You're not a physical being, you are part of God.)