

THE SHEMA, "WHOLLIEST" HEBREW PRAYER

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (THE NAME IS THE MANY AND THE ONE)

(SHEMA YISRAEL YHVH ELOHAYNU YHVH ECHAD)

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (THE NAME IS FOREVER)

Perle Epstein has an excellent discussion of the SHEMA in "Kabbalah, The Way of the Jewish Mystic" (pg. 60-62). She describes how the first word "SHEMA" (meaning "HEAR O") has the Hebrew root word "SHEM" which means "name." The upper six words stand for the unification of the six directions with the one name. The second word "Israel" as described by Epstein, is "a euphemism for the attribute *Beauty* and the patriarch Jacob." "By singing *Hear O Israel!* the Kabbalist effects a unification between *Beauty* and *Sovereignty*, the spiritual Israel with the earthly one." She writes that the four words "YHVH," "ELOHAYNU," "YHVH" and "ECHAD" state that the divine is "both the many and the one." The lower sentence "harmonizes the six created directions in the lower world of *Sovereignty*." The two phrases unite spirit and nature (above and below).

I believe that the "SHEMA" contains a cross-language divine code. The English pronunciation being "SHE" and "MA" indicates that the divine, the many and the one, is the "MOTHER" of all. The tie to SHEKHINA and Goddess Spirituality (All coming from the Mother) is also found in modern "Goddess Spirituality" literature. For instance, in her article "The Unknown Goddess" in "The Goddess Re-Awakening," Beatrice Bruteau states that "the feminine is the dynamic union of the one and the many, a process in which the one ever becomes many and the many are ever reunited with and in the one. This process constitutes wholeness, and it is this wholeness which, I would suggest, is the root meaning of femininity." Another interesting cross-cultural code is that the pronunciation of the word "HE" in English means "SHE" in Hebrew (היא). The word for "HE" in Hebrew (הוא) is pronounced like the word "WHO" in English. "WHO" is "HE" in Hebrew? The Celts have a system called lexigrams where there are codes in their language. I believe that the language codes operate between languages as well.

The most "wholly" Hebrew prayer points to the feminine principle of the one and the many in wholeness, and the uniting of the above and below. The Shekhina, above and below, is essential for this wholeness.