

Jewish Tapestry 2004



Jewish Prayer

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
That we may walk the paths of the Most High.

And we shall beat our swords into ploughshares,
And our spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nations
Neither shall they learn war any more.

And none shall be afraid,
For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts
Has spoken.



Central to the tapestry are the four letters of the unspeakable “Name” of God (YHWH) in Hebrew. Since the fifth century B.C.E., this “Name” has been considered to be unpronounceable, since it referred to a Being beyond limits of either time or space. When this “Name” occurs in the text, another word is substituted in the reading, the word “Adonai”, which means “Lord”.

Behind the name of God is the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, with its ten sefirot symbolizing the various stages of emanation from Nothing to Something. The Kabbalah is a major part of the Jewish mystical tradition which focuses on the Tree of Life and the mystical nature of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The tallit (prayer shawl) surrounds the “body” of the Tree of Life and the four letters of the Name of God. It is worn during times of worship, celebration, and ritual. At the base of the Tree of Life are the candles, the wine and the challah (braided bread) – all part of the ritual of welcoming the Sabbath.

The Sh'ma is at the heart of the Jewish Faith, recited daily in worship and frames the base of the tapestry:
Sh'ma Yisrel, Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai Echad
Listen, Israel: the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One.