

Hosea 2:1-2: "The number of the Israelites shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured and cannot be numbered. In place of saying to them 'You are not my people' it shall be said to them, 'Sons of the Living G-d'. The Judahites and Israelites shall gather together, setting for themselves a single head ... for the day of Yizr'el (יִזְרְעֵאל) is great".

Paradox: 'the number ... which ... cannot be numbered'.

Meaning: the number itself will be beyond number; into the finite world there will flow infinity; just as at the giving of the Torah, the Infinite will be revealed in the finite world.

Bottom-Up Application of Fusion of Finite & Infinite: Yearning:

'Number' = 613 particularized commandments; and 600,000 particularized souls.

'Descent' of divine commandments & of souls into this world is possible specifically via particularization & differentiation from one another.

'Descent for the sake of ascent': descent engenders longing and thirst = move into the infinite.

'Teshuva' (תשובה = 'return' to G-d; often translated 'repentance') is the name of this process; it functions beyond the ordered progression of creation (השתלשלות / 'chain').

Reversal of Hierarchy: Divine infinite expression gains by its descent into the finite:

Example: divine service in the external world:

Yizr'el / יִזְרְעֵאל = Yizra' E-l / יזרע א-ל / 'he sows E-l /divinity', the sowing of divine light into the physical.

Performing divine commandments with physical items (i.e. *tzitzith* (ציצית / fringes) being made of wool; *tephillin* / תפלין being made of leather; charity (צדקה) being given with money) is like sowing a seed in the earth, where it decomposes.

However, only thereby does it grow abundantly greater than what it was

Because it fuses with the 'power of growth', which is in the earth

This resembles infinite fruition.

Why does abundance come specifically via descent? Power Inherent in Darkness:

'For the day of Yizr'el (יִזְרְעֵאל) is great':

'Day' = light, revelation

2 views on 'darkness': 1) mere absence (of light); or 2) force in its own right

Embraces view no. 2, because 'teshuva' transforms intentional sin into virtue, transforms the ultimate rebel / opponent / one who knows his Creator and intentionally rebels against Him, i.e. it transforms active darkness into light

Similarly, sowing divinity (יִזְרְעֵאל) down into finitude = 'darkness' transforms the darkness / finitude into light / infinity, thereby adding a greater quality into the light / day.

Again, 'teshuva' is the name of this transformation-process.

Thus: "In place of saying to them 'You are not my people' it shall be said to them, 'Sons of the Living G-d'" means: that very 'place / circumstance' of 'you are not my people' is transformed into 'sons of the living G-d'.

Indeed, 'teshuva' needs to be carried out in circumstances identical to the sin.

How fusion is possible: Union within the 2-sided psyche:

'The Judahites and Israelites shall gather together'

'Israel' brings divinity into the world = the flow of divine emotions, from the top down;

'Judah' starts from the bottom up, merely acknowledging G-d-as-Other;

The 'gathering together' of Judah and Israel = union of divine downward bestowal with the ascent of created being

'Setting for themselves a single head' = not mere union of two entities, but the two become actually one.

Even when G-d reaches to us from the top down, doing everything for us, even rescuing us (cf. Passover), we still have our internal issues / animal side / separateness from G-d. When G-d reaches down, these are temporarily overwhelmed. But they do not disappear; they still need to be dealt with – purified and transformed (cf. Counting Omer) = 'teshuva'. Thus, even when 'righteous', we still require 'teshuva' / yearning.

Top-Down Application of Fusion: Adopting Divine Perspective:

Nowadays: Duality: 1) Higher Unity: As seen from the 'top down', from within G-d, the existence of every derived thing is nullified to the very core of its being. 2) Lower Unity: As seen from the bottom up, the core being of every derived thing is its own distinct self, separate from its source, although it acknowledges the Source enough to be humble and externally nullified.

Messianic Future: Fusion: Lower perspective totally subsumed into higher; higher perspective as it is above spreads downward. (What I think this means: from the bottom up, created being will see its own, individuated selfhood as a function of the divine absolute; and thus, from the top down, the derived things can be integrated into Oneness, and thereby validated, rather than negated.)

Bridge: (Citing a teaching of the fifth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber of Lubavitch, in his *Handbook on the Tree of Life* (רבי רש"ב, קונטרס עץ החיים) (particularly chs. 6-9)): Lower unity alone is naturally in danger of being lost, because it gives too much room for separateness. Thus, one must strive to attain higher unity, however momentarily, in order to stabilize his commitment to lower unity.

Method for Bridging:

Contemplation during daily morning and night recitation of the 'Shema':

Contemplate 'Higher Unity' when reciting the first sentence, 'Hear, O Israel: the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One' (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Contemplate 'Lower Unity' when reciting the subsequent superadded Rabbinic phrase, 'Blessed is the Name of the Glory of His Majesty for all Eternity' (Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma*, 35b)

Extension of Bridge: even when engaged in mundane matters, sense the higher unity. This enables future fusion.