

# Mormon Kabbalah 101

*Pocket Guide*





# School of the Prophets

The Church of  
**Jesus Christ**  
in Christian Fellowship

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# Mormon Kabbalah 101

## *Pocket Guide*

By David Ferriman for the School of the Prophets

The Church of Jesus Christ in Christian Fellowship  
2025





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# The School of the Prophets

*“Study my Words and my works in the School of the Prophets until thou art ready that ye should train up those that I will call.”*

*—Doctrines of the Saints 125:31*

The School of the Prophets is a place where hearts open, minds awaken, and faith deepens. We are a nondenominational, online seminary devoted to the Church of Jesus Christ, with a special love for the Latter Day Saint movement and the great promise of the restoration of all things.

Here, learning is not about earning a credential, it is about stepping into a richer, fuller walk with God. Our courses are unaccredited by design, freeing us to focus on what matters most: scripture study, spiritual discernment, theological openness, and the living reality of God’s power.

Our mission is simple: to help prepare disciples of Jesus Christ for ministry, leadership, and service, both in the Church and in the world. Whether your calling is to teach, to serve, or simply to grow in your own discipleship, you are welcome here.

We believe that God’s truth is bigger than any man-made creed or dogma. We won’t tell you what to think, we will help you learn how to think on your own, how to listen for the Spirit, and how to walk in faith. Our role is not to replace your personal journey with God, but to

## *School of the Prophets*

walk alongside you as you seek His will for your life.

At the School of the Prophets, we welcome all who feel drawn to the ministry, Latter Day Saints from every denomination, Christians of all traditions, and anyone with a sincere heart who seeks the living Christ. We are an open community where questions are encouraged, scriptures are explored deeply, and fellowship is real. Don't just attend seminary, step into the vast, living world of God's truth.

**Welcome to the School of the Prophets!**

*Website: [ofProphets.org](http://ofProphets.org)*

*Email: [info@cjccf.org](mailto:info@cjccf.org)*



*“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

*-Matthew 11:29*



## Scriptures Referenced

### The Holy Bible: The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

In the CJB, names and key terms are returned to their original Hebrew and presented in easy-to-understand transliterations. It was first published in 1998 by Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. While this version uses Hebrew names for people and places, here those are replaced at times with traditional English versions.

### The Holy Bible: King James Version (KJV)

An early modern English translation of the Christian Bible for the Church of England, originally commissioned in 1604 and published in 1611. This collection includes the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament.

### The Universal Book of Mormon (UBM)

Using the 1836 edition of the Book of Mormon and the chapters and verses of both Community of Christ's RAV (Revised Authorized Version) and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint's OPV (Orson Pratt Version), the UBM puts the RAV reference first, followed by the OPV in brackets like so: *1 Nephi 3:59*

### *Scriptures Referenced*

[11:19a]. This allows readers of either version to find their reference with ease.

## The Book of Commandments and Revelations

- History of the Saints (Book of Avahr)
- Doctrines of the Saints (DoS)
- Theologies of the Saints (Lectures on Faith)
- Epistles of the Saints (EoS)
- Hymns of the Saints (HoS)

The Book of Commandments and Revelations is a two volume collection of modern revelations from all across the Latter Day Saint movement. History of the Saints (originally the Book of Avahr) tells the story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and includes all available revelations from before April 6, 1830.

Doctrines of the Saints collects revelations from April, 1830 to the present day. Theologies of the Saints includes the several lectures used in the original School of the Prophets, voted to be canonized by the Church of Latter Day Saints in 1835. Epistles of the Saints includes a variety of letters, journal entries, and other writings many of which are now seen as doctrine in some of the various Latter Day Saint churches.

Hymns of the Saints contains the collection of hymns selected by Emma Smith with other public domain hymns.

## Doctrine and Covenants

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(CJCLdS DaC)

- Community of Christ or the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS DaC)

When quoting Doctrines of the Saints or Epistles of the Saints, when those verses can be found in one or both of these versions of the Doctrine and Covenants, their references will be included.

## The Plates of Brass

- Volume I: The Torah of Moses
- Volume II: The History of Israel
- Volume III: The Prophecies of the Holy Prophets
- Volume IV: The Genealogies of Joseph

The Plates of Brass is an ongoing translation of the records taken by Nephi from Laban as Lehi and his family were leaving for their promised lands.

## Tsohar

- The Book of Remembrance
- The Book of Enoch
- The Book of Abraham
- The Book of Melchizedek
- The Book of the Law of the Lord
- The Visions and Parables of Zenos
- The Declarations of Neum

### *Scriptures Referenced*

- The Shulemnah
- The Writings of Moroni

Tsohar is a collection of books that includes translations, revelations, and other divine writings mostly based around temple rituals and covenants.

## Talmud

As the central text of Rabbinic Judaism, the Talmud is the primary source of both Jewish theology and religious law. The Talmud may be read here:

<https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Talmud>

## Sefer Yetzirah and the Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom

Sefer Yetzirah (Book of Formation, or Book of Creation) is a work of Jewish mysticism. According to modern historians, the origin of the text is unknown, and hotly debated. Some editions include an extra work, “The Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom.” These works may be read here:

<https://openscriptures.net/library/kabbalah/>

## The Zohar

The Zohar is a group of books which include commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah. It is a foundational work within Jewish Kabbalah. It offers interpretations on scripture along side thoughts on mysticism, mythical cosmogony, and mystical

psychology. The Zohar may be read here:

<https://www.sefaria.org/Zohar>

## The Book of Commandments

The Book of Commandments is the earliest published book to contain Joseph Smith's revelations. These revelations are now included, with changes, in the various editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

## The Pearl of Great Price

- The Book of Moses
- The Book of Abraham
- Joseph Smith–Matthew
- Joseph Smith–History
- Articles of Faith

The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of writings produced by Joseph Smith, published in periodicals of the church that existed in his day. It is part of the canonical Standard Works of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (CJCLdS) and many of their branches.

## The Book of Remembrance

The dreams, visions and revelations of David Ferriman.



# Forward

When you first hear the words “Mormon” and “Kabbalah” together, you might raise an eyebrow. Mormonism? Jewish mysticism? How do these fit? But as you dig deeper, you will see something beautiful. Mormon Kabbalah is a spiritual language that bridges ancient wisdom with Restorationist faith, uncovering hidden treasures from the Bible, Book of Mormon, the Brass Plates, and modern revelations.

At its core, Mormon Kabbalah is not a new religion, it is a way of understanding. It is an interpretive lens that views scripture, temple, and personal revelation through the mystical traditions of Israel. Just as Jewish Kabbalah explores the mysteries of God’s creation and our path back to union with Him, Mormon Kabbalah asks:

- What do the scriptures reveal about the hidden mysteries of God?
- How do we participate in the Shekinah’s exile and return?
- What does it mean to walk the path of teshuvah (return) and aliyah (ascension) in a Restorationist context?

The answers come not only through study, but through living revelation.

The Book of Mormon describes how Nephi took the brass plates from Laban and gave them to his father, Lehi. These plates contained the Torah, writings of prophets,

and records unknown to the Jews of Jerusalem (*1 Nephi 1:158-164 [5:10-14a]*). For Mormon Kabbalists, the brass plates are more than history, they are a mystical key. They preserve teachings that connect Israel's ancient temple mysteries with the Restoration.

The work of translating the Plates of Brass has already begun to bring forth texts from these plates, writings like *The Books of Moses* and the words of prophets like Zenos, Neum, Zenock, and more. These works open doors into spiritual worlds familiar to Kabbalists: the Tree of Life, the Sefirot, the exile of the Shekinah, and the promise of Zion.

Mormon Kabbalah isn't merely about ancient records, it is alive today. In *The Book of Remembrance and Other Dreams, Visions, and Revelations*, there are many keys to understanding Mormon Kabbalah. Dreams that unfold the hidden Torah (sod ha'torah), visions of angelic instruction, and direct revelations from God.

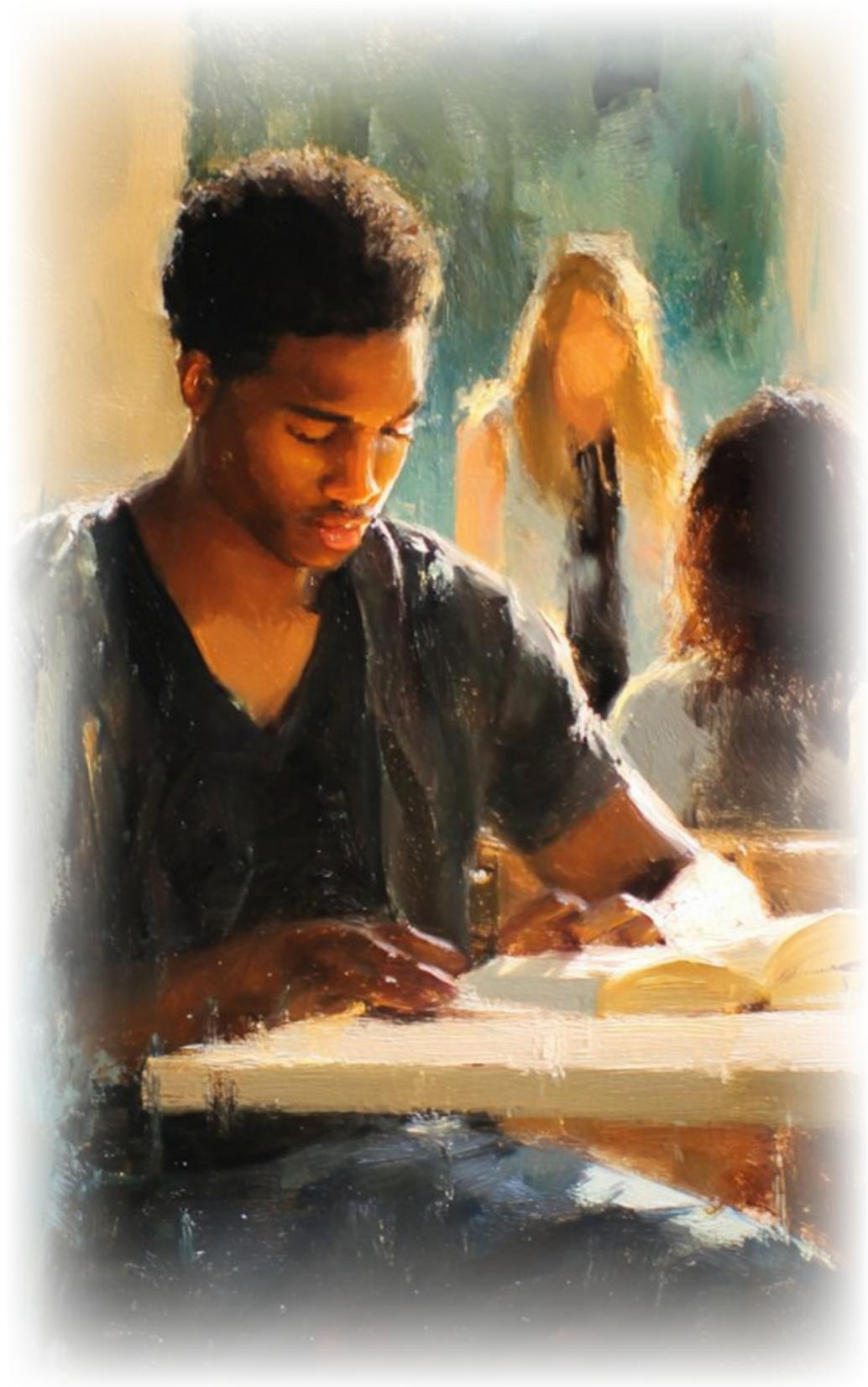
The purpose of this book is to introduce readers to Mormon Kabbalah. Here dreams become sacred texts, visions reveal the heavenly worlds, and revelations teach how to heal the earth (tikkun olam) and restore Zion. In this way, Mormon Kabbalah follows the ancient pattern where prophets and mystics receive not just laws, but divine mysteries.

For newcomers, it might sound lofty, but at the heart of Mormon Kabbalah, everything is about connection. It is about union with God (yichud), knowing God as both Father and Mother. It is about healing the creation (tikkun), bringing light into chaos. And it is about walking with the Divine Presence (the Shekinah), not waiting for Zion to descend, but building Zion here and now.

Mormon Kabbalah teaches that scripture is not merely read, it's lived. Every mitzvah, every whisper of the Spirit, every prayer is part of restoring creation.

So, what is Mormon Kabbalah? It is the Restoration's mystical heart, a weaving together of scriptures, temple mysteries, and modern revelations. It's a faith journey that says: God still speaks, the heavens are not far away, the Divine dwells with us.

Every soul is called to ascend, to heal, and to unite with the Divine. Or as *The Book of Remembrance* shows us, we are not just readers of sacred stories, we are invited to write our own. In short, Mormon Kabbalah is where Restoration scripture meets the mystical wisdom of Israel, opening a path of living revelation, deep connection, and divine union.



# Introduction

Welcome, dear reader. This book is a journey, one that begins not with a map, but with a light. That light is God's presence within you, and the path is yours to walk. Mormon Kabbalah is both ancient and new, rooted in the sacred traditions of Israel, enriched by the restoration given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and unfolding in the hearts of those who seek God today. It is not a creed, not a church, and not a set of rigid rules. Rather, it is a way of seeing, a lens through which all creation speaks the name of the Holy One.

In the pages ahead, you will encounter ideas and practices drawn from scripture, the wisdom of the prophets, and the mystical insights of the Kabbalists. You may find concepts here that challenge familiar patterns of thinking, and others that feel like home the moment you read them. Both are gifts. The goal is not to replace your faith, but to deepen it, to widen your view of the God who has always been with you, and to help you hear His voice more clearly in your own life.

Mormon Kabbalah is different from most religious offerings because it does not ask you to accept its teachings simply because they are written here. Instead, you are invited to test all things, to seek personal revelation, and to walk the path of teshuvah, turning your heart fully to God, at your own pace. You will find reflections, meditations, and spiritual tools, but no single "correct" way to practice them.

This approach honors one of the most precious

## *Introduction*

truths of the Restoration: God speaks to each soul directly. Just as no two people have the same fingerprint, no two souls share the exact same journey to God. This book encourages you to explore, question, and even wrestle with God, as did Jacob of old, until you know The LORD for yourself.

If you have ever felt that church was more about walls than bridges, you are not alone. Many have felt stifled by systems that dictate exactly how God can and cannot be experienced. Mormon Kabbalah invites you to tear down those walls, not to abandon your faith, but to step into a wider, deeper, and more intimate relationship with the Divine.

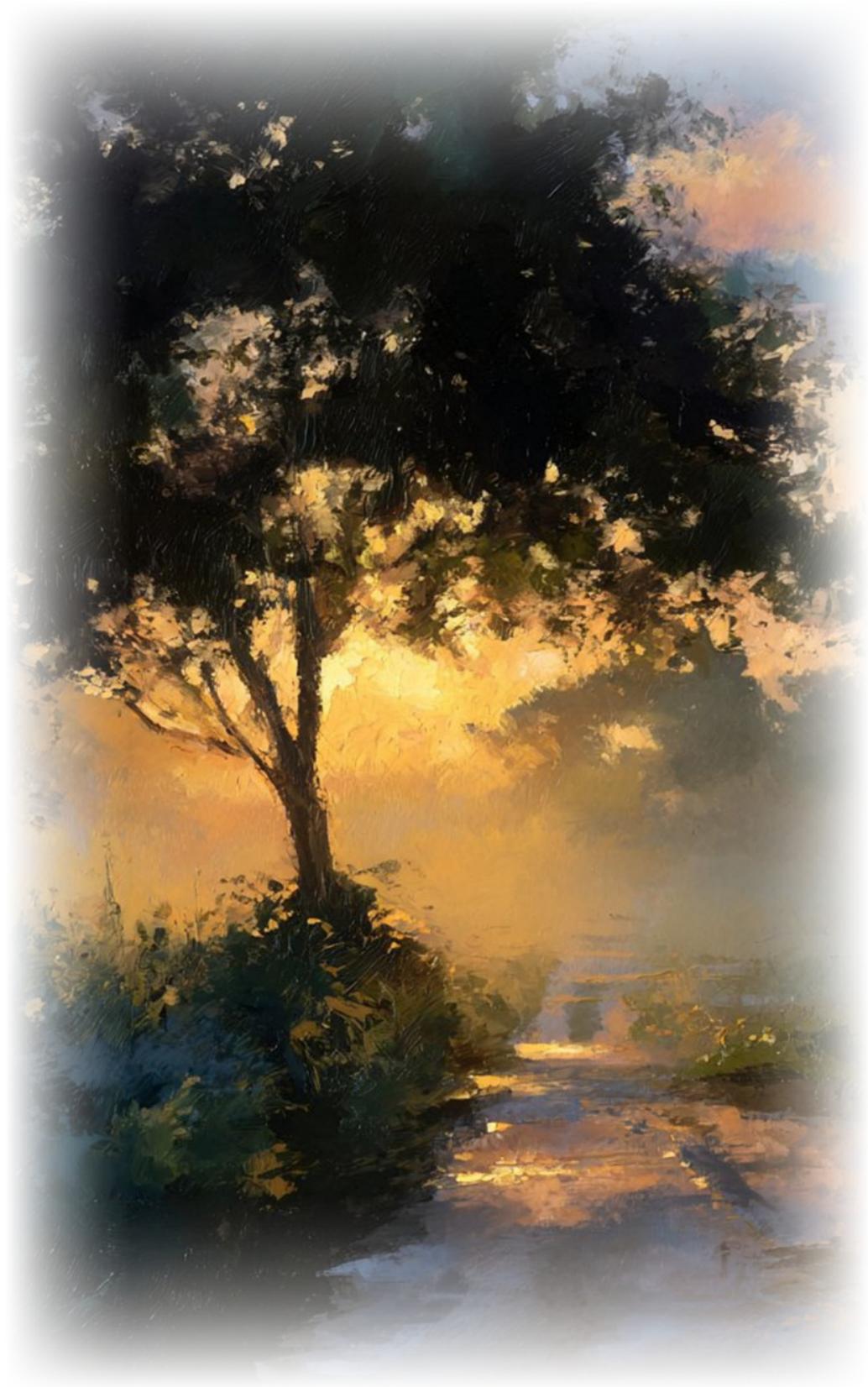
Here you are free to speak to God in your own words, to let scripture breathe in your heart, and to see the Shekinah, the Divine Presence, in the everyday moments of your life. Here you are encouraged to seek truth wherever it can be found, for all truth belongs to God.

This book is an invitation, not to a movement or a membership, but to a conversation with the Eternal Elohim. It is for the seeker and the skeptic, for the devoted and the disillusioned. Whether you come from a Latter Day Saint background, another tradition, or no tradition at all, you are welcome here, to learn with us.

As you read, may you encounter not only new ideas, but also the Living God who speaks through them. May you find the courage to walk your own path with Him, the humility to learn from all His children, and the joy of discovering that the Kingdom of Heaven has been within you all along.

Let us begin...





# Chapter 1

## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

*“Did I not tell thee: Unite my people in Kabbalah? And thou didst seek to know the meaning of this. And at the first thou thought Kabbalah meant the power of God, then thou thought Kabbalah was a way to help mankind understand my Word, and then understood Kabbalah to be the holy traditions given to mankind of me through my servant Moses, and still thou thought Kabbalah to be something more. And I say unto thee: it is all these and more: Yea, Kabbalah is a mysticism, a theology, and a thaumaturgy; Kabbalah is the tradition of Israel, it is my doctrine, and thus it is a mysterious art, for my doctrine is too simple for mankind to comprehend.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 125:4-8*

Mormon Kabbalah isn't really new. Joseph Smith's magical world views were based on folk magic, Hermetics, and Kabbalah. As the religion progressed, forked, and grew, the new denominations that were born from the death of the original church forged new paths with new teachings and understandings.

“Mormonism” is defined as nearly any church tied to the movement founded by Joseph Smith Jr. Yet the term “Mormon” is a nickname that some offshoots reject for a variety of reasons. The Latter Day Saint movement has more than 200 denominations. There are about 70

## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

or more groups that still identify as “Mormon” (for a full list, see *“Divergent Paths of the Restoration”* by Steven R. Shields). The largest and best-known Mormon denomination is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (CJCLDS). While they no longer embrace the term “Mormon,” many of its branches still do. The many churches calling themselves the Church of Jesus Christ, Community of Christ and the RLDS (Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) offshoots, among others, are also a part of the Latter Day Saint movement, they reject the title or nickname of “Mormon,” mostly due to the social identity of the churches started by Brigham Young.

The term “Mormon Kabbalah” is used for a few reasons. For one, it’s easier to say than “Latter Day Saint Kabbalah,” even though that would be more accurate. Also, Joseph Smith Jr. identified himself as a Mormon. Thus, it only makes sense to honor him by using the term, and the name of the holy book he brought into the world, through the power of God. And there are still Latter Day Saint denominations that do accept the term as an identifier of their faith. Lastly, the Book of Mormon is a key scripture we use to teach Mormon Kabbalah, so again it makes sense to use this term.

Knowing what “Mormon” is and why we use it, let’s turn our attention to the second term: “Kabbalah.” Kabbalah is traditionally viewed or defined as a Jewish mysticism that teaches the hidden secrets of the Torah. However, it’s more than a “magical world view,” and more than a way of life, yet still a little of both, intertwined. The word itself is from the Rabbinical Hebrew “qabbālāh,” meaning “tradition,” and from “qibbēl” which is “to receive” or “to accept” (*Google dictionary*).

Some say Kabbalah is a religion, some say it’s magic, others still say it’s a science. Regardless of each of these

views, Kabbalah is a way of life. One way to look at Kabbalah is to say that churches teach one the path of others' spiritual experiences, while Mormon Kabbalah teaches one the art or religion of finding our own spiritual experiences.

It is important to note that Kabbalistic practices are deeply rooted in Jewish mysticism and should be approached with respect and understanding. (Mysticism is the belief that becoming one with God may be attained through subjective experience.) There are key differences between the Kabbalah of Judaism, the Cabala of Christianity, and Mormon Kabbalah. These differences will be reviewed and explained as we delve into Mormon Kabbalah. For now, the most important differences to point out are as follows:

- The focus on Jesus Christ as the Father of our Salvation and our emissary.
- The focus on the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and other works to understand the Torah.
- Focus on personal growth in Christ's Grace to separate us from Ego, enabling our true altruistic nature to grow.

Beyond these, other differences only become relevant as we dig deeper into our studies. For now, the most important thing to know about Kabbalah is its fundamental doctrine: Love God and Love your neighbor as yourself. This is the key that binds Mormonism and Kabbalah.

*“And behold it is written also, that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but behold I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to*

*What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

*them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new. Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”*

*–3 Nephi 5:89-92 [12:43-48]*

## Questions:

- In your view, how is Jesus Christ the Father of our Salvation (*Mosiah 8:91 RAV, 16:15 OVB; Alma 8:93-94 [11:38-39a]*)?
- How is Jesus our emissary (*John 12: 44-50; Moroni 10:4 [10:4]*)?
- What are your thoughts on Jesus Christ, on deepening your faith in and your relationship with Jesus Christ?

## Types of Kabbalah

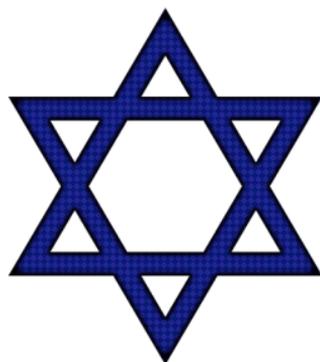
There are two main misunderstandings that I encounter over and over when talking about Mormon Kabbalah. The first is that Kabbalah is a book (it is not). The second is that there is only one type of Kabbalah. We will not be taking an exhausting look at Kabbalah here by any means. However, it is my hope to help readers and students better understand Mormon Kabbalah in light of other types of Kabbalah.

## In Judaism

As stated above, Kabbalah, Hebrew קַבְּלָה, comes from the root קָבַל meaning “reception.” While there are many meanings to the term Kabbalah, including “reception,” “tradition,” or “correspondence,” the idea of receiving is one common understanding between all the various schools. Historically speaking, Jewish Kabbalists developed their own sacred texts and use classical Jewish scriptures to explain and use mystical teachings. Though there are many schools, in modern Judaism Lurianic Kabbalah is most widely taught and practiced.

Jewish Kabbalah came out of what is known as Merkabah mysticism and Hekhalot literature. These were focused in part with the idea of ascending to the throne of God. With ideas of using signs, words, and keys to get past angels to get into heaven and gain access to the throne of God, ideas found in Merkabah mysticism and Hekhalot literature might have been very at home to the early Brighamites, and to many fundamentalists in that branch of our movement today. Though practitioners generally believe that Kabbalah is from an oral Torah given by Moses or even from Adam, coming out of the garden of Eden itself, the Jewish Kabbalah we know today actually came to be around the 12th century AD.

This doesn't mean that Jewish Kabbalah isn't as old as it claims to be, however. The main text of Lurianic Kabbalah is the Zohar, a collection of writings that includes a commentary on the mystical aspects of the Torah, more especially Genesis. The Zohar



## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

focuses on mysticism, mythical cosmogony, and mystical psychology. It is attributed to Shimon bar Yochai, also known as the Rashbi. Many scholars today claim it is more likely written by Moses de León in Spain. But, like the Book of Mormon, that doesn't mean that Moses de León wrote it. It may have been given by God to the Jews as a form of restoration of their religion. One of the main points of the Zohar is strict observance to the Torah and it is written as a type of Midrash, making the style more familiar to the Jewish people.

Kabbalah in Judaism has gone in and out of style. It is currently seeing a resurgence.

## **Christian Cabala & Hermetic Qabalah**

During the Renaissance, Christian scholars became very interested in Jewish mysticism, especially Kabbalah. These scholars saw the Jewish people as having secrets that they believed they, the Jews, couldn't understand because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. They then took Jewish ideas and reinterpreted them to fit with Christian theology. For example, the upper three Sefirot on the tree of life became the Trinity, with the other seven the earthly world. And this does fit, as the lower seven are the days of Creation. One of the beautiful things about the Sefirot is that they can be interpreted in so many ways.

During this same time period, Hermetic Qabalah arose alongside Christian Cabala, creating what we see today, a variety of Esoteric Christian, non-Christian, or even anti-Christian schools. Hermetic Qabalah draws on not only Kabbalah, but astrology, Alchemy, Pagan religions, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, hermeticism, and more.

Hermetic Qabalah differs from the Jewish form in being a more admittedly syncretic system, however it shares many concepts with Jewish Kabbalah. It is the underlying philosophy and framework for a number of magical societies, like the Golden Dawn, and the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. It would be impossible to go into detail on Hermetic Qabalah without getting into a number of esoteric and occult ideas, practices, and philosophies. Remembering that “occult” means secret, the task is even more difficult.

## Mormon Kabbalah

Mormon Kabbalah is a newer concept that arose in March of 2018 when the Lord told me to unite God’s people in Kabbalah. This may seem a contradiction to God’s command to Latter Day Saints to “preach unto the world, saying: You must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (*DoS 12a:59; DaC 16:6c2-d1 RLDS/CoC, 18:41 CJCLdS*). But with the understanding of repentance as “teshuvah,” returning to God, and the Kabalistic understanding that Israel means “Yashar-El,” the path “Straight to God,” then the idea that we would be united in receiving makes perfect sense (*DoS 2g:20-26*).

What is teshuvah? It is a Hebrew word, normally translated as “repentance,” but in reality it means “returning.” One of the Hebrew words for sin is “chet,” meaning “to go astray.” Rather than seeing repentance as the fear of God, in Kabbalah teshuvah is the return to the path of righteousness. Mormon Kabbalah is about building a personal relationship with God, the very nature of true repentance.



## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

To many, Kabbalah is a “mysticism.” Mysticism is the understanding that union with God may be attained through contemplation and surrendering ourselves to God. Or as Jesus put it, “not my will, but thine, be done” (*John 22:42*). Kabbalah and mysticism, according to *Doctrines of the Saints 125:4-8*, is a theology, and a thaumaturgy. Theology is the study of who God is, the nature of God, and religious beliefs in general. We are to build our own theologies, our own personal understanding of God. Thaumaturgy is miracle working, the gifts of the Spirit.

## Questions

- What is mysticism to you?
- What is theology to you, and how do you see it working with mysticism?
- What is thaumaturgy, and how does it help us bring mysticism and theology to life?
- How does this idea of the Gospel in action help us grow or deepen our faith in and our relationship with Jesus Christ?

## The Plainness

Anyone can study Kabbalah. As the Lord has said, it is “too simple for mankind to comprehend” (*DoS 125:8*). This reminds me of Nephi:

*“I glory in plainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus, for He hath redeemed my soul from hell.”*

*–2 Nephi 15:7 [33:6]*

As said above, the teachings of Kabbalah can be summed up in “love God, love thy neighbor.” Beyond

this, Mormon Kabbalah is a perception. It is putting an end to looking at the scriptures to support the ideas of men, to use the Word of God as weapons against our fellows, or to build churches of men. Rather, it is to see the world as a mirror, to fix our broken selves, and understand that this is enough, that we are enough for God.

Mormon Kabbalah is a return to the marriage covenant between Israel and God, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. As we build our own personal relationship with God, our evangelism becomes our actions, rather than our words. We don't need to seek out those looking for God, the Lord will send them to us. And by returning to God personally, we are doing our part to heal the creation. Mormon Kabbalah is an invitation to receive God, personally, into your life.

## Questions

- What does the Law of Love mean to you? (*Galatians 5:14, James 2:8, Moroni 7:52b [7:47]*)
- Which are more powerful to you, words or actions? Why?

## The People of Israel

*“His word was made known to the Prophets, and his sacraments were established in Israel.”*

*–Book of the Law of the Lord 2:20 (Tsohar)*

In the LDS movement, the terms “Zion” and “Israel” come up a lot. Sometimes they are even used interchangeably. But what do these words mean? And what do they have to do with us today?

## Israel

In the Old Testament, Jacob, son of Issac, is given a new title, Israel, after wrestling with an angel (*Genesis* 32:28). The ancient people of God and the modern state of Israel took their names from this title given to Jacob. But commentators differ on the interpretation of its meaning. The Hebrew name יִשְׂרָאֵל (Yisra'el) is said to mean “God contends,” or “God judges.” This is from the roots שָׂרָה (sarah), “to contend, to fight,” and אֵל (‘el), “God.” In the Second Temple period of Judaism, the name was understood to mean “a man seeing God.” This idea comes from the יָשׁ (man) ר’ה (to see) ’el (God).

In Kabbalah, yet another meaning is added to the title Israel: “Straight to El,” or in other words, “the straight path to the Creator.”

*“One who wishes to go by the path of the Creator is called Yashar-El, which is considered Yashar [straight] LaEl [to God], meaning that he wants everything he does to rise straight to the Creator, and does not wish to have any other aim.”*

*–Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (The Rabash);  
He who Hardens His Heart, Article No. 20,  
Tav-Shin-Mem-Hey, 1984-85*

This makes more sense when looking at Israel both as Jacob’s new title and as the name of God’s people. Jacob was unrelenting, wrestling the angel until morning, his path was straight. Yes, God will judge His people, God will judge all. This doesn’t really set God’s people apart from anyone. What sets us apart is that we are on the path of teshuvah, “straight to the Creator.”

## Questions

- What does Israel mean to you?
- What is teshuvah in relation to Israel and does it have any impact on your relationship with Jesus Christ?

## Kabbalah and Israel as a State of Mind and Heart

*“The word YsarmEl (Israel) is the letters of Li Rosh (the head, mind, is mine). This means that he believes he has a mind of Kedusha (Sanctity) although he is only discerned as “just,” meaning that he is in a state of diminution and lowness.”*

*–Baal HaSulam, Shamati [I Heard],  
143, Only Good to Israel*

To be God’s people is more than merely joining a church, denomination, or group of people. We must do more than merely be baptized, confirmed by the laying on of hands, or following a set of rules. We must humble ourselves and be brought low to be taken upon high as joint heirs with Christ (*Romans 8:17, Isaiah 2:17, Matthew 23:12*). We must follow Christ, and He descended below them all (*Ecclesiastics 24:45, Ephesians 4:9-10*). This requires more than being a mere follower of others, but one born again with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Then, as one—as Israel—we will be Zion.

In a revelation received on November 30, 2019, we are told that to be Israel is to be on the path Straight to God, to seek God’s face and taste of the fruit of the Tree of Life and not look away from either (*Doctrines of the Saints 2g*). To love God and our neighbors, to care for the Earth

and her creatures. And we are told that if we do these things, we will not just be Israel, we will be good and faithful servants. We were further commanded then not to quarrel with one another, but to be one. And isn't this Zion, to be one?

## Zion

*“Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Tziyon; and with him were one hundred forty and four thousand, who had His Name and His Father’s name written on their foreheads.”*

*–Revelation 14:1*

Understanding that “Israel” is “Straight to El,” what then is Zion? Zion is תִּיּוֹן Tsiyyon in Hebrew, the term often used as a synonym for Jerusalem. Jerusalem meaning “the place of peace.” Some say that Zion comes from the Hebrew root *ṣiyyôn* or “castle.” This is a feminine term, which makes sense as we are the bride, Christ the groom. For both the Rastafarians and the Latter Day Saints, Zion is a Utopian society of the righteous. It is a people or place of unity, peace and freedom, the exact opposite of “Babylon.” The worldly Babylon representing the oppressing and exploiting forces of materialism, the world of pride and Ego; a place of evil.

In Mormon Kabbalah, Zion refers to the spiritual point from which reality emerges. It is the Holy of Holies of the Temple of God. We seek the unification of “Zion” (here meaning Glory or Foundation) and “Jerusalem” (here referring to Kingship). We wish to bring the Heavens to the earth. Zion then is born from within us and used to repair and transform the world. We can only become Zion by displaying the Pure Love of Christ, meeting everyone where they are and loving them as

God does. And in this we become one, we become Israel: those on the straight path to God.

## Questions

- What does Zion mean to you?
- What is teshuvah in relation to Zion, and does it have any impact on your relationship with Jesus Christ?

## Kabbalah and the Spiritual Path

One question I am often asked is, how can one strengthen their relationship with God, particularly during periods of doubt or when one is feeling disconnected from God? As a Mormon Kabbalist, I generally answer with Kabbalistic principles.

As the mystical arm of Judaism, Kabbalah (like Mormonism) seeks to understand the truth of God and the universe. It incorporates a variety of spiritual practices, including prayers, meditation, and scripture. The idea is that anyone can achieve greater spiritual awareness and connection with the divine. Like Mormonism, Kabbalah places a strong emphasis on personal revelation and direct communication with God.

A common misconception is that Kabbalah is only for the Jewish people, or that it is a secret tradition. In reality, Kabbalah is open to anyone who is interested in studying and practicing. The key teachings of Kabbalah are centered on spiritual growth and accessing a deeper understanding of the universe and our place within it. While there are mystical practices associated with Kabbalah, like Mormon temple rituals, they are often part of a broader framework of ethical and moral teachings.

## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

There are a variety of Kabbalistic practices that can help one deepen their spiritual connection and understanding of the divine. These include engaging the Lord through prayer and meditation, studying the scriptures, visualization exercises, acts of kindness and charity, and attending religious services, rituals, or retreats. Talking with fellow Saints and/or trusted spiritual advisors can also be helpful, as it is a form of fellowship. What is truly important is finding what works best for you and meets your individual needs.

Everyone's spiritual journey is unique, what works for one person may not always work for another. It may take some time and experimentation to find out what works best for you. It's important to listen to your intuition and let your heart guide you in your spiritual journey. Keeping a journal to look back on can also be very helpful in tracking progress and reflecting on what helps you feel more connected to God.

*“Mormonism’ is the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, of which I myself am not ashamed.”*

*–Joseph Smith,*

*Letter to James Arlington, September 8, 1842*

Mormon Kabbalah teaches that acts of kindness and charity (the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ) are essential components of spiritual growth. Giving to those in need and showing generosity and kindness cultivates a deeper connection with the divine. Serving others helps individuals and communities develop a greater sense of empathy and compassion. In other words, the more we serve others the better we understand God. By serving others we are only serving the Lord (*Mosiah 1:49 [2:17]*). And, in doing so we will attain a deeper understanding of the

interdependence and interconnectedness of all things.

Kabbalistic teachings are all about unity, love, and harmony. And as those that spend their lives helping others will tell you, practicing acts of kindness and charity not only helps individuals build positive relationships, but also creates a more fulfilling sense of purpose in their lives. By developing qualities like empathy and compassion we will find greater spiritual growth. Mormon Kabbalah teaches that through acts of kindness and compassion towards others, individuals can overcome negative qualities such as pride, selfishness, and egoism. As we overcome these negative traits we will develop a more expansive and altruistic perspective on life.

As we develop empathy and compassion we cannot help but recognize the divine spark within ourselves and others. This cultivates a sense of unity with all of creation. As we grow in Christ's Grace through the



teachings of Kabbalah, we will let go of egoism, that human perspective of self-serving motivation. We will instead begin to focus on the well-being of others. Practicing acts of kindness and charity can also help to develop empathy and compassion. These actions foster a deeper understanding of the needs and struggles of others.

## *What is Mormon Kabbalah?*

Recognizing the divine spark within ourselves and others means acknowledging that we all have intrinsic value and worth, simply by virtue of being alive. This recognition can lead to greater empathy and compassion. This is because it helps us to see others as fellow human beings who are also deserving of love, respect, and kindness. When we view others in this way, we can be more patient, tolerant, and understanding.

The more we practice Kabbalah the easier this will be, even in difficult or challenging situations. We become more likely to extend a helping hand when someone is struggling when we truly see others. This helps us offer real support and encouragement to those who need it. This is the goal of all Saints and all that would call themselves Saints, and thus it is the goal of Mormon Kabbalah.

*“One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”*

*–Joseph Smith,*

*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 199*

## Questions

- What does Kabbalah mean to you?
- What are some differences between Mormon Kabbalah and other types of Kabbalah that stood out to you in this chapter? What similarities?
- Do you see Kabbalah as something that can help you on your path? Why or why not? What draws you to it? What concerns do you have?
- Where do you see Jesus’ teachings applied in Mormon Kabbalah as it has been presented to you in this chapter?





## Chapter 2

### *Seeking Safety on the Path*

*“Then Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

*–John 6:68*

If you are reading this book, you are likely looking for answers to spiritual questions. This is normal and healthy. Some potential benefits include gaining a deeper understanding of oneself and the world, and finding a sense of purpose and meaning.

I have found that Mormon Kabbalah has helped me to experience a greater connection to God, allowing me to see beyond myself. But that doesn't make me or anyone else “exceptional,” as these experiences are open to all. As with any exploration, it's important to approach spirituality with an open mind and a healthy dose of skepticism. We are not all-knowing, no one but God is. This means that we must be mindful of any potential risks or negative consequences to our thoughts and actions.

One thing I have learned through trial and error is that exploring spiritual matters has both risks and benefits. Potential risks can include things like getting involved in harmful or manipulative practices, even losing touch with reality. One must be careful not to become so focused on the spiritual aspects of life that every other part of our lives begin to fail or fall apart. There is a

connection between what some call the “mundane” or “ordinary” world and the spiritual realm. In truth, they are both the same place. To ignore one or the other is to misunderstand both.

One way to minimize the risks associated with exploring spiritual matters is to approach the exploration with an open mind and a willingness to learn, which is itself a benefit. You must feel safe to be wrong, to fall down, to fail. Ask any athlete, no one was a super star game winner from day one. They worked hard and learned from their mistakes. The same is true in spiritual matters. Anyone too “right” or “righteous” to be wrong has a hard truth waiting to be learned.

How do you avoid traps and pitfalls on your spiritual path? Do your research. Yes, we as humans learn better in groups; but be aware. Be aware of any potential negative consequences, such as becoming involved in a dangerous cult or being taken advantage of by unscrupulous individuals. It is important to have a support system in place as you learn. Friends, family, or even a therapist can provide guidance and support as you explore the questions of the meaning of life. Be sure to find people outside your religious group or community for more insight and better overall perspective.

## Questions

- Do you think many people are on some sort of spiritual journey?
- Is it possible to live a life of joy? Why or why not?
- What do you see as the reason for existence?
- How do you find peace?

## Avoiding Deception in the Last Days

*“At that time, if someone says to you, ‘Look! Here’s the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ don’t believe them. There will appear false Messiahs and false prophets performing great miracles — amazing things! — so as to fool even the chosen, if possible.”*

*—Matthew 24:23-24*

Those who know me know that I like to say that all churches/denominations are cults. This is because Merriam-Webster defines a “cult” as:

- great devotion to a person, idea, object, movement, or work (such as a film or book)...
- a system of religious beliefs and ritual...
- formal religious veneration...
- a system for the cure of disease based on dogma set forth by its promulgator

These definitions are simply too broad. When looking at the definition of “cult” in many religious circles, the term cult gets used for anything that is not affiliated with that group or that disagrees with said group. This is confirmation bias and cannot be used to determine much of anything.

## Cults and the Occult

*“So if people say to you, ‘Listen! He’s out in the desert!’ don’t go; or, ‘Look! He’s hidden away in a secret room!’ don’t believe it.”*

*—Matthew 24:26*

One of the things that people I have met associate with both Kabbalah and Mormonism is that they are cults and/or associated with the occult. Growing up, one question I was asked quite a lot was why I belonged to a cult. As a child, I didn't know what a cult was, and I quickly found that those asking the question also didn't understand the meaning of the term either. I would like to dive into this topic in this chapter, both to clear up some misconceptions and to (hopefully) help readers avoid cults as they move forward in their spiritual journeys.

Most confuse the idea of a cult with the occult. But what is the occult? If you do not know, don't worry, my accusers back in K-12 couldn't answer this question either, and to be fair, I did not really understand the term myself. As I grew, I learned that I did belong to a religious denomination that long held to occult practices. As stated above, Merriam Webster defines the occult as "secret," "not easily apprehended or understood," or "hidden from view." Based on these definitions, not only was the denomination I grew up in definitely of the occult, so are many Latter Day Saint churches. For that matter, a good number of Protestant churches would fall into this category as well, as would the Catholics. This makes Christianity, by strict definition, occult.

The question we should ask then would be, is the occult bad? We know we are to do some things in secret. Jesus taught us to pray in secret, for example (*Matthew 6:6*). Yet when He taught, he also fulfilled the prophecy found in Psalm 78:2, "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old." The author of Matthew confirms this, but changes the second half of the verse to, "which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (*Matthew 13:35*).

We know that Jesus brought true occult teachings

into the light. Yet he also stated, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (*Matthew 7:6*). This leaves a little gray area to discuss.

Clearly, our worship should be both communal and personal, building a real relationship with our fellow Saints and with God. At the same time, we must welcome all people while rejecting secret combinations, a major theme of the Book of Mormon (*see 2 Nephi 11:93-95 [26:22-23]; Helaman 2:150-152 [16:26-27], Mormon 4:25 [8:27]*). In doing so, we must respect God and not mock our Lord, or give people reasons to mock our God. I know a number of Latter Day Saint denominations keep revelations, temple ordinances, and other parts of their rituals or theology secret, or “occult,” for this last reason. While it is easy to accuse our brothers and sisters, warring against our fellow Saints isn’t the way to unify our movement.

## Dangerous Cults

The dangerous types of cults may be seen in a variety of circles, from religious to business to politics and more. Each has their core belief systems that will make sense on the surface, but falls apart upon closer inspection without a wide breath of mental band-aids. Yet the core belief I have found in these groups is the same: egoism. When I say “egoism,” I mean both the “us versus them” mentality and the idea that members or leadership are in some way inherently special.

Members of these types of cults see “truth” when all others are being “lied to.” Members have access to occult (secret) knowledge that only an elite group gains access to, yet there is a pretense that they wish everyone to gain this “secret wisdom.” They may pretend to teach

there is good outside their group. However, because those outside their groups do not have equal access, for whatever reason, the next life for believers will somehow be better or more advanced, while good people outside the group will receive a positive, but lesser standing before God.

When trying to determine if a church or group is a dangerous cult, there are some questions to ask, and signs to look for. These signs may not (necessarily) be where they live or what they wear. If we see a group of people living in yurts, dressing like they are from a culture they do not belong to (ex. Caucasians dressed as indigenous Americans or Buddhist monks) we should not assume these people are in some sort of crazy or evil cult. Many, in fact I would argue most, truly manipulative cults see members living in average homes and dressing like one would expect from their walk of society. To evangelize to prospective members, they will want to be seen as relatable.

Again, many assume that manipulative cults are filled with the emotionally weak or mentally unstable, that they are crazy people with weird or strange beliefs. This is not always the case. In fact, a successful counter-culture cult will be filled with the opposite types of people. This is why the Savior said that even the very elect could be deceived (*Matthew 24:24*). To identify a truly dangerous cult, look for subtle manipulation. Members will likely not even realize they are doing it. For example, when they teach idea “x” and someone points out a flaw, then the outsider made a mistake, not them. When they said “x” they really meant “y” all along. This is called “gaslighting.”

These methods work for them because they create separation between those *in* this type of cult and those

*outside* of it (us vs. them). They have been taught to see naysayers as the enemy or the misguided or somehow confused. If we were to go along with their new idea, “y,” as if that is what “x” meant all along, then we are one of them (potentially), a “golden contact” as it were. If not, then we are an outsider, “of the world,” so to speak. This is the shell we must pierce, helping those see the illogical contradictions for themselves. As Christians we do this by offering the opportunity to unite in Jesus Christ, rather than creeds and dogmatism. We must love one another as God loves each of us, where we are. We should not be forced to believe in ideas “x” or “y” but in Jesus as the Christ, the Word made flesh. This can mean something different for every Christian, and that is okay.

It is important to understand that there is no magic here, no mind control, no demonic possession. This is simply ego fulfillment. The people that fall into this trap give “great devotion to a person, idea, object, movement, or work” because they feel this devotion feeds their own egos (*Merriam-Webster, cult* 2). Regardless of their attempts to hide secret “truths” or teachings until after they have been properly integrated, it invariably begins with ego polishing ideas. Recruits are “strong” for giving up normal things, or if they have already rejected these things then they are somehow gifted.

At the same time, even in these types of cults, members are made to feel that they are somehow unworthy, not good enough. They bully and berate themselves. They are made to feel worthless. And the worst part is that when they seek help from inside the group, they are told again that they are wrong. They are self-shamed for having any sort of doubts. This merely continues the status quo, trapping members further into the manipulative cult. They feel somehow indebted to them.

These false mentalities reject the reality that it is by the grace and great condescension of God to us that we do all good works (*Jacob 3:7 [4:8]*). The point of religion is to lift us up as we reject the ego, pride, and selfishness to become altruistic, like the God who created us. Religion is an opportunity to be humble for the sake of a greater sense of purpose. Yes, everyone has doubts. However, if we keep our baptismal covenants then we will truly be there for one another, to mourn with those that mourn and to have joy with those with joy (*Mosiah 9:39-40 [18:8-9]*, *Romans 12:15*, *Doctrines of the Saints 13a:67*). And most importantly, we will not fear those different than ourselves as we will see the Creator in everyone.

## Questions

- How does the broad definition of “cult” challenge or change the way you’ve used or understood that term in the past?
- In what ways can “occult” practices, defined simply as “hidden” or “secret,” be either spiritually beneficial or spiritually harmful?
- How do Jesus’ teachings about secrecy, praying in secret, or withholding pearls from swine, shape your view of what should be shared openly versus kept sacred?
- What are some practical ways that believers can avoid deception in the last days without falling into divisiveness or suspicion toward other faith communities?
- How can the Latter Day Saint movement, or any faith tradition, balance the need for sacred privacy with the call to openness, unity, and hospitality?

## Warning Signs

Some common warning signs of a cult or unscrupulous individuals may include demands for complete obedience, isolation from friends and family, intense pressure to recruit new members, claims of exclusive knowledge or authority, or financial exploitation. Be wary of any attempts to control your thoughts or behavior. Yes, you want to be a better person, but on your own terms as you grow your personal relationship with God. You are not a puppet and should not be treated as such. It's important to be aware of these warning signs and to trust your instincts if something doesn't feel right. If you have any concerns, it's a good idea to seek guidance from a trusted source.

All that said, we now see that the Latter Day Saint movement is a part of the occult, just like everyone else. Now what? Satan is working even harder now to divide us as Saints. Which group then are actually dangerous cults?

Let's look at some examples of some well known dangerous cults. Cults like *Heaven's Gate*, *The Children of God*, and *NXIVM* have focused on things like celibacy or sexual restrictions, fasting or dietary restrictions, and even special clothing. Yet so do a number of Latter Day Saint denominations. The questions we should ask are: how do these restrictions make us feel? Do we feel closer to God? Or, do we fear we will never be good enough? Do we feel greater love for others? Or, do we feel pride, as though we are somehow better than other people because of these practices? Do we behave as though we know some great secret?

Many cults claim belief in a god or some higher being, salvation, and the afterlife, sometimes combined with an "end of the world" view. Leaders will often claim to be an apostle, or prophet. These groups can be strict, sometimes

using punishments like shunning or exclusion. Members are encouraged to proselytize as often as possible. Sometimes they will even send people on “missions” to convert people to their groups.

If this sounds familiar, it is probably because it sounds like nearly every church on the planet. Even many Protestants now see today as the “last days.” Again, we must ask ourselves, do these ideas help us feel closer to God in a way that helps us love ourselves and all of our neighbors? Even those outside the group? Or do we just feel closer to their group? Both are fine, but no church or leader should ever replace our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And if we feel isolated, cut off from the world, then we most likely have been.

Some cults have a “warrior” mentality. “Spiritual warfare” is a term being thrown around, these ideas can be fueled by a belief that we must somehow change society, start a revolution, or overthrow some perceived enemy to rid the world of the “evil forces.” Members might see themselves as elite people, set apart to go into battle. They might have some idea that the government is on the verge of failure, and only they can save it.

Many times, those in these groups are armed or encourage members to buy weapons. Leadership might discourage this, but little to nothing is done to discourage members of the cult from pushing such ideas. Some may support or even engage in violent activities. If this sounds familiar, it may be because we are seeing more and more of this today. We must ask ourselves, are we fighting to free everyone, or to be free to oppress others?

Cults might have secret handshakes, or other ritualized practices. These might be sustained by belief in attaining wealth and power, status, and quick earnings. The wealthy are rewarded with positions of power. They

typically push ultra-conservative family values, strict morals, good health, or patriotism. Yet they may also push ultra liberal values and agendas. There is far more overlap that some may like to admit! For example, both conservative and liberal homesteaders will find they share far more common values and practices in their similar pursuits in a more self-sufficient lifestyle, despite their different, and at times even opposing, world views. We can see the same thing in dangerous political cults where the overlaps in action stem from opposing views.



While groups may have systems set up to help the poor, they might also use poverty to keep people out of their most sacred rights, like the Zoromites (*Alma 16:122-123 [32:2-3]*). And many times, these rights ask that members give everything they have not to God, but to the organization. Again, this sounds familiar. There are a number of Christian denominations that teach the prosperity gospel. And a number of Latter Day Saint sects have secret rights, these were started by Joseph Smith himself.

Finally, the last example we will look at are the cults that believe in supernatural powers. These might include “magic blessings” that can heal, or even give someone God’s divine will for an individual. These blessings will claim people are tied to ancient Biblical characters, make promises for their lives or even after lives, and give them warnings or predict great things for them. This becomes

problematic when these replace schools, doctors, hospitals, and sound logic and reasoning.

Again, this sounds like many churches, sects, and denominations, not just in the Latter Day Saint movement. The real question we must ask if we see these signs in the churches we belong to is: *How is my personal relationship with God?* If you feel unworthy or unwelcome, then you aren't where God wants you.

## The Test

After looking at this list, did you see things that would make your church a cult? Hopefully, the answer is yes, because many of these are tools used by God for good, just as they are used by Satan for evil. Every church is a cult. Every church delves into the occult. The question becomes, does that church get us closer to Jesus Christ? Because if an organization is building walls between us and God, or between us as Saints, then we are not where the Lord wants us to be. I can say this because I know and testify that the only thing keeping us from our God is ourselves. The only thing keeping us apart as Saints is ourselves. Let us work harder to love God and love our neighbors and put these things Satan uses to divide us behind us, because in truth we have far more in common than the enemy would have us believe.

If you suspect that someone you know or love is in a cult, first off don't panic. The best thing we can do is love them. By trying to convince them they are in a destructive cult, we run the risk of driving them deeper into that cult and building a wall between us and them; between them and reality itself. In *Doctrines of the Saints* 3a:7 we read:

*“Reality is defined by how we see the world... When*

*we see through human eyes, we see weakness and sin. Once born again our perception changes and we see God's creation as He sees it: it is good."*

If we are unsure if our friend(s) or loved one(s) are in a dangerous cult, there is a test. In the Bible, in 1 John 4:1-6, we are told not to believe every spirit, but to test them. The test John gives us is to ask if Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Now, many can answer this question as "yes." However, in the Gospel of John 1:14 we find the deeper meaning: Jesus is the Word made flesh. If we are told to pray on the truth of something or are given a vision or revelation that decrees Jesus was a man, or anything other than the Word made flesh, or that puts a person, group, or organization between you and God, then we know the spirit of that group failed the test and is evil. We may have the light of Christ, but Jesus *is* the light.

## Questions

- In what ways can a church or spiritual community unintentionally (or intentionally) replace your personal relationship with God, and how might you guard against that?
- How do fear-based teachings affect your capacity to love those outside your group?
- When evaluating secretive or ritual practices, what factors help you decide whether they are spiritually enriching or signs of unhealthy power dynamics?
- How might you distinguish between faith-based healing or prophecy that strengthens a person's life, and practices that undermine critical thinking or essential medical care?

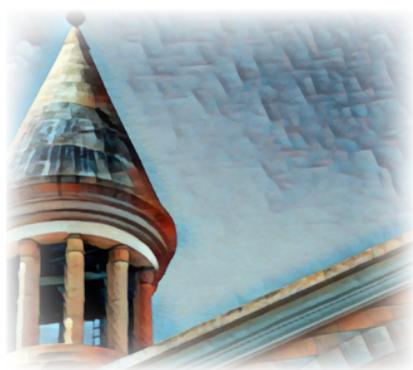
- In what ways can relationship-building and love be more effective than confrontation when helping someone who may be in a spiritually unhealthy group?
- How does viewing Jesus as “the Word made flesh” shape the way we test spiritual claims, visions, or revelations we encounter?

## When is it Time to Leave Your Church?

*“Nevertheless, brothers, I call on you in the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to agree, all of you, in what you say, and not to let yourselves remain split into factions but be restored to having a common mind and a common purpose.”*

*–1 Corinthians 1:10*

All Christian churches, sects, or denominations have one thing in common: faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But once we get past this commonality, our



shared religion begins to fracture. How then do we follow Paul’s advice that we “all speak the same thing?” (*1 Corinthians 1:10*). The answer is simple: the Lord has given us numerous congregations, sects, and denominations to choose from. The question isn’t about finding the one that is right, but the right one for you and your family.

Not every church is right for everyone, and that’s okay. While Mormon Kabbalah does generally try to

encourage people to stay in their home churches, this is not always practical. Hopefully this list will help you and your family see if or when it is time to seek a new congregation that all may worship as one in Christ.

## 1. You Dread Going/Have Lost Passion

As a child, church may feel like a chore; but as an adult it should be a place of community. This isn't to say that worship should be entertaining. Rather, as more mature Christians, we should find services edifying (see *Acts 9:31, Ephesians 4:15-16, 1 Thessalonians 5:11*). Edifying here means it helps you to grow spiritually. A good book, conversation, or program can help you to grow intellectually. Worship services should feed your soul. If you and/or your family is attending a congregation where attendance has become more of a duty than a spiritual meal, it may be time to prayerfully look elsewhere for your spiritual needs. This does not mean that group is bad or evil, but it may be time to move on.

## 2. You Feel Like You Don't Belong

It's okay to feel like a fish out of water in a new church or congregation. But once you've found your rhythm, that should go away. If it doesn't, the question of *why* should be asked. Is it a cultural difference? A theological difference? People too cliquish? Something else? These may be superficial, yet relevant reasons to find a new church. Maybe it's something you cannot put your finger on, but it is there. That could be the Holy Spirit telling you that you are needed elsewhere (see *Ephesians 2:10, 1 Peter 5:6-7, 1 Nephi 1:65 [3:7]*). This is a more difficult, but an important question to address none the less. Sometimes we just don't feel like we fit in anywhere. Be sure to pray on this and see where God needs you.

### 3. Spiritual Shaming

While it is the job of religious leaders to, well... lead... people to Christ, there are good ways and bad ways to go about it. Spiritual shaming is one that hurts both those shamed and those observing the shaming. We can invite people to Christ, but after that we let God tell them what to do. As Joseph Smith said: "I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves" (*quote traditionally attributed to Joseph Smith Jr.*). This doesn't mean that just anything goes, but churches that openly attack others or groups of others in an open spirit of contention creates "enemies of righteousness" out of God's children (*see Proverbs 13:10, 1 Timothy 6:3-5, 3 Nephi 5:30-31 [11:29-30]*). While it is recommended that we reach out to leaders of such denominations and share our concerns, if the spirit of contention isn't withdrawn, then it may be time to leave in peace.

### 4. Differing Theology

While it is true that we should avoid spiritual shaming, that doesn't mean that everyone will agree with everyone on everything. In the Latter Day Saint movement marriage, sexuality, revelations, and even the nature of God are very heated and much debated topics. This is where theological differences (or better said, different opinions) may cause friction in a congregation. If the passion for these topics gets too high, one may be better served in Christ to love their neighbors and move on to another congregation (*see Mark 9:38-41, Titus 3:9, Moroni 7:2-18 [7:2-19]*). This should not be done out of contempt, but in the spirit of love and unity. It is okay to agree to disagree on theologies.

## What Not to Do

These four topics are merely the tip of the iceberg, but they are a good start if you are questioning leaving your current church. Remember what Mormon said to his son, Moroni:

*“Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.”*

*—Moroni 7:18 [7:19]*

If we feel the spiritual prompting to move to another church, we must do so in peace. We shouldn't bring contention into a denomination as we are leaving it or take that contention with us into a new denomination. As Christians, we are bridge builders, not wall builders. We have been taught to love our enemies, and our brothers and sisters in Christ should never be seen as such (*Matthew 5:21-26, 43-48, 3 Nephi 5:69-75, 89-92; [12:21-26, 43-48]*). If we are to love our enemies, then surely we should love our fellow believers in Christ. When the Lord brings us to a new congregation, a new church, we should take the opportunity God has given us to share the good found in the places we have been, that we may all be one in Christ.

## Questions

- In what ways might feeling “out of place” in a church be an opportunity for personal growth versus a sign to move on?

- How can churches address theological differences without fostering division, and what role should individual members play in that process?
- When leaving a congregation, what practical steps can believers take to ensure they depart in peace and without creating unnecessary contention?
- How can past church experiences, both positive and negative, be used to strengthen unity and understanding in a new spiritual community?

## Standing for Truth

*“Do not go around spreading slander among your people, but also don’t stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is at stake; I am The LORD”*

*–Leviticus 19:16*

The last thing I’d like to cover on this topic is the slander, gossip, talebearer. These are all types of *lashon hara* (Hebrew: “evil speak”) that fall under the sin of *rechilus*. The word *rechilus* comes from the root “rachil,” Hebrew for “a peddler.” This is because a *rechilus* act is just that: peddling gossip, or ill will towards another. After looking at cults, suddenly they pop up everywhere. But what is a cult to one is religion to another. We need to avoid dangerous cults. At the same time, we need to avoid putting up walls between ourselves and other believers of the Word.

## Three Deaths

*“The tongue can be as murderous as the hand.”*

*–Arachin 15b:73-74, Talmud*

It is said in Talmud, Arachin 15b, that rechilus speech destroys or “kills” three people. These are the one who speaks, the one who listens, and the one being spoken of. This is very reminiscent of the Lord’s words in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” It seems that it takes three to build and three to destroy. Three is a key common denominator because it is the smallest base of a community. Lashon hara is a vial weed that will destroy a whole village, turning one from another.

In contrast, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the very foundation from which Christian communities are built.

*“Condemn not other branches of the Church of Christ, for contention is not of me; but build bridges that all may come and worship the Father in my name.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 14d:18*

In June of 1829, Joseph Smith received a revelation for all those called to be Apostles in these last days. In part they were commanded not to contend against any “church, save it be the church of the devil” (*Avahr 25:39, DoS 12a:35*). But this commandment wasn’t new. Jesus said the same to His original Twelve:

*“And John answered him, saying, ‘Rabbi, we saw a man expelling demons in your name; and because he wasn’t one of us, we told him to stop.’ But Jesus said, ‘Don’t stop him, because no one who works a miracle in my name will soon after be able to say something bad about me. For whoever is not against us is for us.’”*

*–Mark 9:38-40*

The Book of Mormon tells us that there are two

churches, “one is the Church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil” (1 Nephi 3:221 [14:10b]). Yet there seems to be literally hundreds of thousands of churches on the earth today. How can this be?

One thing to understand is that we are the Church. In Ephesians 5:25, Paul tells the Saints that husbands should love their wives as Jesus loved the Church and gave His life for it. Did Jesus give his life for a building? For an institution? No, he died for us, each of us personally. Thus, *we* are the Church. Romans 16:5 talks about greeting the Church in a house, that would be the people. In 1 Corinthians 14:12, when Paul is talking about using spiritual gifts to edify the Church, he means to edify the people, that we should edify one another. In 1 Timothy 3:5 we are asked how someone that cannot take care of their own family takes care of the people of Christ. And on and on.

Mormon echoes this in the Book of Mormon:

*“Wherefore, I would speak unto you that are of the Church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope, by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven.”*

*–Moroni 7:3 [7:3]*

A building cannot be a peaceable follower of Christ, nor can an institution. But we, as human beings, can. We have free will. We make choices. We can choose for ourselves to side with God by loving our neighbors or with the devil by choosing to love only ourselves.

*“For I remember the Word of God which saith: By their works ye shall know them; for if their works be good,*

*then they are good also. For behold, God hath said: A man, being evil, cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent, it profiteth him nothing; for behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. For behold, if a man, being evil, giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore, it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore, he is counted evil before God... But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, everything which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve Him is inspired of God. Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.”*

*–Moroni 7:4b-12 [7:5-14]*

## Questions

- In what ways have you seen harmful speech impact not only individuals but entire communities of faith?
- How can Christians build bridges with other believers without compromising their convictions or core beliefs?
- What practical steps can you take to ensure that your words invite others toward God rather than create division?

## The Church is in Our Hearts

It is clear that it is not the denomination we belong to that defines our church status, but who our hearts belong to. Who is it that we serve? God or Satan? Our neighbors, or ourselves? Does our love for our fellow

man wax weal or strong? Are we working to grow in the Grace of Christ, or in our own self-worth and self-importance? These are the things that define us, not what we own or what religious institutions we belong to.

My challenge to you this day would be: Turn to God, remember the Shema:

*“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our Elohim, The LORD is Unity.”*

*–Deuteronomy 6:4*

This is the prayer that Jesus uttered when he asked that we, His Church, would be one, even as He and the Father are one (*John 17:11*). This should be our prayer, every morning when we wake and every evening before we sleep as a reminder that we are to be one with God and one with our neighbors, because unity is the very heart of Christianity. To be a part of the Church of Christ is the very desire to be one.

## Peace in Zion

To some it would seem that rechilus speech is merely pointing out facts. To others, the excuse may be made that we are to warn our neighbors (*Doctrines of the Saints 53c:17*). But does this bring peace? Our goal as Saints is to build Zion. Zion begins in our hearts. Can we have Zion if we are pointing to the flaws of others? No. To find Zion we must first perfect ourselves in Christ (*Matthew 7:1-5*). Once we have been perfected in the atonement of Jesus, our perception changes. Rather than as man sees things, pointing out flaws, we see the Godliness of others and meet them where they are. This is, of course, where God met us.

This is important to understand because other people are mirrors of how we see ourselves. When we point out weaknesses and flaws in others it is because we see our own faults in them. But when we have Christ, we see Christ in others. Thus, we cannot speak rechilus because we no longer see as mankind sees. It is Ego that lulls us into false security that we are or must be better than others. As Zion we see each other as one. And as one and lachon hara against another is rechilus against ourselves.

*“And see that there is no iniquity in the Church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking.”*

*-Doctrines of the Saints 2a:52*

## Everything in Love

Processing the light of Christ, we must do everything reasonable to keep the channels of communication open. Do not give your friends or loved ones an excuse to cut you out of their lives. Eventually, they will remember that you are a trusted ally who will not judge them, and that they can speak to you when doubts finally surface. Don't be afraid to learn about a cult your friend or loved one is a part of, but don't get sucked into it or feel the need to join or go to meetings to placate your loved one(s). By supporting them and showing interest, they trust you. And when they do open up, don't place blame on their religious beliefs. Ask them simple, thought-provoking questions and let them think for themselves.

Remember, you cannot fix them, I cannot fix them, but God can help them, if they will listen to the Holy Spirit. By loving them and letting them work things out,

that light of Christ in you can help bring them home.

The one exception to this rule is if they become a threat of harm to you, themselves, or others. If the cult they belong to gets violent, please contact the proper authorities. It does not matter if the cult is a church, a so-called self-help group, a political organization, or even a business. If violence or the threat of violence becomes an issue, for safety reasons, we must alert the proper authorities. Beyond this, the best remedy for getting people out of cults is loving them. Don't let the cult drive a wedge between you and them. Always let them know you are there for them, no matter what and that you love them.

I have found that a genuine spiritual community will encourage its members to explore their own beliefs and experiences. Rather than demanding blind obedience, they will welcome diverse perspectives and ideas. These will be used to help everyone in the group learn and grow.

By contrast, dangerous cults may try to control what members believe or how they think and behave, with membership being the main objective. Dangerous cults generally promote a single, narrow viewpoint that is considered the only "correct" way. A genuine spiritual community should be transparent about its practices, finances, and structure. Cults are more likely to keep these details obscure or hidden.

Educate yourself about these types of warning signs. Use your critical thinking skills to evaluate any group or community before getting involved. I want you to grow spiritually, and I want you to do so safely.

*"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."*

*—Psalms 147:3*

## Questions

- How can practicing unity with God and others transform the way we see and interact with people who believe or live differently from us?
- In what ways might pointing out the flaws of others hinder the building of Zion in our hearts and communities?
- How does our self-perception influence the way we speak about and treat others, and what role does Christ play in reshaping that perception?
- What are some practical ways you can maintain love and open communication with someone, especially a loved one, with beliefs or group affiliation that concern you?

*For more on cults, please see “Cultish” by Amanda Montell.*



## Chapter 3

### *God is Love*

*“Then Simon Peter answered him: ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the word of eternal life.’”*

*–John 6:68*

Before we can truly dive into Mormon Kabbalah, we need to first look at the nature of God. We can use the Seven Principles of Mormon Kabbalah to help guide us in our mutual understanding. This common ground will help us begin.

#### 1. God is Real

To study Mormon Kabbalah (the Book of Mormon + Kabbalah), one must first recognize there is a God. We all see God differently, and this is okay. God meets us where we are. To know God, we must understand that God is not an abstract idea. God is real and is the source of our eternal happiness (*Alma 16:54-55a [30:44c-d]*).

#### 2. God is Love

Once we realize God is real, we must acknowledge that God is good. Why study and develop a relationship with a God we see as evil? Our God is all bestowing and all loving, opposite of man—God’s fallen creation. Bad things don’t happen to good people because God is unjust, but because the creation is not completed (*2 Nephi*

*God is Love*

6:24-25 [9:10], 1 John 4:7).

### 3. We are Created to be Saved

Now that we know God is real and is love, one will ask, why are we here? The knowledge that God is love brings with it the understanding that God did not place us here to fail, but to perfect us. He doesn't doom us to Hell, but sent Christ to save us from ourselves. When the creation is complete, all will be perfected in Christ to our true states of being, be they good or evil (*Alma 19:67b-70 [41:4b-7], John 3:16-17*).

### 4. We have the Freedom of Choice

Once we know the first keys of reality, we must make a choice of what we will do with this knowledge. God doesn't make us good, the devil doesn't make us evil; we have access to both and choose for ourselves. We are tempted by Ego to take for ourselves, but true joy only comes when we give of ourselves. We have partaken of the fruit of the tree, now we must choose good from evil (*Joshua 24:15, Helaman 5:85 [14:30]*).

### 5. We Love and Serve God

Once we choose Christ, we may begin to study Mormon Kabbalah by obeying the two great commandments key to Kabbalistic understanding. The first great commandment is to love God. How do we show love for God? We study His ways, the life of Christ, and emulate Him: we serve others (*2 Nephi 13:29 [31:20a], Matthew 22:36-40*).

### 6. We Love Our Neighbors

We cannot be obedient to the first great commandment if we are not obedient to the second: Love thy neighbor

as thy self. We are all Adam and Eve, regardless of gender. All of creation is one, even as Jesus and the Father are one. The only way to do this is through love. Love abandons Ego for altruism (*Leviticus 19:18, Mosiah 11:16 [23:15], Matthew 22:36-40*).

## 7. Change Perception, Change Reality

Reality is defined by how we see the world. After we have taken the above steps, walking the path of teshuvah, the way we see the world changes. When we see through human eyes, we see weakness and sin. Once born again our perception changes and we see God's creation as He sees it: it is good. With these seven principles in one's life we become Mormon Kabbalists (*Helaman 5:96-99 [15:9], Doctrines of the Saints 42:10/DaC 76:3a CoC, 76:12 CJCLdS*).

## God is Good

One question people have asked for generations throughout time is, is God really good? Philosophers have struggled with what they call "the problem of evil" for as long as the art of philosophy has existed. It is easy to say that there is nothing to talk about, the scriptures say God is good, end of discussion. Yet the scriptures also say that God is fierce, and cruel. God is good, yet at times tells His people to murder women and children in cold blood (*ex. 1 Samuel 15:3*). We see pain and suffering all around us. Why doesn't a righteous God feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and end all war?

To think that we will settle these questions in this short book would be quite presumptuous. Yet these are topics we must discuss, and hopefully by doing so we will have some things to think about to help us gain better understanding. To truly discuss this topic, we cannot look outward first, but inward. Yes, inside is where your

pains are living. Like a loving Father, God is always there for us. We just need to look inwards and find Him.

What does it mean then that God is good? Love is sacrifice, and God gave everything for us. As the Bible says, God loved us first (*1 John 4:19*). We must understand that one of the greatest gifts God has given us is our freedom to choose. But with this freedom comes the consequences of our actions, be they in this life or the next (*Alma 19:67b-70 [41:4b-7]*). Sadly, sometimes those consequences do not affect us at all, but others. And some consequences are much larger than we could ever imagine. But because of the love God has for us, Jesus atoned for our sins, making the way back (*Moroni 7:47b [7:41c]*). This means that God is always there for us, even when we do not want to acknowledge Him.

I will share an example. A fun story we like to talk about in our house is of our youngest son. As a baby he wanted his mother. Always. The only times I was really able to spend time with him was when he was asleep. Yet I love him. One night, after he had snuck into bed with us, my wife got up out of bed leaving the two of us in the bed alone. He woke up and realized that mom was not there. I woke up and told him not to be afraid, I was there for him. He pushed me away and said, "I don't want you dad!" He then began to scream, "Help! Mom! Heeeeelllpppp!" My wife's voice came out softly from the darkness and said, "it's okay, I am right here, and your father is with you." He pushed me again and said, "I hate dad, I want you mom!" I laughed to myself and stayed with him until my wife came back to bed, then we all fell back asleep.

At no point did I ever stop loving my son. I didn't force my way into his heart. I loved him where he was. Eventually, one day he was trying to transform one of

his toys from a car to a robot. I asked if I could help. He rather aggressively said, “No!” He let me know he would get help from his mom. I kindly explained that mom didn’t know how to transform toys, but he did not want to hear it. He went to his mom and came back and said, “Mom said you can do it.” As I transformed the toy, he asked why I know how to do this, and mom did not. I told him I loved playing with this type of toy as a child and that I played with them with his brothers. He was surprised! He suddenly saw me in another light. He then asked me if I could play with him. The joy I felt! Of course, I said yes. We have been friends ever since.

While this is a rather mundane explanation, I feel this story expresses my understanding of how God works. God is always there, unconditionally. He offers us help, even when we push Him away. When we finally change our *perspective* and truly see God, we understand God’s goodness and that God has been with us all along. Now we want to spend time with God, learn all we can about God, let God teach us all we can learn. We grow in God!

Just as my youngest son and I do not always see eye-to-eye, we will not always agree with God. Why not? Because God has an infinite perspective compared to our finite understanding. Just as my children think doing things that can hurt themselves or others are okay because they can do whatever they want, not seeing how their actions might bode negative consequences, we too can be selfish and egotistical. But God is still with us, still wanting us to return. And we always can. That is why God is good. Because He loves and trusts us enough to send us here to learn for ourselves.

## Questions

- How do you personally reconcile the idea of a

good and loving God with the existence of pain, suffering, and seemingly harsh actions attributed to God in scripture?

- How do you interpret the concept of free will in relation to God's goodness, especially when human choices result in consequences that affect others?
- Can you think of a situation or time when your perspective on God or faith shifted after a struggle or challenge? How did that experience influence your understanding of God's nature?

## Three Great Lies

The greatest failing of evil is that it is based on fear rather than on the Gospel, the Good News that is Hope and Love. This is why the spiritual hole gets bigger as humanity puts material gain over spiritual growth. There are three lies we must defeat, and we can do this through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The First Lie: We are not worthy.

*“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

*–The mortal Jesus Christ, Matthew 5:48*

*“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”*

*–The mortal Jesus Christ, Matthew 19:26*

*“Therefore, I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”*

*–The resurrected Jesus, 3 Nephi 5:92 [12:48]*

We are taught that there are limits to what we can and cannot do. This life, we have been told, is too hard. Yet with God, all things are possible! When we are taught that we shouldn't expect to see angels, we won't—we don't have the faith. We cannot say we are a religion of miracles then teach that we should not expect the miracle. This makes no sense. We should be telling each other every week that we CAN do it. We CAN see angels, we ARE good enough for God through Christ.

The Second Lie: It's us vs them in a depraved and evil world.

*“And let everyone esteem their brother and sister as themselves and practice virtue and holiness before me. And again, I say unto you: Let everyone esteem their brother and sister as themselves.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 24:31-32*

*“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”*

*–Romans 14: 10*

*“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”*

*–1 John 3:11*

Satan would have us believe that earth life is brother against brother, sister against sister. If he can get us to fight our human family we won't fight evil. There is no “them” that's out to get us unless we go out and create enemies. We should love all of our neighbors, whether they be atheists, Muslims, or even other Christians.

## God is Love

Those who do attack us, we turn the other cheek (*Matthew 5:39*).

Those who are against us have been taught the same lie, us vs. them. Don't feed the lie, defeat it with love; love of self, and love for all others. Not only are you worthy, you are not alone, they too are worthy. We all need Christ's grace to grow. Know that God is with you, and he has created a place for you to belong, and if you haven't figured out where that is, it's likely right here with us.

The Third Lie: Satan/evil isn't real or doesn't exist.

*“Yea, he saith unto them: Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm. And thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him.”*

*—Avahr 14:22 (Book of Commandments & Revelations)*

Satan is fine with people believing in God. History has shown that humans will kill each other over our various gods. But Satan doesn't want people to know he is real. He will tell us that he doesn't exist, that he is an abstract idea. These lies are told to take away our hope. It creates a false idea that God holds us back, when in truth God is always leading us forward. We just cannot always see the bigger picture. We are His children and He loves us. Men and women are that they might have joy (*2 Nephi 1:115 [2:25]*).

## Unconditional Love

I'm going to now tell you the greatest truth: You are

not alone. You are a Child of God made in the image of our Heavenly Parents. Do not lose hope, have faith and fill your doubts and fears with the Spirit of God. God has a plan for you. The fact that you found this message and are reading it shows that He guided you to a place where you could learn of Him and be reminded of His divine love for you. You are worthy of God's love. Never forget.



*“YHVH hath appeared of old unto me, saying: ‘Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.’”*

*–Jeremiah 31:3*

After weeks of prayer and meditation one might ask why do we do this? The easy answer is love. Not to earn God's love, but because we love the Lord and want to build a personal relationship with him. What is love? Is there a difference between God's love and mankind's ideas of love? Does God ever stop loving us? There is an idea out in the world that God will only love us “if.” What must we do then to earn God's love?

I want to start by reminding you that God's Love is unconditional. We know this because we know why He sent us to earth. We read:

*“Behold; this is the work and the glory of Elohim, of YHVH, and of the gods; to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man”*

*–Book of Remembrance 2:6 (Tsohar)*

This echoes 1 Moses 2:20 in the *Torah of Moses*, Moses 1:39 in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Pearl of Great Price* and Community of Christ/RLDS *Doctrine and Covenants* 22:23c. How does God do this? He sent us here to try us, to allow us to make mistakes. Christ was chosen in the beginning to come here, to live, die, and be resurrected for us (*1 Peter 1:18-21*). And we know that love is unconditional because he came sent by the Father and Mother not to condemn the world, but to save it (*John 3:16-17*).

This is why there are consequences to human actions, regardless of blame or fault. We can learn from our mistakes and hopefully the mistakes of others. Unlike what some would want us to believe, God doesn't hate us when we sin. If He did we couldn't repent. His unconditional love gives us a way back. This is why we have teshuvah, that we may, through Christ, return to the God that created us (*Alma 19:43b-44 [40:11c-12]*).

God loves us even though we sin, giving us unconditional love so we may come home if we so choose. We are saved from our sins, not in them (*Alma 8:87-92 [11:34-37]*). There's a difference between "from" and "in" our sins. Once we are saved, Christ's Grace protects us as we grow in His Grace through our relationship with the First Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Without Christ's Grace we sin by abandoning God, and as Amulek stated, we will not be saved in our sins. But what is the sin that stops us? Merely our own unwillingness to accept God's unconditional love.

The problem with the idea that we'll be saved in our sins is that for this to happen, we must lose the ability to choose for ourselves. This would be its own type of Hell. We'd be saved but still in "Hell" as Hell is a mental state, a perspective where we cannot love or accept God's

love. We'd be damned, just in a different way. And, if we would not actually be saved then Christ would not be the Savior.

Instead, we are perfected when born again but not perfect. If we were perfect, we wouldn't need to grow in Grace. This is why works without grace are meaningless (dead), and grace without works are also dead, showing we do not truly have grace (*Romans 3:19-24, James 2:14-18, 26*). Why follow the Torah if the Torah is dead to us? And how are we saved by the Law if the Grace of Jesus moves us to follow the Law? What matters then is faith and works going hand in hand. In Kabbalah, this is to say what matters is where the Law is written, in our pierced hearts.

## Questions

- How do the “three great lies” described (unworthiness, division, and denial of evil's reality) show up in your own life or community, and what steps might you take to overcome them through the Gospel?
- How might recognizing the interconnectedness of all people, beyond labels of “us vs. them,” transform the way you relate to those with different beliefs or backgrounds?
- What role do free will and personal responsibility play in your spiritual growth, especially considering the idea that grace and works go hand in hand?

## Endure to the End

*“He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”*

*–Matthew 24:13*

To endure to the end the Torah must be written in our hearts, we accept the Lord's unconditional love. Yet some would argue there are conditions. Why endure to the end to be saved if we are saved once born again? This is a simple matter to comprehend. Conditional love is to say that God will only love us if we are good, seeing us as we are now, rather than who we truly are, what we are to become.

The problem with this idea of love is that it implies we are rewarded only when we're loved and only loved when we're good. This is basically saying that when good things happen to bad people, they must actually be good because God loves them, and when bad things happen to good people they must not actually be good because God doesn't love them. This is what is called the prosperity gospel. This is not how God works. Enduring to the end is accepting God's love no matter what comes. That love never goes away, yet we have the freedom to reject it.

The unconditional love of God is seen in Jesus Christ (*John 3:16-17*). When looking upon the wickedness of the people in the day of Enoch, God wept (*Enoch 37:16-17; Moses 7:28-29, PoGP; RLDS DaC 36:6b-c*). Why would God weep if he did not love us? The answer can be found in a revelation given to Joseph Smith Jr. in regards to the temple:

*“If ye keep my commandments [instructions or teachings] ye shall have power to build it [the temple]: if ye keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you; therefore, ye shall walk in darkness.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 59:12;  
DaC 92:3a2 CJCLdS, RLDS 95:11b-12*

The love of the Father shall not carry with us? Does this mean God will stop loving us? No. It means *we* will no longer extrude God's love. His light will no longer shine from *us*, and we will walk in darkness. When we love God and love our neighbors we cannot help but keep the Lord's Torah as God's light shines from us like a beacon. But when we reject God, we close the prayer written in our hearts, that light stops and we walk the earth in darkness.

## Love One Another

*"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."*

*-John 15:12*

God has given us so much, and asks for so little in return (*John 15:13*). He gave his life and asked us to pick up our crosses and follow him (*Matthew 16:24-26*). This, He said, would be easy (*Matthew 11:28-30*). His and His Father's unconditional love is always there, given grace for grace (*DoS 58:18*). And this is how we too must live our lives, with godly unconditional love. Once this concept is understood, the Torah is understood. All the Law and the Prophets rest on just two things: Love God, Love thy neighbors, which is actually one thing: unconditional love (*Matthew 22:36-40*).

## You are Worthy of God's Love

*"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."*

*-1 John 4:16b*

Humanity seems to be searching for something. In general, people feel lost. As we accumulate more material wealth, it seems that the hole we are trying to fill just gets bigger. How do we fill this hole in our lives? These feelings of loss, of emptiness, of loneliness; they come from the depth of our souls.

Mormon Kabbalah teaches us that we are not merely physical beings, we were first spirits. We were born in the flesh, and then corrupted by it. There is no material gain we can achieve that will fill the void in our spirits. Only Jesus Christ can do this.

## Questions

- What does “enduring to the end” mean to you personally, and how might it shape the way you live your daily life and faith?
- How do you understand the difference between conditional love and unconditional love, especially in the context of your relationship with God?
- In what ways might walking “in the light” or “in the darkness” relate to your choices and spiritual growth? How do you sense God’s love shining through you?
- How do you interpret the commandment to love one another as God loves us, and what challenges or blessings have you experienced in trying to live that out?
- When you reflect on feelings of emptiness or searching for meaning, does the idea that Jesus Christ can fill the void resonate with your own spiritual journey? If so, how? If not, why not?





## Chapter 4

### *Finding Your Identity in Christ*

*“If anyone is united with the Messiah, he is a new creation, the old has passed; look, what has come is fresh and new! And it is all from God, who through the Messiah has reconciled us to himself and has given us the work of that reconciliation, which is that God in the Messiah was reconciling mankind to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”*

*-2 Corinthians 5:17-19*

“Identity crisis.” We hear the term thrown around, some even saying it is not real. But everyone at some point asks the questions, “who am I?” and “why am I here?” This is not a new line of thought, as we see that even the people of the scriptures wrestled with these questions. In this book we hope to help you answers in Mormon Kabbalah.

Questioning our faith is not a sin. We are the children of a loving God here to help us find our true selves. As Christians, one of the traps Satan tries to push us into is to tell us we are not good enough for Jesus. That we are not worthy and never will be. That hope is just around a corner that we never seem to get to. But this simply is not true. If you need reminding, I will share a few scriptures with you to help you through this, know that you are not alone. And know who you are.

## You are a Saint

*“You are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s family”*

*–Ephesians 2:19*

In *Doctrines of the Saints* 74:5 the Lord tells Joseph Smith Jr. that the title of this restoration movement (regardless of denomination) is “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” If you are a Mormon then this means they, you, yes you, are a Saint. To be a Saint means that God sees you as a good person, as a disciple of the Son, Jesus, as holy or virtuous and prepared for salvation and exaltation in the world to come (*Moroni 8:29c [26b]*). We have a friend in Jesus, and a connection to God through the Holy Spirit. We have access to gifts of the spirit and many blessings in store (*1 Corinthians 12:8-10*).

## You are Blessed

*“...blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.”*

*–3 Nephi 8:43 [18:12b]*

It is easy to become blinded to the good that God has made in this world, but if we listen to the Holy Spirit, we can see blessings all around us. We have our lives, we have the knowledge of an eternal life in paradise waiting for us. God brings people into our lives that we can have the joy of serving, and in turn that help us as well (*Mosiah 1:49 [2:17]*). With our eyes open, we cannot count all the blessings God has given us! When life gets hard, we have the very Creator there to give us strength.

## You are Saved and Exalted

*“But if ye receive me in the world, then shalt ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am, ye shall be also.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 17a:37  
CJCLdS DaC 132:23*

There is no work we can do to save ourselves (*Doctrines of the Saints 17d:25*). This is a free gift given to us the moment we are born again (*John 5:24*). And we know that we are born again because of our desire in us to do the good works of God (*James 2:14-18*). Satan will have us worried that we aren't doing enough, or that we forgot some commandment because he doesn't understand the power of love. Jesus didn't come to condemn you, but to save you (*John 3:17*). And Satan isn't here to help, his name literally means “accuser” or “adversary.” We cannot listen to the one that condemns and isn't a god, but to our God who has saved us.

## You are Heard

*“Therefore, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”*

*–3 Nephi 13:6b [27:2] (see also Matthew 7:7)*

One of the biggest issues I hear from people is that they do not feel like they are being heard. Please know that God is always listening. And, God always has our best interest in mind. It is important we build a relationship with God, if we hear God we can know that God truly is listening (*see Jeremiah 29:12-13; Zenos 10:57-66; Enos 1:24 [1:15b]; 1 John 5:15; Doctrines of the Saints 12b:9*).

When we work on building a relationship with anyone communication is key. Real communication is not talking at someone, but with them. Take time to listen to God, I promise that God is taking the time to listen to you.

## You are Loved

*“Beloved friends, let us love one another; because love is from God; and everyone who loves has God as his Father and knows God. Those who do not love, do not know God; because God is love.”*

–1 John 4:7-8

This is the most important thing you can know: that the Creator of the universe knows you on a personal level and loves you. If we could see ourselves through God’s eyes we would never doubt ourselves again. If we could love ourselves as God loves us, that love would pour out and heal the world in ways I cannot even describe. God loves you more than you can ever know and more than I could ever express. Remember the words Jesus said to His disciples, and know He speaks them to you as well:

*“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

–John 16:33

## Questions

- In what ways does understanding yourself as a “Saint” or a beloved child of God challenge or affirm your current self-identity?

- How do the ideas of being a “new creation” and “reconciled to God” influence your sense of who you are and your purpose in life?
- How do you experience God’s blessings and presence in your life, especially during difficult or confusing times?
- What does it mean to you to be “born again” and how does this relate to your daily actions, faith, and growth?
- How can you deepen your relationship with God to truly feel heard and loved, and how might that change the way you see yourself and others?

## Free Will

*“There is a God; and He hath created all things... both things to act and things to be acted upon...the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself.”*

*–2 Nephi 1:95-96, 99 [2:14, 16a]*

Many say that the greatest gift God has given us is the Atonement of Christ. This makes sense, as it is this atonement that grants us the Grace that offers us salvation. However, until we accept it, this grace is merely that—and offering. Perhaps then, the greatest gift God has granted us is the freedom to choose for ourselves.

In the beginning, God created everything. As a part of this creation we were given the option to keep our free will, and by following God this is what we did (*Abraham 3:24-27 Tsohar, PoGP*). God gave Adam and Eve instructions in the garden, the first commandments. Genesis 2:17

tells us God taught Adam and Eve the Torah (do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil) and the consequence (if you do, you will die).

Modern revelation from Latter Day Saint temple rituals and the Book of Remembrance expands on this:

*“Yea, and of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; nevertheless, thou may choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 4:11-13*

In Second Nephi, Lehi talked to his son Jacob on this topic of free will, expanding on the creation story found on the brass plates. He teaches his son that there must be “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 1:81 [2:11a]). We had to know the bitter to taste the sweet.

This may seem like an odd concept to many. The question typically asked is: “why do bad things happen to good people?” The opposite is generally ignored, “why do good things happen to bad people?” The reality is that good and bad happen to everyone. What is good and bad other than perception? A wicked person may acquire vast amounts of wealth, attractive mates, all sorts of worldly possessions. While this may seem like a lot, it avails them nothing (*Alma 17:74 [41:10b]*).

On the mortal plane, there is no absolute balance or “fairness.” How can there be? If we don’t know what good and evil truly are, how can we be rewarded by our mortal expectation? A kind person isn’t owed wealth. The “nice guy” isn’t owed the girl. As we grow, and our perspective changes, we learn the truth: everything is as it should be.

## Drown in the Light

“But,” some will ask, “why then does God allow so much suffering?” The answer is simple: God doesn’t, we do. Because we are granted free will, we choose wickedness. And, as Alma said, “Wickedness never was happiness” (*Alma 17:74 [41:10b]*). We then are left with the world we have created, reaping the fruits of the soil we have tilled. As the story of the Book of Mormon teaches us, when we have equality, we have peace and abundance; when we have pride and inequality we suffer (*4 Nephi 1*).

“But, God could set up a system that would allow us to find true happiness in creating a paradisaical world,” some might argue. What these don’t realize is that this is exactly what God has done. It is our pride and Egoism that stops us from living in that perfect world. We must have the freedom to choose.

This is because God is so good and so wonderful that if we merely basked in God’s glory we would drown in the Light and lose ourselves. We would lose our free will, our identity, our true selves. In Kabbalah this is known as “drowning in the Light.” The point of Christ and the Covenant is to help us become who we truly are, not lose ourselves entirely (*John 3:16-17*).

## Might have Joy

*“Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.”*

*–2 Nephi 1:115 [2:25]*



Reality is defined by how we see the world. As we walk the path of teshuvah, the way we see the world changes. In the beginning we see through human eyes, we see weakness and sin. Once born again our perception changes and we see God's creation as He sees it: it is good. This is the seventh principle of Mormon Kabbalah: when we change perception we change reality (*DoS 3a:7*).

Many will say the question of evil can never be answered. We cannot know why evil exists, or why "bad things" happen to "good people." Yet Lehi answered this question in one word in one sentence: "might" (*2 Nephi 1:115 [2:25]*). We are not guaranteed joy. We are not promised happiness in all circumstances. Even God, the Creator of all, weeps tears of sorrow (*John 11:35, Enoch 37:15*).

If God Himself, and Jesus the Son of God have wept, who are we to avoid pain and sorrow? We must seek the greater understanding, the greater will, that of God.

## Questions

- How does the gift of free will shape your understanding of personal responsibility, especially in the face of suffering and injustice?
- What does "drowning in the Light" mean to you, and how might it relate to maintaining your identity and free will in your spiritual journey?
- How can embracing the principle that "when we change perception, we change reality" help you navigate challenges and find joy despite difficulties?

## The Fountain of Existence

*“And the Earth, she was empty, and chaos filled her; and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the endless abyss. And Ruach Elohim moved upon The Presence of the Water, for I am Elohim.”*

*–1 Moses 3:4-5 (Plates of Brass)*

We have free will, but what do we do with it? How do we find the balance between the needs of this world and our spiritual needs? Is it one or the other, or can we do both? The idea of yin and yang is very popular in modern western culture. It is the idea of balance between light and dark, positive and negative, between everything. But it is not a new concept. In Kabbalah this idea of balance is called the Ayin-Yesh.

### Ayin

Ayin is Hebrew (אֵין) for “eye,” literally or figuratively, or a fountain by analogy. Some in Kabbalah might say or suggest that as the half of Ayin-Yesh means or should be understood as “nothingness.” This is based on the idea that before creation there was nothing. We know this can not be true as there was God, and in this Jewish Kabbalists will agree. The word means “eye,” here refers to the All Seeing Eye of God. So this cannot refer to literally nothing but rather God, and likely to everything that is and was before the creation.

This isn't the heavens, as we know the heavens were created as a part of the creation. Rather, it is the waters of the deep that the Spirit of God moved upon (*1 Moses 3:5, Genesis 1:2, Book of Remembrance 2:14*). It is where the Spirits of the gods were brooding awaiting the creations (*Abraham 4:2, Book of Remembrance 2:15*). We cannot then

see Ayin as nothing because there is no such thing as “nothing.” There is what we know and what we do not, there is what we understand and the incomprehensible, there is the finite and the infinite, there is the Creation and The Creator. Ayin then would represent the infinite

## Yesh

Yesh is Hebrew (יֵשׁ) meaning “there is,” “something,” or “existence.” This is that second half of the equation, the what we know to the what we do not, the finite to the infinite, the Creation to The Creator. If Ayin is what was before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, the Yesh is the something that was created. Yesh then is what came out of the Divine Will and what created the Council of Heaven. Yesh exists and functions because of the flow of life stemming from Ayin into the creation.

It is important to note that Yesh isn't something from nothing, as (again) there was never nothing. There was always God. Yesh is the organized Will of God , God's love in action as the Lord is pouring out life into this Creation. It wasn't something that didn't exist, but rather it was the organization of something into everything we know and can know. Thus Yesh is an aspect of Ayin, the finite. These are one as the giver and the receiver. God pours out everything into the creation and we receive or reject that which is given.

## Ayin-Yesh

It is interesting to note that when Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil it was their Ayin (“Eye”) that was opened (*Genesis 3:7*). This is the change in perception we gain as we begin to see things as God does. Once we know, we must make a choice. Do we accept the love of God and

this Christlike perception, as did Adam and Eve? (*See Book of Remembrance 9:37-38.*) Or do we reject what we know

to be true and flee from truth, as Lilith did? (*Book of Remembrance 5:25-28.*)



As Lehi teaches us, when Satan tempted Eve he tried to destroy the creation by giving that creation a godly portion of the Creator (*Genesis 1:2, 2 Nephi 1:1:101-104 [2:17-18]*). But this failed! It was always the intent for mankind to partake of the fruit of that tree. Satan merely sped up the process and introduced it by way of sin rather than as a gift of God. But God knew this would happen and had a plan (*2 Nephi 1:1:108-110 [2:21], Book of Remembrance 9*). And that plan is Jesus Christ. It is the Gospel that we must choose to receive into salvation or reject unto damnation.

## Yin and Yang

At this point one might be wondering what any of this has to do with yin and yang. Isn't this Eastern philosophical symbol one of opposing forces? No. Yin and yang is a symbol of the balance of all things. When the forces of nature are at one they are at peace. What good is a giver without a receiver? If one only gives or only receives they are out of balance. There must be order to their chaos and some chaos to their order to create true inner peace.

Likewise, Ayin-Yesh is about this inner balance, the "flowing of existence." In a very real way, God is everywhere and in everything. All we see, touch, hear, smell, taste, or in any way perceive is God's creation. Therefore, we cannot merely be takers, we must be givers

as we are an extension of the Creator. As the Psalmist tells us, we “are gods, children of the Most High” (*Psalms* 82:6). We must then pass on the light and life of the creation, the light of Christ, to others. We cannot merely be receivers but givers as well. This is the balance, the yin and yang, the Ayin-Yesh.

*“Do not deceive yourselves by only hearing what the Word says, but do it!”*

*–James 1:22*

## Questions

- In what ways does the relationship between Ayin (the giver) and Yesh (the receiver) challenge or affirm your view of your own role in God’s creation?
- How might the opening of Adam and Eve’s “eyes” symbolize a shift in perception that you have experienced in your own spiritual journey?
- What does it mean to you to live in balance as both a giver and a receiver of God’s light and life?
- How can the Ayin-Yesh concept deepen your understanding of God’s presence in all aspects of existence, and how might that shape your daily choices?

## We Need Jesus as the Christ

*“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but everyone who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

*–Luke 14:11*

If life is about finding balance, we must ask the question: do we even need Jesus Christ? And if so, why? Why can we not merely “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (*Philippians 2:12*)? This idea of Jesus is one of the key topics that separates Jewish and Mormon Kabbalah after all. Will we always need a savior? A messiah? Why grow in grace, why not just grow?

## Yeshua HaMashiach

*“And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state, and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name; and since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atoneth for their sins through faith and repentance, and so forth.”*



*–Alma 13:45-46 [22:13-14a]*

Jesus was named Yeshua (or Y’shua, the Hebrew for Jesus) at birth by his mother, Mary, by divine decree (*Luke 1:31*). This is important because Jesus came into the world to save us from our sins (*Matthew 1:21*). Yeshua is based on the root *שׁע*, meaning “to deliver; to rescue.” His name tells us that he is HaMashiach “The Anointed One.” The Hebrew, Yeshua HaMashiach, has become in our day “Jesus Christ,” the Greek variant of His name and his title. The fact that His name comes from divine counsel, it clearly has great significance.

Through Israel, the world was promised a savior, a

rescuer, a deliverer (*Isaiah 53*). He was more than a mere human man, being the Word made flesh (*Isaiah 52:14, John 1:14*). While we come to live the Torah, Jesus came to fulfill the Torah, and he did (*Matthew 5:17; 3 Nephi 7:3-12 [15:2-10]*). This is important to understand, as while we can be rescuers and deliverers, we are not God, Jesus is God. While we can be anointed ones we are not *the* anointed one. While we can be the light to others, shedding the light of Christ upon them, we are not that light; Jesus is the light (*John 8:12, Alma 18:11-12 [38:9]*).

## The Light of Christ

*“And thus, ye see the Light of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I, the Lord, might show unto you the way to judge, and behold this is how she was warned.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 9:14-15*

The light of Christ, also known as the Christ Consciousness, or in Hebrew Ha’Or En Sof (the Everlasting Light) is divine energy, power, and influence that proceeds from God to us through Jesus Christ. This light gives life and light to all things (*Doctrines of the Saints 53b:4-11*). This light governs all things, as it is the eternal Torah; and by it the path of teshuvah is lit so that we can see Israel, the straight path to God. As such, this light is an influence from God that prepares us to accept Jesus and receive the Holy Ghost as the influence for all that is good and righteous (*Book of Remembrance 8:23-24, Doctrines of the Saints 5c:27-30*).

The manifestation of the light of Christ is the Christ Consciousness. This light fills us and flows out into the world to repair the creation in tikkun olam (the

restoration or repair of the world). As we flood the earth with this light, those drawn to it may also receive it and are led to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, while those in darkness will not recognize it (*Isaiah 52:14, John 1:5*). It is by this light that we may know wisdom: right and wrong (*Book of Remembrance 9:13-15; Moroni 7:14-15a [7:16]*).

While this is a very interesting topic, why is it relevant? Do we actually need this light? After all, Paul did say, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (*Philippians 2:12*). And Nephi said, “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (*2 Nephi 11:44 [25:23b]*). Reading these alone, this can create a very ego-centered idea that we must work out our own salvation, and that we seek Christ last, or “after all we can do.” This lonely idea completely contradicts what Jacob stated on the subject:

*“And remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.”*

*–2 Nephi 7:42 [10:24b]*

When we put these ideas together we see a different, unified, idea: “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after we are reconciled unto God; that it is only in and through the grace of God that we are saved.”

Before Nephi, Zenock said:

*“I confess with the words of my mouth that the Torah is not fulfilled in me, but that salvation comes only by the grace of YHVH, and the works of Elohaum are given through us despite (notwithstanding or regardless of) all we may do.”*

*–Zenock 24:41 (Plates of Brass)*

And this idea is summed up perfectly by Moroni:

*“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness.”*

*–Moroni 10:29a*

And this is important to understand because Grace is the power of the Atonement: **At + one + ment**. How can we become one as the creation of God without God? How can we grow in grace from imperfection to perfection alone on a deserted island?

I testify to you that we cannot, and Jacob bears witness of that testimony:

*“Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness, that we may know that it is by his grace and his great condescensions unto the children of men that we have power to do these things.”*

*–Jacob 3:8 [4:7]*

## Questions

- In what ways does the meaning of Jesus’ Hebrew name, Yeshua HaMashiach, shape your perception of His mission and identity?
- How might the “Light of Christ” or Ha’Or En Sof influence daily choices, relationships, and spiritual growth?
- How does the idea of At-one-ment as unity with God reshape the way you think about spiritual maturity and life’s ultimate purpose?

# Jesus: the Resurrection and the Life

*“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”*

*–John 11:25*

Christians everywhere say that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Jesus even said this of himself. But what does this mean? Is it merely bringing the physically dead back to life or is it something more?

## 1. Spiritual Death is Overcome

From the time Adam and Eve were born again into the Garden of Eden, symbolizing our spiritual rebirth, Jesus was a part of their lives. Yes, they still made choices; some good, some not so good. Yet God was there to guide and correct them.

Life eternal was breathed into them the moment they stepped into the garden. Yet through the use of their free will, spiritual death appeared. Adam and Eve were kicked out when they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil before it was time. This is the power of Jesus the Christ, that through Him we may repent and live spiritually again (*1 Peter 1:3, 2 Corinthians 5:17*). We can be “resurrected” over and over as we walk the path of teshuvah. Without Him, we would merely die to the chains of Hell forever, never to return to the God that sent us here.

## 2. New & Everlasting Covenant Restored

There is one Law, one Torah: Love God, love thy neighbors. All the teachings and commandments help

guide us in teshuvah to the Torah (*Matthew 22:37-39*). The Torah is given to all, but it is given in a special way to God's covenant people. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, they made a New and Everlasting Covenant with God (*Melchizedek 11:1*). They fell so they could assend. Likewise, when Israel was in Egypt they forgot The LORD and upon their release they remembered Him again, making a New and Everlasting Covenant with Him, leaving the fallen world (Egypt) and accending in covenant.

Again, in New Testament times, God's people forgot the Creator, and Jesus came to renew the New and Everlasting Covenant. This time, a fallen world saved by Christ, our King. And when it was time, Jesus came to Joseph Smith Jr. to restore the New and Everlasting Covenant. People were following creeds and not looking to God. God doesn't want blind obedience, God wants a personal relationship with us.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life because it is He that Renews and Restores our covenant with God, with Him. Because He resurrected what, to us, had become a dead covenant, we live again as His covenant peoples. This is tekkun olam, this is restoration.

### 3. A New Life in the Resurrection

Just as all die, we will all live again, resurrected to our physical bodies in an eternal and glorified state (*Article of Faith 11, Doctrines of the Saints 3b:11*). This can only happen because Jesus chose death. We mere mortals didn't kill Him, how could we kill the Immortal God? But he chose to give up his life, to give up the ghost (*Matthew 27:50*). And when the time came, He chose to take it back up, to live again (*Mark 16:1-7*)! Only He could do this. And by this sacrifice, we will live once again; like Him never to

die (*1 Corinthians 15:22*). This isn't just waking someone up from the sleep of death, it is the fulfillment of teshuvah, reaching the tree of life and being worthy of it once again. It is Eden restored. And it is only possible in Jesus.

As Kabbalists, we understand that we start as Adam and Eve. But do we realize that we end as Jesus and Mary? We grow grace by grace, in the New and Everlasting Covenant, to defeat death and enter what some call "the Christ Consciousness," being one with Jesus Christ. This can only happen if we give up this world, stop trying to bring earth to the heavens, and submit to the will of God. By doing so we will partake of tikkun olam to repair the world and finish the creation. We will, through Christ, bring the heavens to the earth. That is the very definition of the resurrection and the life. Everything will live eternally, reborn in perfection that is our God (*Revelation 22:1-14*).

## Not Alone

While there are numerous reasons as to why we need our Savior, the most important may be because as the creation, we are not alone; we were never meant to be alone (*2 Peter 1:19-21, Revelation 13:8*). This idea that we can "go it alone" denies not only the power of the Atonement, but the reason for the creation. How can we share the light of Christ with the world if we reject that light of God, the Christ Consciousness, in a vain attempt to be our own christ? Our own messiah? To be our own gods? This is the very height of egoism, to think we do not need our Savior, that we do not need our Creator.

Self-realization isn't the end of the journey; it is the very beginning. Once we know that we exist, we understand that we are the creation. Every step we make from there must be to know the Creator: Jesus Christ,

the Word made flesh. Otherwise, we will be swallowed up in the darkness, unable to see the light of Christ. If we wish to be a “christ,” a “messiah,” one anointed in and by the very Grace of Jesus, we must know the Christ: Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus the Christ. We must be born again in Jesus. And, as He commanded us: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (*Exodus 20:3*).

*“Yea, we have reason to praise him forever; for he is the most high God and has loosed our brethren from the chains of hell. Yea, they were encircled about with everlasting darkness and destruction; but behold, he has brought them into his everlasting light, yea, into everlasting salvation; and they are encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love; yea, and we have been instruments in his hands of doing this great and marvelous work; therefore, let us glory; yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice, for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever.”*

*—Alma 14:94-96 [26:15-16a]*

## Questions

- The “New and Everlasting Covenant” is presented as something repeatedly renewed throughout history. What does it mean for a covenant to be “restored,” and how might that restoration look in our own time?
- How might viewing resurrection as both a spiritual and physical reality shape the way we live daily life?
- How can we distinguish between healthy spiritual growth and the ego-driven self-reliance of trying to “be our own messiah” or “our own gods?”

- Looking at self-realization not as the end of the spiritual path but the beginning, how might this shift in perspective affect the way someone approaches personal transformation and their relationship with God?



## Chapter 5

### *A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*

*“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”*

*–Psalms 34:18*

To start our journey there are a few things we must first understand. The broken heart and contrite spirit are key because this is the sacrifice we, as Christians, make. When teaching the people Jesus had gathered in the Americas, He did away with the sacrificing of animals. He asked for something more personal when he told them, “ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 4:49 [9:20]). But what does this mean?

Before we explain the broken heart, please note that everyone and everything has a spirit. The Creation was spiritual before it was physical. Even before the spiritual creation we existed as intelligence throughout all eternity.

You are eternal with God. Yet here upon the earth we’ve been separated from God as if by a veil. Realizing this begins the process of remembering who we are and Who’s we are known as teshuvah (return). To understand why we need teshuvah we must first understand the fallen nature known as sin.

## What is Sin?

*“By the deeds of the Torah there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Torah is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the Torah is manifested, being witnessed by the Torah and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

*–Romans 3:20-23*

We have been told to abandon sin, to forsake sin, and not to sin. But what is sin? What does it mean to sin? And once we know, how do we avoid it?

Sin is generally defined as “an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law” (Lexico). The Hebrew word translated to “sin” in the Tanakh or Old Testament however is “chata’ah” (חַטָּאָה). Chata’ah comes from the root word “chet” (חַט) which means to “miss the mark.” To the ancient Israelites, this meant to neglect one’s obligation, whether to man or to God. There are two categories of sin in Jewish thought:

Sins against God and sins against other people (<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/sin>).

Chata’ah is a feminine noun, meaning that it describes or represents our will to receive. When we sin, whether against mankind or against God, we take into ourselves a desire that is off the path to God. We, in a sense, become the Biblical Eve. In the garden of Eden, Eve wanted all God had to offer, even that which she was forbidden (1 Moses 5:17-18, Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-6; Book of Remembrance 4:11-13, 7:11-24). Her sin wasn’t eating the fruit but disregarding what God had instructed. She missed

the mark by partaking of the fruit of the tree before its time (*Book of Remembrance 9:42-44, Happiness Letter 1:16-17*). She didn't wait for God's time, nor did she eat it for God. She took only for herself.

Understanding the true word, *chata'ah*, we gain a new perspective of "sin." Sin isn't a blemish, it is human error. It is us seeking our own desires rather than seeking what God desires for us. Fortunately, there is a remedy, a way back onto the path of teshuvah, the return. Sin/*chata'ah* can be corrected by strengthening our relationship with God. Seeking God is what makes us Israel (straight [path] to God) and puts and keeps us on that path of teshuvah. We seek forgiveness and grow in Grace as we move forward in Christ. He is the Potter, and we are the clay (*Isaiah 45:9*).

God doesn't want us wallowing in self-pity, guilt, or shame. That's Satan. All fall short of the Glory of God (*Romans 3:23*). God knew this and this is why Jesus' role was a part of the plan from the beginning (*John 1:1-5*). Through teshuvah, we return to God in Christ, and grow in Christ. And we do this by coming to Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

Satan likes to make this seem far more complex than it is. He wants us to feel as though everything is hopeless and there is no way out. And there is nothing more we can do. No work will save us. However, by walking in teshuvah and accepting God's correction and Grace we can move forward to His joy and happiness, which is beyond our mortal comprehension.

*"Deliver others from misfortune and affliction and destruction, yea from the fire and burden of sin."*

*—Book of Remembrance 17:33*

The Ego asks two questions: **what and who**. God answers both questions with the same answer: **Jesus Christ**.

As we learn the answers to these questions, gaining a personal relationship with God, we are awakened. Our hearts break upon remembering who we are, in the light of what we've become, and the soul is born. The light is being separated from the darkness. This is why the first two principles of the Gospel are to believe in Christ and repentance.

Christ is the iron rod, the Word of God, leading to the tree of life, out of the darkness and into the light (*1 Nephi 3:68, 4:38 [11:25a, 15:24a] 9:42-44, John 1:1-5, 14*). And, this is why it is called being “born again,” our soul is born as our spirit is healed from our mortal sins.

## Questions

- How does redefining “sin” as *chata'ah*, “missing the mark,” change the way you view your own mistakes and the process of repentance?
- In what ways might offering a “broken heart and contrite spirit” feel more personal or transformative than offering a traditional sacrifice?
- How does the concept of *teshuvah* (returning to God) shape your understanding of spiritual growth and healing?
- What does it mean for you personally to remember who you are and whose you are, and how might that awareness affect your daily choices?

## The Thirst

*“There is nothing as whole as a broken heart.”*

*–Kotsker Rebbe  
(Hasidic rabbi, 1787-1859)*

In Kabbalah there is a story of a man trying to drink from a stream of fresh flowing water. He is thirsty but cannot drink because the water tastes bitter. He curses the stream. And, in his anger he continues to be frustrated by his thirst. This despite the freely available water. Then, upon closer inspection he sees his “kli” or cup is dirty. After cleaning his cup, he can drink in abundance, and enjoy the water, never again to thirst (S. Vinokur *The Secrets of the Eternal Book* p. 112).

The water in this story represents the Love of God. The mercy of Jesus Christ is the freely flowing water. The cup is the desire in our heart, our “kli,” Hebrew for “vessel.” God gives us nothing but good, that which is best for us. But this water tastes dirty to us until we clean our cups. This is why we perceive pain in our world. Pain gives us perspective, allowing us to enjoy the pleasure (2 Nephi 1:111-115 [2:2:22-25]). In addition, it allows us to grow so we are not simply slaves to the light (2 Nephi 1:81-82 [2:11]). This realization is the broken heart. We stop blaming God and realize it is us, the heart, the kli, that is dirty.

A broken heart is known to the Kabbalist as the point in the heart. According to Director Semion Vinokur, “The ‘heart’ symbolizes all the egoistic desires of this world, while the ‘point in the heart’ is the Creator’s sprout. It can also be likened to a lifeline that the Creator lowers into our world, so we can grab it and rise to Him” (*The Secrets of the Eternal Book* p. 32).

This “point in the heart” is a prayer written on our hearts, a plea to God. This happens because one feels in their heart the reality of God. Our perspective has now changed. We realize Ego has taken us from the path. We now desire teshuvah, to return to the path (Israel). One’s heart breaks as they realize they have been selfish. Now, through the Grace of Christ, we wish to be healed. Because the light has been divided from the darkness, our hearts are broken. We seek spiritual pleasures (the light of Christ, Ha’Or En Sof) rather than personal or “worldly” pleasures of the flesh (the darkness). We have been born again in Jesus Christ.

## Dividing the Light from the Darkness

The heart holds our kelim (Hebrew, “vessels”) that wish to be filled. Until we know God, this vessel is coated by Egoism; our egoistic desires. Once our hearts are pierced the kli is cleansed, the light of God’s Love pours from us through altruism (Ha’Or En Sof, the light of Christ). Even now, the earth is flooded, as in the days of Noah, with Ego. This harms us spiritually, economically, and as we’ve seen it’s destroying the earth. To fix this, we must continue dividing the light from the darkness throughout our lives, as we grow in degrees in Christ’s Grace.

Imagine the world as it might be in ten years or so if this flood of Egoism isn’t stopped. Climate change is creating super storms that are growing larger and more violent. The gap between the rich and the poor is growing; pitting man against man, neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, and sister against sister. The older generation blames the younger generation, and vice versa. Wars are escalating, and there are constant rumors, hints and whispers of new wars on the

horizon. In short, the overwhelming power of Egoism is destroying us; it is destroying the world.

In contrast, imagine now what would happen to the world if all mankind would come to God with broken hearts. With their hearts pierced, God's Love would flood the earth, washing away the Ego. Rather than only helping ourselves, we would help one another in the spirit of ubuntu. What is ubuntu you ask?

## Christ and the Spirit of Ubuntu

*“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”*

*–John 17:22*

The early followers of Christ were different than what people see Christians as today. They were pacifists, they enjoyed communal living, and their focus was on love. One might say they embodied the spirit of ubuntu.

Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term translated as “humanity towards others.” A broader understanding of the term would be “the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity,” (*Wikipedia*). In Mormon Kabbalistic ideology it's Zion: “I am because we are” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu\\_philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_philosophy)).

We all share the same creator, and are all the children of God, as we learn in the first book of Genesis. This bond is universal and connects all of us. The greater we understand this principle, as taught in Kabbalah, the greater we understand ubuntu and our creator.

The following story is shared to explain ubuntu:

*“One day, a western anthropologist went to Africa to study the social behavior of an indigenous tribe. He*

*proposed a game to the children and they willingly agreed to be part of it. He put a basket filled with fruits underneath a tree and told the children that whoever would reach the basket first would win the whole basket and could eat the fruits all by him- or herself.*

*“He lined them all up and raised his hand to give the start signal. Ready. Set. Go!*

*“The children took each other’s hands and started running together. They all reached the basket at the same time. Then they sat down in a big circle and enjoyed the fruits together, laughing and smiling all the time.*

*“The anthropologist could not believe what he saw and he asked them why they had waited for each other as one could have taken the whole basket all for him- or herself.*

*“The children shook their heads and replied, “Ubuntu, how can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?”*

*– Amy Rees Anderson*

*(<http://www.amyreesanderson.com/blog/ubuntu-i-am-because-we-are/>)*

What could be more Christian than to put others before self? This is the age-old internal war between Ego and altruism. The real winners are those who seek altruistic goals and opportunities over those which rewards ego, pride, and selfishness. Let us all move forward embracing the spirit of ubuntu.

Rather than simply taking from the earth, we would give back, caring for it as God has commanded us (*Genesis 2:15*). Instead of wars, we would work together reaping the benefits of unity, building, and trade. How much better things would be for all of us then!

## The Pierced Heart

How are we born again? What is this pierced heart? Both are a prayer. It is the true prayer. It's not a vocal prayer, not even a prayer recited in our minds. It is a prayer in our hearts; it is a plea to God. More than this, the pierced heart is a sincere plea to God inscribed in our very souls. It merges our eternal spiritual selves and our mortal, physical selves. God answers this plea the moment one's heart is broken. We pray in our hearts for deliverance, and God obliges us immediately (*Alma 3:25-29 [5:12-14]*). Christ's Grace will continue to help unify us until we have been fully perfect in Jesus, body and soul, at, by, and through the resurrection.

This prayer comes to us the moment, in our most desperate hour, that we realize we are nothing without God and desire nothing more than to be one with God (*Avahr 5:5-17*). In this moment we are Born Again, our souls emerge from the "womb" as a new creation in Christ, Jesus. This prayer determines our perception. Not our will, but God's will be done. We are not victims of circumstance, but blessed by God in all things, even our struggles and challenges. Rather than pure Ego or blind Altruism we would find the balance that would enrich lives by doing God's will, blessing all. As we grow in Grace, our perception continues to grow, changing our reality.

## Questions

- How does this idea of the "broken heart" as a point of connection with God, rather than just pain, challenge or reshape your understanding of spiritual brokenness?
- In the parable of the dirty cup, what might your

own “cup” represent, and what steps could you take to cleanse it so that you can better receive God’s love?

- How might the spirit of ubuntu, “I am because we are,” change the way you interact with others in your community and beyond?
- How does the idea of being “born again” through a pierced heart influence your perspective on struggle, suffering, and personal growth?

## A Contrite Spirit

Once the heart has been pierced and broken, upon realizing the harm Ego has caused, we feel guilt. This sorrow and remorse is expressed through our contrite spirits. Merriam-Webster defines “contrite” as one “feeling or showing sorrow and remorse for a sin or shortcoming.” This is a natural part of teshuvah as we separate the darkness of Ego and move into the light of altruism (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contrite>).

While the broken heart helps draw us back, nearer to God, the contrite spirit allows us to right wrongs and mend harms done by Ego. There by, we become more like Elohim; the Creator, our Heavenly Parents. We know good from evil, we’re separating the light from the darkness. The broken, pierced heart has borne the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ. The contrite spirit brings us deeper, into repentance. And this has been required from the Fall of Adam and Eve.

## As Moved by the Spirit

These repairs, the act of repentance, cannot be made by us alone. They can only be performed with the help

of Christ's Grace. Further, our works cannot save us. They do not perfect us in any way. We've already been perfected in Christ. When we do any works, we are merely following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So why do we do them? Because we cannot help it. Christ's Grace has transformed us. Our perception, our reality, has changed. Our new actions are prompted by the contrite spirit within us and bears testimony to God, ourselves, and the world that we are saved.

*"If you catch yourself thinking this way, it means the point in the heart has awakened within you and is drawing you to the Creator. If you don't want this incarnation going to waste, follow your point and listen to your inner voice."*

*—Semion Vinokur, The Secrets of the Eternal Book, p. 66*

This is why the Savior taught further that "whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not" (3 Nephi 4:50 [9:20]). It's not the laying on of hands that baptizes us in fire, we're washed clean even before baptism by water. We are washed by the cleansing light of God as our hearts are pierced and broken.

The dirty cup filled by Ego is scrubbed clean and purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit. The further we grow in Grace, the deeper we are pierced, and the more God's light is able to flow from us. The bitter cup is now filled with clean, delicious water that never ceases. It is because we have accepted Christ and repented of our sins that the Spirit moves us to be baptized by immersion, confirmed to to have received the Gift of the Holy Ghost,

and partake of the Sacrament of Communion.

## The Path of Teshuvah

This is not a onetime thing. As previously stated, is the return to the path, and that path must be traveled. There is no growth in a vacuum. Our conversion will deepen over and over as we grow in Christ's Grace. This is why the steps of Teshuvah are repeated over and over throughout our lives as we grow in Grace. After each day of rest, the Sabbath, the creation begins anew as we get upon the potter's wheel and are remade into God's image, further restored to the image in which Elohim created us. This is in part what Jesus meant when he asked us to pick up our cross and follow him. His death was a pure act of altruism. It was the example of how far we will be willing to go once we are fully transformed back to our true selves.

This is also why what church or denomination we belong to do not matter. As Christ taught, the Lamanites were baptized at the time of their conversion, by God, the change in their hearts, and were completely unaware. When we are confirmed a member of a church, that confirmation is mirroring what has already been done spiritually here in the physical world. As above, so below; as below, so above (*Matthew 6:10*).

With a broken heart and contrite spirit, we have already been baptized into the heavenly Church of Christ, the Church of the Lamb, the one true church (*1 Nephi 3:220-221 [14:10]*). Any earthly confirmation can bring us into one of the branches within the vineyard of that Church here on earth. Which denomination doesn't matter, providing one is led there by the Holy Spirit. For in the Lord's house there are many mansions (*John 14:2*). So to, there are quite a few branches here on earth within

God's vineyard.

Now I will ask: have you been born again? Have you felt this mighty change through Jesus Christ upon you? Do you have this new prayer inscribed in your heart?

As we walk the steps of teshuvah, all may have a deeper relationship with God and His Christ (*Revelation 11:15*). Dear reader, how I pray that you have been awakened and are beginning to remember! We know it is so when our hearts have been broken, pierced by the light. We perceive that it is good. And with this change in perception, the whole of our reality is born anew. We are a new creature, Adam or Eve, being born again unto God, finally returning to where we come from. We are on the path home.

## Questions

- How does the distinction between a “broken heart” and a “contrite spirit” deepen your understanding of the process of teshuvah (return)?
- How might this perspective that good works flow naturally from a contrite spirit, not as a means of earning salvation, change the way you approach service, repentance, and spiritual discipline?
- How does the idea that denomination matters less than being led by the Holy Spirit into the vineyard of God's Church influence your view of unity and diversity among Christians?
- In what ways have you experienced (or would you like to experience) the “scrubbing clean” of the cup, a transformation from bitterness to being filled with living water?

*A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*

- The path of teshuvah is described as a continual, lifelong process of being remade in God's image. How do you see this ongoing transformation in your own spiritual journey?





## Chapter 7

### *Mormon Meditation*

*“Don’t you know that you people are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”*

*–1 Corinthians 3:16*

The “magical world” is an abstract idea used by fantasy and religions alike. Methods may vary, but the main difference comes from the argument over who has the better story or philosophy. This is not to say that what the world calls “magic” is not real. It’s simply to state that one’s path is not the same as another’s, and that’s okay. There’s no reason to fight over paths that work. God’s vineyard is far larger than any one sect or denomination. And those that haven’t heard the Torah yet have it written in their hearts, will still be saved (*Romans 2:11, 14-15, Doctrines of the Saints 42*).

Anyone that has felt true love’s embrace cannot deny that what many call “magic,” in some form or another, exists. The questions shouldn’t be, “does it,” but rather how can one use or channel it. This is where we shall start. The first thing to know about what people call “magic” in Mormonism is generally called the power of God or priesthood power, or priesthood keys. A better term would be “miracle working.”

Holding priesthood keys unlocks God’s gifts in deeper ways, yet it is still available to disciples. This is

because as we align ourselves with God, God works miracles through us. This is what is meant by “keys.” We must be in tune with the Spirit, like a musical instrument. We are in harmony with the Lord. It is by this power that we pray and miracles occur.

The power of the priesthood is an energy, given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. Understand that it is real, and it is powerful. Think of it as a natural, raw power like electricity. While it is not necessary to have faith in electricity to be harmed or even killed by a lightning strike, it is necessary to believe in the power of electricity to harness it.

Who in their right mind would put a cylinder battery into a toy if they thought it had no power? The same is true with using the “magical” miracle working powers of God. Holding the priesthood gives us a ministry that God will use to shine truth and light, and to preform might miracles, you will perform might miracles in God’s name. And these miracles will be done by the Gifts of the Spirit.

The simplest way to explain how one may harness these spiritual gifts is to say that they only work from the inside out. We make a very real, deeply personal connection with God. It starts in your heart and grows outward.

We are the temples of God, we house the Holy Spirit. When we use spiritual power, our spiritual gifts, God works through us. Being in tune, you become a “lightning rod” for the power of the Holy Spirit. The magic of this miracle must come from God for you to work with it. Just a little faith can go a very long way. Imagine how much further God will take us once our faith in the Lord has grown just to the size of a mere mustard seed!

## Meeting in Reverence Before the Lord

*“And [Raphael] said unto them, in the temple of the Lord: Behold eight tasks shall I give unto thee, teach thy people to do these each in their proper order.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:2 (Tsohar)*

To approach mediation in the Lord, and not merely in ourselves, we must invite the Lord to meet with us. The Lord has given us instructions on this topic through Raphael, as he spoke to Adam and Eve. These instructions may be used in our home temples, in our Tabernacles, Synagogues, and Temples for personal and group worship. And these may be used by seekers, disciples, and ministers. They are given to the world to be received in the spirit. As we go over them, please remember that all things should be done by the Holy Spirit. Please do not see these as hard, fast rules, but as a guide. If the Spirit moves you to add to or change the order of these, or even leave parts out at times, that is okay. Having a personal connection with God means being flexible to the promptings of the Spirit.

### 1. In Prayer

*“First, beginning thy rituals in prayer”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:3*

It seems rather obvious to say we should open with prayer, yet what is prayer? What does this instruction mean? Prayer is more than mere words. Prayer is direct communication with God. We must be open to speaking and listening in the Spirit. Prayer is a form of meditation. We pray from the heart, and hopefully in the Spirit of prophecy and revelation (*Ecclesiasticus 39:5*).

Does this mean that prewritten prayers are lesser, or undesirable? No. It is about the spirit in which the prayers are said or read, not the words. How many times do we hear prayers that are verbatim the same yet not read? There is no difference between these and written prayers. And all are acceptable before God when given in the proper spirit.

## 2. Scripture Readings

*“Second, rehearse unto all the proclamations of the Word of God.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:4*

Prayer helps us align our thoughts with God and helps prepare us to speak spirit to spirit. After prayer, reading from the Word of God helps us align as one in the same direction, preparing for the service. The scripture(s) chosen should match the theme of the service that all may worship as one in Christ’s name. The scripture(s) should be prayerfully chosen ahead of time when possible. Yet those leading services should follow the Spirit’s promptings, should they feel moved to change or add to the readings.

As the scriptures are read, we should remember that the True Word of God is Jesus Christ (*1 Nephi 3:68, 4:38 [11:25a, 15:24a] 9:42-44, John 1:1-5, 14*). The True Scriptures are written upon our hearts, God speaking to us. We are called to be a prophetic people after all (*Doctrines of the Saints 2d:18*). This is important to remember as scripture is written by men and women as they are in the high plains of Heaven. We too should seek these higher plains to understand what they are telling us, and this can be done to greater extents in group settings.

### 3. Open Hearts

*“Third, open thy hearts to hear and to feel that thou might learn and be blessed.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:5*

As mentioned before, prayer should invite us to speak spirit to spirit and the scripture reading should give us focus. We should remember that the True Word of God is Christ, and the True Scriptures are written upon our hearts. This is important to understand as scripture is written by men and women as they are in the high plains of the Heavens.

We too should seek these higher plains to understand what they are telling us, and this can be done to greater extent in group settings. This is why the third must be the opening of our hearts. The first two steps are the invitation, now we must accept that invitation.

### 4. Oils and Flowers

*“Fourth, place oils and flowers pleasing to the nose to welcome the Lord into thy midst.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:6*

With our minds and spirits open, we next place pleasing smells to enlighten our minds. Modern science tells us that scents help open us to things like happiness, boosting brain power, and more. Frankincense is a good example of this (<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/olfactory-life-hacks-scents-that-increase-brain-power.html>). According to the New York Times, “Pharmacologists in Israel have found that frankincense, a whitish resin tapped from the veins of a shrubby tree, relieves anxiety and depression” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/17/>

[fashion/17INCENSE.html](#)).

Why not add these scents from the beginning? Because our spiritual eyes must be opened first. Then, we may add these external stimulants, otherwise we may be deceived by things which feel right to our mortal minds, not yet being opened to the things of the Spirit.

## 5. Be Clean

*“Fifth, keep thy bodies clean that thy hands might give in righteousness.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:7*

We should be clean before we begin our services. That said, it is at this point that we ensure we are spiritually clean before the Lord (*2 Corinthians 7:1*). This is because the next step is the work at the altar of God. This work is sacred, and we too must be sacred, clean, to perform or accept this work (*4 Moses 8:13-14*). Raphael is speaking here of abandoning Egoism before we partake of rituals.

Baptism may be performed at this step, making one worthy of the Sacrament of Communion that follows. The Foot Washing may be performed here that one might be made clean for their Endowments. The Sacrament of Communion may be done here, combining steps five, six, and seven, that we may be clean as we worship the Lord. But all of these must be done with pure intent.

## 6. Consecrate upon the Altar

*“Sixth, consecrate upon the altar in supplication before God.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:8*

Now is when we perform the Works of the Lord. This may be the Sacrament of Communion combining the sixth and seventh steps, the Laying on of Hands, an Endowment being received, the blessing of babies, or any number of good works. It could also be the time to bear testimony, share a message or preach to the congregation, or open for testimonies. This is the part where we worship as one, as the Saints of God.

It is clear that these works are to be performed at the altar. This does not always literally mean an altar, but the altar is a symbol of where we place the things of the Lord in His temple. An altar is a symbol of a number of things; a table, the earth, the creations, and more. If the temple is a symbol of our bodies, the altar is a symbol of our hearts. And this reminds us that if everything is the Creator then we, the Creation are in a sense the heart of God.

## 7. Renewal

*“Seventh, renew thy covenants that the body, mind, and spirit might be renewed therein.”*

*—Book of Remembrance 25:9*

In the Latter Day Saint movement, one way we may renew our covenants by partaking of the Sacrament of Communion. This may be performed as part of other previous steps. However, if it has not been completed by this time, now is the time for Communion.

In the Old Testament times, animals were offered as sacraments to renew covenants. Where done properly, these were then eaten. Today the Sacrament of Communion, bread and water or wine, has replaced the sacrifice of animals as we have been told that the sacrifice

required of us is the broken heart and contrite spirit  
(3 Nephi 4:50 [9:20]; *Book of Remembrance* 11:28-29).

## 8. A Temple Walk

*“Eight, thy feet walk into the temple, yea the house of study and even the house of prayer, therefore complete these that thou mayest return into the world of men in perfection.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:10*

This may seem an odd statement, given that we should already be in the temple from the beginning of the services. But remember, we are the Lord’s temple: the temple of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians* 3:16-17). We should see all of the things we are doing in the temple, be it an area, a room, or a building, as examples of the internal transformation we are going through as we grow grace by grace.

Our prayers are not to be said merely with our lips, but with our hearts. Scripture shouldn’t be read merely to hear, but to be felt. Rituals are not performed merely to be done, but to enlighten. All of these tasks are to be done in humility, not to be seen, and internally as an outward expression of inward convictions.

*“Do not revere the Lord for the world’s sake, nor for thy eternal glory; thou shalt revere for the Lord’s sake, and the light of God shall spring from thee as from a fountain, and by this thou shall be perfected before God in love, for it is by grace thou art saved, and thy works are as a sign unto the world.”*

*–Book of Remembrance 25:12-14*

## Questions

- How do you personally understand the connection between what some call “magic” and what scripture calls the “power of the priesthood?”
- Which of the eight tasks from the Book of Remembrance resonates most with you right now, and why?
- How might incorporating the senses, like scent, touch, or beauty, into your worship affect your ability to feel God’s presence?
- When you think of yourself as a temple of God, what changes in how you approach prayer, scripture, and spiritual gifts?
- In what ways could you make your own life a ‘temple walk,’ carrying the spirit of reverence and renewal into your daily interactions?

## The Temple of God

*“I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways.”*

*–Psalms 119:15*

To use spiritual gifts (*Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, Moroni 10:8-12 [10:8-17]*), we must first take control of what goes on inside of us, in our hearts and our heads. If we cannot control ourselves, how can we be expected to understand or do God’s will and take control of the outside world? The first thing we do to take this control is practice meditating.

Meditation in Mormon Kabbalah is different from

other types of meditation. In most forms of Eastern meditation, for example, the idea is to empty ourselves. In Mormon Kabbalah the idea is to fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit. We empty our Ego and pride, allowing God to judge us, to remake us in the image of Christ.

Remember, the Holy Ghost is a holy fire, or Gevurah (strength), Judgement. It will burn us as Hellfire unless we repent. But for the penitent, this fire transforms us, like a clay pot in a kiln. Christ's Mercy, or Chesed (Hebrew for mercy), has washed us clean. The Holy Spirit's fire cleanses us from the inside out. We are the temples of God, and all unclean things must be cast out (*1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Alma 5:26 [7:21a]*).

One technique you can try is based on the word "chedvah," which is Hebrew for "joy." There are four letters, which gives us our four steps in the breathing cycles. We inhale for eight seconds for the first letter, chet, exhale for four seconds for the second letter, dalet, then inhale for six seconds for the third letter, vav, and finally exhale for five seconds for the final letter, hei. Then the cycle starts over.

Through practice, this breathing technique will become so natural, one will no longer need to count. You may need to start by meditating for just a few minutes, 5 at a minimum. Pray first to invite the Holy Spirit and to ask for a circle of protection. Clear your mind and focus on the energy inside you, and the power of the Holy Spirit you've invited. You will know it is the Holy Ghost because of the peace you will feel from Him (*Avarh 13:40-41*).

Feel that energy inside of you. Move it around, let it flow in one direction. As you do this, you are working the true Christian magic of miracle working. Keep doing this until you can meditate for fifteen, twenty, or even

thirty minutes. Reading from the scriptures before and/or after meditation is also advised.

Prayers and meditations should be daily practices. By doing this, in conjunction with scripture study, one's faith will grow. With it, spiritual gifts will also grow. Remember, these are teachings Joseph Smith Jr. used to "divin"e the Book of Mormon. Also remember that Oliver Cowdery failed due to his lack of faith and understanding. Be patient. Oliver was later able to use his divining rod to gain powerful revelations from the Lord. In time, so will you. For now, try finding your center and grounding your energy.

*"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O YHVH, my strength, and my redeemer."*

*–Psalm 19:14*

## The Core

*"He that giveth his mind to the Law of the most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient, and be occupied in prophecies."*

*–Ecclesiasticus 39:1*

When meditating, look for your core. It should be somewhere between your navel and the center of your chest. It doesn't move around, but it is in a different spot for everyone. Once you find it and get the hang of moving your energy around it, try to anchor it to the ground or to the sky. This will help you practice controlling where the energy is going.

*"But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it*

## *Mormon Meditation*

*out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right; But if it be not right, ye shall have no such feelings, but ye shall have a stupor of thought, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong.”*

*–Avahr 20:11-13 (Book of Commandments & Revelations)*

While this refers to Oliver Cowdery translating using his divining rod, it teaches us about identifying the Holy Spirit. This “burning” is the Holy Spirit we wish to focus on as one meditates. Remember, we are meditating not merely to empty ourselves, but to fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit. This will enlighten us, purify us, and build a stronger relationship between ourselves and the Lord.



We cannot correct the world, but we can, through Christ, correct ourselves and this corrects the world. In reality, this has been happening from the time of Adam and Eve. Jesus gave us the renewed covenant, and He did so to help us understand the Torah we have been given. And this is what we are doing in our meditation, allowing the Holy Spirit to correct us.

How do we recognize the Holy Spirit? Oliver Cowdery was taught the answer when the Lord advised him how to use his divining rod.

*“Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth... cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?”*

*—Avahr 16:30, 42-44*

One will know it is the Holy Spirit filling us and speaking to us as we will find God’s peace in our minds. Again, the center or core is in the bosom. In most people, it is found in the hollow spot below the chest, above the stomach. Once it is found, center to move your energy, become one with the Holy Spirit. Move this energy around both inside and outside of your body.

Some people say they see a light, or hear a noise, or other things when they find their center. Personally, I do not physically see a light when I move my energy around, but I can feel it. That feeling allows me to “see” a spiritual light, using my spiritual eyes. However, it took time to see it. It is felt first. The energy is like a combination of air, water and fire. It is warm like fire (sometimes hot) and light, and easy to penetrate like air, yet heavier—like water.

If you cannot physically see this energy, imagine the color being the emotions you feel and/or base it on what the energy is doing, or how you’re moving it. Sometimes it is a yellow energy flowing in and around,

expanding outside the body. Other times it spins tight inside, closer to the center, hot and red. Still other times it flows through every part of the body without going outside and is blue. And, occasionally it can be a slow moving green.

These are my experiences and the experiences of others I have worked with. As one gains control of their energy, they will find a similar experience, albeit uniquely to you. If one needs an aid, they can use a seer stone, as Joseph did, or a divining rod like Oliver.

One may also use hand signs to control how the energy moves and what it does. After getting the hang of it, push a chain of energy up rather than down into the Earth. When grounded to the Earth, you can feel the energy strongly stabilize. Plant the energy, like a tree; like the tree of life. Once we gain control of this flow of energy, we can put it out into the world to help heal the creation.

## Wearing the Shield of Faith

*“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”*

*—Ephesians 6:16*

In the scriptures we are taught to put on the armor of God (*Ephesians 6:10-18*). Many of us cannot help but think of medieval knights when we read Paul's words. One part of this armor is the Shield of Faith. This is not a metaphorical shield, but a literal shield, a spiritual tool available to use through the power of God; the priesthood.

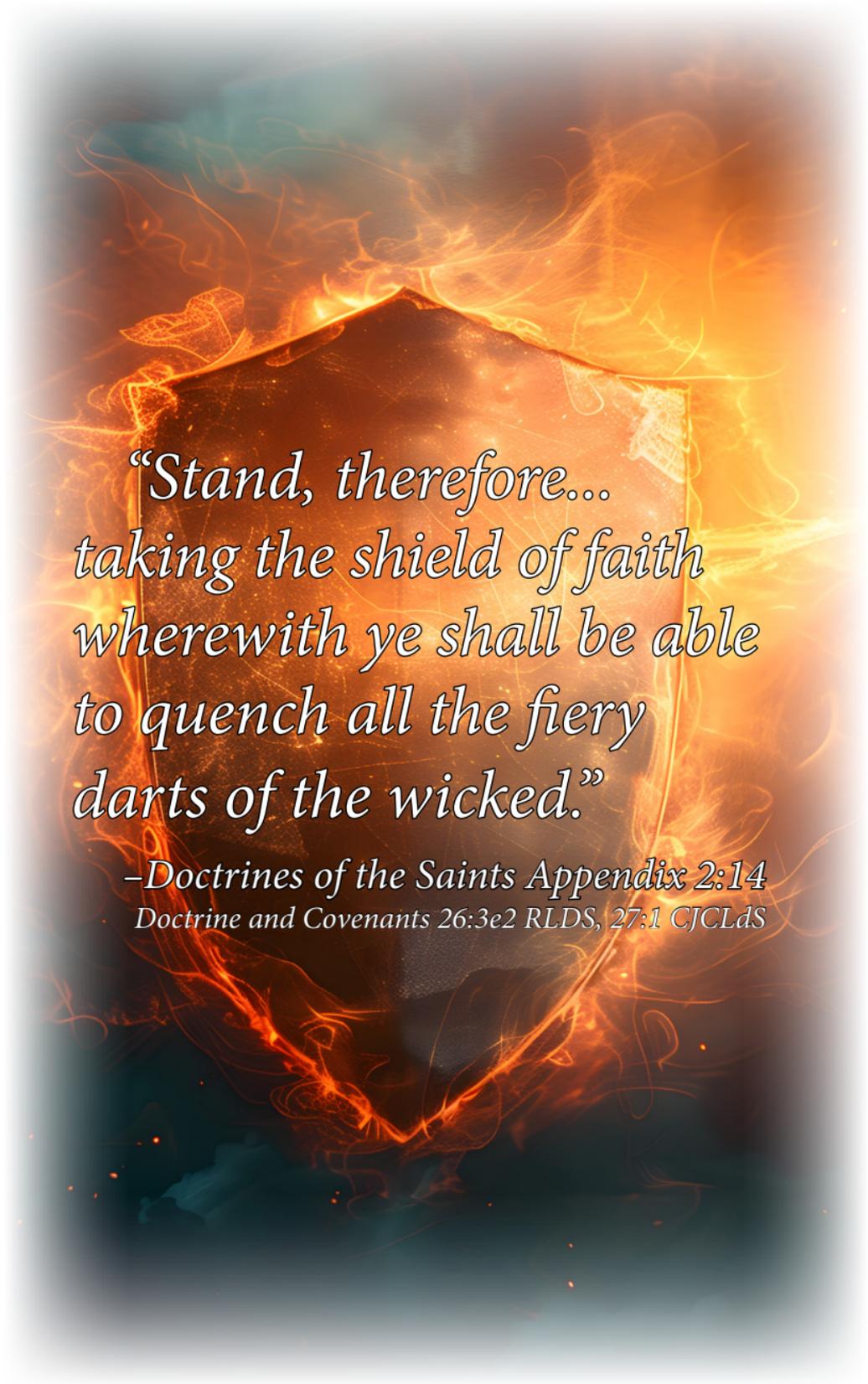
Everyone naturally has a shield, spiritual protection given to us by God. If we eat right, exercise, and sleep

well it will be naturally stronger. However, it will not protect us from priestcraft and “all the fiery darts of the wicked” unless we learn to use it properly (*Ephesians 6:16*).

Wearing this shield feels less like a wall and more like a warm safe fire. It makes it easier to read people as this shield is a part of our energy connected to the Holy Spirit. Being conscious of this energy through meditation and practice, one can keep out or let in what they like. When it is on, I feel like I am more aware and in control, more focused.

Let’s go over making a shield. But first, we should point out that a shield is for stopping negative energy, not bullets. That said, when bullied in Middle School, having a shield was a real protection that helped me to stick up for myself and not let others get me down. We use meditation to create and strengthen our shields. One will grow to control their shield over time, and as our faith grows, our relationship with God deepens, strengthens, one’s shield naturally grows much stronger. Through meditation we can learn to shape and control it, tighter to protect self, family, and friends, and tighter to protect; or looser around one’s self to “feel” things out better. Our shields grant us greater perception of our surroundings.

To focus the Shield of Faith, go into a simple meditation and ground and center your energy; this is very important. Picture an oval, egg shape, around you to give your shield shape and distance. Once done, push the shield out from your center to the imaginary bubble you’ve created. Next, send out the flame of Gevurah, merging your energy with the fire of the Holy Spirit, pushing the energy from the inside out to clear yourself, others, and space area you are in. If you’re not exactly sure what is being referred to, think back to the fire felt



*“Stand, therefore...  
taking the shield of faith  
wherewith ye shall be able  
to quench all the fiery  
darts of the wicked.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints Appendix 2:14  
Doctrine and Covenants 26:3e2 RLDS, 27:1 CJCLdS*

in meditation. This is what we are pushing out. Think of it as a clean, white flame. From there, reach out with the energy in your shield to find things or feel things out.

*“That which ye do send out shall return unto you again.”*

*–Alma 19:80 [41:15]*

This bubble shield is the most basic type of shielding. If one need picture it in their mind, think of a blue and white energy ball. But, this is not the only type. There are conversion or transference shields that will let one change the negative energy into something useful. There are also mirror shields that let one reflect back negative energy. To use a mirror shield, simply picture your shield as shiny and reflective. Rather than just keeping negative energy away, it will reflect it back to the sender. If there is no sender, it will just shoot out from where it is, having nowhere to go back to. This type, however, comes with a number of ethical questions.

## Meditation and Ethics

*“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

*–Romans 12:2*

Ethics can be seen a hard topic as every situation changes the question. It can also be seen as simply as love God, love your neighbor. Sending negative energy back at someone has its risks, all must face justice. If someone or something is throwing priestcraft using a mirror

shield It may stop them, but it may harm someone else unintentionally.

One may argue that, ethically, someone else threw the priestcraft and they are the ones deserving justice. But this doesn't help if that negative energy harms someone you know and care about.

A more positive solution is what is called transference. The conversion or transference shield won't stop anyone or anything from throwing negative energy around, but it is better to turn the energy into something else, something good. Remember, we have been born again in Chesed, Christ's mercy. This allows us to translate, alter, or change the nature of the energy, as all energy comes from God.

Using the power of God we may transform negative energy back to positive, dividing the light from the darkness. To use transference, simply grab the negative energy in the outside of your shield, like a net. I find it helps at first to imagine the shield as being sticky. Push the negative energy to your grounded energy—do NOT let it get through your shield—and focus on channeling your grounded energy, effectively shoving the negative energy down into the earth where it will be recycled. It is the Holy Spirit doing the real heavy lifting, as the fire of Gevurah purges the energy, and the Grace of Chrsit transforms it.

While the mirror shield is a weapon, and should be treated as such, the transference shield is a peace-maker. We should remember that most negative energy is thrown unknowingly. Some exists due to attitudes or events. There is a common expression: some people give off "bad vibes." That doesn't mean they are "sorcerers" using priestcraft out to get people. They may just be going through a rough time and are unknowingly

sending out negative energy. It is our role as disciples and ministers of Christ to mourn with those that mourn and help them through these types of situations.

*“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded; for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”*

*–1 Nephi 1:65 [3:7]*

Generally, one should use the bubble shield first. Once we get an understanding of what is going on, we can switch to transmutation shield if appropriate; one shouldn't take energy if we don't know where it is coming from. The mirror shield is then an option if one needs to merely send the negative energy away. If after assessing the situation it is seen that a peacemaker is needed, heed the call of God and convert the negative to positive energy, allowing our positive energy to overwhelm the negative in the light of Christ, like making like.

One may, as moved by the Holy Spirit, use appropriate names of God, mudras, stones, or other tools as needed. If, for example, one of my kids has had nightmares, they will use a black obsidian stone and a warding mudra in their meditations and shielding to great positive effect. I highly recommend learning to use mudras, mantras, and other tools once having the basics down.

## Recapping:

- Magic (God's power working through us) comes from inside of us
- To control magic (the power of God), one must

control one's self

- To control what goes on inside of us we must practice and take the time to develop a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit

Meditation may sound boring, but it works. If one is doing it correctly it shouldn't be boring because it is a spiritual conversation. We talk to our god, then we listen. That's meditation. Pay attention and you'll see the magic of God's miracles working in your life. As we truly live our religion, we will find we become more and more in tune with the spiritual or magical world than even we realize as we grow in Grace.

*“Water, fire, truth, and God are all the same; truth is Mormonism, God is the author of it, he is our shield.”*

*–1 Joseph 8:23 (Epistles of the Saints)*

## Questions

- When you imagine yourself as a temple of God, what parts of your inner life might need cleansing, and what would it feel like for the Holy Spirit's "fire" to transform them?
- Which of the eight tasks from the Book of Remembrance resonates most with you right now, and why?
- How does the idea of "filling" ourselves with the Holy Spirit during meditation, rather than "emptying" ourselves, change the way you think about prayer and spiritual practice?
- In what ways have you personally recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit, through peace,

warmth, light, or other impressions, and how might meditation help you become more aware of those moments?

- How could practicing energy work, shielding, or grounding be seen not as mystical curiosities, but as practical tools for living out your faith and protecting your spiritual well-being?
- In what ways have you personally recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit, through peace, warmth, light, or other impressions, and how might meditation help you become more aware of those moments?

*“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints.”*

*–Ephesians 6:11-18*



## Chapter 7

### *Four Weeks of Teshuvah*

*“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”*

*–Mark 1:15*

Teshuvah is a Hebrew word translated in the Bible as “repentance.” However, its true meaning is “return,” as in one returning to their original state. We use the term Teshuvah in Mormon Kabbalah for a few reasons. The main reason is because we are not leaving our old lives or old paths when we set Ego aside for something new. Rather, we are returning to the path we were already on.

A common understanding within the Latter Day Saint movement is that were all together with God before we were born (*Psalms 82:6, John 10:34-36, 1 Nephi 1:126-127 [17:36]*). We knew God, we are all the children of Elohim. By accepting Christ, we are returning to Elohim as Christians, children of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. By studying Mormon Kabbalah, we are relearning that which we already knew. We have merely forgotten and need reminding.

In Mormon Kabbalah, there is a cycle of four weeks of Teshuvah, and one may line this up with the lunar phases for a full month. Each day for four weeks one will read a day of creation and meditate on that day, one day at a time. How does each day fit with where one is now?

One begins the four forms of Teshuvah:

- Week 1: Self-reflection
- Week 2 (Keter): Born Again (accepting and growing in Grace)
- Week 3 (Geburah): Return (repentance)
- Week 4 (Chesed): Restoration (healing)

Each of these have seven steps, each modeled after the creation. And each step is performed daily. We will repeat these steps as we grow in Christ's Grace. Thus, even after moving beyond this level in our Mormon Kabbalist studies, we continue the practice.

These steps serve us as we grow in Christ's Grace. We are fully perfected in Christ the moment our hearts are pierced. As our kli (heart or vessel) is cleaned, our perception is changed. This will continue as we grow in degrees of Grace. Teshuvah is a constant path to becoming what we truly are. To us it appears as a circle spiraling up, but to God it is a straight path moving forward.

## The Sefirot

*"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."*

*-Proverbs 11:30*

We will get into the Sefirot (Hebrew for "emanations") in greater detail later but for now know that in Mormon Kabbalah these are 12 understandings or expressions of God. Ten are visible on the Tree of Life, one is invisible, and the twelfth Sefirah is the Tree itself, En Sof (the

Everlasting name of God). The ten Sefirot represent the ten attributes of God in Kabbalah, through which Ein Sof reveals Himself/Themselves to humankind.

There are a few different ways of using the Sefirot. Some Kabbalists study and grow on the thirty-two paths, growing from attribute to attribute. Others see them as an urim and thummim. As an urim and thummim, the right and left sides create a series of “lenses” for the natural eyes, while the center creates a series of “lenses” for the third or spiritual eye. Through this urim and thummim, God helps us see both the physical realm and the chain of higher metaphysical realms.

The most important thing to understand about the Sefirot and the Tree of Life in Mormon Kabbalah is that while the tree does represent God, and studying it and the Sefirot will help us understand the Divine, we are made in the image of God. Therefore, in Mormon Kabbalah the Tree of Life is also us, we are also learning about ourselves as we study the emanations of God.

## The Sefirot in Mormon Kabbalah

As stated, some Kabbalists use the Tree of Life to study and grow on the thirty-two paths, while others see them as an urim and thummim, the right and left sides create a series of “lenses” for the natural eyes, while the center creates a series of “lenses” for the third or spiritual eye. In Mormon Kabbalah, we do both, using the Sefirot for growth along the path and as seer stones.

We grow from Sefirot to Sefirot in Christ’s grace and seeing the world through spiritual eyes by the power of the Holy Ghost. Here we will give a quick overview of each Sefirot and how one may grow their perspective with each as we grow closer to God. Please keep these

Sefirot in mind as we move forward into our teshuvah meditations.

Likewise, teshuvah ceases to be a guilt trip Satan uses against us, becoming a return to the path of happiness we have been separated from by Ego. Ego leads us to sin, which can give us a false sense of happiness. Eventually, however, we see how hollow this “happiness” is. The grass is continually greener on the other side of the fence, just out of reach. But forever the “one more” of Ego’s greed only seeks another object that will never truly satisfy us. This is why Lehi taught that “mankind is that we might have joy” (2 Nephi 1:115 [2:25]).

We are tempted by Ego to think returning from sin leads to eternal sorrow as we come to Christ with a broken heart and contrite spirit. Teshuvah leads us past the illusion of the happiness of Ego’s worldly pleasures. True happiness comes when we reject Ego for altruism and the spirit of ubuntu.

This is best understood by the two greatest commandments: Love God and love thy neighbor as thyself. Why? Because God loves us as a parent loves a child, only infinitely more so. As we grow to love God, we cannot help but grow to love others.

This path leads us into the eternal bliss of God’s love. It is a world that can only be understood by those who’s eyes have been opened through Christ. These see the world as Elohim does.

Over time, our growth in Grace returns us by restoring our vision of the world as it truly is; a blessed creation of God. That is to say, by changing one’s perspective teshuvah changes all of reality. Remember again what Elohim said in Genesis 1 over and over of the creation, of us: “It is good.”

# The First Three Sefirot, Before the Seven Days of Creation

## 1. Keter / Crown

*“And the first path is Keter, the path of eternal light and life, the opening of the gate, returning to the light of YHVH Elohim, the beginning of the journey towards the divine reality.”*

*–Zenock 20:1 (Plates of Brass)*

Keter is the top most Sefirot, it is where we must begin, with God. And where we end, in God's presence. It is the light of Keter that illuminates all of Creation, it is the light that separates the darkness. Keter is the beginning and the end with no beginning and no end. Keter helps us to understand God and ourselves before the Creation.

## 2. Da'at / Knowledge

*“Da'at, the path of knowledge of good and evil, teachings us to see between truth and lies or reality and deception, leading mankind to judge themselves in righteousness by the authority and power given by The LORD.”*

*–Zenock 20:5*

The greatest wisdom is to know God. This knowledge comes at a price. We must put the false gods of pride and Ego behind us. We may be seen as weak before the world because we give of ourselves as Christ gave His life for us. Yet this is the true knowledge, truth gained by revelation from God to mankind. Da'at helps us to know

God and ourselves before the Creation.

### 3. Chokhmah / Wisdom

*“Chokhmah, the path of wisdom and revelation, the revealed Word of The LORD, the great urim and thummim.”*

*–Zenock 20:6*

It is one thing to know there is a God, but true wisdom, divine wisdom, dictates that we submit to God. We do not take upon ourselves the name of Christ in vain but become the children of God, Christians. We let go of Ego and begin the work of bringing the Heavens to Earth. We can only do this through the revelation of Wisdom given to mankind by God directly. Chokhmah helps us to learn of God and of ourselves before the Creation.

The Sefirot,  
Seven Days of Creation:

#### 1. Chesed / Mercy (*Genesis 1:1-5*)

*“Chesed, the path of mercy and divine vision, the mercy of YHVH giving birth to prophetic clarity and insight from the washing away of sin in teshuvah”*

*–Zenock 20:12*

We cannot perfect ourselves except through Christ. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of God’s mercy for us. As we follow Him, turning our lives over to the Peacemaker, the Prince of Peace, the light separates from the darkness and we too become the peacemakers. This

is the first day of our new creation.

## 2. Gevurah / Judgment (*Genesis 1:6-8*)

*“Gevurah, the path of oneness, through the fire of the atonement of the Son of Man, the Creator becomes one with His creation.”*

*–Zenock 20:13*

In the Fire of the Holy Spirit we are judged and found worthy, having been washed clean (the water dividing from the water) by Christ’s mercy. Being the pure in heart, our perception changes, we see the world through new eyes. We see God’s hand in everything around us. And eventually, we in a very real way will see God. This is the second day of our new creation.

## 3. Tif’eret / Compassion (*Genesis 1:9-13*)

*“Tif’eret, the path of beauty and hidden power; when the High Priest and High Priestess make the will of YHVH known, the miracle is seen.”*

*–Zenock 20:19*

With our new eyes we see things as they are, which opens us to love others, even those we don’t know or that have hurt us. The dry land appears and we stop the selfish cycle of pride Ego brings and extend mercy because we have been given mercy (*Mosiah 2:29-36 [4:16b-21]*). God has judged us and made us whole, we in turn bring this same light of life into the world. This is the third day of our new creation.

4. Netzach / Endurance (*Genesis 1:14-19*)

*“Netzach, the path of endurance; the adversary will bring temptations and trials, but in YHVH Elohim truth shall outlast these.”*

*–Zenock 20:23*

We are the covenant people of God, and just as God will keep His covenants with us, we must keep ours with Him. This cycle of staying hungry for righteousness and keeping the Torah as we understand it is how we grow in Grace. We do this by following the lights in the firmament. This is the fourth day of our new creation.

5. Hod / Submission (*Genesis 1:20-23*)

*“Hod, the path of creation; through humility and submission to the will of YHVH mankind will do the will of YHVH and fulfill their creation.”*

*–Zenock 20:24*

Only in meekness can we gain all the Father and Mother have for us. Once we gain true, godly perspective, we see bad things don't happen to good people, things happen to all of us—good and bad. It's our reactions to these things that determine who we are, not the causality (*Omni 1:46-47 [1:26]*). This allows for the creation of the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. These represent our base desires for godly things. This is the fifth day of our new creation.

6. Yesod / Foundation (*Genesis 1:20-23*)

*“Yesod, the path of support (foundation), here Zion*

*will be gathered, one soul at a time.”*

*–Zenock 20:30*

The foundation of true transformation lies in how we interact with, and not just perceive, the world around us. We seek and speak truth, we do not judge others, we are a comfort to those that stand in need of comfort (*Matthew 7:1-5; Mosiah 9:38-41 [18:8-10]*). The light of Christ from Keter shines into the world through our actions. We shed Ego and pride for godly altruism. This is the very foundation of righteousness, and Adam and Eve (our desire to bestow and to receive in righteousness) are formed. This is the sixth day of our new creation.

#### 7. Malchut / Exaltation (*Genesis 1:24-31*)

*“Malchut, is the path of the kingdom; the path of ascension is to return to that Elohim who did create all living and who does know the beginning from the end; amen and amen.”*

*–Zenock 20:32*

We are now walking the path of exaltation in our innermost thoughts and outer expressions. We are transformed into new beings. No longer yearning for worldly possessions, dividing people by what they have or have not, looking at worldly things we desire; but seeking the spiritual things we need. By seeking entry to heaven we now see heaven isn't a destination to arrive in but a state of mind we've brought to Earth. Now we rest.

## Questions

- The Sefirot are described as both a ladder for spiritual growth and a tool for seeing reality

more clearly. How do you think holding these two purposes together might shape your own spiritual practice?

- The first three Sefirot—Keter, Da'at, and Chokhmah—exist “before Creation.” What could it mean for your relationship with God to begin your journey in a place beyond time and the material world?
- The progression through the rest of the Sefirot mirrors the “Seven Days of Creation,” blending scripture and mystical symbolism. How might this perspective shape the way you read the Genesis creation account?
- Teshuvah is presented here as a return from the illusions of Ego to the reality of God’s love. How might practicing Teshuvah change the way you interpret your past choices and current challenges?
- Malchut describes heaven not as a distant place but as a state of mind we can bring into the world. How might embracing this idea affect the way you live your faith daily, in your thoughts, actions, and relationships?

## Week 1: Seven Days of Reflection

In the first week, the meditation is a question, where are we in our relationship with the Lord? It is a week of new birth and reflection. This first week in the Tree of Life itself, En Sof. Let’s look at the seven days:

**1. God divines the light from the Darkness** (*Genesis 1:1-5*): This first day is our first “commandment,” to look inside ourselves at our thoughts and our desires see if they are pure.

**2. God divides the Waters** (*Genesis 1:6-8*): Here we accept the mercy of Jesus Christ, we have seen our sin, now we let the mercy of Christ's grace wash over us.

**3. God creates Dry Land, and Vegetation grows** (*Genesis 1:9-13*): At this point we reflect on our most basic desires. How do we see our selves? How does this reflect with how God sees us?

**4. God makes the Lights in the Firmament** (*Genesis 1:14-19*): This is the light that we follow to God, reflect on your life, can you see that light? Can you hear the Holy Spirit? Do you feel your connection to God growing?

**5. God creates the Living Creatures of the Sea and Air** (*Genesis 1:20-23*): Filled with the Holy Spirit, we are now able to reflect on greater desires connected to the mercy of Jesus and the knowledge of God. Do we show mercy similar to that which we have ben given?

**6. God creates humans in His image** (*Genesis 1:24-31*): In Kabbalah the male represents our desire to bestow and the female our will to receive. We will get into this more later, for now are your desires to give and receive like that of the Creators? Why and why not?

**7. God Rests** (*Genesis 2:1-3*): On the seventh day we rest in our reflection, giving ourselves to God. We do not reflect, but take in fully of His Spirit.

## Questions

- How does the idea that Teshuvah is not starting over but returning to what you have always known change the way you view repentance and your relationship with God?
- In what ways does each day of creation reflect your current spiritual state, and how might God be inviting you to grow in that particular area?

- As you meditate on humanity being created in God's image, both to give and to receive, where in your life is there imbalance, and how might that be restored in Christ?
- What does it look like for you to truly "rest in God" on the seventh day of your own spiritual creation cycle, allowing His Spirit to simply be received without striving?

## Week 2: Born Again

Hebrew for "Crown," Keter is the topmost Sefirot on the Tree of Life. It is the above and between Da'at (knowledge) and Chokmah (wisdom).

*"The first 'holy' is the highest Crown"*

*–Sefer HaBahir 128*

*"The First Path is called the Admirable or the Hidden Intelligence (the Highest Crown): for it is the Light giving the power of comprehension of that First Principle which has no beginning, and it is the Primal Glory, for no created being can attain to its essence."*

*–The Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom*

Keter is the first Sephirot we obtain because Christ's Grace first fully perfects us. That Grace then guides us throughout the Tree. It is seen as interchangeable with Binah, the "hidden" Sephirot directly below it because with Sinah (understanding) our perception changes and we see through God's eyes.

Keter walks us through the first step: the broken heart, or pierced heart, and the contrite spirit. We acknowledge that we are fallen beings. We eat from the

tree of knowledge of good and evil. But, unlike Adam, Lilith, and Eve, we do so with God's permission.

Knowing good from evil is not enough. God has given us free agency. This agency allows us two options: (1) willingly allow Christ's Grace to use, guide, direct, and transform us, or (2) be used by God as a blunt instrument. God's will shall be done regardless. Our freedom merely allows us to decide how we will be a part of the story. We either allow the atonement of Christ to clean our kli (Hebrew for "vessel," here representing our hearts) or we keep drinking from a dirty cup.

The Seven Days of Being born again may take a moment. It may take years. Regardless, it follows the seven days of the creation.

## The Seven Days of Creation: Keter

**1. Light from the Darkness** (*Genesis 1:1-5*): Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil without God's permission. Today, God has called us to seek him. We are free to know good from evil that we may find him. We seek the light of the love of God to replace the darkness of our Ego. This begins with the prayer, a plea, to god inscribed in our hearts – our pierced hearts.

**2. Water divides between the Earth and the Heavens** (*Genesis 1:6-8*): From this prayer, the firmament is divided from the waters. This is to say, God grants us Water; His Chesed, Mercy represented in Jesus Christ. We have partaken of the tree and now see that we are naked. This perception, a clearer view of reality, given us by God.

**3. Dry Land is revealed and Vegetation Grows**

(*Genesis 1:9-13*): On the third day, we must clothe our ignorance. Rain comes, and growth begins within us. The land is Earth, Chokhmah, the wisdom of Shekinah. She has given birth within us, the mercy of God in answer to our prayer. Our “clothing” are the “fig leaves” of our altruistic actions. We are moved by grace to do good works. And, by our fruits will they know us (*Matthew 7:16-20*).

**4. Lights in the Firmament** (*Genesis 1:14-19*): The Holy Spirit leads us, showing us the way. There are ups and downs, and so God has given us the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. These are the ups and downs we all go through as our faith is tried. Every degree we rise to creates new darkness, challenges that God will guide us through.

**5. Living Creatures of the Sea and Air are Created** (*Genesis 1:20-23*): These living creatures represent the desires within us. These creatures are of Air and Water. These are Da’at, Knowledge and Chokhmah, Mercy; God the Father and God the Son. We grow in both Grace and Knowledge.

**6. Bring Forth Living Creatures After Its Kind** (*Genesis 1:24-31*): It is here that we, humans, are created. We’re now born anew. What then of these “animals?” Remember, God brings the animals to Adam to name in the second chapter of Genesis. We see these desires within us, and through Christ’s Grace we tame them. Everything God has given us, every desire, we may use to glorify him. Here too are we given the charge to care for the world that God created. This is both a command to continue to grow in Grace, and also to share the fruit of that tree and bring more souls to Christ, back to that God that created them.

**7. The Sabbath** (*Genesis 2:1-3*): At this point God’s work in creation is completed. What’s next? Rest and

repeat. We are continuously Born Again in Christ every time we grow in his Grace.

We are now God's new creation. With our pierced hearts, we have access to the Tree of Life (*1 Nephi 2:49 [8:10]*). By being Born Again, we are transformed into "new beings," a new creation of God in that have grown in the grace of Jesus Christ, rejecting Ego (the darkness) and deepened our personal relationship with God as we move towards altruism (the light). Our kli, a "vessel" within our hearts, is washed clean that we may drink of the water of life freely and taste of its goodness. We accept Christ, we more fully accept him.

This doesn't mean we have let go of all of our sins or Ego. It means we, as a new creature, have been fully washed clean by Christ's Grace. This transformation allows us to move forward as perfected beings into the second stage of return. Each of us are Adam and Eve walking out of the garden, and we are also Joseph Smith Jr. walking into the grove. Mormonism is a very personal religion because it's not about us as a part of a greater organization of people. It's about our very personal relationship with God.

Teshuvah is an opportunity to deepen our relationship with our God. Because our God is a God of Love, we too must use this opportunity to grow in love, as we are the creation, thus a reflection of God.

## Questions

- When you reflect on the "pierced heart" and "contrite spirit," what personal experiences or moments in your life come to mind, and how have they prepared you to receive Christ's grace?
- In your own journey, how do you distinguish

between “knowing good from evil” and truly using that knowledge to align with God’s will?

- If being Born Again is a continual process rather than a one-time event, what practices or changes could you embrace to live more fully in the light of God’s grace each day?

## Week 3: The Return

We have traveled through Keter, being Born Again. Next is Gevurah, Hebrew for “strength.” This is the fifth Sefirah in the Tree of Life. It is below Da’at, across from Chesed, and above Hod. Gevurah is the essence of Din (Arabic, “way of life”), or judgment, and limitation. And, it is fire. It represents the Left Hand of God, the Holy Spirit. It’s fire will cleanse us and perfect us. Or, it will condemn us and destroy us if we do not allow it to use Christ’s Grace to perfect us.

Gevurah is the internal transformation. It is our confession as we wash away Ego and sin. It is God’s strength, and thus our strength from God. It is our repentance as we return. When we say that we have returned to become a “new being” or a “new creature,” we are referring to the union between our immortal spirit and our mortal bodies. Our spirit and body have become one, our physical bodies growing to be like or resemble our spirits in purity. This union is the birth of the soul. We were all perfect in the premortal worlds. We were the perfect creations of God; children of Elohim; Avinu and Shekinah. Through Jesus we are made whole again.

This desire to return allows us to acknowledge our sins and be judged by them. Thanks to Christ’s atonement, justice has been served by mercy. This allows us

something we could never do on our own, grow to heal the damage our physical bodies have done to our souls. We are able to return to Elohim as perfected beings, through Christ, accessing Da'at, knowledge (Avinu) and Chokmah, wisdom (Shekinah).

## The Seven Days of Creation: Gevurah

**1. Regret** (*Genesis 1:1-5*): On the first day we must separate the light from the darkness. We understand sin harms us, harms others, and separates us from God. We must regret this damage as the first step forward, away from darkness and towards God's light.

**2. Renounce** (*Genesis 1:6-8*): On the second day came the waters, and as in baptism we must wash away sin. We cleanse ourselves from that which separates us from God, desiring to replace acts of ego with acts of altruism.

**3. Confess** (*Genesis 1:9-13*): Just as vegetation sprung from the ground, on the third day we bear the fruit of confession. We must separate the land from the seas, the guilt and shame, admitting what we've done to ourselves, to God, and to those we have harmed.

**4. Reconcile** (*Genesis 1:14-19*): On the fourth day God created the sun, moon, and stars to light our path and give us signs in the firmament. Gevurah represents the Holy Spirit, the God that guides us. As we access this deity, he will light our path; bridging the gap created between us and God. This will stir Christ's Grace within us, moving us to do his works. Thus, we do our part to mend bridges broken by our egos so that the warmth of the sun may be felt by all involved.

**5. Make amends** (*Genesis 1:20-23*): On the fifth day living animals were created. While only Christ can truly repay our wrongs, we still must do our best to repair any damages

caused by our ego's sin, bringing life where there was only the vegetation of confession. Now, our good deeds bare fruit and multiply. God blesses both those that did harm, and those that were harmed.

**6. Resolve** (*Genesis 1:24-31*): On the sixth day God creates humans, as a new creature. The same is true with us. By working through the first five steps, we are new people, born again in Christ. We are humans created in the image of God. With renewed focus, we must now move forward resolving not to repeat this sin, as we are now a new person in God.

**7. Rest** (*Genesis 2:1-3*): This last step can be the hardest, as we must forget the sin and forgive ourselves. Our egos will attempt to shame us for what we've done. We must see ourselves as God sees us; forgiven. We must put past sins behind us, and rest knowing God has seen our hearts and said, "It is good."

In Keter we took the first steps of teshuvah, welcoming Christ into our lives. In Gevurah we take the next steps, learning to do God's will, because Gevurah is fire—action. This is the time when Ego steps in to move against us. Nagging doubts may creep in, but by building a relationship with the Holy Spirit, we gain a powerful guide and protector. Remember, God doesn't want us to fail. His plan for our happiness is the reason everything is happening.

We were perfected when we were born again, even though we are not without egoism and sin. If we were perfect on our own, we wouldn't need to grow in Grace. This is why works without grace are meaningless (dead), and grace without works are also dead, showing we do not truly have grace (*Romans 3:19-24, James 2:14-18, 26*). Why follow the Torah if the Torah is dead to us? And how are

we saved by the Torah if the Grace of Jesus moves us to follow the Torah? What matters then is faith and works going hand in hand. In Kabbalah, this is to say what matters is where the Torah is written, in our pierced hearts.

To endure to the end, the Torah must be written in our hearts in Gevurah's flames, by this we know that we have accepted the Lord's unconditional love. God has given us so much and asks for so little in return (John 15:13). He gave his life and asked us to pick up our crosses and follow him (Matthew 16:24-26). And this He said would be easy (Matthew 11:28-30). As Gevurah transforms us, we move beyond merely accepting Christ's mercy. The Holy Spirit finely tools us into instruments of God, in building His creations.

## Questions

- When you think of Gevurah as both “fire that cleanses” and “fire that destroys,” where do you see this refining fire at work in your own life?
- How has your understanding of confession and reconciliation changed when viewed not as punishment, but as a step toward the union of body and spirit in purity?
- In what ways have you experienced the balance between grace and works, between God's unconditional love and your active participation in returning to Him?
- What does rest and self-forgiveness look like for you, and how can you resist ego's attempts to bring back guilt once God has declared you forgiven?

## Week 4: The Restoration

*“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”*

*–Psalms 51:12*

Gevurah has given us the strength to return home. The final step is Chesed, Hebrew for “kindness” or “love.” This term is commonly used in the Bible to describe God’s love for mankind. It refers to “tikkun olam,” Christ’s mercy repairing the world. It is the foundation of the Law (Keter): Love God and Love thy neighbor (*Leviticus 19:18, 33-34, Matthew 5: 43-48; 22:36-40, 3 Nephi 5:89-92 [12:43-48]*). Thus, in Mormon Kabbalah it is known as Mercy.

Sin has two affects: damage to the sinner, and damage to those they sinned against. The restoration or mercy is the healing portion of Teshuvah. This also has two parts. First, it completes the Return healing us, and second it heals us when we have been spiritually harmed by others. This healing power has a third effect: ministry.

We obviously do not harm God when we sin against Him. However, sin is a negative with both cause and effect. Being washed clean by Christ’s Grace feels wonderful, it’s empowering! However, it doesn’t merely heal us. On its own, teshuvah can be seen as ego fulfillment. Yet this is contrary to the whole point of being Born Again!

There must be a way to heal those that have been harmed, and for God to heal us when we have been harmed. This is Chesed. This is the Gospel of Jesus, the Good news. This is the Atonement’s Mercy healing us, healing the wrongs done against us. This is the power of Christ, and His Atonement.

## The Seven Days of Creation: Chesed

**1. Healing** (*Genesis 1:1-5*): Sin has harmed us and others. On the first day of Chesed we allow God to separate the light from the darkness. The darkness is washed away by the warmth of the light. Being cleansed by the light we are purified and thus moved by the Holy Spirit to do holy works.

**2. Washing** (*Genesis 1:6-8*): Next the waters come, cleansing the pain sin has caused us, and helps us make clean our sins that have caused pain to others. The waters are cool and refreshing, getting deep within us, healing our wounds. They are also harsh to help us mourn with those sin has hurt. We are literally washed clean and made whole in the peace of God, and now wish to extend that same healing out to others. Know that it is Christ's mercy that washes us.

**3. Works** (*Genesis 1:9-13*): The earth brakes free from the water, and vegetation springs from us, causing us to take action. When we are the ones that did harm, we are moved by God to admit our mistakes and work to heal those we have harmed, just as we have been healed. We do this as we are moved by the Spirit. While it is by Grace we are saved, that salvation moves us to action.

**4. A New Path** (*Genesis 1:14-19*): With the sun, moon, and stars lighting our way, the Holy Spirit guides us forward. We're back on track, leaving the past sins, pride, and Ego behind. This allows us to do more than be healed. We are now able to move beyond our own needs and be a light unto the world, helping and healing others.

**5. Greater Works** (*Genesis 1:20-23*): As we grow in Grace, our good deeds bear fruit and multiply. We now wish to bring others to Christ. God moves us like birds to the

air, and fish in the sea; swift, ever moving, ever singing his praise. We're seeking to help heal all that have been harmed. God has called us to minister to those in need.

**6. Mission** (*Genesis 1:24-31*): With your new found understanding, God has called you to bring teshuvah to the world. You are called to be a fisher of mankind. Many are lost, and you now hear their cries. You understand the call to repentance isn't wall of a chastisement, but a bridge we build through acceptance and love. You're now active in the building of God's kingdom, a new Eden.

**7. Rest** (*Genesis 2:1-3*): The cycle of teshuvah isn't the end, but a new beginning. Now we rest so that we can start the cycle again in the new month. Today we worship; we mourn with those that mourn and have joy with those that have joy. You can better help others because God has opened your eyes and you see "It is good."

To be fully restored, we must continue learning, growing, teaching, and building. We're growing grace by grace in Christ. The way to grow now is not merely inside of us, building our own relationship with God. Now, we find others that can help us grow. All of these will teach and guide you on the path, just as you will teach and guide them. No one has all of the answers. This is why God has taught us to worship with others. You're not alone. We're all in it together. This is that Spirit of Ubuntu, the very light of Christ in action.

## Questions

- When you think about Chesed as "the mercy that heals," where in your life do you most need this kind of divine restoration right now, either for yourself or for someone you love?
- How have you experienced the difference between

being forgiven for something you've done and being healed from something done to you?

- In what ways could your personal restoration naturally overflow into ministry, helping to heal and restore others in your community or family?
- The meditation speaks of moving from being healed to becoming a light for the world. What might that shift look like in your life over the next month?
- Looking back, how can the Spirit of Ubuntu, “I am because we are,” reshape the way you think about your role in God’s kingdom?



## Chapter 8

### *Growing in Grace*

*“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

*–2 Peter 3:18a*

You have learned how to connect to God, what is next? There are differing levels one may be called on within the kingdom of God. This book was not written to convert you to anything, but rather to help you build a personal relationship with God. Once one builds this relationship, we begin to grow in that relationship and in Jesus’ Grace. This book breaks that growth into 3 categories, each with its own duties and responsibilities. We cannot choose these for ourselves but are called to them. They are seeker, disciple, and minister. Here we will go over these and look at their roles in the Kingdom of God.

### Seeker

Up until now, maybe you have been seeking Christ, and/or investigating the Latter Day Saint restorational movement. You have been learning about God, His plan for you, nondenominational Christianity/Mormonism or maybe an actual Latter Day Saint denomination, or maybe even another Christian church or movement. It does not matter if you have come from (or are even still

a part of) a particular sect or denomination. The reality is that we are and will always be seeking truth, this is the nature of Christianity, continual growth in God. We must be ever learning, pressing forward to learn more of God's Word. Before finding Christ or deciding to fully embrace Christ/Christianity one is still a seeker or investigator.

This is not something we do alone. Remember what Jesus taught us: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (*Matthew 18:20*). If there isn't a denomination close by that you feel called to worship with, start a study group. Look for others around you or online to talk with. And as you learn, you will also teach. This is how the Lord works, and why we have been told to fellowship one with another.

No one has all the answers. This is why the Lord has created so many denominations in His earthly Church (*1 Nephi 3:230-231 [14:14]*). What is right for one person may not be right for another, and that's okay. The question we must ask ourselves as seekers is, "what does being a Christian mean to me in my relationship with the Lord?" As you draw closer to Christ, do you see yourself as one that points fingers or one who forgives?

## Disciple

As soon as one accepts Christ as their personal savior, they become a disciple and a member of God's heavenly Church (the Church of Christ). If one feels called to join a particular denomination, they'll also be a member of that congregation as a disciple of Jesus. The Church of Jesus Christ in Christian Fellowship is always here to help people find or build a denomination, as seekers and disciples give us people to minister to. But

what does it actually mean to be a disciple?

There are many ideas of what “disciple” means. The Rabbinical idea would be to follow Jesus, to copy Jesus, and to carry the passion of Jesus. We must be willing to surrender to Jesus Christ, to be partners with Jesus. Throughout the scriptures, the relationship between mankind and God is described as a marriage. It is a real relationship. It’s more than studying. Disciples do have duties. Their duties are their baptismal covenants. As Alma taught us:

*“Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life.”*

–*Mosiah 9:38-40 [18:8-9]*

Even as disciples, we have a duty to study the Gospel, grow in Grace, and help others. These are the works we do because we are saved by Christ’s Grace (*James 2:14-26*). Disciples teach of Christ by our example. We share in times of joy and sorrow. We are always missionaries, leading others to investigate Christianity and Mormonism by seeking after Christ.

## Minister

Every church, sect, and denomination has ministers

that help those in the kingdom. Moroni teaches us:

*“Behold, elders, priests, and teachers... and the church did meet together oft to fast, and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls; and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them... And their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.*

*–Moroni 6:2, 5-9 [6:1, 6-9]*

People are called to different types of ministries. Ministers teach of Christ, hold the keys to ordinances in the Kingdom, and are given authority from their home sects/denominations to represent them as these earthly organizations go about their dedicated ministries. They help teach investigators, disciples, and help train other ministers.

Within the movement known as the Church of Jesus Christ in Christian Fellowship, there are two priesthood's ministers may be called to, the Lower and the Higher. The lower is also called the Levitical Priesthood. For those that identify as male this would be in the Brotherhood of Aaron or the Aaronic Priesthood, and for those that identify as female the Sisterhood of Miriam or the Miriamic Priesthood. The higher is called Melchizedek for those that identify as male and Magdalene for those that identify as female.

Not all Latter Day Saints view the priesthood in this way, or ordain women as Joseph Smith Jr. did in the

original Church, and that is okay. What is important is to understand that the Lower or Levitical priesthood is for those called to perform outer ordinances such as the sacraments of baptism and communion. They also teach the Gospel and assist the Higher priesthood in their duties. Their role is to prepare the earth for the coming of the Heavens. The High Priesthood is for those called to minister in leadership roles, give the gift of the Holy Ghost, heal the sick, and guide disciples to deeper relationships with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; to bring the power of God, the Heavens, to the earth.

The keys of the priesthood give us access to true powers from God. What spiritual gifts as the Lord blessed you with? How have the spiritual gifts of God given to others in your life helped you?

## Gifts of the Spirit

Ministers are also disciples, and seekers. Likewise, disciples are also seekers. No one ever stops learning; therefore, they never stop seeking. Regardless of the place God has called one to, we all have been blessed with gifts of the Spirit that we use to help one another grow in Christ.

*“And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men to profit them.*

*“For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God that he may teach the word of wisdom;*

*“And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

*“And to another, exceeding great faith;*

*“And and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

*“And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles;*

*“And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things;*

*“And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits;*

*“And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;*

*“And again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues.*

*“And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally according as he will.*

*“And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.”*

*–Moroni 10:9-13 [10:8b-18]*

As we grow in the Gospel, we learn what our gifts are, and how to use them to bless others in God’s name.

## Questions

- As you think about the three roles, seeker, disciple, and minister, where do you see yourself right now, and what signs might God give you when it’s time to grow into the next role?
- When you consider the duties of a disciple (bearing burdens, mourning with others, witnessing for God), which comes most naturally to you, and which challenges you the most?
- If you were called into ministry, how might you use your spiritual gifts to strengthen both

seekers and disciples?

- Looking at the spiritual gifts listed in Moroni 10, which ones do you feel most drawn to, and how have you seen them (or others) work in your life or community?
- What does “growing in grace” mean to you personally, and how might it change the way you see your role in God’s Kingdom over the next week, month, year?

## Baptism as a Part of Rebirth

*“Therefore, come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.”*

*—Alma 5:25 [7:14b]*

When Nicodemus came to Jesus to learn about salvation, he was told he would need to be born again (*John 3:1-8*). Baptism is a Sacrament required by the Savior for admission into God’s Kingdom. When we were born again, we were washed clean and made members of God’s one true Heavenly Church. Likewise, when moved by the Holy Spirit, we will wish to be baptized into one of God’s earthly churches. As above, so below; as below, so above (*Matthew 6:10, 16:19*).

In the Latter Day Saint movement, one must be at least eight years of age to be baptized (*Doctrines of the Saints 38a:18*). Baptism must be performed by immersion, by one ordained to the priesthood as a Priest or Priestess of the Low priesthood or to the High Priesthood (*Doctrines of the Saints 119:4-8*). Being baptized into any of the many

Latter Day Saint denominations would be perfectly acceptable for anyone moved by the Holy Spirit to work with the Fellowship of Christ, as all that are baptized are members of the Church of Christ (*Doctrines of the Saints 14c:23*).

Before baptism by one working within the Fellowship (*Doctrines of the Saints 13a:62-67*), the following questions are asked:

1. Do you desire to come into the fold of God, and to be called a member of His Fellowship?
2. Have you confessed your sins to the Lord, and repented of them?
3. Are you obedient to the laws of the land?
4. Are you willing to bear another's burdens, that they may be lightened?
5. Are you willing to mourn with those that mourn, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort?
6. Are you willing to stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that you may be in, even until death, that you may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that you may have eternal life?
7. Are you willing to continue in obedience to the Laws of God and Jesus Christ as you understand them?

By answering these questions in the affirmative, and the Spirit testifying to the questioner that the individual is ready to commit to baptism, they may be baptized. They should ask two individuals to officially witness the baptism for Fellowship records. Witnesses for Fellowship baptisms

may belong to either the Offices of the Brotherhood or Sisterhood as a Deacon or higher. If none are available, lay members may stand as witnesses as well. Members of other Latter Day Saint or Mormon denominations are also welcome to be invited to stand as witnesses.

Once the person has been baptized, they should privately dry, change their clothing and return to receive confirmation of the Gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. While these are not mandatory as a part of teshuvah (*3 Nephi 4:50 [9:20b]*), the majority of those that have been born again are moved by the Holy Spirit to crave baptism by water and fire. This is because while our works will not save us, they are a sign that we are saved.

*“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

*—James 2:17, 26*

Those already baptized, and in good standing with the Fellowship, may be re-baptized as often as they like, provided the timing permits. It is recommended that re-baptisms be done when new members are being baptized or that a day be set aside once a month for all baptisms, adding more dates as needed. The Sacrament of Communion replaces baptism for members. Yet, it is understood that there are times when some wish to be re-baptized for personal reasons.

## Baptism or Tevilah?

*“And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water to fulfill all righteousness, O, then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be*

*baptized, yea, even by water.”*

*–2 Nephi 13:7 [31:5]*

When reading the Book of Mormon, we see baptism mentioned repeatedly throughout the book. However, Nephi and others would not have understood this as we understand baptism today. They would have understood baptism as *tevilah*, a full body ritual washing for cleansing rather than absolution.

The idea of baptism is not new. The Torah requires washing in water, full immersion, as a means of purification in Leviticus 15:13. Some of the reasons for baptism were:

- Converting to Israel (*known as Judaism today*)
- In preparation for temple worship, particularly the High Priest before Yom Kippur (*Leviticus 16:24, 16:26, 16:28*)
- Men experiencing a seminal discharge (*Leviticus 15:2, 13*)
- After sexual acts (*Leviticus 15:18*)
- Contact with or after carrying any animal deliberately killed for any reason other than food (*Leviticus 17:15*)
- To prepare the body for burial (*Ecclesiastes 5:15*)
- Coming in contact with a dead body (*Numbers 19:7-8*)

The Book of the Law of the Lord, Chapter 11 reads:

*“Except a man be born of the water, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. But no man may have baptism*

*of water, except such as have faith toward God, and come unto him through the ministry he has sent; repenting of evil deeds, and seeking to learn righteousness by the living word: For this is the door of all into the kingdom; from eight years old and upwards; through which if ye enter not, ye shall not see God. For the keys of the ministry of the remission of sins, in the sacrament of baptism, hath the Lord, your God, bestowed upon His Apostles; and through them, upon their fellow laborers, the High Priests, Elders, and Priests; commanding them to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations throughout the earth.”*

The Book of the Law of the Lord is a collection of translations from the plates of brass and other writings and revelations of James Strang. It is clear based on the language that this is a translation like the Book of Mormon with Christianized text. In the Torah of Moses also translated from the Plates of Brass we find:

*“And the angel of YHVH spoke unto Moses and Zipporah, saying: Thou shalt be washed, fully immersed in living water, be it by a running stream or with the mikveh; and this thou shalt do to fulfill all righteousness; for except that thou born of the water, thou cannot enter into the Presence of Ha’Elohim; therefore ye shall wash with water that ye die not; and when thou cometh up out of the water, thou shall be clean and the Breath shall fall upon thee; and this thou shalt do that desire to be holy unto YHVH and walk in teshuvah before YHVH, thy Elohim, and to wear the mantel of righteousness.”*

*–4 Moses 31:1-4 (Plates of Brass)*

From this it becomes clear that some sort of washing is needed, and that we will be moved by the Holy Spirit to desire it. It will not be done out of guilt or shame or



threat of hell or punishment, but by our love for God.

Looking again at Nephi, did Jesus need baptism? He didn't need to be washed clean in the Christian sense, but he would have needed *tevilah*; and if Jesus needed *tevilah* then so do we.

As Christians we view baptism through our new traditions rather than the Torah. Why then are we baptized before we are given confirmation? One reason may be because we are temples of God. We wash our bodies to be worthy of the Holy Spirit. It makes sense that God would ask people to bathe before going into a holy place, like temples, or the tabernacle before temples, in Israel. This held both spiritual meaning and helps to stop the spread of diseases.

The Israelites had access to the Holy Spirit just as Christians and Jews do today. As we wash our bodies, we are symbolically cleansed to be reborn as new people, as Christians reborn in Christ, for Jews reborn into the Covenant. We use different languages, yet what we do, and why, aren't all that dissimilar. Being baptized is not so much a New Testament law as it is a new understanding of Torah. And there is no reason we cannot or should not be washed clean at every opportunity.

## Questions

- How does the concept of baptism as both a Christian sacrament and a continuation of the Torah's ritual washings change or deepen your understanding of its meaning?
- In what ways might thinking of baptism as an act of love rather than obligation transform your approach to the ordinance?
- How does the practice of re-baptism or repeated

ritual washing fit into your understanding of ongoing spiritual growth and renewal?

- If faith without works is dead, how do you see baptism as a “work” that grows out of living faith rather than as a way to earn salvation?
- What spiritual experiences or personal meaning have you found (or might you expect to find) in connecting baptism to both cleansing and commissioning for ministry?

## Called of God

*“And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”*

*–Hebrews 5:4*

The Lord has given us signs to know we are called of God. The things we should look for is that we are not calling ourselves, but are truly called by the Lord, as was Aaron (Hebrews 5:4). The signs to look for are:

- A “magical” or “supernatural” experience (*Avahr 7*)
- A willingness to serve (*Avahr 13:5*)
- Spiritual gifts of the Spirit drawing one to service, (*Moroni 10:9-13 [10:8b-18]*)

Some are called in a blessing, or by an angel, or even by God directly. Some have an overwhelming desire to serve given to them by the Holy Spirit in humility. And others possess spiritual gifts that denote their call in a clear way. And we may have one, two, or all three of these.

Within the Latter Day Saint movement, people are called of God as “apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers,

evangelists, and so forth” to help move individuals, congregations, churches, and the kingdom forward in Christ (*Doctrines of the Saints 3b:6*). These Saints “must be called of God by inspiration and the Spirit of prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (*Doctrines of the Saints 3b:5*). What does this mean and how does this work? Let’s look at Aaron’s call as told in the Plates of Brass:

*“...and the Voice of the Lord said: Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well... thy spokesman he shall be unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth...”*

–3 Moses 4:27 (*Plates of Brass*)

In Exodus 7:1-2 we read that Aaron is called by God through Moses to assist Moses as he leads Israel. The same is true in Third Moses from the Plates of Brass. There is a need, and Aaron is called to fill this need. However, there is more to the story, as we read in the Plates of Brass:

*“And it came to pass that not many days before Moses was in the presence of the angel of YHVH, in a flame of fire within the very center of that bush, that the angel of YHVH did come unto Aaron, the brother of Moses; and the angel of YHVH did say unto Aaron: Go ye into the wilderness to meet thy brother, Moses; for unto thee is given a call, even to be the mouthpiece of thy brother...”*

–3 Moses 6:1-3

Here we can see that there are two parts to this call from God. It is not merely God telling Moses, then Moses demanding that Aaron do as he, Moses, tells him

as the mouthpiece of God. The Lord told two people of the call: Moses (the one with the need) and Aaron (the one filling that need).

This is important to remember as people are called of God. If one feels called, but the one the Lord has called to received the revelation does not hear it, then perhaps they are called but it is not yet their time. Likewise, if there is a need and God tells the person seeking to fill that need to call a person, and that person does not receive a revelation that they are called, then they are called but not chosen. This is the dual nature of one being called of God. The person calling *and* the person called must know by the power of God or they are not called.

*“Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying: Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...”*

*–Jonah 1:1-3*

There may also be times, like in the case of Jonah, where one is called and they run from the call and the Lord chases them down and convinces them to accept the call. But we should understand that Jonah was not fully called until he accepted, and that he had the choice (and the consequences) of continuing to run away. Jonah eventually chose to heed his call. But we cannot force anyone to accept a call. God will help them become ready, or God will choose someone else.

Sometimes the call is so important, as with Moses and Jonah, that God will *not* call someone else. Other times, the Lord will call someone else. This doesn't make the next person less called. Rather, the Lord already

knew that the first person would not accept. But the Lord new they needed to hear the call as a part of their own personal development.

The point here is that we cannot force a call on anyone. Even if God tells them they are called, by revelation, they are not fully or truly called until they accept on a deeply personal and spiritual level. This is more than merely saying “yes.” It is embracing their call, making it a part of their identity (*Doctrines of the Saints* 133:15). This is how we can know someone is fully called. They embody the spirit of their calling.

*“A Preface or instructions upon the Book of Commandments, which were given of the Lord unto His Church through him whom He appointed to this work by the voice of His Saints, through the prayer of faith...”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints Section 1 Header  
(Book of Commandments Chapter 1 Header)*

The final part of being called of God is having the confidence of the people. We should understand that this will not always happen. Mormon had the people’s confidence in leading them into battle, but not unto the words of the Gospel that would have saved their mortal position and their immortal souls (*Mormon* 1:36-39 [2:12-14]). When the Lord is calling those that would help facilitate the growth of the Saints, those Saints will be moved by the Holy Spirit to sustain them. If this does not happen it can be because the Saints are unwilling or unable to listen, the person called may be called to work other with Saints, or the timing of the call is not right.

When we look at James Strang, we know he was called as Joseph called him as Joseph’s successor (*9 Joseph* 1:6). However, history shows that he was kept out of town

and not allowed to speak when Brigham Young and Sidney Rigdon were asking the Saints to vote on who they wished to follow. Rather than uniting the Saints, this divided them and the fractured Church became *the Churches of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, with everyone moving in their own directions. Because the Saints refused to be one, the Lord called more than one person to lead them. The Holy Spirit moved the Saints to follow and rebuild the fractured kingdom.



In this we know that all of those called were truly called as they were truly sustained, they had followers. Strang, Young, and Rigdon and others continue to have followers to this day. Therefore, this is the seal that unites the first two parts of the call. Even Mormon, rejected in his time, has today been sustained by every Latter Day Saint that studies his abridgement of the records of his people.

We cannot assume that one is called merely because they have followers. At the same time, we also cannot reject one claiming they have been called merely because they do not have followers (or do not have enough followers in the world's eyes). We must ourselves

go to the Lord, every time, and seek our own personal revelation (*Moroni 10:5b [10:5]*). We are after all, to be a prophetic people.

## Questions

- In your experience, what role do spiritual gifts play in confirming a divine calling?
- Why might God communicate a call both to the person who will serve and to the person extending the call, as in the example of Moses and Aaron?
- How does the principle of agency shape the process of accepting, or rejecting, a call from God?
- In situations where multiple leaders are called and sustained, what spiritual insights can help us understand God's purposes in such diversity?



## Chapter 9

### *Repairing the World*

*“We believe... that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 3b:10*

When we come to Christ, we're Born Again. Our broken hearts, and contrite spirits recreate us into new spiritual beings. As we know, the changes of teshuvah are about returning to who we truly are. Thus, we are reborn in Christ as our true selves. This leads to obedience to God. Our hearts are pierced, the kelim (vessels) within that are filled with the light of God's love (Ha'Or En Sof or the light of Christ) pours from us through altruism. This outward expression of our inner change is known as tikkun olam.

Tikkun olam is Hebrew for “repair of the world,” literally translated. It's also understood to mean “construction for eternity.” This refers to the teshuvah construction of the world, where we are “created” in seven days (*Chapter 7*). While in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were commanded by God to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (*Genesis 1:28*).

“To replenish,” as stated in the passage of scripture,

is מלא, or mala, meaning to finish or to complete. This means that we are to bring the Heavens to the Earth through the correction of teshuvah (Hebrew, “return”). This sounds like an impossible task, but nothing is impossible with God (*Luke 1:37*). Man brought sin upon ourselves via the fall, and we’ll return to our, and the world’s, true state through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Radah, רדה, is a verb translated as “rule” or “dominate;” here “dominion,” meaning “chastise; Arabic tread, trample; Syriac chastise, also (and so Assyrian radû) go, flow” (<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7287.htm>). Remembering that ours is a God of love, we must understand that radah here doesn’t require force. By correcting ourselves, the light of Christ flowing from our kli will change the world. And this is tikkun olam.

## As Above, So Below

There is an ancient maxim, “As above, so below, as below, so above” (*Matthew 16:19*). Tikkun olam is about fulfilling this mandate, as commanded by the Lord. Remember, every man is Adam and every woman is Eve. This is the first commandment he has given to all of us when bringing us, symbolically, into Eden.

How do we fulfill tikkun olam? We live our lives with tikkun olam in our prayers and rituals. We let the light of Christ fill and flow from our kli. We love and help our neighbors. This brings the light of Christ into their lives, giving them the opportunity to taste God’s fruits and be born again. We care for the earth and all its creatures. This means we use resources responsibly and support persons, companies, and governments that do so, and peaceably requesting that those that do not change their ways. We do this both by making use of the sealing power of the priesthood, and by preparing the

earth for Christ's return, which began about 200 years ago when Jesus descended to the Earth and spoke to the boy, Joseph Smith Jr. just as he ascended into heaven nearly 2000 years before (*Avahr* 5:17-24, *Acts* 1:9-11).

I'm sure there are those reading this thinking, "it's too much, how can I do this?" The first step is not to be overwhelmed. Remember, the Savior taught us:

*"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

*—Matthew 11:28-30*

Faith moves mountains (*Matthew* 17:20-21, *Ether* 5:30b-31a [12:30]). Prayer, meditation, fasting; these will be the vehicle used by Mormon Kabbalists to bring about the will of the Lord. We let the Spirit guide us. Again, the Lord is on our side; how can we fail? Ego tells us both that we are great and can do anything when it comes to sin, but makes us feel weak and powerless in doing God's will. As we reject Ego and embrace altruism the world is being corrected because as God's creation, we too are a part of the world.

## Questions

- How does the idea of teshuvah, returning to your true self, change the way you see being born again in Christ?
- How do you understand the scriptural command to "replenish the earth" in light of the Hebrew meaning of mala ("to finish" or "complete")?

- How might the principle “As above, so below” inspire your daily prayers, rituals, and actions toward tikkun olam?
- What small, consistent steps can you take to help repair the world without becoming overwhelmed by the enormity of the task?
- How does rejecting Ego and embracing altruism influence your relationship with God, yourself, and the world around you?

## Mitzvah and the Sacraments

*“Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness, that we may know that it is by his grace and his great condescensions unto the children of men that we have power to do these things.”*

*–Jacob 3:8 [4:7]*

In Christianity there seems to be an ongoing battle between works and grace, salvation and exaltation, the Law and the fulfillment of that Law. Yet in truth, these are not opposites. Justice and mercy are not rivals; they are partners. Mercy fulfills justice, and justice gives mercy its depth and meaning. In the same way, doing the works of God cannot be evil, for they are God’s works. The opposite of the holy is not “works” but the superficial, the appearance of religion without its living spirit. The task, then, is not to pry apart the things of God, but to unite them.

Mitzvah (plural mitzvot) is a Hebrew feminine noun usually translated “commandment,” but more deeply it means “a good deed done from religious duty.” In Kabbalah, the feminine represents the will to receive, while the masculine represents the desire to bestow. In

mitzvah, we receive our duty from God—the divine will. One might say that God offers us teshuvah (repentance, return), and we choose to receive it in mitzvah..

The first time we see this word used in the Torah is Genesis 26:5:

*“Because that Abraham **heard** my voice, and kept my **charge**, my **mitzvot**, my **ordinances**, and my **Torah**” (emphasis added).*

This is an important verse because it gives us a list of the things God desires of us:

- **Shema** (verb, masculine & feminine): to hear. A two-way relationship with God, listening, responding, conversing
- **Mishmereth** (noun feminine): charge; to watch, worship, or guard
- **Mitzvah** (noun feminine): obligation or duty
- **Chuqqah** (noun feminine): ordinance or statute
- **Torah** (noun feminine): Law, Teaching or instruction

God calls us to listen (*shema*), to keep watch over Him (*mishmereth*), to fulfill our obligations (*mitzvot*), to receive His ordinances (*chuqqah*), and to walk in His teachings (*Torah*). What are the mitzvot? Anything the Lord asks us to do, as we are moved by the Holy Spirit. They are the terms of our Covenant with God. The mitzvah are the chuqqoth (plural for chuggah) or ordinances and the Torah, but more than this to live in mitzvah is to live the Torah, it is a way of life we embrace as Christians.

## The Sacraments

“Sacrament” is a Christian term from the Latin meaning “solemn oath.” The Sacraments are a portion of our mitzvah. The ritual Sacraments are the chuqqoth/ordinances God requires per the Torah/Law. We do not keep mitzvah to save ourselves, but rather they are a symbol that we are saved (*Jacob 3:8 [4:7]*). Some of these mitzvah sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion, as outlined in the Fourth Article of Faith (*Doctrines of the Saints 3b:4*).

Many Christian denominations have lists of Holy Sacraments. These lists may include any of the following:

- Sacrament of Faith
- Sacrament of Baptism
- Sacrament of Confirmation
- Sacrament of Communion
- Sacrament of Marriage for Time
- Sacrament of Sealing: Marriage
- Sacrament of Sealing: Families



- Sacrament of Sealing: Adoption
- Sacrament Conferring & Ordaining
- Sacrament of Initiatories
- Sacrament of the Endowments

Many of these rituals have been around far longer than Christianity. Baptism, for example, is a tevilah (טְבִילָה); a full body immersion in a mikveh (מִקְוֵה), a ritual bath by immersion to achieve ritual purity. But the nature of these has changed as our understanding of God has grown and as our cultures have evolved over time. Why? Because it's what these represent that matters the most, and that is our internal changes.

## Why Symbols Matter

Symbols are everywhere. We see them plastered on nearly everything. Why? Symbols speak to the deepest part of us. They bypass the filters of the conscious mind and speak directly to the heart, our subconscious. Symbols are the language of the inner us. They are our holy writ, if you will. This is why symbolic images and events fill our dreams. Symbols have the power to help inform, to help us understand, and even to rewire our thoughts. This is why spiritual paths and religions are filled with symbols. The Lord has told us:

*“Thou shalt strive at all times and in all places to serve me, the Lord your God; and just as a man putteth on one set of clothing to plow the fields and another to sleep, so too doth man put on another to do the work of the Lord. Behold, the symbols of my garments were given in the Garden of Eden unto Adam and Eve, as they covenanted with me to take upon themselves my name and to use my*

*holy priesthood; and they wore their garments when they cried unto me without the Garden, and when they did all the works I commanded them to do in my name; in them there was not salvation, yet there was strength given them from me.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saint 106:39-43*

The mitzvot and the sacraments, these are symbols. We aren't good people because being good saves us. When we are washed clean in baptism or tevilah it is not the washing that purifies us, it is Christ.

Why be washed clean then? Because the symbol is a powerful statement that we have been washed clean. We are offered salvation by Christ's grace and are exalted to do His works. This is how these flow together as one. It's never been grace or works, salvation or exaltation, the Law or the fulfillment of the Law. It's always been grace and works, as together these offer salvation and exaltation.

And with these we grow in grace by obedience to the Torah as the Torah is written upon our hearts and fulfilled in Christ now as it always has been. We are saved, as Nephi puts it, “after all we can do,” because there is nothing we can do except that which we are moved to do by the Holy Spirit. Or as Zenock put it,

*“I confess with the words of my mouth that the Torah is not fulfilled in me, but that salvation comes only by the grace of YHVH, and the works of Elolaum are given through us despite notwithstanding all we may do.”*

*–Zenock 24:41*

## Questions

- How do the mitzvot and sacraments work together to write God's Torah upon your heart?
- In what ways does the relationship between the mitzvah God puts on your heart and the sacraments change your understanding of the balance between grace and works?
- How might the symbolic nature of the sacraments influence the way you approach rituals in your own spiritual life?
- How can embracing both mercy and justice, rather than seeing them in opposition, transform the way you live your faith?

## Grace and Works

*“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”*

*–Romans 11:6*

Mitzvah and sacraments are tied to grace and works. God wants us to hear Him, to watch and worship Him, to remember the mitzvot, receive ordinances, and study and live the Torah. And we do all these by grace.

To use the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, grace and works are represented by the right and left hands of God: the right being the grace: Chesed (Mercy) and the left being the works: Gevurah (Judgment).

And yes, one can still exist without the other. One may do works without grace, and one may accept grace without works. Does this save us? We are not the judge,

Christ is the Judge. We may speculate, but then we leave doctrine for theology.

## The Parable of the Pencil

Let's look at this another way. Grace erases sin, purifying us in Christ's mercy, making us whole again. On a pencil this would be the eraser. If we have a paper with all the deeds we have done, it would erase everything, making the paper white again (*see Isaiah 1:18*). Yet we do not stop living at this moment. Yes, the grace continues to erase our sins from the paper as we repent, but it will remain blank, unfilled, without good works.

The pencil has lead, and with it we record our deeds. If we travel the path of works alone all our works will be written down. However, these works will be interwoven with our sins as we have not applied grace. One could balance our good works against our sins, but even one sin will keep us from God's presence (*see Romans 3:23*). The only way to tip the scales is to use the eraser provided in Christ (*see Romans 3:24, Ether 5:27 [12:26]*).

We can see that grace and works are both halves of the pencil. To say that we have grace without works proves our grace empty. To say we have works without grace leaves us in sin. This is why James said: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (*James 2:26*). And what is this faith? It is our access to the grace, the first work unto salvation (*Romans 1:16-17, 4:16; Ephesians 2:8*). This is why the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (*Doctrines of the Saints 3b:4*). Without faith, we cannot accept the grace. Yet, we have the faith by the grace of God, these are one in the same.

## Atonement

We must remember that the atonement says what it literally is: **at+one+ment**. It is how we become one with God. And we do not become one with God casually. How then do we do it? We accept the grace and, as moved by the Spirit, do God's works. What are God's works? Many will say things like baptism, taking communion, and the like. But these are ordinances, not works. The Hebrew teaches us what God's works are.

Let's have a little fun with a form of numerology called gematria. This is the Kabbalistic practice of assigning a numerical value to a name, word, or phrase so we can read it as a number. We then look for matching numbers in others names, words or phrases. One of God's names in Hebrew is יהוה or YHVH: Yah, Hai, Vav, Hai, sometimes pronounced Yahweh, Jehovah, or Yah `Vah.

In Hebrew every letter has a numeric value. YHVH is  $10+5+6+5=26$ . The word for love in Hebrew is אהבה or ahvah. Ahvah is  $1+5+2+5=13$ . And one in Hebrew is אחד Echad. Echad is  $1+8+4=13$ . "Love" + "one" = YHVH because  $13+13=26$ . Thus one+one=one. The at+one+ment is when we are one in love and one in God, YHVH. This is the grace, we become one with God spirit, and it is the works, we become one in action as creation, with The Creator.

Ordinances then have no saving power except in their use to enable us to symbolically become one with God and one with one another. We are baptized in Christ, buried in and rising from the water as both a symbol of new life in Christ and into the denomination the Lord has sent us to. Regardless of our denominations, we are one in Christ as Christians. Again, one (ourselves) + one

(each denomination) = one (our oneness in Christ).

If that was a little confusing, that's okay. The most important thing to remember is that Christ is our "pencil." This means that God loves you now, as you are. He's not waiting for some future, perfected version of you. He's perfected us in grace the moment we come to Him in faith, and we come because He has called us. That's right, Jesus has already called you. He already loves you (*1 John 4:19, 1 Nephi 3:57 [11:17]*). This cannot be stated enough.

God wants us to love others as He loves us. Not some perfect version of them later, but as they are now. This doesn't mean we allow others to take advantage of us. But it does mean we love others where they are.

While it is easy to fall prey to Satan's contention, we must remember that as Christians we are here to perform tikkun olam: the Repair of the world. We cannot do this fighting one another. This does not set the right example to those seeking Christ. Those that preach works alone likely have grace without realizing it. Likewise, many of those that preach grace alone still do the Lord's works. Therefore it is not ours to judge but to love. Love all, and let God sort it out.

## The Wide and Narrow Paths

*"Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

*—Matthew 7:13-14*

Continuing our discussion on grace and works, and in mitzvah and the sacraments, as human beings we tend

to separate then regroup things. Yet God asks us to bring things together (*see John 17*). And so many ask themselves, “How can we rely fully on grace if we do good works?” Or on the other side of this coin, “How can we do good works if we rely only on grace?” And most importantly for salvation, “If the path is that narrow, how can we know if we are truly saved?”

The answers are simple: we receive what we receive, do what we do and know what we believe is true because we are on the path of teshuvah, the return path with God. We know because we know. That is what it means to be Israel (*straight to God*).

When looking at the wide gate we see two sides: on the right we have fundamentalism and on the left utopianism. On the right we have the idea that we can force others to be good, or that we can show people how good we are by our piousness. Yet this never works as people find ways to break the laws of men and do as they wish. And as no one is perfect, the pious braggart easily becomes the hypocrite in the eyes of man. Trying to contain the human will is like grabbing a fist full of water, the tighter one squeezes the more water escapes.

On the left we have the Utopian dreams. The idea that men and women can give up their Egos for the greater good. And while yes, this is the dream, at this point that is clearly where we are, dreaming. We have people upset by simple ideas like public roads, public schools, public post offices, and public healthcare. While these are all common things that help keep economies alive, the gears of human society humming, we are not even Christlike enough as a people to unite in the things that would benefit us in our greed. How then can we unify in altruism?

If we keep missing the mark, what then is the narrow

## *Repairing the World*

path? It is this combination of works and grace. The faith we have that if we choose the right *humbly* then others will follow. And it is not getting upset when they don't. It is accepting people where they are just as God has accepted us where we are (see *Mosiah 2:28-41 [4:16-25]*). In the Church of Jesus Christ in Christian Fellowship we are an inclusive unity movement (*Doctrines of the Saints 137e 19-22*). This means that we accept everyone regardless of our differences. *Doctrines of the Saints 3c Article V* states in part:

*Membership, ordinances, callings, and fellowship are open to all regardless of age, race, ethnic background, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, family or socioeconomic status, educational background, political affiliation, physical or mental ability, or faith history.”*



Does this mean we wouldn't baptize someone that is homophobic? or sexist? or racist? No. We would love them in Christ. They would merely need to understand that we wouldn't cater to their fears.

Likewise, some like to quote Jesus' conversation with

the rich man as proof that we must give up everything we own to escape hell (*Luke 18:18-26, see also Luke 6:24 & 12:21*). But it's not wealth Jesus was asking this man to leave behind, it was what his wealth represented. In verse twenty-nine Jesus lists other things disciples had given up for the sake of the kingdom of God:

- houses
- parents
- siblings
- wives
- children

Are we to literally walk away from our families? our homes? No! We are to leave behind the Egoism that ties us to these things. We do not own our wealth. Our families, our homes, everything we have is a temporary possession. If the Lord asks us to give something up we do not do so for greater gain. We do so because of what we have already gained: a personal relationship with the Spirit of God.

## A Two-edge Sword

The reason this path is narrow is because our choices are a two-edge sword. If we have balance in the middle, we are safe. But fall to the Egoism of the right or the worldly altruism to the left and we cut off our own heads. Does this mean we shouldn't support those seeking a better world, use tax dollars to feed the hungry? No (*Matthew 22:15-22*).

As more and more people vote for social changes that help us care for one another, we are becoming one.

The more we vote for leaders that want to stop wars and help build peace the closer to peace we are coming. This is tikkun olam, together we are repairing the world.

Christianity is not a religion of oppression or of silence, it is a religion of social justice. This is not political, it is spiritual (see *Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 82:3, Jacob 2:14-18 [2:12-14], 2 Nephi 6:62-64 [9:30], Mosiah 2:9-45 [4:6-27], Acts 4:34-35*). Sadly, society has blurred the lines and confused this truth.

Pride and Egoism says we cannot, but God says we can. We must then place our faith in God. And this is the reality of salvation. It's not about where we're going but where we are. It's not about who we're becoming but who we are, and even more important who's we are. If we are God's then His goals are our goals. And we know that goal: to bring the Heavens to the earth.

*“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”*

*–Matthew 6:9-10*

## Questions

- The teaching of tikkun olam (repairing the world) emphasizes both action and compassion. In what ways do you feel called to participate in this work today?
- In your own spiritual journey, how have you experienced the balance between God's grace and your own works?
- How does the idea of at-one-ment, as presented here becoming “one in love and one in God,” shape your understanding of salvation and your relationship with others?

- When you reflect on the narrow path described by Jesus, what practices or attitudes help you stay balanced between the extremes of legalism and idealistic utopianism?
- How might truly accepting people “where they are” transform the way you engage with those who believe or live differently from you?

## Ego vs Altruism

*“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

*–Galatians 5:14*

In case you haven't noticed yet, in Mormon Kabbalah there is a theme of change. We grow in Grace, and as we do we grow from Egoism to becoming Christlike, altruistic. This is because as we grow to love God more, we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves to greater degrees. What is this Egoism we're trying to shake off?

When we first meet God, we generally are not ready. God asks us to give, but we've been trained to take. As babies we cry and someone, normally a parent, gives us what we need. We see God as a parent, and we cry to God expecting Him to do the same.

Yet God isn't a genie that grants our every wish. His desire is to make us like him. He gives us everything we need. But, our Egos tell us his gifts are not enough. He should do better for us. How can an all knowing God not see our wants as needs?

Our kelim (vessels) are dirty, and we cannot see that what God has for us is, in reality, our greatest desire. When we clean our klin we drink living water from a

clean cup and the taste is amazing beyond description! We must learn, one by one, to clean the kli (vessel). By doing so we change our perspective and see the world as it truly is.

## The Twin Deceivers

There are two forms of Egoism we must battle. They are both base, and undesirable. They warp our perspective, tricking us into seeing the world through tainted eyes. These are Ego and Blind Altruism. Keep in mind; ego is a good thing, or it can be if kept in check.

The same is true for altruism. With the proper ego we see ourselves as God does and wish to please him, which pleases the righteous ego and makes us happy. And, altruism allows us to give as God does, on our own level. At this point we know what we should be working towards; now let's look at what we're leaving behind.

### Lilith: Blind Altruism

In the story recoded in the Book of Remembrance, in the Garden of Eden, Adam lived happily with his two wives, Lilith and Eve. When Satan came into the Garden tempting Lilith, she ate of the Tree of Good and Evil. We know the sin here was simply eating from the tree without God's permission. Had she waited she could have partaken at the proper time. Instead, she took for herself (*Book of Remembrance 5*).

After eating from the tree, she understood the need for the fruit. But, unlike Eve, she gave to Adam to hide her own sin, and in attempt to subjugate him. Lilith was the first "serpent" that tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden. Her temptation was ignored due to the righteousness of Adam and Eve. It would take a far more

slippery serpent to deceive them.

Lilith represents the Blind Altruism of the world. Rather than giving to others to please God, and thus fulfilling the desires of a pierced heart (righteous ego), she worked for herself. Blind Altruism has us give to receive from our own efforts. It is altruism blinded by selfishness and greed. It is not good to give simply to gain or to seek pleasure from the service, puffing ourselves up with pride. As Christians, we give of ourselves to please God.

## Cain: Ego

After leaving the Garden, Adam and Eve had two sons; Cain and Able (*1 Moses 7, Genesis 4*). Cain was a farmer, Able a shepherd. Both offered sacrifices to God, but Cain's was rejected. Why? Because of his intent (*Book of Remembrance 18*). He followed Lilith and Satan. He desired Able's wife (*1 Moses 7:24*). He murdered his brother thinking this would grant him worldly possessions. He took what he wanted.

Because Cain rejected God for Egoism, knowing God personally, he became perdition. He is the Master Mahan, self-proclaimed keeper of the "great secret" and glorifies in his wickedness (*1 Moses 7:31*). How many people of the world fall into this trap? They are easy to spot, they claim to be "self-made" men and women. Blinded by Ego they do not see the other people that helped them get where they are. They fail to see God's hand in everything good that has come to them.

Cain is an extreme example of Ego. People don't just go about murdering and plundering, though this does still exist in the world. Cain represents our Ego just taking what we want, no thought to God, our neighbors, or the consequences. This is a child grabbing another child's

toy. It is also a wealthy person paying someone too little that they may keep back more for themselves.

## How to Overcome

*“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.”*

*–Mosiah 1:49 [2:17]*

How do we move past Lilith and Cain? By cleaning the kli inside us. In Kabbalah, there is a focus on moving away from Ego towards godly altruism. The essence of not just Mormon Kabbalah, but every form of Kabbalah is “love thy neighbor as thyself,” the second greatest commandment as taught by Jesus (*Leviticus 19:18, 33-34, Matthew 22:36-40*). Rabbi Akiva taught that loving others as we love ourselves is the great principle of the Torah the purpose of all spiritual teachings (*Mishnah Nedarim 9:4*). I would add that it is the very heart of the Torah and all our spiritual work.

Altruism, to the Kabbalist, isn't just giving, it is serving others. It's not just a handout, it is a help up. And it is more than what we do or what we give, there is a focus on the how and the why as well.

As Kabbalists, we see the world as a reflection of ourselves. When we are full of Grace, the world is good. We know this because God created our world, and he has said that it is good. When our kli is dirty the world is dirty. We can only see what we can take for ourselves, and it is never enough. By journeying on the paths of teshuvah Christ's Grace strips away Ego and replaces it with God's love. While all can be good people, only

through Christ can we truly grab hold of the iron rod and reach the tree whose fruit is desirable above all else (*1 Nephi 2:48-53 [8:9-12]*).

## The Coats

When I was younger, I attended a Latter-day Saint congregation on OSU (Ohio State University) campus. Every autumn people would come to college for the first time, many from out of state. Inevitably there would be those that came without winter coats. Remembering the teaching of Jesus to give people the coats off our backs, I not only opened my closet gifting coats, but because of my financial disposition I bought a number of coats and jackets in various sizes for people to choose from (*Luke 3:11*). I thought rather highly of myself for doing this. And, my pride and Ego were rewarded with a boost to my own self-worth.

One night while I was praying, I asked the Lord how I could serve even more and the voice of the Lord came to me, chastising me for what I was doing. He reminded me that two of my coats were still hidden in my bedroom closet. When I offered coats to those in need, I didn't offer either of my favorite coats. The Lord asked me where His sacrifice was. He reminded me to serve Him, rather than myself when offering the coats.

Going forward, I made sure my favorite two were also in the closet. Being a collector of coats, it was very painful for me, knowing that I might lose one of my two favorite jackets. The Lord blessed me in two ways. First, I learned a very valuable lesson. When we serve, when we give, it should hurt a little. If it doesn't hurt a little, we are feeding Ego. When it hurts a little it is a sacrifice to the Lord. Second, no one took either of the two I favored. God didn't need me to give them up, merely to be willing

to do so.

Small acts of service can do great things. Small nudges can help those in need economically, physically, socially, or spiritually. Saying “hello” to a stranger or calling a friend or family member can be just as, or even more, effective than drolling out money for good causes. Humans are social creatures. Our needs are greater than mere food and shelter, though these are clearly needs as well. The dignity and respect of those in need should always be kept.

This is why the how is so important. When we give to feed Ego, we are building ourselves up at the risk of tearing others down. This is not true altruism. True service comes from within and is a sacrifice to the Lord. Joseph Smith Jr. taught us that “love is one of the chief characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons [*and daughters*] of God” (*CJCLdS History of the Church, 4:227*).

True service comes from a broken heart and a contrite spirit. We should pray for the Lord to guide us to those in need that we can help, and to guide others to those in need that we cannot help. If you’re not there yet, that’s okay, keep giving. The Lord will get us there. His Grace will perfect our offerings as we grow into true altruism. That’s His gift to us, he takes our weakness and perfects them into strengths. True altruism pours out from our kli, it is Tikkun Olam and with God at our side, we can repair the world, one soul at a time.

## Questions

- How does the idea that that salvation is not about where we are going but where we are on the path and whose we are shift your perspective or affect the way you live out your faith each day?

- Knowing that ego can have both positive and negative expressions, how do you personally distinguish between a righteous ego and a self-centered one?
- In what ways can “blind altruism” appear generous on the surface, yet still be rooted in selfish motives?
- How do you think practicing godly altruism changes not only the lives of those we help, but also our own spiritual growth?
- How might you recognize when your giving is feeding your ego rather than serving God, and what practical steps could help realign your intentions?



## Chapter 10

### *Scripture Study in Kabbalah*

*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”*

*–2 Timothy 2:15*

PaRDeS is an ancient Jewish methodology for studying sacred texts that invites readers to explore scripture on multiple levels. This methodology, used for centuries by Jewish Rabbis, is not merely for the Torah. This introduction to the methodology will provide students with a structured approach for exploring the layers of scripture. By engaging with the literal, hinted, interpretive, and mystical dimensions, students can deepen their understanding of the scriptures. By deepening our understanding of the scriptures, we can deepen our personal relationship with God. Throughout this class we will use this method to discuss the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Plates of Brass, drawing closer to God’s light and truth.

The PaRDeS can be compared to climbing Jacob’s ladder, ever expanding our understanding as we climb. PaRDeS takes us to the four corners of the earth, searching God’s Word for His truth. And at the very top, we take all of this inward, revealing God’s will for our true selves.

## Introduction to the Orchard

The term PaRDeS itself is an acronym for four Hebrew words: P'shat (פְּשָׁט) Literal, Remez (רְמֵז) Hint, D'rash (דְּרָשׁ) Homiletical or Interpretive, and Sod (סוּד) Mystical. The word is Hebrew for “orchard.” Each level represents a deeper layer of understanding, moving from the surface meaning of the text to its symbolic and spiritual depths, like walking through an orchard, eating the fruit of the trees. This method originated within Rabbinic Judaism as a way to engage with the Torah, providing a structured yet dynamic approach to interpretation. It reflects the belief that scripture is divinely inspired and layered with wisdom that transcends a single reading.

Over time, PaRDeS has been embraced by scholars, mystics, and believers as a way to uncover profound truths while remaining grounded in the text itself. The popularity of PaRDeS lies in its versatility and depth, making it an effective tool for both intellectual study and spiritual growth. By starting with the plain meaning (P'shat), readers establish a foundational understanding before delving into subtler hints (Remez), interpretive lessons (D'rash), and mystical insights (Sod). This layered approach ensures that scripture is not reduced to mere literalism or abstract allegory but is appreciated in its fullness.

PaRDeS works because it mirrors the complexity of human experience and divine truth. It encourages exploration, reflection, and personal application of the scriptures. For those studying texts like the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Plates of Brass, PaRDeS offers a way to connect deeply with scripture, uncover hidden connections, and align with God's will on every level of understanding.

Let's explore how this method deepens understanding, fosters reflection, and encourages actionable insights.

## Questions

- How does this image comparing PaRDeS to a walk in an orchard help you visualize moving from the surface of scripture toward deeper truths?
- The PaRDeS model encourages balance between intellectual study and spiritual growth. How have you seen these two approaches work together in your own learning?
- The PaRDeS method begins with P'shat, the plain or literal meaning of a passage. How might starting with this level provide a stronger foundation for deeper spiritual insights?
- Why do you think it is important to begin with P'shat rather than jumping straight to mystical or symbolic interpretations?
- How can a careful study of the literal meaning of scripture (P'shat) still invite personal revelation and spiritual application?

## P'shat: The Literal Layer

The P'shat layer represents the most straightforward and literal interpretation of scripture. It focuses on the plain meaning of the text, considering historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts to uncover what the author intended to communicate to the original audience. This foundational layer is essential for understanding the baseline message of scripture, providing clarity and grounding for deeper exploration.

In the P'shat stage, readers seek to answer the question, "What is the text saying directly?" By engaging with this level, students of scripture establish a firm grasp of the narrative, commandments, or teachings as they are plainly written.

## Scripture Passage for Discussion

*"And my father dwelt in a tent."*

*-1 Nephi 1:46 [2:15]*

By exploring this simple verse through the PaRDeS, its depth and richness are revealed, offering insights into faith, humility, obedience, and the sanctity of creating a space for divine communion. Here, "And my father dwelt in a tent" simply describes the living situation of Lehi, Nephi's father, during their journey in the wilderness.

The passage indicates that Lehi and his family had left Jerusalem and were now living in a nomadic setting. The tent is a practical shelter, emphasizing their temporary dwelling as they traveled. It reflects the sacrifices and hardships associated with obeying God's command to leave their home.

## Questions

- The PaRDeS method begins with P'shat, the plain or literal meaning of a passage. How might starting with this level provide a stronger foundation for deeper spiritual insights?
- Why do you think it is important to begin with P'shat rather than jumping straight to mystical or symbolic interpretations?
- How can a careful study of the literal meaning of scripture (P'shat) still invite personal revelation

and spiritual application?

## Remez: The Hint Layer

The Remez layer explores the subtler nuances of scripture and symbolic hints embedded within the sacred text. This level invites readers to consider what lies beneath the surface, uncovering deeper meanings that the words may suggest through patterns, repetition, or imagery.

Remez often connects the text to broader scriptural themes or principles, revealing insights that may not be immediately obvious. It encourages readers to think critically and creatively, asking, “What is this text hinting at or pointing toward?” This layer enriches the study of scripture by uncovering connections and implications that deepen understanding.

### Scripture Passage for Discussion

*“And my father dwelt in a tent.”*

*–1 Nephi 1:46 [2:15]*

In the Remez layer, we look for symbolic hints. The tent may hint at humility and dependence on God during a transitional phase. Just as Abraham dwelt in tents during his journey of faith, Lehi’s tent symbolizes reliance on God’s provision and protection.

The tent could also hint at the idea of a temporary dwelling, representing the transient nature of mortality and the greater spiritual home to come. This verse may also hint at the patriarchal leadership of Lehi, with the tent serving as the center of the family’s spiritual and communal life.

## Questions

- How do you personally tell the difference between what a text says plainly (P'shat) and what it may be hinting at (Remez)s?
- What role do patterns, repetition, and imagery play in helping you move from the P'shat level of understanding toward the Remez layer?
- In your own scripture study, how might you build a habit of starting with P'shat while staying open to the subtle hints that lead into Remez?

## D'rash: The Interpretive Layer

The D'rash layer focuses on interpretive and moral lessons derived from scripture. At this stage, readers seek to apply the teachings of the text to personal and communal life, exploring how scripture can guide behavior, inspire faith, and shape relationships.

D'rash bridges the gap between the ancient world and contemporary experience, inviting reflection on how timeless principles can address modern challenges. This layer asks, "What lesson does this text teach, and how can it transform us?" By emphasizing application, D'rash makes scripture a living document, relevant to every generation.

## Scripture Passage for Discussion

*"And my father dwelt in a tent."*

*-1 Nephi 1:46 [2:15]*

At the D'rash layer, we explore the moral or spiritual lessons. Lehi dwelling in a tent teaches the principle of prioritizing obedience to God over worldly comfort.

It shows the faith required to leave behind material possessions for the sake of spiritual growth and divine guidance.

This passage challenges readers to reflect on their willingness to sacrifice and follow God's commands, even when it involves discomfort or uncertainty. The tent can also represent a familial sanctuary where faith is nurtured and taught, encouraging families to create spiritual spaces in their homes.

## Questions

- How does reflecting on this passage at the D'rash level deepen your connection to both the ancient narrative and your present-day spiritual journey?
- Can you think of a time when a scripture passage directly shaped your behavior, relationships, or faith?
- What principles from ancient scripture do you think still speak powerfully to modern challenges?

## Sod: The Hidden Layer

The Sod layer delves into the hidden, spiritual, and mystical dimensions of scripture. This level invites readers to explore divine truths that transcend language and human comprehension, often revealed through symbolism, numerology, or metaphysical concepts. It encourages us to seek divine revelation, connecting us, through the text, to the infinite nature of God (the light of Christ/Ha'Or En Sof).

Here we uncover the spiritual essence of the words and their implications for the soul's journey. This layer

asks, “What spiritual mysteries or divine realities does this text reveal?” By engaging with Sod, readers can experience scripture as a gateway to profound spiritual insight and connection with the divine.

## Scripture Passage for Discussion

*“And my father dwelt in a tent.”*

*–1 Nephi 1:46 [2:15]*

The Sod layer delves into the hidden and mystical meanings of the text. Here, the tent can be seen as symbolic of a tallit (prayer shawl) or a personal temple space. In Jewish tradition, the tallit is a sacred covering that creates a private, holy space for communion with God. Similarly, the tent can be understood as Lehi’s personal sanctuary, a place where he connects with God, receives revelation, and leads his family in righteousness.

Mystically, this tent may symbolize the Divine Presence (Shekinah) dwelling among the family, just as the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a place where God’s Presence was felt. It serves as a reminder that wherever we are, we can create a sacred space to encounter God, whether in a physical temple, a home, or even under the covering of a tallit.

## Questions

- How can the Sod layer help you see scripture as more than words on a page?
- What role does symbolism and metaphysical ideas play in revealing spiritual truths?
- How might exploring scripture’s hidden or mystical dimensions deepen your relationship with God?

- In what ways has divine revelation or personal inspiration shaped your understanding of a sacred text?

## Kabbalah as Reception

*“O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.”*

*–Jacob 2:50 [3:2]*

In Mormon Kabbalah, we use the PaRDeS method for the internal and eternal progression. Some might see Sod as the true Kabbalistic approach, and they wouldn't be fully incorrect as it is a rung in the ladder. However, to have a truly Kabbalistic view of the scriptures we combine all of these and receive them. This is to say we take their message inward. The scriptures were not written to teach us history, but to bring us closer to God. In Kabbalah, when we read the scriptures, we are everyone in every story. We are Moses, and we are the Pharaoh. We are Peter the Saint and Simon the Magician. We are Moroni and we are the Lamanites trying to destroy him.

Rather than read the scriptures merely as an analogy, we seek the various forms of philosophical and religious thought based on a mystical insight. We use the wisdom God grants us into the divine nature to see the symbols of dynamic processes in the Order of God.

Looking at the Creation through the eyes of Kabbalah to the uninitiated, it appears that everything was created through the letters of the Hebrew language and Divine Names. However, once initiated we realize that the scriptures are written in a form of linguistic mysticism, the language of the branches. In them we

find the Male and Female Parent Gods, and worship the Son, Jesus Christ. Through teshuvah we enjoy Christ's Grace and grow in it by way of the Holy Spirit, being the temples of God. Our physical temples, altars, tools, and rituals are all symbolic of our internal journey.

*“Study my Word which hath gone forth among the children of men; and also study my Word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which you are translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation; and then shall all things be added thereunto.”*

*–Avahr 19:38-40*

## The Orchard of Kabbalah

In Kabbalah, it is said the Torah has seventy faces, which is to say there are seventy ways of looking at each of the four PaRDeS. How can this be? Why didn't God merely tell the authors of the scriptures exactly what He wanted to say?

God meets us where we are. How can God do this if there is only one meaning for the Word and we are not yet ready to hear it? Simple, He finds a better way. And He did! This is why the scriptures are so vast in their wisdom, anyone truly seeking will find. All scripture is “alive” in that it speaks to us where we are. This is why one person can read a portion of the text and gain wisdom and insight rejected by others. We all shape the scriptures by our various perspectives, and if we are truly wise our perspectives are then further shaped by the scriptures.

Why seventy? If we were to take every word in the scriptures, then every sentence, then every verse, then every paragraph, then every chapter, then every book, then every collection of books, then every grouping of

words, then every combination of grouping every passage together to come to new conclusions (D'rash), and any other way we can think of to study scripture, multiply these by four, then again by seventy... I'm not sure if we've reached infinity, but that's a lot of perspectives! And, that's the point. The scriptures can speak to all of us, meeting us where we are, all at the same time.

The similarity one should find in all of these answers is: to teach us there is a deeper truth to life, and as we find that truth brings us closer to God.

## The Sages

*“The Sages taught: Four entered the orchard and they are as follows: Ben Azzai; and ben Zoma; Aher, and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva said to them: When you reach pure marble stones, do not say: Water, water, because it is stated: ‘He who speaks falsehood shall not be established before My eyes’ (Psalms 101:7).*

*“Ben Azzai glimpsed and died. And with regard to him the verse states: ‘Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His pious ones’ (Psalms 116:15). Ben Zoma glimpsed at the Divine Presence and was harmed [went crazy]. And with regard to him the verse states: ‘Have you found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for you, lest you become full from it and vomit it’ (Proverbs 25:16). Aher chopped down the shoots. Rabbi Akiva came out safely.”*

*–Chagigah 14b (Talmud)*

What does this tell us? The orchard is PaRDeS, the study of the Torah. The sages enter seeking paradise. They see God, the Divine Presence. The first dies. The second went crazy. The third became a heretic, the fourth left unharmed.

Does this mean we will meet the fate of one of these men if we study and learn of God? If we meet God? If we receive the Second Comforter? No. Remember, in Kabbalah, we are everyone. Everyone is us. The fate of these men is the fate of us, or in other words, our desires.

When we meet God, we will die. This is to say, we will no longer be the person we once were. Our wicked desires will have been purged. Will we go mad? Our perception will change. People won't understand because they have not experienced it. Look at what happened to Galileo when he said the sun was the center of our solar system, not the earth.

Likewise, because of this change in our perception, the traditions of men will see us as heretics. We will abandon the authority of men for the authority of God. But we, our true selves, will walk away unharmed. This is to say, we will become our true selves. And that, as they say, is the point of all of this.



*“The Kingdom of God will not come by looking for it: don’t tell people to look here, or to look there; indeed, the Kingdom of God is inside you.”*

*–Luke 17:20-21*

## Questions

- How might combining all four levels of the PaRDeS open deeper layers of meaning in a single verse or passage?
- The orchard parable presents transformation, disorientation, heresy, and safe return. How do these outcomes reflect different stages of spiritual growth?
- How do you discern between insights from the Spirit and interpretations shaped primarily by personal bias or tradition?
- How does recognizing that “the Kingdom of God is inside you” influence the way you approach study, prayer, and daily living?

## Writing Our Own Sacred Story

*“I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore, I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days—nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days, yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore, I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with*

*mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.”*

*-1 Nephi 1:1-2 [1:1-3]*

This introductory segment to the small plates found in the Book of Mormon was written years after Nephi and his family had left Jerusalem. Record keeping was so important to Nephi that he kept his records on metal plates. He was able to use the large plates to create the small ones when the Lord commanded him to do so (*see 1 Nephi 2:96 [9:3]*). The scriptures were recorded by God's instruction not to tell us a story, but to teach us how we can have a relationship with him. God isn't an impersonal being but loving parents that care for us.

In Mormon Kabbalah, scripture study is about putting ourselves into the scriptures. Are we not Nephi? Were we not born of goodly parents that sent us to school where we learned to read and write? Are we not at times Laman and Lemuel defying God? We may or may not have been born of goodly parents, but we were born in a time when, in first world countries at least, education is the norm. Access to information today is easy.

Because of the abundance of information, we've reached a point of information overload. People tend to ignore things like climate change, perpetual wars, and focus on distractions. One of the reasons to keep a journal is to help us see past these distractions so we can focus on our mission of tikkun olam, teaching others of Christ in the spirit of ubuntu. Writing in our journals gives us focus and clarity.

The most basic journal type records one's thoughts and ideas. This can be a simple notebook to jot down ideas. We'll also want to keep journals of our miracle workings. As we grow the seed we've planted in our hearts Satan will come and tempt us. Keeping a record

helps us remember the blessings the Lord has sent. It also allows us to write down how we felt when performing the Lord's work. What worked and why, what didn't and why not.

One woman I know had a very powerful spiritual experience, so amazing that she later doubted that it even happened. Going back to re-read the event not only helped her remember the experience, but to relive it again and move forward with greater faith able to perform even greater works for the Lord.

## Where to Start

If carrying a journal around everywhere with you seems a bit much, a good place to start is to keep a dream journal. This can be harder to do as some people forget their dreams when they wake or don't even know they dream in the first place.

To keep a dream journal, one must write diligently every morning the moment they wake up. Wait and the dream gets lost. However, recording dreams is a very powerful "magic." It not only allows one to remember their dreams, it also helps them tap into their subconscious minds. And remember, the subconscious is where God talks to us.

Once you're feeling good about this, then start carrying a journal or notebook everywhere you go. Start jotting down your thoughts. When you get really good at this, begin another one to write in at the end of the day. Use this journal to record daily events. Your notebook will help with this as you get started.

Miracles happen every day. Look for the ones happening in your life and write them down. If there are other journals you'd like to keep, make special notebooks

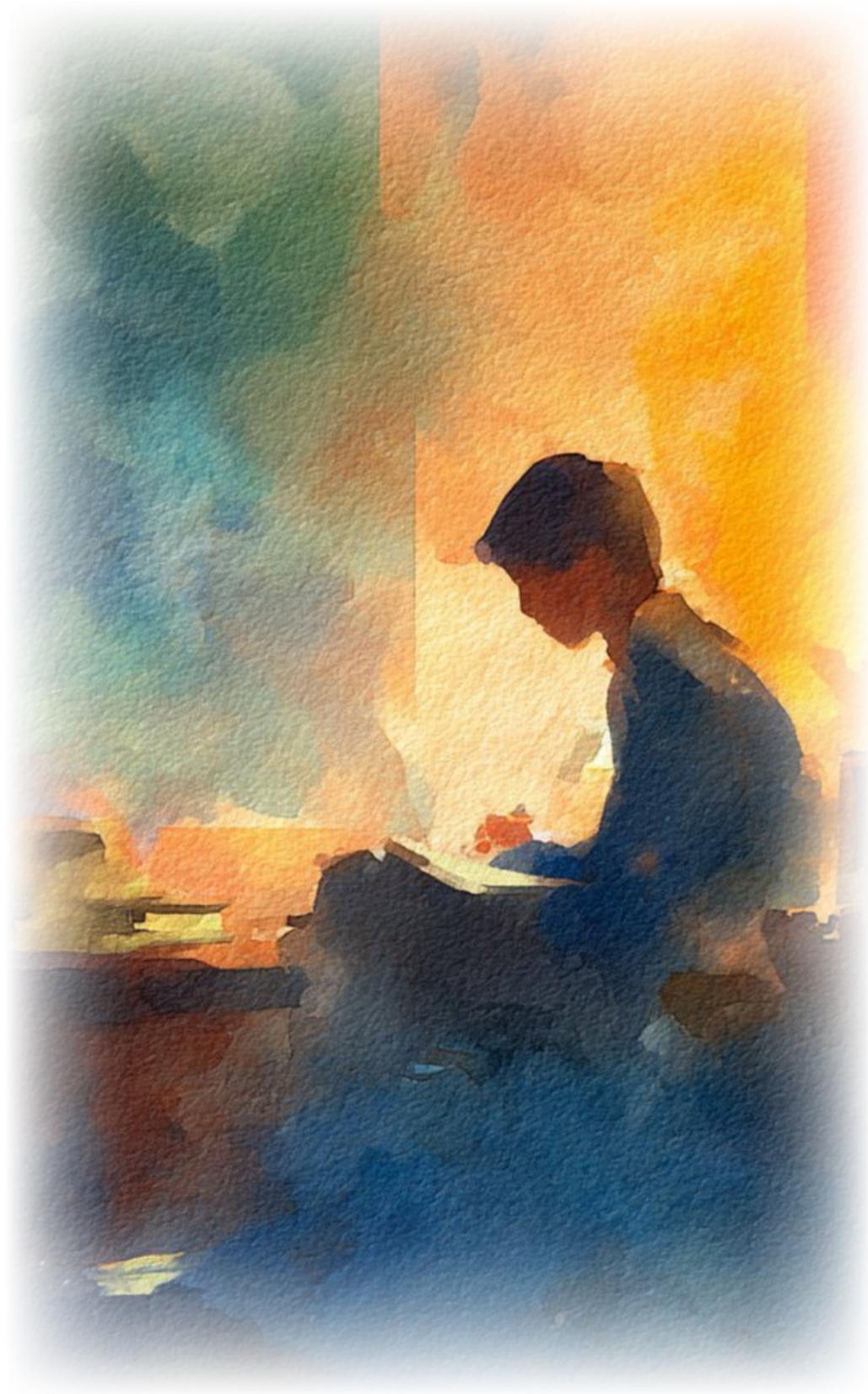
for them. Write prayers, songs, poetry, record times, occasions, quotes. The sky is the limit!

Be sure to read your journals regularly. Read them as you do the scriptures; everyone in your story is you, or a part of you. Doing this helps us see others as ourselves, and that's part of the second great commandment (*Mark 12:31*).

Remember the original three-fold mission of the Fellowship of Christ: Grow closer to Christ, bring others to Christ, and fellowship together as Christians. Mormon Kabbalah is centered around Christ and his teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are not an organized religion, we are the body of Christ. As we embody Christ and the spirit of ubuntu we complete the mission. Keeping records will help us grow closer to the Holy Spirit so that we may be moved by that spirit to do the works of the Lord.

## Questions

- How does putting yourself into the role of the different people in the scriptures deepen your understanding of their experiences and your own ?
- How might writing your own “sacred story” change the way you see yourself in relation to scripture and God’s plan?
- In what ways can recording and reflecting on dreams open you to deeper spiritual guidance?





# Appendix

## *Looking the Part*

*“Let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands; and let all things be done in cleanliness before me.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 4a:51*

*(Doctrine and Covenants 42:12a1 RLDS, 42:40b CJCLdS)*

As a Mormon Kabbalist, I get asked a lot of questions about the way I dress and whether clothing or jewelry I wear carries spiritual meaning. I have chosen to include this chapter because many people feel inspired to express their devotion through what they wear, finding that sacred garments or symbolic jewelry help them stay mindful of God’s presence throughout the day.

At the same time, it is important to remember that divine love is not conditional. God’s watchful care and blessings are with you no matter what clothing you choose. If wearing certain items helps you draw nearer to the Lord, you may find guidance here. If not, you are just as beloved and free to walk your path without them.

For this reason, I have made this final chapter an appendix. This final part of the book is to help readers looking for outward expressions of their inward commitments and changes. You are welcome to skip it, if you feel it does not apply to you.

## The Talit and the Tzitzit and the Book of Mormon

*“And my father dwelt in a tent.”*

*–1 Nephi 1:46 [2:15]*

Lehi’s willingness to forsake his wealth and worldly possessions to follow God’s will can be seen by his humility to live in a tent. However, there may be a potential deeper meaning in this passage connected to the concept of the tallit (Jewish prayer shawl) and the tzitzits (pronounced ZEET-zeet, fringes or tassels worn on the corners of garments). “Tallit” translates to “little tent.” This suggests a possible link between Lehi’s temporary dwelling and symbolic representations of covenant and identity.

### What are Tzitzits?

Tzitzits are fringes or tassels that observant Jews and some Messianic believers wear on the corners of their garments as a reminder of God’s Torah and our covenant with Him. The instruction to wear tzitzits is found in Numbers 15:37-41 in the Old Testament:

*“Speak to the people of Israèl, instructing them to make, through all their generations, tzitziyot on the corners of their garments, and to put with the tzitzit on each corner a blue thread. It is to be a tzitzit for you to look at and thereby remember all of Adonai’s mitzvot and obey them, so that you won’t go around wherever your own heart and eyes lead you to prostitute yourselves; but it will help you remember and obey all my mitzvot and be holy for your God.”*

*–Numbers 15:38-40*

It is also recorded in the plates of brass in 4 Moses, which Nephi would have had access to.

*“Thou shalt make tzitzits in the four corners of thy garments throughout all your generations, and thou shalt put upon the tzitzit a blue thread. And it shall be unto thee for a protection, that thou shalt look upon it and remember all thy mitzvot unto me and do them, and thou shalt remember that Israel is a holy people, a nation of kings and queens, and of Priests and Priestesses.”*

–4 Moses 7:23-25

Both accounts specify making tzitzits on the four corners of garments with a blue cord. However, the reason for wearing them differs slightly. In Numbers, the purpose is to remember the commandments and avoid straying after one’s own desires.

In the Plates of Brass, the purpose is to remember the Torah and one’s identity as a holy people, a nation of kings and queens, and priests and priestesses, offering both a preventative and an identity-affirming reason.

## Healing in His Wings

The Book of Mormon, both 1 Nephi 11:22 [25:13] and 3 Nephi 11:23 [25:2] (quoting Malachi 4:2), describes Jesus Christ as having “healing in his wings.” This imagery is connected to the biblical account of the woman who touched the hem (corner) of Jesus’ garment and was healed (*Matthew 9:20-22*).

“Wings” in this context can be another translation of tzitzit. It may refer to the corners of Jesus’ tallit. This implies that the healing power of the covenant is associated with these symbolic fringes. This idea speaks

to our subconscious, wearing them represent that covenant and our divine connection with God.

## The Red Mark of the Amalekites and Tzitzits

The Book of Mormon describes the Amalekites marking themselves with red on their foreheads as a sign of rebellion against God and alignment with the Lamanites, who were under a curse marked by the Lord.

*“The Amlicites were distinguished from the Nephites, for they had marked themselves with red in their foreheads after the manner of the Lamanites, nevertheless, they had not shorn their heads like unto the Lamanites.”*

*–Alma 1:102 [3:4]*

*“Now we will return again to the Amlicites, for they also had a mark set upon them; yea, they set the mark upon themselves, yea, even a mark of red upon their foreheads.”*

*–Alma 1:111 [3:13]*

*“Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed; and I will set a mark upon them, that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever, except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me, that I may have mercy upon them.”*

*–Alma 1:113 [3:14b]*

*“Now the Amlicites knew not that they were fulfilling the words of God when they began to mark themselves in their foreheads; nevertheless, they had come out in open rebellion against God; therefore, it was expedient that the*

*curse should fall upon them.”*

*–Alma 1:117-118 [3:18]*

Tzitzits can also be translated as “locks” as in locks of hair. In a culture familiar with wearing tzitzits, the deliberate act of placing a red mark on the forehead could be interpreted as a rejection of their covenantal identity symbolized by the tzitzit.

## Symbolic Meanings

Wearing tzitzits serves multiple purposes:

- **Remembrance of Covenant:** The blue thread symbolizes the covenant path.
- **Identity as Kings and Queens, and Priests and Priestesses:** The tzitzits are a reminder of our divine potential and calling.
- **Symbol of Service:** The tzitzits signifies a commitment to serve others, mirroring Jesus Christ’s example.
- **Visible Sign:** The tzitzits can serve as a way for others to recognize them as a follower of Christ who is willing to help.
- **Worthiness:** It’s a sign that they are worthy to be called God’s people through the grace of Jesus Christ.

The tzitzits are a symbol of belonging to Christ and a reminder to serve others and embody Christ-like qualities.

## Should all Believers Wear Tzitzits?

This commandment to wear the tzitzit is still observed

today by many orthodox Jewish men and women. Some tuck them under their shirts, reminiscent of the Latter-day Saints' garments with the temple symbols sewn onto their underwear. Others might tie them to their belts or attach them in some other way to their outer clothing. Some have them attached to prayer shawls called a tallit, just as the Lord has asked the High Priests and High Priestesses to do within the Fellowship (*Doctrines of the Saints 114:30-31*).

That said, wearing tzitzits is not seen as mandatory for all believers today. Our covenant with God is personal, we should seek the experience of receiving revelation to wear them as a sign of our covenant relationship with God. It is a reminder of their royal priesthood, and a symbol of service. Every individual is encouraged to seek their own personal revelation from the Lord to determine if they are invited to wear tzitzits.

What then does the tzitzit have to do with us? I've had a few people talk to me about this. It should be understood that Mormon Kabbalah is does not belong to anyone or any group, it is nondenominational. No one is going to force anyone to do or wear anything. If one doesn't feel called by the Lord to wear them, this is perfectly acceptable. No one is going to judge you. The Fellowship is about love and acceptance. We're all brothers and sisters in Christ. One should prayerfully determine if and how they will fulfill this commandment. And, if one needs counsel, our doors are always open.

That said, anyone moved by the Spirit to do so should wear the tzitzit. Some may wear them on or under their clothing. Others may have them sewn to their garments. Anyone may wear them on or with a tallit. Do some research, pray, work as moved by the Spirit. It should be noted that all that hold any office of the priesthood

may wear the tallit, but only the High Priests and High Priestesses should forgo the other head coverings for the prayer shawl (*Doctrines of the Saints 114*).

For me the tzitzit has very deep meaning, in that Jesus is King of kings and queens. We then are His kings and queens and that makes us servants of the people, not rulers over others. Likewise, we are his Priests and Priestesses, He being the great High Priest. This makes us caretakers of the spiritual needs of others. I see the ancient idea of wearing the tzitzit as a sight that Israel was and is a nation of servants, caring for one another as equals.

## The Tallit and the Gospel

*“And the High Priests and High Priestesses, these shall wear a tallit, which is to say a prayer shawl with tzitzit, or fringe.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 114:30*

A טלית tallit is a fringed prayer shawl traditionally worn by religious Israelites. The purpose of the tallit is the special twined and knotted fringes, the tzitzit, attached to the four corners of the garment. The cloth of the tallit, called the *begeh* (Hebrew for garment), is usually made from natural fibers, such as wool, cotton, or silk.

According to the commandment in the Torah, a thread called a “tekhelet” (Hebrew תְּכֵלֶת meaning blue, blue violet, or turquoise) is to be included in the tzitzit. Because of this, it is recommended that at least one of the threads be blue, indigo, purple, violet, or turquoise. A tallit may also have an אַטָּרָה atara (Hebrew for “crown”) at the top.

## Looking the Part

The Bible does not command us to wear any special type of prayer shawl. As discussed above, it instructs the Children of Israel to attach “fringes” (צִיצִית tzitzit) to the corners of their garments to remind them of their covenants with God (*Numbers 15:38-39, Deuteronomy 22:12*).

This is very reminiscent of the reason Latter-day Saints always wear their temple garments under their clothing: as a symbol of their ministry and to remind them of their temple covenants.

These passages from the Torah do not specify tying particular types or numbers of knots in the fringes. The exact customs of tying of the tzitzit and wearing the tallit are of post-biblical, rabbinic traditions. In Mormon Kabbalah one may use a traditional tallit or make one as moved by the Spirit.

## How to Wear the Tallit

*“Thou shall clothe yourselves, placing the tzitzit in the four corners of thy garments throughout all your generations.”*

–5 Moses 18:20



Tallits may be any size, as long as the tzitzit are worn on the corners. They should surround us, creating a portable safe space or temple for us to be in at any time or place. Because of this, one should ensure their tallit is sized accordingly.

To put the tallit on, the following steps are traditionally taken:

- Always check the strings, the tzitzit fringe, ensuring they are undamaged and untangled, and that the knots are firmly in place.
- If the tallit has an embroidered atara, be sure this faces upwards and outwards, holding the tallit over the head for the blessing.
- Say the traditional blessing (see below)
- Wrap the tallit around the body by putting all four tzitzit over the left shoulder for a few moments to wrap one's in tzitzit.
- The tallit is then draped over the shoulders so that there is a tzitzit in the front left, front right, back left and back right; the tallit may now be worn on the head like a hood, or around the neck, as preferred, but not over the face (*Doctrines of the Saints 114:31*).

It should be kept in mind that all of this is merely tradition. If one prefers to skip any of these steps, this is acceptable. What is important is that if one wears the tzitzit, it is worn in the proper place, the four corners.

The tallit, it should be remembered, is not to be worn out of pride, but in grace and humility. It is not worn to place one above another, but as an equalizer; a reminder that we are all God's creation. We are a royal

generation, a royal priesthood. We have been ordained and set apart as kings and queens, priests and priestesses. The tallit is our reminder not to act like it, that we stand in personal temples, on holy ground. Because we love God and serve, we are to love and serve our fellow man and woman.

## Tallit Prayer

While there is no commandment to pray before putting on the tallit, it is customary to do so in Judaism. The following is a recommended prayer based on this tradition:

Phonetic Hebrew:

*Baruch atah YHVH Eloheinu melech ha olam, asher kidishanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hitatef b'tzitzit.*

English:

*"Blessed are you O LORD, our Elohim, Sovereign of all who has sanctified us with your Torah and commanded us to wrap ourselves in its fringes."*

Our growth in grace is a journey. The pilgrimage to Zion we are journeying together begins in our hearts. It will spread from us to the whole earth. A variety of task have been given to us because the Lord has faith in us, he knows we are up to the challenge.

The tzitzit is a reminder not only of our covenants with God, but His faith in us as well. He has given us resources and tools to help along the way. Remember, we are not alone. God has sent angels, the Holy Spirit, and others to assist us. There will be a way because God is making the way.

## Ayin Hara and the Red Bracelet

*“I pray the God of my salvation that He view me with His all-searching eye.”*

*–2 Nephi 6:87 [9:43c]*

One of the most well-known traditions in Kabbalah may be the red or scarlet bracelet worn by practitioners. It is חוט השני, Hebrew for “scarlet string.” It is worn as a talisman to ward off misfortune said to be brought about by עין הרע (ayin hara), the “evil eye.” In Mormon Kabbalah, some of us also carry out this tradition.

*“Therefore, one who has ayin hara, the evil eye—that is, one who is naturally envious and jealous in disposition—is biased by the spirit of evil; and the sphere wherein they move becomes a power of evil to others and should be avoided, in order to escape injury from them.”*

*–Zohar ‘Why the Animal was Destroyed by the Deluge’ vs 20-21*

While the scarlet bracelet is not mentioned in the scriptures, it is a tradition in a number of cultures. Hindus, for example, have the Kautuka, which uses one yellow and one red string together for ritual protection. In Christianity, red is a symbol of Pentecost. Wearing a red bracelet on the left wrist may be worn by fellow Christians as a symbol of fire (Holy Spirit) and blood (Christ), or the martyred Saints. Today it is common to see elderly women selling red string bracelets in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem, to Christians and Jews alike.

In the United States, the red string began to grow favor in the 1990’s. Celebrities began wearing them as they joined Philip Berg’s “Kabbalah Center.” This is an

example of a religious tradition being used by the masses of popular culture. We've seen similar things happen with the Christian Cross, and a number of different traditional symbols.

Some of the traditional benefits the scarlet bracelet is said to bless us with:

- Positive energies, gaining a closer connection with the Holy Spirit
- Success, prosperity, and God's blessings
- Overall happiness and harmony
- Protection from the "evil eye" and priestcraft from without
- Protection from dark forces and negative energies within
- Protection from negative thoughts and misfortunes both from others and from self

## In the Scriptures

While the scarlet bracelet is not mentioned in the scriptures, as stated previously, there are a few ties to it, according to tradition and observation. The most common scripture referenced in relation to the scarlet string is likely Genesis:

*"And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, 'This came out first.' And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, 'How hast thou broken forth? this breach*

*be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.’ And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.”*

*–Genesis 38:37-30*

In Kabbalistic teachings, we learn of mankind’s duality: good and evil, light and darkness; also male and female, spiritual and worldly, etc. The scarlet bracelet reminds us of our spiritual path, as the left is the spiritual or receiving side, the right the physical, the giving. God’s left hand is the Holy Spirit, justice. His right hand is Jesus Christ, mercy. The twins in this story show both duality, but also that without the string the midwife would not have known which child actually came out first. It is good to have physical reminders of spiritual things.

One of the most well-known passages is Isaiah 1:18. This chapter speaks of the Lord’s disappointment with Israel.

*“I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats... Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”*

*–Isaiah 1:11, 16-17*

In the Book of Joshua, Rahab saves the Israelite spies. She uses a scarlet thread in her window as a sign that she may be spared when the Israelites attack the city of Jericho (*Joshua 2:12-22*). This is very reminiscent of the scarlet bracelet being a protection.

*“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind*

*Looking the Part*

*this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee."*

*–Joshua 2:18*

In Proverbs 31, starting in verse ten, king Lemuel asks how to find a virtuous woman. One item on his list: she clothes her household in scarlet for protection.

*"She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet."*

*–Proverbs 31:21*

While we are perfected in Christ, we are still to grow in Grace. We cannot cycle through rituals believing there is no sin in us. Christ shields us from judgement. As we grow in His Grace, we do greater works in His name. The scarlet bracelet reminds us to do His works. In Hebrews 9, Paul speaks of Christ being the mediator of the New Covenant.

*"When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying: 'This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.' ...And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission... Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*

*–Hebrews 9:19-20, 22, 28*

Within Mormon Kabbalah, the scarlet represents the blood of Christ, shed for us that we may come to Him with a new sacrifice: a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This is what the Lord was truly seeking when speaking to Israel in Isaiah 1. The scarlet bracelet reminds us that we are a part of the New Covenant.



Speaking of the New Covenant, the all-seeing eye is also mentioned in the Book of Mormon. It is not only in 2 Nephi 6:87 [9:43c], but also in the Book of Mosiah:

*“And they shall quake, and tremble, and shrink beneath the glance of His all-searching eye.”*

*–Mosiah 11:199 [27:31d]*

Being a part of the New and Everlasting Covenant, we wear the scarlet bracelet for the same reasons as other Kabbalists. Yet, to us we add Christ to its meaning.

## Wearing the Red String

The first time I prayerfully made my scarlet bracelet, I felt prompted to use the traditional wool, as the scarlet represents the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. I also felt inspired to use two red strings for the duality; the old and new worlds, the Levitical and High Priesthoods, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, etc.

To unite these twin strings, I used three wooden balls. These represent the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the trinity or Godhead. I feel that other items may be used, an eye, a cross, and a dove, for example. Putting the Hand of Miriam or the Star of David on the bracelet are also very traditional. The Hand of Miriam is a symbol used in Mormon Kabbalah, and makes sense. In fact, in later bracelets I have used one red string with a Hand of Miriam (*see Hamsa, below*).

Back to the original, the center ball had both ends of both strings in it, creating a circle. I blessed the string with a simple prayer over it, and asked my wife to tie the knots. The person that ties the seven knots should be a trusted loved one. It is not required they hold the Priesthood, as the string should be blessed beforehand.

## Red String Prayer

While your loved and/or trusted one are tying the knots, they may recite the Ana Be'Ko'ach prayer:

Knot one:

אָנָא בְּכֹחַ גְּדֻלַּת יְמִינְךָ תַּתִּיר תְּזַרְוּהָ

Ana b'koach g'dulat yeminecha tatir tzeruah

*“We ask thee, by the strength of thy right arm—  
untangle our knotted fate!”*

Knot two:

קַבֵּל רִנַּת עַמְּךָ שֶׁגִּבְנוּ טַהֲרֵנוּ נוֹרָא

Kabel rinat amecha sagvenu taharenu Nora

*“Accept your people’s song, lift us and purify us!”*

Knot three:

נָא גִבּוֹר דּוֹרְשֵׁי יְחִוּדְךָ כְּבַבְתָּ שְׁמֵרֵם

Na gibor dorshei yichudecha k’vavat Shamerem

*“Please, mighty one, we who look to you as our shepherd.”*

Knot four:

בְּרַכְּם טַהֲרֵם רַחֲמֵי צְדִקְתֶּךָ תָּמִיד גַּמְלֵם

Barachem taharem rachamei tzidkatech tamid gamlem

*“Purify us, the blessing and the mercy of your righteousness is bountiful!”*

Knot five:

חֲסִין קָדוֹשׁ בְּרוּב טוּבְּךָ נַהֵל אֶדְתֶּךָ

Chasin kadosh b’rov tuvcha nahel adatecha

*“Powerful and Holy One, in righteousness lead thy flock.”*

Knot six:

יְחִיד גָּאָה לְעַמְּךָ פִּנְהַי זוֹכְרֵי קִדְשֶׁתְּךָ

Yachid ge’eh l’am’acha p’neh zochrei k’dushatecha

*“Lord, take pride in your people, we remember your*

*Looking the Part*

*Holiness.”*

Knot seven:

שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ קִבֵּל וּשְׁמַע צַעֲקוֹתֵנוּ יוֹדֵעַ תַּעֲלֹמוֹת

Sha'vatenu kabel ush'ma tza'akatenu yodeha  
ta'alumot

*“Accept our cries, and hear our prayers, O knower of  
mysteries.”*

*–Hebrew, phonetic Hebrew, and English*

## The Hamsa

*“Therefore, shall they receive a glorious kingdom,  
and a beautiful crown from the Lord’s hand: for with his  
right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he  
protect them.”*

*–Wisdom of Solomon 5:16*

The hamsa (Hebrew: חמסה) is an amulet in the shape of a palm popular throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It can be found in both jewelry and wall art. In Arabic it is called khamsah (خمسة), meaning “five” or “the five fingers of the hand.” This symbol can be found in kabbalistic manuscripts and amulets, doubling as the letter shin, the first letter of the divine name Shaddai. The hamsa is depicting as an open right hand, much like the Sign of the Law of Sacrifice. This image has been used and recognized as a sign of protection throughout history.

The eye embedded in the palm of an open hand has used as a symbol in many cultures by many names throughout the ages. Some call it the hand of Miriam, others the hand of Mary, in Islam it is the hand of Fatima, Mohamid’s daughter.

Sometimes rendered naturally, as a right hand. Other times, perhaps more commonly to-day, it is represented symmetrically, with a second thumb replacing the pinky finger. In the Church of Jesus Christ in Christian Fellowship, it is the Hand of Miriam at times representing the Levitical Priesthood, at other times representing the nondenominational church.



We use the open right hand, mirrored just as we find the Tree of Life, with the tree's right being our right, and its left our left. Within the hand we find the Star of David, the Christian Cross, the Sun symbolizing the Celestial Kingdom, a Heart for God's love, and the All Seeing Eye in the palm in the shape of the Christian fish, representing Mary Magdalene to some, Jesus to others, and a Moon for the Terrestrial Kingdom. The Star of David may double as a symbol of the Celestial Kingdom as well. Around the hand we find words associated with each of the symbols on the fingers:

- **Star:** Faith in His Name (Faith in Ha'Shem)
- **Cross:** Salvation by His Grace

- **Sun:** Vision in His Light
- **Heart:** Peace by His Love
- **Right Hand:** Sign of the Law of Sacrifice

In Judaism the hamsa is a kabbalistic symbol literally meaning “fivefold.” This is derived from the word “chamesh,” meaning five. Many Muslims and Jews believe the hamsa may be used to provide defense against ayin hara, “the evil eye.” Its symbolism is used to remind us of a number of things, including the five books of Torah.

This being a nondenominational movement, it may be used in the Fellowship of Christ for many things. The Hamsa can be used to represent the Lower or Levitical Priesthood, the priesthood that prepares the Earth for the coming of the Heavens. Many of the ordinances of this Priesthood require one to raise their right hand to the square.

As the hamsa is called the Hand of Miriam, it is can also be used to represent the Sisterhood of Miriam, or the Miriamic Priesthood. Also being the Hand of Mary, it may also be used to represent the High Priesthood of the Sisterhood. But this symbol is not for women only. When Moses raised his hands, Israel was successful in battle against Amalek (*see Exodus 17:11*). Some believe this is the true origin of the hamsa. Regardless of which of these resonates with a person, in every instance the hamsa’s true purpose is to represent the Hand of God.

In the Book of Remembrance, we are told that “Adam and Eve did establish a church unto the Almighty God, of sixty, four hundred, and thirty; and the Lord above counted them as five hundred” (*Book of Remembrance 17:59*). This reminds us that we are of more value to God than we know.

We are told further in the text that “the course of the universe is as five hundred years, let he who has ears hear, for it is treasured by God as the measure of heaven” (*Book of Remembrance 19:9*). The hamsa may be used to map the human hand over the divine name. In this way, the hamsa creates the effect of bridging the worshiper and God.

## Garments of the Priesthood

*“Thou shalt place the symbols upon it: Lamed, the staff of Elohim upon the right breast; and Gimel, the motion upon the path of YHVH on the left breast; Vav, the guidance of El Elyon upon the right about the knee, and Bet, the house of Ruach Elohim about the navel.”*

–4 Moses 32:8

Many Latter Day Saints of various backgrounds still hold the tradition of the temple garments in some way or another. While these are not mandatory in Mormon Kabbalah, they will still be discussed in this appendix.

As a part of receiving the Initiatories we are given the Garments of the Priesthood. A new name is presented with the garment as the individual is made a new person in their ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. Into these garments symbols are sewn or cut, that they may function much like a classic amulet that has power from God to shield the wearer against evil powers and demonic spirits.

The Garments of the Priesthood, or more simply “garments,” are clothing with the four symbols of the priesthood upon them. These are the Square, the Compass, the Horizontal Line on or about the Navel, and the Horizontal Line on or about the Knee. These symbols are what make the garments sacred. Without them, and

the setting apart by Priesthood blessing, the garments are merely mundane clothing.

The Lord has told us:

*“And on the right breast place the sign of the square, yea, and on left breast the sign of the compass; for these are signs unto me from before the beginning. Yea signs of which are the justice of Elohim and the salvation of the Only Begotten; for in the square is Gevurah, the justice of God, and in the compass is Chesed, His mercy. And place upon this, my holy garment, two lines; one at the bottom on the right about the knee as a reminder that every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, and the other midway upon the front thereof, yea or upon the right of the divide, about that of the navel; and this thou shalt do for health in the belly, and as a sign and token of my Holy Spirit, and of temporal salvation.”*

*—Doctrines of the Saints 2b:20-21*

This revelation makes clear the meaning of these symbols. They represent the attributes of the God we worship and represent as His ministers. More specifically, they represent the atonement of Jesus Christ. God the Father is represented by knowledge, and the Justice of the Holy Spirit; the Mother by wisdom, and the Mercy of Jesus Christ. In the atonement both justice and mercy were appeased.

Because of the sacred nature of these symbols, we cut them out of the garments and burn them before discarding them when they are worn out.

The symbols of the Garments are explained in the Book of Remembrance, Doctrines of the Saints, and 4 Moses

from the plates of brass. It should be noted that the letters/symbols on the plates of brass do not look like the Hebrew letters we know today, nor do they look exactly like the symbols on the Latter Day Saint garments. Their meaning and our understanding of them comes per inspiration as a part of the translation method.

## When to Wear

*“Yea, and these garments thou shalt wear throughout thy life, at times even as the Spirit directs: to bless the sick, and to preach my gospel at the pulpit, and to do works in my name as thou art moved to do so by my Spirit.”*

*–Doctrines of the Saints 106:57-58*

When officiating, one should wear the proper Robes of the Priesthood, with the garments beneath. At other times one may merely dawn their garments. For example, when giving a blessing, or if one is meeting at home or a hospital, etc. the garments alone may be worn that people understand the wearer is clergy. If one is ordained but not engaged in their ministry, they may wish to wear their garments during worship or other services. There may be other times as well when the Spirit moves us to wear our garments.

## Garments of Light

Sacred clothing and jewelry can be powerful reminders of covenant, identity, and divine connection, but again, they are not requirements. They are tools, symbols, and aids for the journey, never the journey itself. Just as prayer beads, scriptures, or temple imagery may help some focus their hearts, so too can a ring, pendant, or garment become a personal altar carried into the world.

### *Looking the Part*

Whether you choose to wear such items or not, the true adornment God seeks is the light of the Spirit shining from within, a “garment” made from the light of Christ. Your kindness, compassion, and faith are the greatest garments you can wear. So, take joy in whatever path you choose, clothed in fabric and clothed in Spirit, for both are holy when worn with love.



“...clothe yourselves with the bonds of charity, as with a mantle which is the bonds of perfectness and peace.” (DoS 53:62)