

# Unifying the Heart

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

וְיַחַד לְבַבְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֶךָ

V'yachayd l'avaynu l'ahavah u'l'yirah et sh'mecha. (from the liturgy)  
Unify our hearts to love and to be in awe of Your Name/Essence.

These words are part of the prayer that comes in the paragraph just before the Sh'ma. The Sh'ma opens in us the perception of Unity, but before we go there, we must do the work of unification inside our own hearts. This practice guides me to identify with both the love and the awe for the essence that is hidden behind all form. When I chant, "v'yachayd l'avaynu", I journey into my heart. When I chant, "l'ahavah," I find my love. When I chant, "u'l'yirah," I find my awe. And when I chant "et sh'mecha," I call on the wholeness of my heart to perceive/receive the essence of That-Which-Is.

Note: Psalm 86:11 says:

יַחַד לְבַבִּי לְיִרְאָה שְׁמֶךָ

Unify my heart to be in awe of Your Name.

The liturgist obviously knew this psalm and decided that Love was also needed.