

Cheselyn Amato – Artist’s Statement
Judaic Focus - February 19, 2012

I live my life as an artist and as a person as if every day is a sanctuary itself. I make art to create sanctuary for myself, and as prayer, and as offering of sanctuary for others. I feel compelled – both within ordinary and extraordinary time, that is, in everyday time and sacred ritual time – to create a meeting place between the two – to bring above and below together and to allow all of life to be sanctified in all its dimensions.

Within a Jewish perspective/frame of reference, I make work in a form similar to how the Torah is read and to the Jewish mystical Tree of Life of Kabbalah is structured. The Torah is read on four levels, PaRDeS: Peshat, the plain or literal reading; Remez, the allegorical reading given as hints and allusions in the text; Derash, the metaphorical and homelitic reading, interpretive and authoritative commentary regarding truths and principles given within the text; and Sod, the secret and hidden mystical meaning embedded and encoded in the text.

The Tree of Life of Jewish mysticism exists on four levels or in four worlds: Atzilut, World of Emanation and Nearness (Chayah, Spirit, Fire); Beriah, World of Creation (Neshamah, Thought, Intellect, Mind, Air); Yetzirah, World of Formation, (Ruach, Emotion, Feeling, Sensation, Heart, Water); and Assiyah World of Action and Body (Nefesh, earth, matter and energy) – of spirit, of mind, of heart and of body. This is a love affair between Adonai, the masculine aspect of G-d, standing outside of time and Shekinah, the Presence that Dwells Amongst Us, standing close inside of time. Baruch Hu and Baruch Hee. Blessed is the Union of the Masculine and the Feminine in Time as Sanctuary. How wonderful the earth ...; the water, mem, mayim, mother, womb that loves us always and unconditionally; the air...; and the fire, esh, aysh, ayin shin, ner tamid, unwavering flame, beacon of light, kindled and burning, always and forever.