PUPPET ON A STRING
Clearly, Saddah Hussen’s death isn’t going to stop the violence. From a spiritual perspective, Saddah was a puppet on a string.

KABBALAH CHRONICLES
The Rambam (Maimonides) wrote that when the whole of humanity was deep in idol worship, one man could not go with the flow. His name was Abraham. He pondered and searched until he found the truth: that the world has only one leader. When he discovered this, he realized he had discovered life’s eternal truth and ran to tell the world. Since then, the world has had a method that reveals this truth. Today this method has a different name—“Kabbalah”—but it is essentially the same. If we open our hearts to it, it will teach us why things happen, and how to make them happen better.

Past
In Chapter One of The Mighty Hand, The Rambam (Maimonides) describes how there was a time when people knew that there was only one force governing the world. He explained that once they all forgot it, no one knew this truth, and people believed that there were many forces in the world, each with their own responsibilities—for food, reproduction, wealth, health, etc. But one man just couldn’t grasp how all these forces followed the same code and obeyed the same rules of appearance and disappearance, life and death. Through his research of nature, this man, whom we now know as Abraham, discovered that there was really only one force, and all other things are partial manifestations of it.

Once he discovered this, he began to spread the word. Challenged by having to explain a concept that contradicted everything his contemporaries believed, Abraham was forced to develop a teaching method that would help him reveal it to them. This was the prototype of the teaching method we now call “Kabbalah” (from the Hebrew word Lekabel, to receive). Today, Kabbalah teaches us how to discover the single guiding force, and by doing so, receive infinite joy and pleasure.

But Abraham’s discovery was no coincidence; it was perfectly timed to counter an outbreak of egoism and selfishness that threatened to destroy the state of love and unity that humanity had been living in up to that point. This is what the Bible means by the words “And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech” (Genesis 11:1). Unity, or altruism, is a powerful force—it can make its users invincible. Up to the time of the Tower of Babel, this was a separate entity; after, it was invincible.

To Understand Means to Feel
When the Light hits “ouches” the soul, it evokes a sensation of wanting...

MARCH 2007, vol. 1, No. 1
| AUTHENTIC WISDOM FOR A BETTER FUTURE |

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

A Miracle Inside

In Hebrew, The Book of Esther is called Megilat Ester. Megilah comes from the word Gihat (disclosure), and Ester comes from the word Heter (concealment). In other words, The Book of Esther is about disclosing what is concealed.

But let’s take this disclosure one step at a time. First, we must remember that the wisdom of Kabbalah explains that in the whole of reality there are only the Creator and a creation that perceives Him. The Bible and all other ancient Hebrew texts, are actually written in different “languages” that explain the same spiritual concepts as the wisdom of Kabbalah.

In The Book of Esther, the King is the Creator, obviously, but none of the other protagonists is a separate entity; actually, each character is an aspect of the Creator’s single creation. This is a key concept to remember because it shifts everything from a moralistic talk about how the good go to evil eventually defeats the bad, to an allegory about our personal relationship with the Creator. According to the Kabbalah, Esther, Haman, and Mordechai are all within us, and the Creator is the attribute of benevolence that we need to acquire if we want to unite with Him and be happy.

The story begins with establishing the character of the good guy, Mordechai. He discovers that two of the king’s servants are plotting to assassinate the king. But the king’s reaction is far different from what we expect; he actually promotes Haman instead of Mordechai!

The Nation, vol. 1, No. 1
FREE

EDITOR’S NOTE
THE ORDER OF THE DAY
In the Land of Israel of the 1940s (then called Palestine), a Kabbalah paper was truly an unusual undertaking. For almost two millennia, the wisdom of Kabbalah had been kept hidden and was only revealed to a chosen few. But on June 5, 1940, one of the two great Kabbalists of the twentieth century, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (1884-1954), decided it was time for a change.

Rabbi Ashlag, also known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder) for his authoritative Salas (Ladder) commentary on The Book of Zohar, published The Nation, the first Kabbalah paper in history.

The Nation was intended for everyone, but despite Baal HaSulam’s efforts, its language and style were too complex for most readers to understand. Even today, 60 years after the publication of The Nation, Baal HaSulam’s actions seem highly unorthodox, if not revolutionary.

But Baal HaSulam was not alone. Rav Avraham Kook (1865-1935), Israel’s first Chief Rabbi, supported Baal HaSulam’s statements that his generation was ripe and ready for the wisdom of Kabbalah.

Baal HaSulam envisioned a global society, founded on sharing and mutual giving, in accord with the Upper Force. In Kabbalah, the Upper Force is synonymous with nature’s comprehensive law of giving, and Ashlag believed that the more we put off the founding of such a society, the more troubles will befall humanity. Yet, he also assured us that if we consciously applied nature’s rule to the human society, we would reach unimaginable heights; we would become eternal, whole, and balanced with the Upper Force.

THE SPIRITUAL GARDENER
Our secular gardening practices reflect our own spiritual roots, and we can relate to them by sheer reflection using the wisdom of Kabbalah.

TO UNDERSTAND MEANS TO FEEL
When the Light hits “ouches” the soul, it evokes a sensation of wanting...

KABBALAH ICONS
Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai—author of The Book of Zohar

SNEAK A PEAK
Desires—the Engine of Change

KABBALAH REVEALED

THE LARGEST, most dynamic source of authentic Kabbalah content on the web.

www.kabbalah.INFO

* All content is available at no charge.

www.kabbalah.INFO

THE ORDER OF THE DAY
In the Land of Israel of the 1940s (then called Palestine), a Kabbalah paper was truly an unusual undertaking. For almost two millennia, the wisdom of Kabbalah had been kept hidden and was only revealed to a chosen few. But on June 5, 1940, one of the two great Kabbalists of the twentieth century, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (1884-1954), decided it was time for a change.

Rabbi Ashlag, also known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder) for his authoritative Salas (Ladder) commentary on The Book of Zohar, published The Nation, the first Kabbalah paper in history.

The Nation was intended for everyone, but despite Baal HaSulam’s efforts, its language and style were too complex for most readers to understand. Even today, 60 years after the publication of The Nation, Baal HaSulam’s actions seem highly unorthodox, if not revolutionary.

But Baal HaSulam was not alone. Rav Avraham Kook (1865-1935), Israel’s first Chief Rabbi, supported Baal HaSulam’s statements that his generation was ripe and ready for the wisdom of Kabbalah.

Baal HaSulam envisioned a global society, founded on sharing and mutual giving, in accord with the Upper Force. In Kabbalah, the Upper Force is synonymous with nature’s comprehensive law of giving, and Ashlag believed that the more we put off the founding of such a society, the more troubles will befall humanity. Yet, he also assured us that if we consciously applied nature’s rule to the human society, we would reach unimaginable heights; we would become eternal, whole, and balanced with the Upper Force.

THE SPIRITUAL GARDENER
Our secular gardening practices reflect our own spiritual roots, and we can relate to them by sheer reflection using the wisdom of Kabbalah.
To save humanity from its own egoism, the Creator, the single force discovered by Abra- ham, could do one of two things: dispense his unity and thus pre- vent a catastrophic clash of self- interest, or teach people how to overcome their egoism.

The latter option had an im- portant benefit by learning how to unite despite their growing egoism, people would gain deep- er awareness of both themselves and their Creator. They would have to study the Creator be- cause their present level of unity had collapsed under their new egoism. Therefore, they would have to obtain a greater “por- tion” of bonding straight from the source—the united force of nature, or the Cre- ator. And to do that, they would have to enhance their knowl- edge of Him.

This is why the Cre- ator revealed Himself to Abraham. This is also why Abraham was such an enthu- siastic disseminator of his method. He knew that time was of the essence: either he taught his people how to unite or they would be dispersed.

As we learn from both the Bible and the ancient Hebrew text, Midrash Rabb, Parasha 38, the Baby- lonians scorned Abra- ham’s offer to teach them. Fed from Babylon and began to teach while roaming “from town to town and from kingdom to kingdom, until he arrived at the Land of Israel” (Maimonides, The Mighty Hand, Idiorty Rules, Chapter 1).

Despite many hardships and challenges, Abraham’s teachings gained some support, and those who supported him helped him to spread the knowledge with others, filling the ranks with “new re- cruits.” In time, one lone fighter for truth had grown into a nation whose name symbolizes the one thing they had in common: “the nation of Israel,” Israel, as the great Kabbalist Ramchal explains in his Commentary on the Writings, is a combination of two words: Yisroel (straight) and El (God).

The people of Israel are those who have one desire in their hearts: to be like the Creator, united by altruism, as opposed to their Babylonian contemporaries.

The collapse of the Tower of Babel was not, however, the end of the story, but only the beginning. Humanity’s egoism continued to grow because the Creator still wanted people to overcome it, and thus gain a deeper aware- ness of themselves and the Creator. For those who wanted to remain egoists, this would mean even greater alienation. New forms formed and new technolo- gies created new weapons. These were intended to guard nations from each other or to sub-jugate them. But for those who wanted to overcome their egoism and unite despite it, an upgrade of their method was necessary.

This was Moses’ cue. As in the case of Babel, the solution to the intensifying egoism was to escape it. But Pharaoh wasn’t simply an evil king. He actually brought a big step forward, since it elevat- ed a whole nation into contact with the Creator. But Pharaoh was not at the end of the road. The end of the road will only come when the entire world is in touch with the Creator, experiencing the unity that the ancient Babylo- nians did, before the first out- break of egoism. But for that, the end of the road will arrive when all of humanity recognizes what it once had, and then lost. This reclamation is very impor- tant, since you can only reclaim something when you know what it is. This is indeed the goal of creation: to teach us who/what the Creator is, and to have us reclaim Him/It.

As always, the only antidote to intensify- ing egoism is unity.

ToDay

The future started in the 1940s, when the great Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, also known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder) and his students, began to teach the Zohar, predict- ing that the last stage in the spiritual evolution of human- ity would begin in 1995. Simi- larly, the Vilna Gaon (GRa) wrote in his book, The Voice of the Testator, that this stage will be the time to finally defeat egoism and unite as one.

To solve our prob- lems, we need an inclusive solution, and such a method that can do just that: unite and experience the Creator in the deepest sense of the word, for it is written that, “they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer- emiah 31:33). The wisdom of Kabbalah has been prepared as a method that can do just that: unite, and experience the Creator. In his “Introduction to the Book of Zohar,” Baal HaSulam wrote that if we in- tegrate Kabbalah in our day- to-day lives, we will complete the goal of creating and we will be “of one language and of one speech” and at one with the Creator, never to part again.
Kabbalah, the method intended to help us through every moment of our lives. Through Kabbalah, one discovers the future, the past, one’s attributes when he or she first descended into this world many lifetimes ago, and the way one still needs to traverse.

“Seeing both ends of the rope, one understands what to do and how best to do it. Kabbalists can also see the forces operating on them at any given moment in time, such as why one should marry a specific individual, or why one’s children are the way they are.”

—Michael Laitman

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

M ore than 3,000 American soldiers have already died in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians were killed by their own countrymen. In both cases, the numbers are increasing even as you are reading these lines. Iraq is a sad reflection of the current state of the world. As Yehuda Ashlag (1884–1954), this is the moment in time, such as why one should marry a specific individual, or why one has to traverse.

Kabbalists descended a method intended to help us through every moment of our lives. Through Kabbalah, one discovers the future, the past, one’s attributes when he or she first descended into this world many lifetimes ago, and the way one still needs to traverse.

“Seeing both ends of the rope, one understands what to do and how best to do it. Kabbalists can also see the forces operating on them at any given moment in time, such as why one should marry a specific individual, or why one’s children are the way they are.”

—Michael Laitman

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

reason, the better our situation will become. As King Solomon said, “Let us learn from the kings and rulers to determine where the world is going, it’s in the hand of the Force that created and guides the world is going, it’s in the hand of the Lord. He, the Creator’s perspective, the better our situation will become. As King Solomon said, “Let us learn from the kings and all the friends and foes we see before us are His messengers.”

Everything that happens, all the good and bad experiences and all the friends and foes we see before us are His messengers.

PUPPET ON A STRING

Clearly, Saddam Hussein’s death isn’t going to stop the violence. From a spiritual perspective, Saddam was a puppet on a string.

With each test we pass, we become “owners” of another degree; we gain the ability to relate to it from the Creator’s perspective.

1. He is good and therefore wants to do good to you. Granted, you don’t feel it. If you did, you wouldn’t have to choose between being good or not; you’d know what to do to be like Him. But there’s a hitch: when you know what to do, you become a copycat, not a student who learns through your own scrutinizing.

2. If He is good, and I want to be like Him, I, too, have to be good. To whom can I be good if I can’t see Him? I can “practice” being good on other people.

3. Every time I discover a bad quality in me, and learn how to turn it into a good one through practice on other people, I “graduate” and move on to an even worse quality. This is actually a positive development. Realizing you are worse than you thought means you have become, and have “earned” the right to know yourself better. Ironically, the recognition of your own evil is a reward for your good behavior.

4. The King is our Creator. If we understand what He expects of us, we gain the ability to relate to it from the Creator’s perspective. At that degree, we are no longer puppets on strings because we have gained the knowledge and the power of the Creator.

The atrocities in our world reflect our overblown and uncontaminated egos. But these ordinances don’t have to manifest as natural disasters, terrorism, or global pandemics. If we channel our egos in the right direction, the moment they arise, they will not have to manifest in such horrendous displays.

The human ego only points to qualities in our souls that are not (yet) similar to the Creator. At first, these qualities may not manifest as conflicts and clashes among people and between humanity and nature.

Ashlag also explained that the human ego continually develops in quantity and quality. This is why we constantly want more money, more power, more sex, more of everything. But at the height of egotism, he writes, we will want to control the entire world, know how everything works, and govern it. In short, we will want to become God.

The Kabbalah, and practically all spiritual texts, explain that the Creator is good and therefore wants to do good to us, His creations. Because there is nothing better than the Creator Himself, He wants to give us everything He can of Himself: all His knowledge and all His powers.

To accomplish that, He created a “school,” a “playground” where we can practice at being Creators.

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

Through Kabbalah, one discovers the future, the past, one’s attributes when he or she first descended into this world many lifetimes ago, and the way one still needs to traverse.

“Seeing both ends of the rope, one understands what to do and how best to do it. Kabbalists can also see the forces operating on them at any given moment in time, such as why one should marry a specific individual, or why one’s children are the way they are.”

—Michael Laitman

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

This is our world. The rules of the game are really quite simple:

1. He is good and therefore wants to do good to you. Granted, you don’t feel it. If you did, you wouldn’t have to choose between being good or not; you’d know what to do to be like Him. But there’s a hitch: when you know what to do, you become a copycat, not a student who learns through your own scrutinizing.

2. If He is good, and I want to be like Him, I, too, have to be good. To whom can I be good if I can’t see Him? I can “practice” being good on other people.

3. Every time I discover a bad quality in me, and learn how to turn it into a good one through practice on other people, I “graduate” and move on to an even worse quality. This is actually a positive development. Realizing you are worse than you thought means you have become, and have “earned” the right to know yourself better. Ironically, the recognition of your own evil is a reward for your good behavior.

4. The King is our Creator. If we understand what He expects of us, we gain the ability to relate to it from the Creator’s perspective. At that degree, we are no longer puppets on strings because we have gained the knowledge and the power of the Creator.

The atrocities in our world reflect our overblown and uncontaminated egos. But these ordinances don’t have to manifest as natural disasters, terrorism, or global pandemics. If we channel our egos in the right direction, the moment they arise, they will not have to manifest in such horrendous displays.

The human ego only points to qualities in our souls that are not (yet) similar to the Creator. At first, these qualities may not manifest as conflicts and clashes among people and between humanity and nature.

Ashlag also explained that the human ego continually develops in quantity and quality. This is why we constantly want more money, more power, more sex, more of everything. But at the height of egotism, he writes, we will want to control the entire world, know how everything works, and govern it. In short, we will want to become God.

The Kabbalah, and practically all spiritual texts, explain that the Creator is good and therefore wants to do good to us, His creations. Because there is nothing better than the Creator Himself, He wants to give us everything He can of Himself: all His knowledge and all His powers.

To accomplish that, He created a “school,” a “playground” where we can practice at being Creators.

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

This is our world. The rules of the game are really quite simple:

1. He is good and therefore wants to do good to you. Granted, you don’t feel it. If you did, you wouldn’t have to choose between being good or not; you’d know what to do to be like Him. But there’s a hitch: when you know what to do, you become a copycat, not a student who learns through your own scrutinizing.

2. If He is good, and I want to be like Him, I, too, have to be good. To whom can I be good if I can’t see Him? I can “practice” being good on other people.

3. Every time I discover a bad quality in me, and learn how to turn it into a good one through practice on other people, I “graduate” and move on to an even worse quality. This is actually a positive development. Realizing you are worse than you thought means you have become, and have “earned” the right to know yourself better. Ironically, the recognition of your own evil is a reward for your good behavior.

4. The King is our Creator. If we understand what He expects of us, we gain the ability to relate to it from the Creator’s perspective.

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

This is our world. The rules of the game are really quite simple:

1. He is good and therefore wants to do good to you. Granted, you don’t feel it. If you did, you wouldn’t have to choose between being good or not; you’d know what to do to be like Him. But there’s a hitch: when you know what to do, you become a copycat, not a student who learns through your own scrutinizing.

2. If He is good, and I want to be like Him, I, too, have to be good. To whom can I be good if I can’t see Him? I can “practice” being good on other people.

3. Every time I discover a bad quality in me, and learn how to turn it into a good one through practice on other people, I “graduate” and move on to an even worse quality. This is actually a positive development. Realizing you are worse than you thought means you have become, and have “earned” the right to know yourself better. Ironically, the recognition of your own evil is a reward for your good behavior.

4. The King is our Creator. If we understand what He expects of us, we gain the ability to relate to it from the Creator’s perspective.
Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai (Rashbi), author of The Book of Zohar (dradance) was a Tana—a great sage in the early Common Era centuries. He was also Rabbi Akiva’s direct student. Rashbi’s name is tied to numerous legends, and he is mentioned constantly in the Talmud and in the Midrash, the sacred Hebrew texts of his time. He lived in Sidon and in Meron, and he established a seminary in the Western Galilee.

Rashbi was born and raised in the Galilee (a mountainous region in today’s north of Israel. Even as a child, he was not like other children his age. Questions such as, “What is the purpose of my life?” and “How is the world created?” plagued him, demanding an answer.

In those days, life in Galilee was harsh: the Romans persecuted Jews and continually invented new laws to make their lives miserable. Among these laws was a decree that prohibited Jews from building a storehouse. As a result, they delved in the secrets of the hidden. Their efforts succeeded, and they discovered the entire system of creation.

After thirteen years in a cave, Rashbi heard that the Roman emperor had died. He could finally heave a sigh of relief. After leaving the cave, Rashbi gathered nine students and went with them to a small cave in Meron, known as The Idra Rabba (Great Assembly). With their help, he wrote The Book of Zohar, the most important book of Kabbalah.

The Book of Zohar was written in the 2nd century CE, not long after the ruins of the Second Temple and the beginning of the last exile of the people of Israel from its land. But even prior to the exile, Rashbi predicted that The Book of Zohar would only be revealed at the end of the exile. He stated that its appearance to the mass would symbolize the end of the spiritual exile: “...in it, they will come out of the exile with mercy” (Zohar, Naso).

It is also written in The Book of Zohar that its wisdom would be revealed to all toward the end of the six thousand years, the period allotted to the correction of humanity. "And when it is near the days of the Messiah, even infants in the world are destined to find the secrets of the wisdom, and know in them the ends and the calculations of redemption, and at that time it will be revealed to all” (Zohar, VaYera).

The Secret of Reincarnation Rashbi is an incarnation of a unique soul, which coordinates and connects the Upper Force to every creation. This soul comes down into our world and incarnates in the patriarchs of Kabbalah. This is the order of its appearance: Abraham, Moses, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, the Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria), and Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam). Each incarnation of this soul promotes humanity to a new spiritual degree and leaves its mark in Kabbalah books, which serve the generations that follow.

An example of this process can be found in special sections of The Zohar called Raia Ma’imona (The Loyal Shepherd). In these parts, Rashbi speaks from a state of clothing in Moses’ soul. Another example of this is the book, Shaar HaGilgalsim (Gate of Reincarnations), where Rashbi speaks from a state of clothing in the soul of the Ari.

The Book of Zohar is undoubtedly unique and one of the world’s most renowned compositions. Since its writing, thousands of stories have been linked to The Zohar, and the book is still revered today. The fascination around it is so great that even though the book is completely incomprehensible to us, our generation without prop- er interpretation, millions of people diligently read it.

Rashbi’s Departure According to tradition, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai passed away in the presence of his friends on Lag BaOmer (the 33rd day of the Omer count, which starts on the first day of Passover) of the year 160 CE, and was buried in Meron. With his death, the soul of a giant Kabbalist completed its task in our world.

Rashbi fulfilled his destination. Hundreds of thousands visit his gravesite yearly, trying to sense some of the Light that he had brought to the world. The greatest Kabbalists praise his composition and repeatedly claim that The Book of Zohar is destined to bring redemption to the world.

Each incarnation of this soul promotes humanity to a new spiritual degree and leaves its mark in Kabbalah books, which serve the generations that follow.

Rav Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, wrote about the Zohar (Ohr Yakar): “This composition, called The Book of Zohar, is like Noah’s Ark, where there were many kinds, but those kinds and families could not exist unless by entering the ark. ...Thus the righteous will enter the secret of the Light of this composition to preserve, and thus is the virtue of the composition, that immediately when engaging, with his desire for the love of God, it will draw him as a magnet draws the iron. And he will enter it to save his soul and spirit and his correction. And even if he is wicked, there is no fear should he enter.”

We are living in a historic time. The soul of Rashbi is completing its mission in our generation, and thanks to this spiritual giant, who lived nearly 2,000 years ago, the wisdom of Kabbalah is emerging and will ascend to a state of clothing in humanity’s soul.
THE BOOK OF ESTHER
—a Miracle Inside

By J.S. Cronimoto, The Adversary and Enemy is the Wicked Haman

To UNDERSTAND MEANS TO FEEL

In our story, Esther represents the collective soul, the vehicle of creation. The two rivals, Haman and Mordechai, represent the soul’s two inclinations—the evil inclination, egoism (Haman), and the good inclination, altruism (Mordechai).

These roles are the reason why the king promotes Haman, instead of Mordechai. To choose altruism and thus unite with the Creator, one must first realize that egoism is bad. We are made of a desire to receive pleasure. To make the shift to altruism, we must realize that egoism is bad for us, and subsequently want to change it. But the change is not made just for us. How is that done? By giving Haman (egoism) a bait.

The term “reincarnation” is known to us as a process in which the soul leaves the body and “dresses” in a new one. Kabbalah, however, explains that an incarnation is a new state that the soul experiences. It is another phase of the soul’s correction process as it approaches its goal. The innovation that Kabbalah introduces is that to reincarnate, you do not need to physically leave the body. The term “reincarnation” is known to us as a process in which the soul leaves the body and “dresses” in a new one. Kabbalah, however, explains that an incarnation is a new state that the soul experiences. It is another phase of the soul’s correction process as it approaches its goal.

Today, the question of reincarnation is a hot topic. In Kabbalah, the subject of reincarnation is often referred to as the “Light that reforms.” The higher Light is made of one thing only—a desire to reveal the Creator, but the evil inclination (Haman), and the good inclination (Mordechai), represent this goal. In fact, his name testifies to that. The name Adam means that he was the first man, and “Rishon” means that he was the first person in whom the desire to discover life’s purpose appeared. Adam discovered that life’s purpose is to become similar to the Creator—the altruistic force that creates all life—and he achieved this goal. In fact, his name testifies to the fact that he achieved it because the name Adam comes from the Hebrew word, Admah. The term “Admah,” “I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14). In other words, Adam the first person in the history of humankind to consciously perceive the Creator, or as Kabbalists put it, to attain Him.

Today, the question of the purpose of our lives is awakening in growing numbers of people. Their inability to find the answer to this question brings many people to despair, disappointment, divorce, and even suicide.

If Adam were alive today, he wouldn’t be alone in his quest.

To be continued on page 6...
Why is one person rich and famous, while another has to work hard and remain anonymous? Why is one person born with a silver spoon in his or her mouth, while another is born into a poor family? The Kabbalistic meaning of the term, "Mitzva" (luck) comes from the root "NaZaL" (dripping). It describes a process where Light, or energy, "drips" from the Upper Degree to the lower one. For Kabbalists, who know the laws that govern the system of reality, this "dripping of energy" is planned and predetermined. But for us, who are unfamiliar with this system of rules, this "dripping" seems incidental and unpredictable. This is why we call it "luck."

Desires—The Engine of Change

D

esires don’t just pop out of the blue. They form unconsciously within us and surface only when they become something definable, such as, “I want a pizza.” Before that, desires are either too hidden, or at most, felt as general restlessness. We’ve all experienced that sense of wanting something but not quite knowing what it is. Well, it is a desire that has not yet ripened.

Plato once said, “Necessity is the mother of invention,” and he was right. Similarly, Kabbalah teaches us that the only way we can learn anything is by first wanting to learn it. It’s a very simple formula: we learn something when we do what it takes to get it. We make the time, muster the energy, and develop the necessary skills. It turns out that the engine of change is desire.

The way our desires evolve both define and design the entire history of humanity. As humanity’s needs developed, they urged people to study their environment so they could fulfill their wishes. Unlike minerals, plants, and animals, people constantly evolve. For every generation, and for each person, desires grow stronger and stronger.

This engine of change—desire—is made of three different degrees. In the first degree, Kabbalists refer to this engine as “a will to receive,” or simply, “the will to receive.” When Kabbalah first appeared, some 5,000 years ago, the will to receive was at level zero. Today, as you might have

...
Surprising as it may be, our leisurely gardening pastimes reflect our own spiritual roots, and we can relate to them by sheer reflection using the wisdom of Kabbalah.

And God said: 'Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit tree bearing fruit after its kind.'

-Genesis 1:11

The symbol most associated with the wisdom of Kabbalah is the Tree of Life. Kabbalah and all the ancient writings are replete with examples from the plant kingdom. Ancient Hebrew Scriptures used the spiritual roots of vegetation to explain human spiritual growth processes. They used it as a learning tool, and we can benefit by using it to “touch base” with our souls.

The words below are based on a letter written by Kabbalist Rabbi Baruch Ashlag, the firstborn son and successor of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, also known as Baal HaSulam. In his letter, Rabbi Ashlag explains to his students that the works of the field reflect spiritual processes, and how we can experience them.

Adam and the Tree of Life

In Kabbalah, the terms, “nature” and “Creator” are considered synonymous. The term, “life” is defined as being in contact with nature and its Creator, and the word, “tree” can either symbolize “life,” meaning contact with the Creator, or “knowledge,” understanding why the Creator works the way He does. Actually, the degree called The Tree of Knowledge is the highest spiritual degree a person can achieve.

The first person to discover the Tree of Life was Adam. He was an ordinary person whom the Creator instructed to research and discover what lies beyond our world. When Moses described what happened to Adam, he used the image of a tree to describe Adam’s relationship with the Creator. The Creator told him he could eat of every tree in the garden except for the Tree of Knowledge, reflecting the last and only degree Adam couldn’t reach.

The Creator knew that if Adam discovered the knowledge contained in that tree, he would want to leave the Garden, since he would know as much as the Creator. That, in turn, would detach him from the Creator—life—which is why the Creator forbade him to eat of that tree. We all know what happened: Adam ate, and as a result, we are all denied of Adam’s promised eternal life.

But all has not been lost. The Creator also gave us ancient writings that teach us how we can return to the Garden of Eden. He also gave us examples, which Kabbalah calls “branches.” These branches can indicate how things really work. If we study the writings along with the right explanations, we will understand the spiritual processes that manifest in every plant, and we will learn to emulate them in our souls.

What Moses Meant

By the sweat of your face you will eat bread.

-Genesis 3:19

In Moses’ time, spirituality was a tangible reality. Everyone experienced the spiritual world today. At the time, there wasn’t the rift that exists today between us and spirituality. People then didn’t have to learn spirituality, they lived it. When Moses wrote his Torah (Pentateuch), he used the spoken language of his time so people would understand him. The difference between Moses’ contemporaries and people today is that they knew he was using mundane words to explain spiritual concepts, while we think he was actually referring to our physical world. Indeed, how can we think otherwise? We no longer feel spirituality the way our predecessors did.

This is why Kabbalists refer to the language of the Bible as “the language of roots and branches.” Our world is only the outermost layer of the spiritual worlds; it is only a shell, the fattest branch of a great tree.

To fully understand life you must explore it where it really happens—at its roots. This is what Moses explained. “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread,” he tells us. In other words, if we want to (become spirituality nourished) we need to work (sweat) for it. Since Adam’s sin, contact with the Creator is not a given; instead, we must cultivate it, using every means at our disposal. And the promised reward is priceless: it is our access to the Tree of Knowledge.

“[My teacher,] Johannes Reuchlin, the father of philosophy, did not receive those teachings from the Greeks, but rather received them from the Jews...and he himself was the first to convert the name Kabbalah, unknown to the Greeks, to the Greek name philosophy.”

--Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), a German humanist, political counselor to the Chancellor, a classics scholar and an expert in the ancient languages and traditions.

The Spiritual Gardener

“There is not a blade of grass that does not have a lot above that strikes it and tells it, ‘Grow.’”

--Midrash Raba 10:6

Spiritual Gardening

For is the tree of the field a man

-Deuteronomy 20:19

Just like a tree, to be ready to bear (spiritual) fruit, you and I need to experience the same work we do on trees and plants. If we graft, powder, fertilize, and weed those parts in our souls requiring cultivation, our spirituality will enhance and fill our lives with joy. If we nourish our souls, we will be “like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf doth not wither” (Psalm 1:3). It only takes a few ground rules to tend to our inner "plants.”

Fertilize

Like plants, human beings can’t grow without fertilizers. In Webster’s dictionary, “a fertilizer is a substance (as manure or a chemical mixture) used to make soil more fertile.” In plants, the fertilizer needs to be brought from the outside. We already have plenty of “manure” within us; we needn’t bring it from the outside, but rather correct what is already within us. For that, we need to recognize which of our qualities are improper (manure) and correct them (turn them into fertilizers) using the method of Kabbalah. This is the essence of spiritual gardening.

When Kabbalists speak of improper qualities, they speak not about socially indecent qualities, but of spiritual qualities, those which relate to our relationship with the Creator. In the end it does make us treat each other better, but we must keep in mind that the final goal of Kabbalah is to return to the Garden of Eden, to the spiritual world.
Hoe

In spirituality, “hoeing” means examining the depths of one’s soul. According to Kabbalah, only there, within ourselves, will we discover why we have come into this world. The answers to all of life’s questions rest deep within us. If we want to find them, we must “hoe” into our souls and dig them out.

Remove Excess Leaves

While we are studying Kabbalah to rediscover the Creator, the “leaves” are our efforts and desires to discover Him. Once we establish this connection, these efforts and desires become “fruits.” We do not change who we are, only our focus of attention: “spirituality” means focusing on the Creator, while “corporeality” means focusing on ourselves.

Leaves are very important. They are beautiful, provide shade, and protect the fruits while they are growing. There shouldn’t be so many leaves that they exhaust the tree’s water and energy, but we do need to have enough leaves to help the fruits grow lush and plentiful. Similary, when you are learning how to become spiritual, don’t worry if you haven’t made contact with the Creator quickly. Your attempts are your “leaves.” Even if you are unaware of it, they are protecting the fruits already growing within you, hidden among the foliage.

Powder

“Powdering,” in Hebrew called Simim, means covering with powder or dust. It also means struggling. To connect to the Creator, we have to bridge the barrier between our inborn nature objects to being Creator-centered and send us thoughts that our connection with Him is not a worthwhile goal. Therefore, we must “powder” these thoughts and cover them with our conviction of the importance and the merit of our goal.

Water

And God said: “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” —Genesis 1:8

We’ve saved the best for last. Water exists above—in Heaven—and below—on Earth. It is the ultimate solvent and the prime ingredient of everything alive. Not surprisingly, water also represents the Creator, specifically, His quality of mercy. As the Creator is omniscient, water, too, retains information about everything it touches. Plants can use this quality in water, which tells them when to bud and when to bloom.

To grow, a plant needs only water and a few minerals, which it often takes from the water itself. No other substance can replace water as the sole cause of evolution and growth. The hydrological cycle allows water to connect the “higher” worlds (air or sky) with the “lower” worlds (earth), just as the Creator does in spirituality. Knowing when and how much to “water” one’s soul with the quality of the Creator is therefore the single most important piece of information a seeker of spirituality needs.

Becoming a “Spiritual Gardener”

The wisdom of Kabbalah was hidden for many centuries—from the days of Abraham, the Patriarch, to the end of the 20th century. Today, however, we can all enjoy what it has to offer. To a spiritual person, Kabbalah is the hoe, the pruning shears, and the plow. The Creator gives the water of life, and we need only turn our “waste” into fertilizer and discover the Creator so that our souls can blossom. In the words of King Solomon, this knowledge “is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that hideth her fruit” (Proverbs 3:18).

**From Chaos to Harmony**

**NEW**

**12-SESSION COURSE**

starting March 6, 2007

every Tuesday at 8pm.

To register and for more information, please visit www.kabbalahevent.org

Location: TBS, located at 44 East 32nd Street, 11th floor (b/w Park and Madison Ave)

Announcements

Kabbalah Revealed Film Festival!

Join us in the heart of Little Italy of New York City at the historic Blue Moon Hotel located at 80 Orchard Street. Watch highly acclaimed features from Israeli independent film troupe ARI Films, about self-discovery, perception of reality, and the wisdom of Kabbalah.

WHEN: every Sunday, starting March 4th, @ 7pm
WHERE: Blue Moon Hotel, 100 Orchard Street on the Lower East Side

To reserve tickets and for more information, please visit www.kabbalahevent.org or call 800-540-3234

About Bnei Baruch

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization that is spreading the wisdom of Kabbalah to accelerate the spirituality of humankind. Its founder and president is Rabbi Baruch Ashlag, the son of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, author of the classic Lubavitch commentary on the Book of Zohar.

Editorial Staff

Executive Editor: Charm Rez
Editorial Board: Marka Zagarit, Michael R. Kegley, José Náshash
Copy Editor: Claire Giraud
Graphic Design & Layout: Eugene Namanskly, Askos Baruch Kholov
Distribution: Ayo Infos
Printing: Askos Kholov

Published by Bnei Baruch
Kabbalah Education and Research Institute
7900 Northaven Road, Dallas TX 75230

Chicago, IL
251 East Dundee Road, # 10,
Wheeling, IL 60090
Phone: 847-360-3732 or 847-372-2223
Email: chicago@kabbalahstudy.com

Dallas, TX
7900 Northaven Road, Dallas TX 75230
Phone: 972-757-2817
Email: bbddallas@gmail.com

Los Angeles, CA
Bnei Baruch of Los Angeles
Telephone: 818-776-7177
Email: losangeles@kabbalah.com

San Francisco, CA
American West Learning Center
22 Monterey Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94131
Telephone: 415-469-9394
Email: sfkabbalah@yahoo.com

St. Louis, MO
6147 Forsyth, Clayton, MO 63105
Telephone: 314-845-9591 or 314-540-2093
Email: kablstl@kabbalaglobal.net

London
Telephone: 0044 7951 98 28 11 or 0044 1883 343 844
Email: orlondon10@yahoo.com

Australia
Sydney
Level 1, 504 Dover lane
Rase Bay NSW, 2029
Tel: 61 2 93713382
Email: info@kabbalah.net.au

Israel
Bnei Baruch
PO 1552
Ramat Gan 52115, Israel
Telephone: 972-3-9226741
Fax: 972-3-9226741
Email: english@kabbalah.info
Web: www.kabbalah.info

Canada
Toronto
3701 Chestwood Drive # 216
Toronto, Ontario, M3L 2P6
Phone: 416-778-3906 or 416-840-5487
Email: info@bttontoronto.info
Web: www.kittontoronto.info
Our Bookstore is open Thursday 4-7 PM

United States
New York, NY
Bnei Baruch USA
194 Quentin Road, 2nd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11223
Phone: 718-435-0121 or 800-540-3234
Email: newyork@kabbalah.info

Boston, MA
The Kabbalah Institute of Massachusetts
Phone: 1-877-850-0668
Email: info@massachusettskabbalah.info
Web: www.massachusettskabbalah.info

Chicago, IL
251 East Dundee Road, # 10,
Wheeling, IL 60090
Phone: 847-360-3732 or 847-372-2223
Email: chicago@kabbalahstudy.com

Dallas, TX
7900 Northaven Road, Dallas TX 75230
Phone: 972-757-2817
Email: bbddallas@gmail.com

Los Angeles, CA
Bnei Baruch of Los Angeles
Telephone: 818-776-7177
Email: losangeles@kabbalah.com

San Francisco, CA
American West Learning Center
22 Monterey Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94131
Telephone: 415-469-9394
Email: sfkabbalah@yahoo.com

St. Louis, MO
6147 Forsyth, Clayton, MO 63105
Telephone: 314-845-9591 or 314-540-2093
Email: kablstl@kabbalaglobal.net

United Kingdom
London
Telephone: 0044 7951 98 28 11 or 0044 1883 343 844
Email: orlondon10@yahoo.com

Australia
Sydney
Level 1, 504 Dover lane
Rose Bay NSW, 2029
Tel: 61 2 93713382
Email: info@kabbalah.net.au

Israel
Bnei Baruch
PO 1552
Ramat Gan 52115, Israel
Telephone: 972-3-9226741
Fax: 972-3-9226741
Email: english@kabbalah.info
Web: www.kabbalah.info

KABBALAH TODAY | March 2007 | Vol. 1, No. 1 | www.kabbalah.info