

KABBALAH TODAY



FREE

AUGUST 2007, #6 | A PUBLICATION OF THE BNEI BARUCH ASSOCIATION FOUNDED BY RAV MICHAEL LAITMAN, PhD | www.kabtoday.com

THE MASTER PLAN

The term "Creator" does not signify a supernatural entity, but the next degree that a human being should reach



» PAGE 2

TIME TO ACT

Why was Ben-Gurion so intrigued by what Baal HaSulam had told him?



» PAGE 4

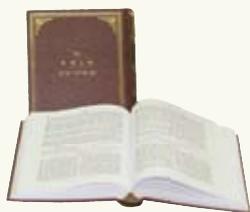
125 DEGREES TO HAPPINESS

The way to happiness is not something we have to invent. It is prepared in advance

» PAGE 6

UNRAVELING THE ZOHAR

Why does Rashbi stress that we all must know the secrets of the Torah?



» PAGE 7

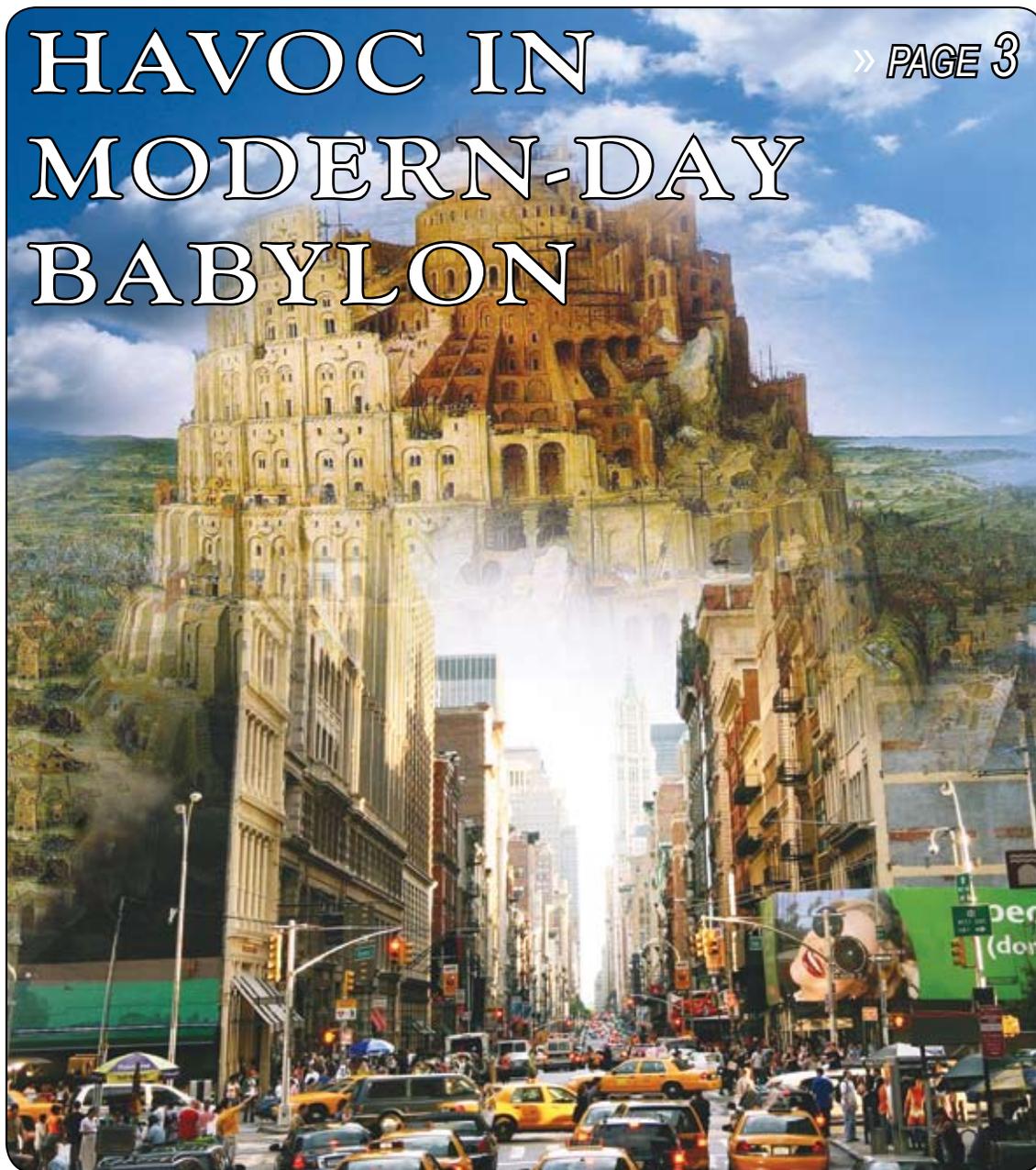
KABBALAH: USER MANUAL

The myths, the facts, the FAQs

» PAGE 8

HAVOC IN MODERN-DAY BABYLON

» PAGE 3



Editor's Note

Days of Do or Die

A glance at last month's news reveals a startling picture: floods, fires, quakes, terror, corruption, and a nuclear radiation leak are just some of the issues that made the headlines. It seems we are approaching days of do or die.

And indeed, there is a lot we can do for ourselves, but we must resolve to do it. According to Kabbalah, things do not happen by chance; they occur to show us the direction towards happiness. The faster we follow the signs, the sooner we will achieve this goal.

This issue of *Kabbalah Today* discusses why we are unhappy, but mainly what we can and should do to change that. The items in this issue present the solutions Kabbalah offers from multiple angles. It is our sincere hope that reading this paper will provide you with a renewed sense of strength, hope, and faith in the good future of humanity.

ALL ARE ONE AND ONE IS ALL

THE WAY WE PERCEIVE REALITY DICTATES ALL THAT WE EXPERIENCE IN LIFE.
SO HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT MISSING SOMETHING THAT COULD HAVE MADE
OUR EXPERIENCE IN THIS WORLD A WHOLE LOT BETTER?

by Ron Gilboa

Our Own Interpretation of Reality

Do our five senses really provide us with a picture of the world that surrounds us? Science has already proven a long time ago that they do not. It is clear to us that there are innumerable details that we simply do not perceive. So what are we really sensing?

First, let's remember how our five senses work. We will take our sense of hearing as an example. It may seem that sound waves actually enter our ears and somehow find their way into our brains. But, in fact, nothing could be farther from the truth.

When a sound wave meets our ears, it is abruptly stopped when it strikes the eardrum. This contact creates vibrations that are transformed into electrical signals, which are then relayed to the brain. Subsequently, our brain interprets those signals as sounds, causing us to believe we heard something from outside.

Our eyes work in much the same way. Light never actually

enters the brain, but is stopped by the retina, a kind of screen inside the eyeball. The retina transforms the light into electrical signals and sends them to the brain through the optic nerve. Our brains then create a picture, and again we believe we are seeing something that is outside us.

If we take a good look at this process, a real conundrum arises:

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ZOHAR

“Everything depends on our sensations and correct adaptations to the true reality in place of the illusion, which we feel in our five senses.”

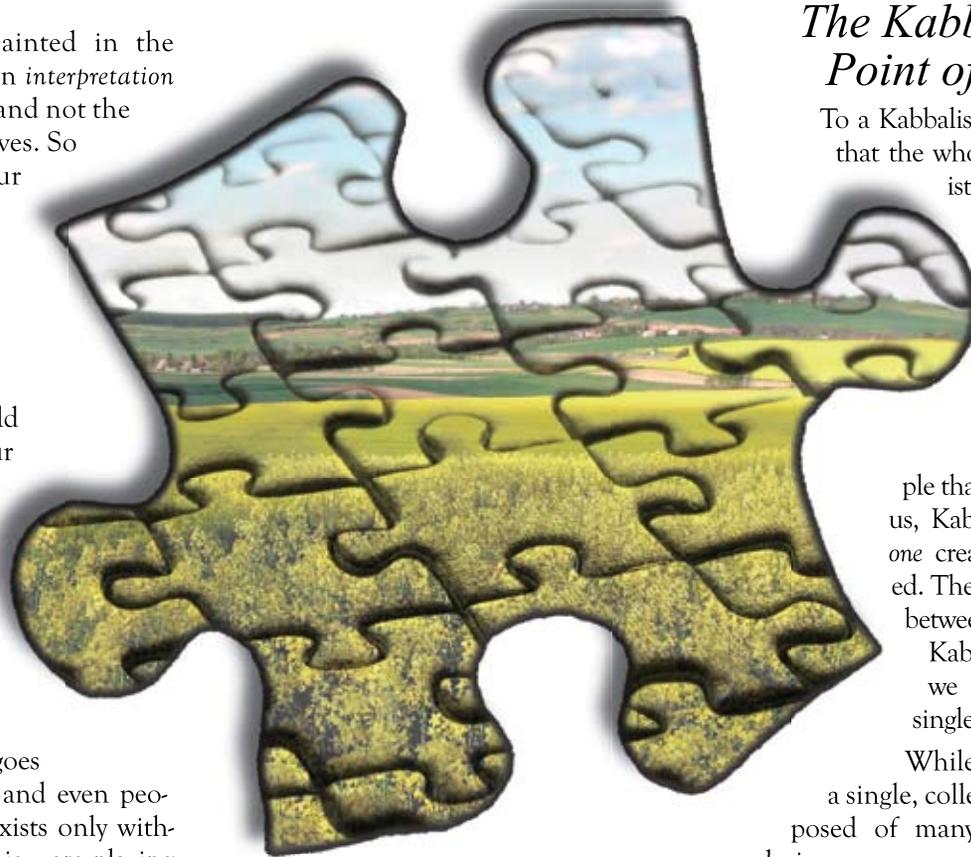
ALL ARE ONE AND ONE IS ALL

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The picture that is painted in the brain is entirely our own *interpretation* of the external stimuli, and not the external events themselves. So how do we know that our interpretation is the same as what is truly out there?

No matter what we perceive from our five senses, the reality we believe to be the world around us is simply our brains' interpretation of the data we have collected.

All that we can really say for sure is that when we call what we see “a tree,” it is because we *interpret* it this way. The same goes for houses, milkshakes, and even people. Our entire reality exists only within us, as if a private movie were playing in our minds.



The Kabbalist's Point of View

To a Kabbalist, it is no secret that the whole of reality exists within us. But there is more to this, for despite the endless variety of minerals, plants, animals, and people that we see around us, Kabbalists say only *one* creature was created. The only difference between us and the Kabbalists is in how we perceive that single creature.

While Kabbalists see a single, collective soul composed of many interconnected pieces, we see us and the world around us, filled with other beings.

The only thing missing in our perception is what actually connects these pieces, the “adhesive” that binds the pieces to form one entity.

Now let's be Kabbalists for a moment: if you feel that you and everything else are one being, then there is only one creature that exists. In that state, all the others are no longer separated from you; they are all *parts* of you.

This single entity, the single soul that Kabbalists describe is experienced on a deeper, more fundamental level of reality that does not surface to our awareness. Simply put, we are all connected—we just don't feel it.

The wisdom of Kabbalah holds the key for us to recover our lost perception of the one, eternal soul. Once we have regained this integral awareness, not only will our lives in this world be peaceful, but we will also recognize the unique force that originally created us, and that now connects us.

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/61

■ Sneak-a-Peek @ the book *Kabbalah Revealed*

THE MASTER PLAN

THOSE PIONEERS IN NATURE'S RESEARCH WANTED TO KNOW IF NATURE ACTUALLY HAD A GOAL, AND IF SO, WHAT HUMANITY'S ROLE MIGHT BE IN THIS MASTER PLAN

It is no secret that Kabbalah did not begin with today's Hollywood trendy hype. It has actually been around for thousands of years. When it first appeared, people were much closer to Nature than they are today. They felt an intimacy with Nature and nurtured their relationship with it.

In those days, they had little reason to be detached from Nature. They weren't as self-centered and alienated from their natural environment as we are today. Indeed, at that time,

humanity was an inseparable part of Nature and nurtured its intimacy with it.

In addition, humankind did not know enough about Nature to feel secure; instead, we were afraid of natural forces, which impelled us to relate to Nature as a force superior to our own.

Being intimate with Nature, on the one hand, and afraid of it, on the other hand, people aspired not only to learn about their surrounding world, but even more important, to determine what or who governed it.

In those early days, people couldn't hide from Nature's elements as they do today; they couldn't avoid its hardships as we do in our “man-made” world.

And most important, the fear of Nature, and at the same time, the closeness to it, urged many to search for and discover Nature's plan for them, and coincidentally, for all of us.

Those pioneers in Nature's research wanted to know if Nature actually had a goal, and if so, what humanity's role might be in this Master Plan. Those individuals who received the highest level of knowledge, that of the Master Plan, are known as “Kabbalists.”

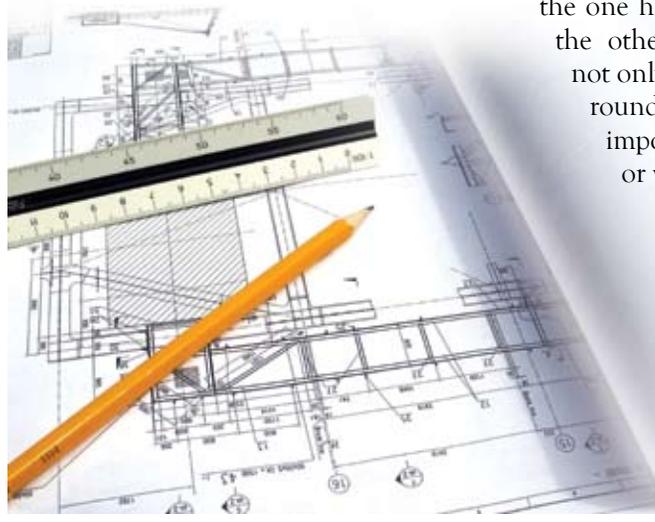
A unique individual among those pioneers was Abraham. When he discovered the Master Plan, he not only researched it in depth, but first and foremost taught it to others. He realized that the only guarantee against misery and fear was for people to fully understand Nature's plan for them. And once he realized this, he spared no effort teaching whoever wished to learn. For this reason, Abraham became the first Kabbalist to start a dynasty of Kabbalah teachers: The most worthy

students became the next generation of teachers, who then passed on the knowledge to the next generation of students.

Kabbalists refer to the designer of the Master Plan as “the Creator,” and to the Plan itself as “The Thought of Creation.” In other words, and this is important, when Kabbalists talk about Nature or Nature's laws, they are talking about the Creator. And vice versa, when they are talking about the Creator, they are talking about Nature or Nature's laws. These terms are synonymous.

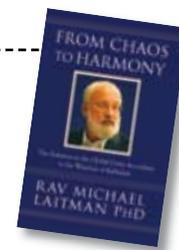
To a Kabbalist, the term, “Creator,” does not signify a supernatural, distinct entity, but the next degree that a human being should reach when pursuing higher knowledge. The Hebrew word for Creator is *Boreh*, and contains two words: *Bo* (come) and *Re'eh* (see). Thus, the word, “Creator,” is a personal invitation to experience the spiritual world.

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/62



FROM CHAOS TO HARMONY

“If we were to study how ancient tribes lived, we would find that the closer they were to Nature and to their roots, the more easily they sensed Nature’s force of love.”



HAVOC IN MODERN-DAY BABYLON

“...we are like a pile of nuts, assembled by a wraparound bag. That level of unity does not turn them into an integrated body. Every slight movement of the bag makes them swing and separate from each other. They, in turn, partially join and unite anew. And all that they lack is the natural unification from within. Any force of unification is due to an external incident. This is very saddening.”

Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
HaUma (The Nation)

by Chaim Ratz

Unity. That is what we experience from time to time, in moments that bring us together as a people. We celebrate the Jewish holidays, each in our own way, and we share many collective experiences rooted in our culture.

But such experiences are not enough to grant us a real sense of a unified people. As Baal HaSulam allegorically puts it, to the onlooker we may seem like nuts in a bag, united only by the cloth that holds us together. Any knock from the outside wiggles the contents to and fro, and when pressed, they unite. When nothing pressures them from the outside, they remain apart.

Obviously, this kind of unity does not really make us feel as one.

What Turns People into a People?

231 years ago, the United States declared its independence. Its residents came from all over Europe, Africa, and Asia. They were Jews, Christians, and others from many religions and nationalities, and they all left their homelands to move to the “land of unlimited opportunities.”

These people, separated by language, faith, and cul-

ture, had one thing in common—a burning desire for a new and brighter future. Thus, they bridged their differences and went on to establish a vast trade system.

Unlike the United States, where people of diverse nations gathered largely to establish a country based on profitability and benefit, European countries were based on a common ethnic background. England, France, Russia, Germany, and other countries, were comprised of tribes of the same race. For those countries, one’s common origin was the uniting force.

It is easy to think that Jews, too, share a common origin. However, genetically speaking, there is no “Jewish gene.”

A Different Kind of Unity

To understand what “the Jewish people” is based on, we need to make a short trip to Babylon about 5,000 years ago. Mesopotamia, and especially its capital, Babylon, was a melting pot much like today’s New York City. In fact, in many ways, Mesopotamia is the cradle of civilization. Back then, humanity was built as an aggregate of clans. An instinctive, animal-like closeness made people feel very close to one another, as with kin.

But as time went by, human egoism intensified and began

to turn people away from one another, to alienate them. People became increasingly concentrated on self-interest, ignoring the needs of others. After some time, exploitation and hatred appeared.

One of the Babylonians was able to see how humanity, once a warm family, was turning into a lions’ den. But this was not all that he saw. Abraham realized that beneath its egoistic surface, humanity was, in fact, a single, collective entity, like cells in a body.

Abraham understood a crucial point: once humanity transcends egoism and reunites into a single entity, it will match the inclusive force of love that binds all parts of Creation—the Creator.

Armed with this new perception, Abraham began to develop a method capable of allowing all people to transcend their egos and connect to the Creator. However, few of Abraham’s contemporaries expressed any zeal to correct their egos. The minority that did follow his method would actually become the first group of Kabbalists in history. Ultimately, this group grew into what we now know as “the people of Israel.”

Why were they called “Israel”? *Ysrael* (Israel) is a combination of two words: *Yashar* (straight) and *El* (God). Thus, Israel means “Straight to God.” The name implies the essence of the unity among the people of Israel: a profound, eternal bond that connects them to Nature itself, beyond race, nationality, or personal considerations.

THE IDEA OF UNITY AMONG ALL HUMAN BEINGS IS NO MORE TO US THAN AN IMAGINARY CHILDREN’S STORY. BACK IN BABYLON, SOMEONE HAD A WAY FOR HUMANITY TO UNITE. TODAY, OUR WORLD NEEDS SUCH A METHOD MORE THAN EVER

Away from the Public Eye

Since human egoism continued growing to new highs (or lows), the people of Israel gradually lost their unity, as well as their bonding with the inclusive Nature, the Creator. This happened in two stages called “the ruin of the first, and second Temples.”

Eventually, only a select few were left who could sense the immensity of Nature. And for approximately two millennia, away from the public eye, these people, whom we call “Kabbalists,” continued to develop Abraham’s correction method and adapt it to humanity’s (still) growing ego.

Consequently, over the years, *authentic* Kabbalah has become shrouded in mystery, immersed in misconceptions, and, as of late, tainted by commercialism.

Kabbalists have been preparing the method for a time when humanity would reach the height of egoism. At that point, it would be ready and willing to use Kabbalah as a correction method, and as nothing else. Now, the time has come.

Living in Modern-Day Babylon

Today, our lives are not much different from those who lived in ancient Babylon. Admittedly, we have a variety of foods, clothes, high-tech communication, high-speed transportation and whatnot. And yet, our world is swamped by cor-

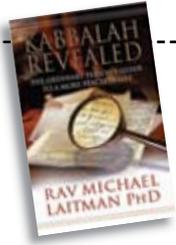
ruption, hatred, segregation, terrorism, and other forms of menace. We have become so “sobered up” by hatred and pain, and so cynical, that ideals like “love of man” sound absurd, if not inconceivable.

The more the global crisis escalates, the more accusatory fingers will be pointing at the Jews. The reasoning is rather simple: Nature pulls all of its parts into unification, like a magnet at the center of its field. But to be drawn towards the middle, we need to implement the correction, or bonding method, developed and guarded by Israel. As long as we are not using our correction method, all of humanity remains stranded, and the tension between where we should be and where we actually are will continue to grow. As a result, consciously or not, other nations are driven to impel Israel to move.

We Jews must recognize the merit of the wisdom we possess and put it into practice. The *authentic* wisdom of Kabbalah has nothing to do with any kind of mysticism or belief. It is rather a systematic method, imprinted in Nature itself, aimed at elevating humanity to its next evolutionary phase.

When we find within us the desire to revive our inner unity, we will discover the natural love that awaits all human beings, the kind of love we are intended to dispense throughout the world. In the words of Prophet Isaiah, we will be “a light of the nations.”

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/63



KABBALAH REVEALED

“The beauty about Kabbalistic knowledge is that it has no copyrights; it belongs to everyone.”

TIME TO ACT

HE KNEW THAT THE CLOCK WAS TICKING, HE WHISPERED IN BEN GURION'S EAR THE WAY TO ESTABLISH A REAL INDEPENDENT STATE, HE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO SPREAD THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH. THIS IS THE LIFE STORY OF POSSIBLY THE GREATEST OF ALL KABBALISTS—RABBI YEHUDA ASHLAG, ALSO KNOWN AS “BAAL HASULAM”

by Eli Vinokur

One windy winter eve in Poland in 1921, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag returned home even more withdrawn than usual. He put his haversack at the corner of the room and sat thoughtfully on the sofa. He did not utter a word. After a long silence, he informed his family: “We are standing on the verge of a new era. I can no longer stay in Poland. It is time to make *Aliyah* (immigrate) to Israel...”

Baal HaSulam was one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time. He was a unique soul that came into this world to bring us the wisdom of Kabbalah, and to move us closer to a life of happiness, peace, and unity.

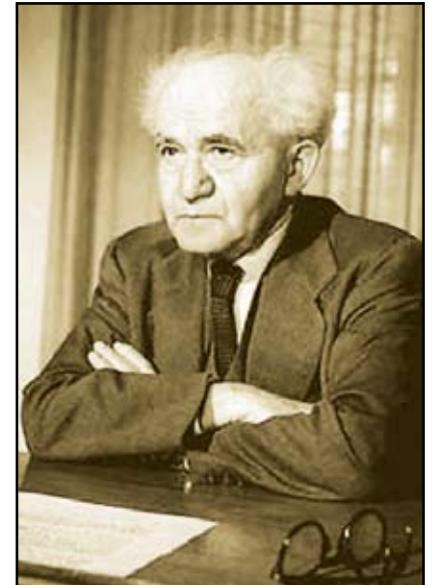
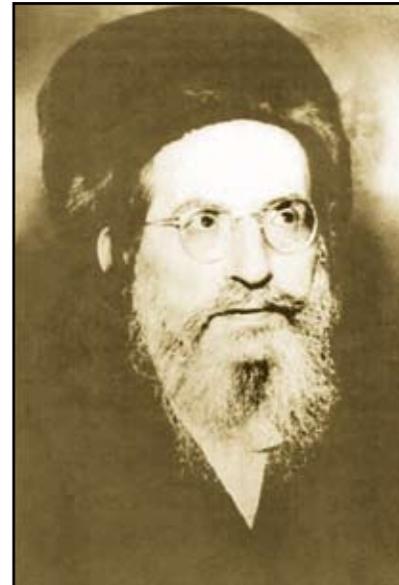
“I have a great desire to break an iron wall that has been separating us from the wisdom of Kabbalah,” Baal HaSulam wrote (“Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot”). Indeed, he was the first Kabbalist to interpret the entire *Book of Zohar* and the writings of the Ari, and to make the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah accessible to every single person. He was also the first to publish a Kabbalistic paper and disseminate it among the people. His heart ached with concern for the future of the people of Israel and the world at large, a concern that controlled his every move.

Struggling to Make Aliyah

That day in 1921 was not the first time Baal HaSulam had expressed his desire to immigrate to Israel. A few years earlier, he had tried to arrange *Aliyah* for a group of one hundred families and to establish a new settlement in Israel. “Dark clouds are looming in the skies of Europe,” he proclaimed to anyone who would listen. “The clock is ticking, and time is of the essence.”

The group had already ordered homes to be shipped from Sweden and was getting ready to make *Aliyah*, when the Warsaw rabbis found out about the plan. Concerned about the influence of secularity in Israel, the rabbis forbade the group to leave. Instead, by strongly pressuring the group members to remain, they eventually caused it to disperse.

Baal HaSulam, who organized the group, was ostracized, humiliated by the city rabbis, and relieved of his office as a rabbi. Yet, he did not give up, but continued to pursue his efforts. Shortly afterwards, and penniless, Rabbi Ashlag made *Aliyah* with his family and settled in Jerusalem.



Rekindling the Love

It was the end of the forties, at the home of David Ben-Gurion at 17 KKL St. in Tel Aviv. At eight o'clock in the evening; the Director of The People's Administration seemed fascinated as he listened to the man sitting in front of him... If we get close enough we will hear fragments of words: “David,” says the man passionately, “we can build an independent and happy state here, if we only knew how to rekindle the natural love, latent within us...”

He continues, “We must make sure that when the state is established here, its citizens will care for each other. Only in this way will we have a natural and secure basis on which to build and continue our existence as a nation...”

“Many times,” says David Ben-Gurion, “I met with Baal HaSulam to discuss Kabbalah and the future of the nation.”

Why did Ben-Gurion meet with Baal HaSulam on so many occasions? What did Baal HaSulam tell him and why was Ben-Gurion so intrigued by what he had to say?

Baal HaSulam knew the essence and uniqueness of his people. He knew that the people of Israel could only survive on the basis of the spiritual law of love

of man. In his discussions with Ben-Gurion, he emphasized time and again: “To succeed in our mutual mission and build a united community here,” he said, “we must evoke within us the spark of love for our fellow men. Otherwise, sooner or later we will not find common ground.”

However, Ben-Gurion was not the only one. Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag met with all the leaders of the nation of that time, including Moshe Sharet, Zalman Shazar, Moshe Aram, and Chaim Arlozorov. Oblivious to differences in mentality and appearance, Baal HaSulam's sole concern was for the future of the people of Israel.

Kabbalah for the People

“I am happy to have been born in such a generation, when it is already permitted to publicize the wisdom of truth.”

Baal HaSulam, “The Wisdom of Kabbalah and Its Essence”

Baal HaSulam did not settle for meetings with the leaders of the nation. Soon after his arrival in Israel, he dedicated all his time to teaching and spreading the method for achieving love of man. In 1933, he decided to publish a series of articles intended to pave the way to true unification of the people.

Books
DVDs
CDs

ATTAINING THE WORLDS BEYOND

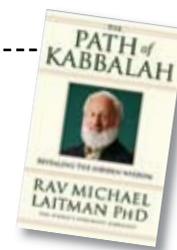
KABBALAH REVEALED
THE ORDINARY PERSON'S GUIDE TO A MORE PEACEFUL LIFE

KABBALAH BEGINNERS

www.kabbalahbooks.info

THE PATH OF KABBALAH

“Our deepest desire is to cleave to the Creator. This is everyone’s unconscious desire... imprinted in us to begin with and it is the only desire that we are actually eager to satisfy.”



A Paper Written in Love

On June 5, 1940, Baal HaSulam decided to take a revolutionary step: he gathered the core ideas of the wisdom of Kabbalah, rewrote them in simple terms and published them in the first Kabbalistic paper in history, *HaUma* (*The Nation*). In the paper, Baal HaSulam addressed the nation with a single message: **We must unite!**

Unfortunately, those who opposed the dissemination of Kabbalah turned to the British Mandate authorities and spread rumors to make them shut down the paper. Thus, after only one issue, the first paper that tried to spread unity, bonding, and love of man was discontinued.

Yet, Baal HaSulam was not deterred by these attempts to stop him from sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah. He was determined to do all he could to disseminate the wisdom, and began to write his life’s work, the *Sulam* (Ladder) Commentary on *The Book of Zohar*.

A Ladder with its Top Reaching to Heaven

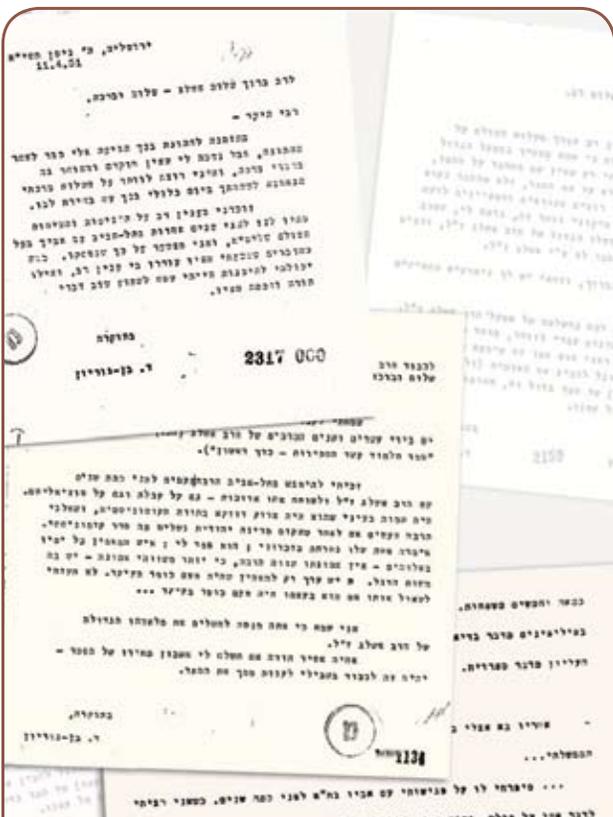
The scene is Tel Aviv, in a rickety building, almost a ruin. Baal HaSulam is already in his late sixties. For many long hours he stands bent over an old printing press and organizes the letters with what little strength remains in him. The lead in the letters has already harmed his health, but he does not despair. On the contrary, his face is luminous. “I must finish the work” he thinks, “because the destiny of the entire world is at stake...” He straightens up, takes a deep breath and continues his work...

Baal HaSulam summoned what little strength he had had left to get out of his sickbed, ignoring his doctor’s orders to rest, and carried on writing. He worked eighteen hours a day. When he fell asleep, his wife would pull at his fingers to remove the pencil from his clenched, arthritic hand.

Since he could not afford to hire a typesetter, Baal HaSulam did the typesetting himself. He would set each letter in its place, preparing *The Book of Zohar* for print.

Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag completed his role. He left us with the *Sulam* Commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, and *The Study of Ten Sefirot*—a comprehensive commentary on the writings of the Ari. He paved the way for our happiness, wholeness, and eternity. All we need to do is follow it and climb the spiritual ladder he had set for us, “a ladder set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven” (Genesis 28:12).

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/64



“I see great importance to the completion of Rabbi Ashlag’s endeavors. I have always regretted the absence of a Hebrew translation to *The Zohar*. Indeed, the Bialik Institute published a partial translation, but it is appropriate that this book be in the hands of the Hebrew reader, who cannot understand the Aramaic, in its entirety. ... this great book... occupies a very important position in the spiritual life of our people.”

Ben-Gurion Archives,
correspondences,
January 6, 1960

“Time to Act” was his first article, and its title testifies to Baal HaSulam’s resolute intention to make the wisdom of Kabbalah suitable to our generation. Until his time, Kabbalah had been securely hidden; however, all that was about to change. Humanity needed the wisdom of Kabbalah, and Baal HaSulam was determined to introduce it to the world.

As a major part of his dissemination efforts, Baal HaSulam interpreted the writings of the Ari and published his commentaries in a momentous six-volume composition, *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (*The Study of the Ten Sefirot*).

In his introduction to the book, Baal HaSulam wrote that it was intended to enable every person to answer the question, “What is the meaning of my life?”

“Only through the dissemination of the wisdom of Kabbalah to the masses will we merit complete redemption,” asserts Baal HaSulam unequivocally. “And since that is the case, we are obligated to establish schools and write books in order to accelerate the circulation of the wisdom throughout the nation.”

www.

AriOnline

.info



**FREE INTERACTIVE
VIDEO COURSES**





Discover the authentic teaching

Expand your senses

Reveal your higher self



ARI Ashlag Research Institute

Online Kabbalah Education Center



ATTAINING THE WORLDS BEYOND

“Kabbalah speaks about us as being a part of the Creator that He distanced from Himself.”

■ Campus Kabbalah

125 DEGREES TO HAPPINESS

**WE HAVE DESCENDED 125 DEGREES AWAY FROM THE CREATOR.
NOW IT IS TIME TO CLIMB BACK UP AND REKINDLE THE BOND**

“Behold that before the emanations were emanated and the creatures were created, the Upper, Simple Light had filled the whole existence.”

Rabbi Isaac Luria
(The Holy Ari),
Tree of Life

by Avi Ventura

The term “Upper Light” pertains to the Creator, whose only desire is to impart infinite abundance. To accomplish His desire to give abundance, the Creator created a creature that can receive the abundance that He wants to give. The origin of the word *Bara* (created) is in the Aramaic word *Bar* (outside); it means “to bring out.” The Creator-creation relationship is therefore a relationship between the internal and the external: the Creator being the innermost part of creation, and creation being anything that is not Him.

Separation Strengthens

For the creature, contact with the Creator is the greatest possible pleasure. Because the Creator’s wish is to bestow abundance, He created within the creature the sole wish for precisely the abundance that He wants to give it.

However, in such a state, the creature has no independence; it is entirely dominated by the desire for pleasure. In that sense, there is no creature here, an independent, autonomous being that chooses to receive; instead, what exists is but a “product” of the Creator’s desire to give. For the creature to acquire independent and free will, to build a genuine relationship with the Creator, it must first become detached from the Creator, the source of

the pleasure. Only in that state can the creature decide to advance toward the Creator of its own free will.

As a father who wants his son to be as strong and as free as him, the Creator gradually steps away from the creature, allowing it to learn how to attain His state by itself. But detachment from the Creator is not an abrupt event. It is a gradual decline over 125 degrees, to the degree of this world.

As just stated, the creature’s decline is initiated in order for it to return to the Creator, but this time, it must do so independently. Each such decline in degree by the creature symbolizes the exit from the inside out, the growing distance from the Creator, to the point of complete detachment. When the creature chooses to return to the Creator and climb the spiritual ladder, it will traverse the distance from the Creator and reestablish its union with Him. During this process, the creature will gain true independence and will ultimately unite with the Creator.

From Above Downward, and from Below Upward

The detachment process ends in the shattering of the creature into myriad pieces, called “souls.” At the end of the process, these pieces fall into the outermost place, the farthest from the Creator, known as “this world,” or “the corporeal world.”

In this state, the existence of the Creator is totally hidden from the souls. The reason the corporeal world exists is to allow us to choose returning to

the Creator over our attachment to this world, and to do it of our own free will.

After the long process that has brought us to total detachment from the Creator, we now have a choice to begin the gradual and conscious climb to our root, the Creator. The wisdom of Kabbalah can guide our generation on its spiritual path along the 125 degrees back to the sensation of the complete reality—the Creator.

Returning to the Complete Reality

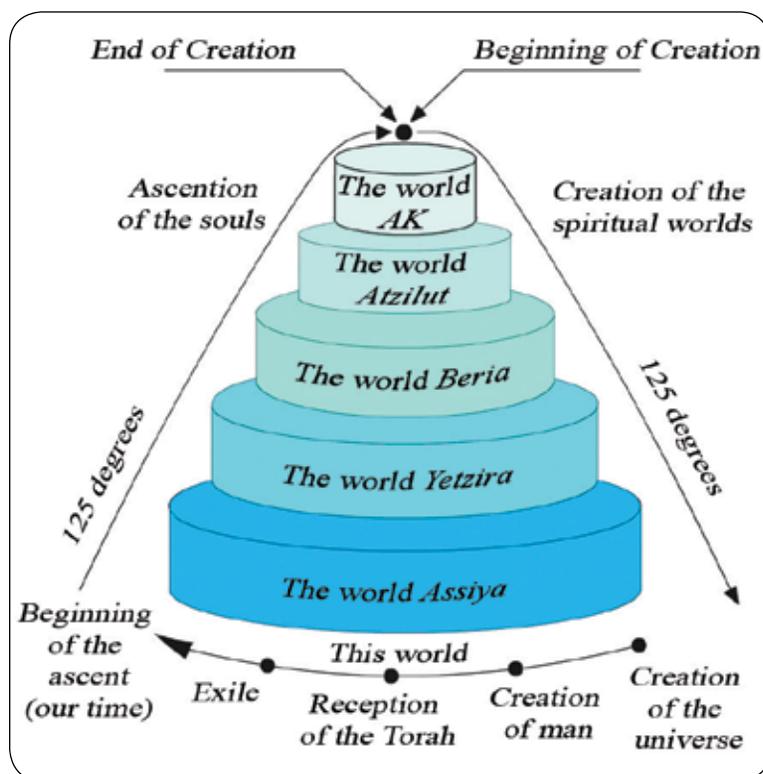
As the Creator is the internal and creation the external, souls, too, are divided into internal and external. In Kabbalah, the internal part is called “the nation of Israel” and the external part is called “the nations of the world.” The inner part is considered closer to the Creator, and should therefore initiate the return of the souls to the Creator.

The structure of the physical world is an exact replica of the spiritual world. This is why the nation of Israel, in our world, appears as a group of people whose goal is to lead the return to the recognition of the Creator.

In order to start off the process, the people of Israel were given the method of Kabbalah. Over the years, Israel has lost its contact with the method, except for a handful of people called “Kabbalists.” The Kabbalists kept the wisdom secret, to be used at the proper time. Since early in the twentieth century, Kabbalists have been stating that we should choose to use this method now to reinstate our bond with the Creator.

The Correct Ratio between Internal and External

To lead the return of the souls to the Creator, the Israeli nation needs only this: to prefer the internal to the external, that is, to want to rekindle the bond with the Creator. By doing so, we will intensify the importance we ascribe to spirituality over corporeality, and grant merit to the eternal world, compared to the temporal. One who has already determined the right proportions between internal and external draws abundance from Above, and this brings wholeness and peace to that individual, to the ones close to him or her, and eventually to the whole world. When the whole of Israel chooses this approach, we will all be as one unit, and every soul will return to the highest degree on the ladder, to eternity and bliss.



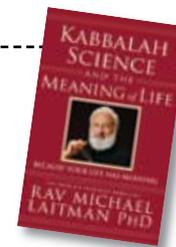
In his article, “The Essence of the Wisdom of Kabbalah,” Baal HaSulam addresses this very issue: “The wisdom of Kabbalah is generally divided into two parallel, identical orders like two drops in a pond. The only difference between them is that the first order extends from above downward, to this world, and the second order travels from below upward, through precisely the same routes and make-ups imprinted at the root when they appeared from above downward.”

In the words of Baal HaSulam (“A Handmaid that is Heir to Her Mistress”): “The worlds are generally divided into internality and externality... and you should know that the branch extending from the internality are the people of Israel... they contain the preparation to be able to develop and grow, until they arrive. They will also motivate the nations to reach the overall purpose.”

WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/65

KABBALAH SCIENCE AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

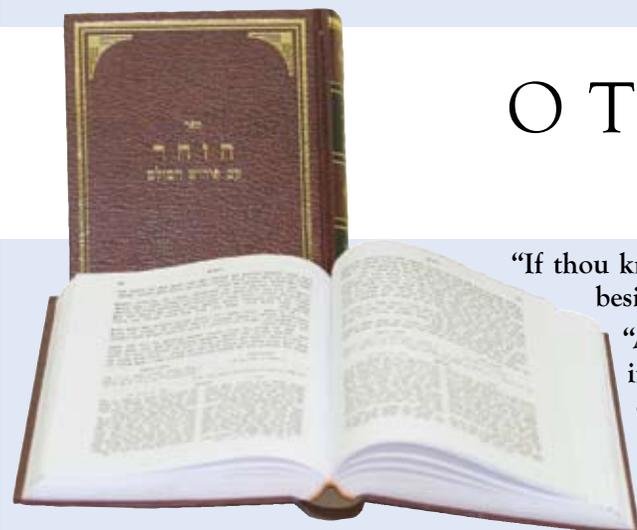
“Nothing is new from the Creator’s perspective; it is only hidden from us so we may independently choose to spiritually evolve.”



Unraveling The Zohar

IF THOU KNOW NOT, O THOU FAIREST AMONG WOMEN

BASED ON THE ESSAY FROM THE BOOK OF ZOHAR, “THE WISDOM A MAN NEEDS”
(NEW ZOHAR WITH THE SULAM COMMENTARY, SONG OF SONGS, ITEM 482)



“If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids, beside the shepherds’ tents” (*Song of Songs* 1:8).

“Anyone who goes to that world without knowing the secrets of the Torah, even if there are many good deeds in him, is taken outside all of the gates of that world.

“Come and see what is written, If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, the Creator replies to the soul: If you have come without looking in the wisdom before coming here, and you do not know the secrets of the Upper World, go thy way, you are not worthy of entering here without knowledge. Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, meaning reincarnate in the world, and you will know by the footsteps of the flock.”

New Zohar with the Sulam Commentary, Song of Songs, Vol. 10

by Dudi Aharoni

In a profound and mysterious essay, the author of *The Book of Zohar*, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai (Rashbi), explains the above text in the book *The Song of Songs*. *The Song of Songs* is a Kabbalistic text dealing solely with one’s perception of the Upper Worlds. This composition describes the states that a soul experiences as it climbs up the spiritual ladder, from the first degree to the complete and eternal bonding with the Upper Force, the Creator.

Rashbi reveals what happens to an individual whose earthly life has terminated without having begun the correction process of one’s soul. In such a state, the soul returns to

the spiritual world as “a point in its spiritual root.”

This soul begins to experience reality through special senses, but it can only experience a tiny fraction of the spiritual reality, since it did not evolve spiritually. Rashbi explains that at this point, the soul feels that the Upper Force is “speaking” to it.

In Kabbalah, the term “speaking” means “revealing.” A soul that experiences the spiritual world discovers that the purpose of creation is to bring it to perfection and eternity, just like the Creator. But when a soul that did not evolve in our world rises to the Upper World, it feels only the gap between its own qualities and the qualities of

the Creator. Such a soul senses how remote it is from realizing its vocation. When this happens, a soul begins to want to close the gap and correct itself in order to achieve wholeness and eternity.

In *The Book of Zohar*, this state is described as the Creator “speaking” to the soul, telling it, “If thou know not, O thou fairest among women.” Rashbi explains this saying in the following way: “If you have come without looking in the wisdom before coming here, and you do not know the secrets of the Upper World, go thy way; you are not worthy of entering here without knowledge. Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, meaning reincarnate in the world.”

To exist in the Upper World, a soul must have equal qualities to those of the Creator. For this to be, the soul should develop its quality of loving and giving. This is why a soul that did not correct itself is told to leave, return to the corporeal reality, be born in a physical body, grow, and achieve a state where it stands on its own and can decide which path to take.

According to the greatest Kabbalists, such as the Rashbi, the Holy Ari, and Baal HaSulam, the wisdom of Kabbalah is the only means by which a soul can begin to discover the spiritual world. This is why Rashbi stresses that we must all know the secrets of the Torah, which is the Kabbalah.

When we begin to implement the wisdom of Kabbalah in our lives, we correct our souls and equalize our qualities with the Creator’s quality of love and benevolence.

When this happens, our souls are rewarded with all the wondrous secrets of creation—the *Thought of Creation*. The next time such a soul stands before the Upper Force, it will achieve perfect and everlasting bonding with It. Moreover, in that state, it will not have to return to this world “by the footsteps of the flock.” Instead, it will experience the full grandeur of the spiritual reality.

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/66

extras

THE NEXT WORLD

Many think that “the next world” is a reality that awaits us after our departure from this world. But according to the wisdom of Kabbalah, the next world relates to the reality that we attain as we evolve on the spiritual path, which is also the reality we feel once the body has passed away. A person who did not fully achieve the spiritual world will have to reincarnate into this world until he or she fully attains spirituality.

Kabbalists explain that “the next world” is a special state that one attains during one’s life. In other words, every time one attains another spiritual degree, the new degree is considered “the next world,” compared to the previous degree.

“Man is the center of reality; the upper worlds, this corporeal world, and everything within them were not created but for him.”

Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“Introduction to the Book of Zohar”





THIS IS NOT
KABBALAH

KABBALAH: USER MANUAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS KABBALAH?

Kabbalah is a method of revealing divinity to a person who is in this world. It explains to us the purpose of life and how to fulfill this purpose. Kabbalah sheds light on the processes we go through during our lives. It also describes what happens to the soul after life in this world ends.

WHO ARE KABBALISTS?

Kabbalists are people who discovered and understood the overall reality—our world and the Upper World. They explain to us how a person can reach eternal life while still living in this world.

WHY NOW?

In order to discover the wisdom of Kabbalah as the method for attaining happy and tranquil life, humanity had to undergo several developmental phases. Kabbalists explain that in our time, when humanity has reached the last phase of its development, our generation is now ready and mature enough for Kabbalah to reveal divinity to all.

Q: What is the relationship between Kabbalah, red strings and holy water?

There is no connection. Red strings, holy water and other products are a lucrative commercial invention created in the past two decades.

Q: Is Kabbalah related to tarot cards, astrology and numerology?

No. Tarot cards, astrology and numerology are mystical practices which were mistakenly associated with Kabbalah during the past one hundred years.

Q: What is Kabbalistic meditation?

There is no Kabbalistic meditation. Kabbalah teaches a person how to internally change relating to other people—moving from hate to love.

Q: Are there any amulets in Kabbalah?

No. In our world, there are no physical objects that bear any spiritual contents. Amulets can only help a person as a psychological support.

MYTHS AND FACTS

Myth: Kabbalah is a religion.
Fact: Kabbalah is a science—the physics of the overall reality. It is a wisdom that reveals the comprehensive reality that is normally hidden from our senses.

Myth: Kabbalah is reserved for a minority of persons and only men over 40 years of age are allowed to learn it.
Fact: During the exile Kabbalah was only studied by a few select individuals. However, since the time of the Ari (the 16th century), it is available to all.

Myth: Kabbalah deals with magic.
Fact: Kabbalah does not deal with magic or any other sorcery; rather, it deals with a pragmatic investigation of reality.

Myth: Kabbalah is a sect.
Fact: Kabbalah is a wisdom and a science open to every person without any restrictions.

Myth: Kabbalah is related to “New Age” and is a trend—a passing phenomenon.
Fact: Kabbalah is humanity’s oldest wisdom, its beginnings were 5,000 years ago.

Kabbalah Sources

KABBALISTS ON

KABBALAH

“I am happy to have been born in such a generation, when it is already permitted to publicize the wisdom of truth. ... Hence, we must establish schools and compose books to accelerate the dissemination of the wisdom.”

Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“The Wisdom of Kabbalah and Its Essence”

“The crown of the Torah is the wisdom of Kabbalah, from which most people retire. Reach out your hand, hold it, and do not turn away from it, for one who did not taste this wisdom, has never seen Light and is walking in darkness.”

Rabbi Pinchas Ben Meir,
Sefer HaBrit (The Covenant Book)

“For the intrinsic content of this teaching is worthy and mandatory for every person and for every nation on Earth.”

Rav Kook,
Orot HaRaiah (Lights of the Raaiyah)

THE WISDOM OF
KABBALAH
www.kabbalah.info

Live Lessons, Films
eBooks, Clips, Audio Books
and lots more...
and it's all free

Learning Center | Kabbalah TV | Kabbalah Today | About Us | Contact Us | Archive | Contact Us | About Us

What is Kabbalah?
• What is Kabbalah?
• Why am I looking for something spiritual?
• What does Kabbalah teach?
• What does studying Kabbalah do for me?
• What is reality?
• Why do I feel better?
• Why Kabbalah?
• Rav Michael Laitman's questions

Introduction
• Overview
• Preface
• Introductory Lecture
• Articles for Beginners
• Time to Act
• Dispensing the Secrets
• The Sixth Sense
• Who am I?
• Freedom of Will
• Selected Issues from Kabbalah M. Laitman
• Talk about

Most Baruch Paper (online version)
KABBALAH TODAY

The World's
Largest Source
for Authentic
Kabbalah

www.kabbalah.info

About Bnei Baruch

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization committed to sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah in order to raise humankind's level of spirituality. Its founder and president, Kabbalist Rav Michael Laitman, PhD, was the disciple and personal assistant to Rabbi Baruch Ashlag, son of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (author of the *Sulam* [Ladder] commentary on *The Book of Zohar*).

Bnei Baruch provides individuals of all faiths, religions, and cultures with the precise tools they will need to embark on a fascinating journey of self-discovery and spiritual ascent. Its teaching method focuses primarily on the inner processes that people experience, each at his or her own pace.

In recent years, a massive worldwide search for the answers to life's questions has been gaining momentum. Society has lost its ability to perceive reality as it is, and in its place, superficial and often misleading concepts have appeared. Bnei Baruch reaches out to all those who are seeking awareness beyond the ordinary, who wish to understand their true purpose for being here.

Bnei Baruch's approach to understanding our experience of life on earth is both practical and reliable. By studying Ashlag's method, based on authentic writings, we can overcome the trials of everyday life, and initiate a process by which we will move beyond our present boundaries and limitations.

In addition to *Kabbalah Today*, Bnei Baruch offers a variety of avenues for further study. Among them are: Kabbalah TV (www.kab.tv), the Online Kabbalah Education Center (www.arionline.info), and www.kabbalah.info, the largest, most comprehensive Kabbalah site on the Internet.

Bnei Baruch welcomes people of all ages and lifestyles to engage in this rewarding process.

About Kabbalah Today

In 1940, Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) published the first and, as it turned out, the last issue of his Kabbalah paper *HaUma* (*The Nation*). Its aim was to introduce the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah in a contemporary style and language. The paper was shut down by the British Mandate authorities after having received malicious (and false) information that the journal propagated communism. Nevertheless, the goals for which *The Nation* was published are even more valid today than ever.

Kabbalah Today continues the spirit of *The Nation*. It is a Kabbalah paper that shares the ancient wisdom of Kabbalah in a contemporary style, and aims to reach people from all walks of life. Its sections provide readers with a wide variety of content, presented in different styles and approaches, while guaranteeing that the material is true to authentic Kabbalah texts such as *The Book of Zohar*, *The Tree of Life*, and the writings of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag.

No prior knowledge is required to read *Kabbalah Today*.

It is our hope that you will enjoy reading *Kabbalah Today* as much as we enjoy making it.

Sincerely,
Kabbalah Today editorial staff

If you wish to share your comments and feedback with, please write to:

english@kabbalah.info

Editorial Staff

Editorial Board: Chaim Ratz, Oren Levi, Eli Vinokur, Lior Gur, Michael R. Kellogg, Josia Nakash

Copy Editor: Claire Gerus

Graphic Design & Layout: Gia Basilaia, Olga Ohayon, Eugene Nemirovsky, Alex Khodos, Baruch Khovov

Distribution: Ilya Ioffe

Printing: Eugene Fridkin, Eugene Levit

Published by

Bnei Baruch Association

PO Box 1552

Ramat Gan 52115, Israel

E-mail: english@kabbalah.info

Web: www.kabbalah.info

Telephone: +972-3-9226723

Fax: +972-3-9226741

Help Share Kabbalah

Donations to help share *Kabbalah Today* and other worldwide distribution projects of the Bnei Baruch Association are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible in the United States and Canada.

Through Kabbalah we can reveal nature's complete picture, achieve world peace, eternal life and unbounded fulfillment, all while living in this world. All efforts of the Bnei Baruch Association are aimed solely at achieving these goals.

Bnei Baruch Association USA,
194 Quentin Road, 2nd floor,
Brooklyn, NY 11223

Bnei Baruch Association Canada,
3701 Chesswood Drive, Suite 216,
Toronto, Ontario M3J 2P6

Subscribe to Receive Kabbalah Today by Mail

First name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State (Province): _____

Zip (Postal Code): _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Make a \$6 (6 issues) check and mail it together with your filled out subscription coupon, to one of the following:

In the US:
Payable to "Bnei Baruch USA,"
194 Quentin Road, 2nd floor,
Brooklyn, NY 11223

In Canada:
Payable to "Bnei Baruch Toronto,"
3701 Chesswood Drive, Suite 216,
Toronto, Ontario M3J 2P6