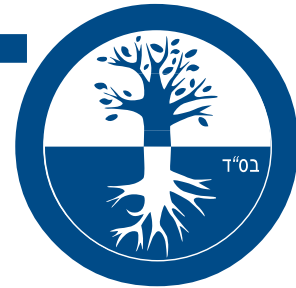


# KABBALAH TODAY

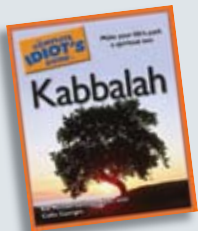


**FREE**

JULY 2007, #5 | A PUBLICATION OF THE BNEI BARUCH ASSOCIATION FOUNDED BY RAV MICHAEL LAITMAN, PHD | [www.kabtoday.com](http://www.kabtoday.com)

## A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR NO IDIOTS

New comprehensive yet easygoing guide to Kabbalah



» PAGE 3

## KABBALAH ICONS

The Rabash - Baal HaSulam's son and successor

» PAGE 4

## SOUL SPLITTING

If there were one billion people fewer in the world, would we feel that something was missing?



» PAGE 6

## KABBALAH SOURCES

Baal HaSulam on the perception of reality



» PAGE 7

## CONTRADICTORY PHENOMENA

In all our fields of research, we actually research ourselves, not the world around us

» PAGE 7

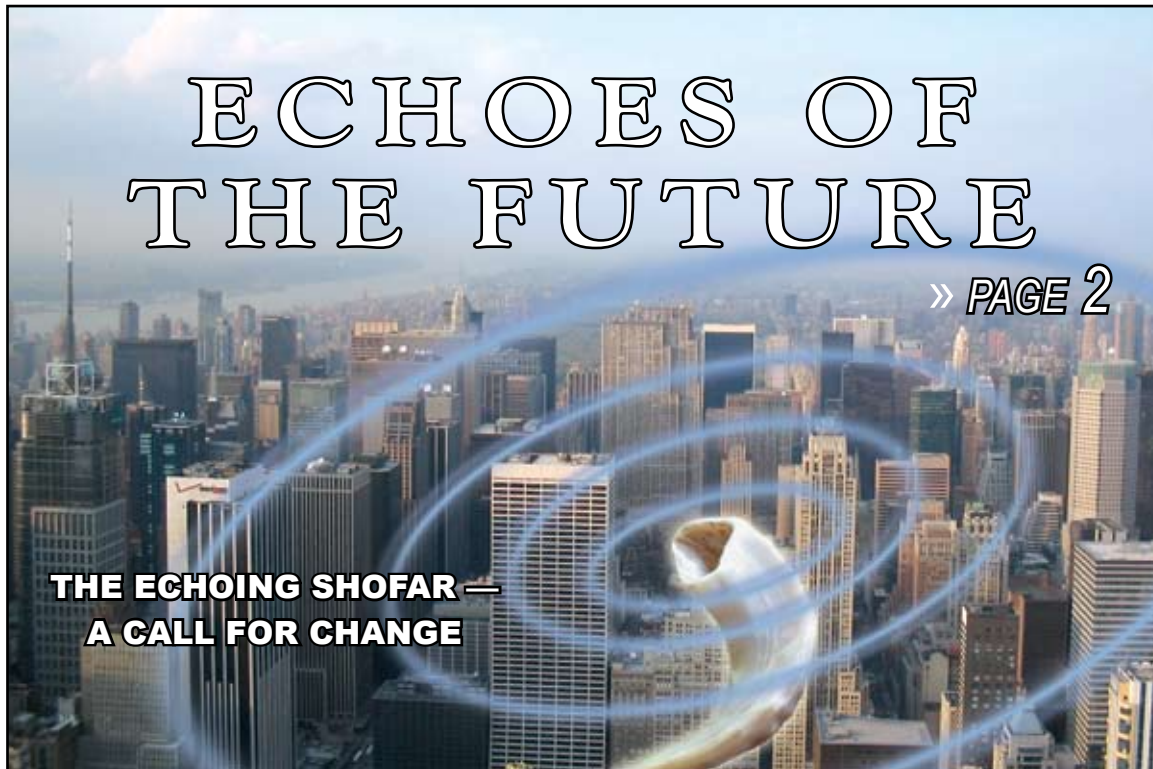
## WHAT IS (AND IS NOT) KABBALAH?

Let's clear up the misunderstandings and misconceptions

» PAGE 8

# ECHOES OF THE FUTURE

» PAGE 2



**THE ECHOING SHOFAR — A CALL FOR CHANGE**

## CREATION, EVOLUTION AND BEYOND

HUMANITY HAS BEEN THROUGH A LOT. NOW WE WANT TO KNOW HOW IT ALL BEGAN AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

by Ron Gilboa

Our time in history is very special, the kind we learn about in history books years after it unfolds. Numerous events are happening daily and in every possible realm. Changes are occurring more often than ever, and at a pace that seems constantly faster.

Humanity has already been through great changes, but this time, it seems we are facing a fateful crossroads. Millennia of evolution are all pointing to a special point in time: ours.

### *The Beginning*

In the beginning, man thought that Earth was flat, and that if one only walked far enough, he or she would reach the end of the world. In those days, people believed that a special God was assigned for each of the

world's phenomena. But as science evolved, people developed a better understanding of the world we live in. Yet, one question remained unresolved: "How did it all begin?"

Ancient books of Kabbalah reveal that questions about how the world began occupied the minds of the first Kabbalists as early as 5,000 years ago. They discovered that the reality prior to our arrival started with a tiny spark of spiritual energy. This burst into the corporeal space about fifteen billion years ago created our universe. Science calls it "the big bang."

The big bang created the conditions for the existence of life on Earth. Baal HaSulam, generally regarded as the greatest Kabbalist of the twentieth century, writes about it in a paper he published in 1940 under the title, *The Nation*:

"However, the planet had not yet grown still from the war between the forces, and after some time the liquid force of fire overpowered and erupted in a great noise from the bowels of the Earth, rising and shattering the cold hard crust to pieces, turning the planet into a liquid ball of fire once again. Then an era of new wars began until the cool force overpowered the force of fire once more, and a second crust was chilled around the ball, harder, thicker, and more durable against the outbreak of the fluids from amidst the ball.

"...Thus, the eons interchanged, and every time the cooling force was victorious, the crust it made was thicker. Finally, the positive forces overpowered the

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

### Editor's Note

## *Our Natural Desire to Know Why*

In each of us lies an unresolved riddle concerning the purpose of life. Every so often we ask ourselves questions such as: "Why are we here?" "How were we created?" "Is there a purpose to our experiences, both personal and global?" and "Where are we headed?"

For the most part, we try to avoid these kinds of questions. We do not think of them as something that can be or was even meant to be answered. We have created a society that makes it convenient for us to ignore our natural desire to know why we are alive. In the eyes of society, it is much more acceptable to simply chase after the trifle day-to-day chores and joys of life. Those of us who do question the meaning of life are often considered odd or in some cases even somewhat bizarre.

Today, however, life's meaning is not a question we can put aside. The increasing drug abuse, depression, suicides, and violence, and such trends as the new age, mysticism, and radical cults are all signs that humanity is looking for the answer.

It is time for the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah to come out of its "hiding" and present humanity with the means to connect to the source and the purpose of its Creation.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of *Kabbalah Today* and that you will not hesitate to share your thoughts and comments with us.

Have a pleasant read.





## WONDROUS WISDOM

“The more we discover the true situation in our world, the more we will be ready for an inner change.”

# ECHOES OF THE FUTURE

by Chaim Ratz

It is hard to ignore the increasing popularity of the wisdom of Kabbalah in Israel and throughout the world. Many reasons have been linked to it: a celebrity trend, a fad, a part of the New Age trend, etc...Or, could something else be happening here? Is it possible that we are at the onset of a profound change that the whole of humanity is experiencing?

Furthermore, the wisdom of Kabbalah has traditionally been studied in secret by only a chosen few in each generation. Hence, we have to wonder at the reason for the sudden interest, and why now?

To get some reliable answers to these questions, we must turn to the *authentic* sources of Kabbalah, such as Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai's *The Book of Zohar*, the writings of the Ari, and the writings of their commentator, the greatest Kabbalist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rav Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam).

Perhaps once we have scrutinized these sources more

**TODAY, THE ECHOING SOUND OF THE SHOFAR IS NOT JUST A JEWISH SYMBOL. IT REPRESENTS THE SOUND THAT EMANATES FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE HUMAN HEART, ASKING FOR A CHANGE IN TODAY'S REALITY**

deeply, we will understand that the interest in Kabbalah and the quest for a real answer to life's meaning is not merely a trend or a fad. Rather, we will find that the message of Kabbalah is sounding ever louder, like the voice of the *Shofar* (ram's horn), which can travel great distances.

## The Key to Humanity's Good Future

“And the dissemination of the wisdom in the masses is called a *Shofar*. Like the *Shofar*, whose voice travels a great distance, the echo of the wisdom will spread all over the world... the nations will hear and acknowledge that there is Godly wisdom in Israel.”

Baal HaSulam,  
“A Messiah's *Shofar*”

In our search for happiness, we have already tried numerous solutions to humanity's continuing problems. We have tried uninhibited arms race, developed low-inflation economies, created diverse cultures based on various traditions, and have welcomed the high-tech and scientific revolutions. But we still haven't found the real means to achieving peace and love.

In his article “A Messiah's *Shofar*,” Baal HaSulam declares that it is necessary to reveal the only secret Israel possesses, which can bring peace and quiet to the whole world: the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah.

## Why Israel First?

The goal of achieving the purpose of Creation rests with all of humanity. The path to the goal of our existence requires correcting the ego, the force that propels us into motion. All of us are in this boat and we cannot avoid it.

Since this change could not begin simultaneously with all the nations of the world, the Creator gave Israel the Torah as a means to bring the Light that will correct the human ego. This Torah contains the wisdom of Kabbalah, which is now emerging the world over. Clearly, it is easy to mistakenly think that Israel's role has to do with some kind of “nationalism.”

It is commonly known that unlike all other nations, the nation of Israel has no genetic root. About 5,000 years ago, Abraham started this nation. Abraham was a Babylonian, who, as many of us do today, searched for life's purpose. His method of searching was passed from one generation to the next until it was time to implement it in the whole of humankind.

## Implement & Disseminate

“The generation is worthy of it, as it is the last generation, which stands at the very threshold of complete redemption. And for this reason it is worthy of beginning to hear the voice of Messiah's horn, which is the revealing of the secrets.”

Baal HaSulam,  
“A Messiah's *Shofar*”

As part of Israel's use of Abraham's method to find life's purpose, the Jews' mission is to share this wisdom with the rest of humankind so they, too, can use it. Disseminating the method in the broadest manner is called *Shofar*. The engagement of the people of Israel in the wisdom of Kabbalah will bring with it an abundance that will be shared by all the people in the world. In his article, “The Arvut” (Mutual Guarantee), Baal HaSulam stresses that the nation of Israel is only a channel, a transition tunnel for the implementation of this method.

In the beginning, disseminating the correction-method to the world was Israel's natural desire. It existed everywhere in the nation. Today, however, we are renouncing our imperative mission. In doing so, we are making the whole world pressure us, as they subconsciously recognize that their own spiritual progress is linked and depends on the spiritual progress of Israel.

However, we have had to absorb much stigma towards our vocation. Whenever the words “chosen people” are mentioned in relation to the Jewish people, they stir in us emotions of revulsion and disgust. Thus, Israel is vehemently rejecting its role.

But renouncing the role means intensified pain and suffering for the people of Israel.



Rav Avraham

Kook, a great Kabbalist and the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, said in this regard:

“When we are not blowing this horn, the enemies of Israel come and they blow in our ears for redemption... they warn and make noise in our ears, and give us no rest. They force us to heed the voice of the *Shofar*, and those who do not hear for their ears have been sealed, will hear the voice of the *Shofar* of the Jews' plight, that is, the suffering will force them to listen to it after all.”

Rav Kook,  
Articles of the Raiah

The wisdom of Kabbalah is a means by which humankind can do good to itself, to the environment, and to the whole world. It tells us about the *true love of man*, the cure for all of humanity's afflictions. The purpose of Kabbalah is to bring bonding and unity between the people of Israel and all other nations, and make us all one Light-filled soul. The wisdom of Kabbalah holds within it the knowledge of how every nation can function in reality, and how it fits into the structure of the common soul called “humanity.”

This is the *Shofar* of the Messiah, beginning to sound in Israel and the world over: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great horn shall be blown” (Isaiah 27:13)—a horn of peace, of unity, abundance and love.

WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
www.kabtoday.com/links/51

## ISRAEL, JEW

When we encounter terms such as “Israel” and “Jew,” we naturally give them corporeal definitions pertaining to one's nationality, birthplace, or native tongue. The Kabbalistic approach to these terms, however, is slightly different...

**Israel** is actually a combination of two words: *Yashar* (straight) and *El* (God).

So, to be an Israeli doesn't necessarily mean having an Israeli ID and living in the physical land of Israel. Rather, an Israeli is one with an attraction to the Creator—the Upper Force that encompasses and governs the whole of reality. An Israeli is one who wishes to acquire the Creator's quality of love and bestowal.

“...will crave to complete one's soul and bring it back to its root, and this is discerned as 'Israel.'”

Baal HaSulam, *Pri Hacham (Fruit of a Sage)*, Letters

“And he is called *Ysrael*, by way of *Yashar El* (Straight to God)...”

The Ramchal Commentary on Hagiographa, *Proverbs*

**Jewish** – In Hebrew, *Yehudi* (Jewish) originates from the word *Yechudi*, meaning “one,” “united” or “unique.” Thus, Jewish is one who achieves unity with the Creator.

“His name is *Yehudi* (Jewish)... since he has *Yiched* (united) the name of the Creator against all of humankind.”

Midrash Raba, *Esther*, Parasha 6, Paragraph 2

“...who united his heart to one God and became a Jew.”

Baal HaTurim about Exodus 18:9



NEW BOOK

NEW BOOK

NEW BOOK

NEW BOOK

NEW BOOK

# A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR NO IDIOTS

**IT PROBABLY ISN'T THE FIRST SETTING YOU'D CONSIDER FOR REVEALING SUCH ANCIENT WISDOMS, BUT *THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO KABBALAH* IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE: COMPREHENSIVE AND EASYGOING AT THE SAME TIME**

by Daniel Tolman

Rav Laitman isn't quite the sort of person you would pick to write a book for the Idiots series. His background as a scientist and researcher showed no promise of him becoming an "easy writer." But the combination of a man of "hard facts" with the easy going style of Collin Canright proved successful, and the outcome is an easy-going, *authentic* Kabbalah book.

And don't be fooled for a minute by the flowing writing style, the facts and the knowledge are all there. By the time you have finished reading this book, you will have traversed millennia of spiritual evolution that began in Babylon, and that (according to Kabbalah) is culminating today. You will also learn about the dos and don'ts of Kabbalists, which teach you how to become one of them, should you want to.

The book is divided into four parts, adhering to the CIG series traditional structure. However, in this case the division is very helpful, because it helps focus your mind on the key message of each part.

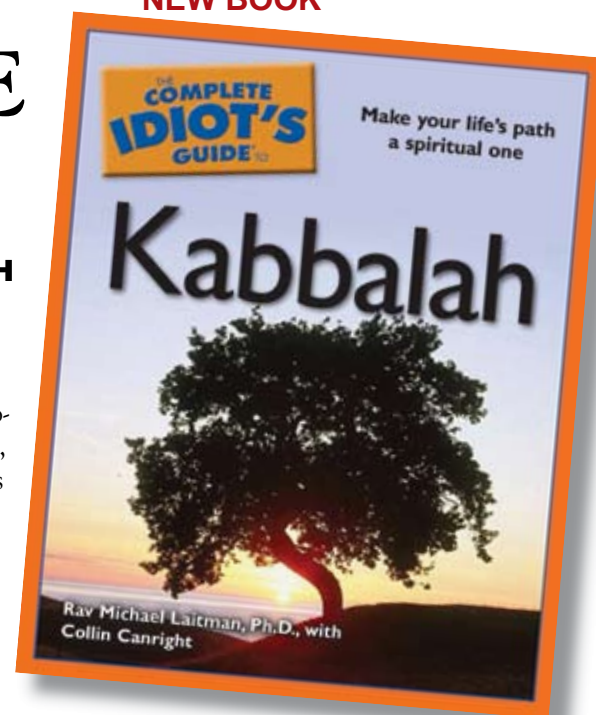
Part One deals primarily with the rapid expansion of Kabbalah in the past ten years or so. But this part does more than that: it explains the gist of Kabbalah, the difference between authentic Kabbalah and "Kabbalah-inspired" offshoots, which are not Kabbalah. In the words of the authors, "Kabbalah has always had a reputation of possessing insight into the highest forces of nature, of the spiritual worlds, and of the nature of God. As a result, people have always wanted to connect Kabbalistic terms with all kinds of teachings... The problem with such connections is that they trivialize Kabbalah and undermine its power to help us better understand our human and spiritual natures. This,

after all, is at the heart of today's interest in this teaching, and the reason Kabbalah was developed in the first place."

Part Two provides diluted "hardcore" Kabbalah knowledge. It talks about how the spiritual worlds are built, and their structure reflects on our souls.

Part Three is the gist of the personal Kabbalistic knowledge. If you want to become serious about it, this part will give you the know-how of fast advancement in Kabbalah. The concepts of spirituality explained there, and how they integrate with our perception of reality (presented in Part One) are truly remarkable, if not revolutionary. For most of us, most of the concepts presented in this part will be new.

Part Four takes a sharp turn from the inner world of a Kabbalist to the global issues we are facing today. According



to Kabbalah, climate change, depression, divorce, wars and every other problem you can think of is connected to Kabbalah, or to the fact that we are not realizing life's goal of "possessing insight into the highest forces of nature, of the spiritual worlds, and of the nature of God."

In a word, this book quite smoothly traverses the challenging terrain of authentic Kabbalah and is a true guide for those who want to know the real deal concerning Kabbalah. It is a complete guide for no idiots. ■

## CREATION, EVOLUTION AND BEYOND

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

negative forces and they came into complete harmony: the liquids took their place in the abdomen of the Earth, and the cold crust became thick enough around them to enable the creation of organic life as it is today."

The still (inanimate) nature evolved first. The next life form to emerge was vegetation. When vegetation completed its evolution, animals appeared. After several more millions of years, when the animate level completed its evolution, humans appeared.

Each of these life forms evolved independently, regardless of the preceding life form. It is important to understand that the still does not beget the vegetative, the vegetative does not beget the animate, and the animate does not beget the human. There is, rather, a connection of cause and consequence between the levels. In other words, when one life form completes its evolution, it is as though a hidden hand pushes a secret button, which sets off the emergence of the next form.

### *The First Kabbalist*

Thus, 5767 years ago, evolution had come to a level when a new sensation appeared in one man: a desire to discover what lies beyond this world. This man could not settle for a roof over his head, a family, and a good meal. To be happy, he had to know why he existed.

Although many generations of humans existed on Earth before him, this man was the first to experience the awakening of the desire for spirituality. Baal HaSulam wrote that "Adam ha Rishon (The First Man) was the first to receive a body of knowledge of everything he had seen" ("The Wisdom of Kabbalah and Its Essence").

That man's name was Adam, from the Hebrew words *Adameh LaElyon* ("I will be like the Most High") (Isaiah, 14:14), after his desire to be similar to the Upper Force. The awakening of spirituality that *Adam ha Rishon* experienced is the point from which the spiritual evolution of humanity begins. Hence, this is also the date on which the Hebrew calendar begins.

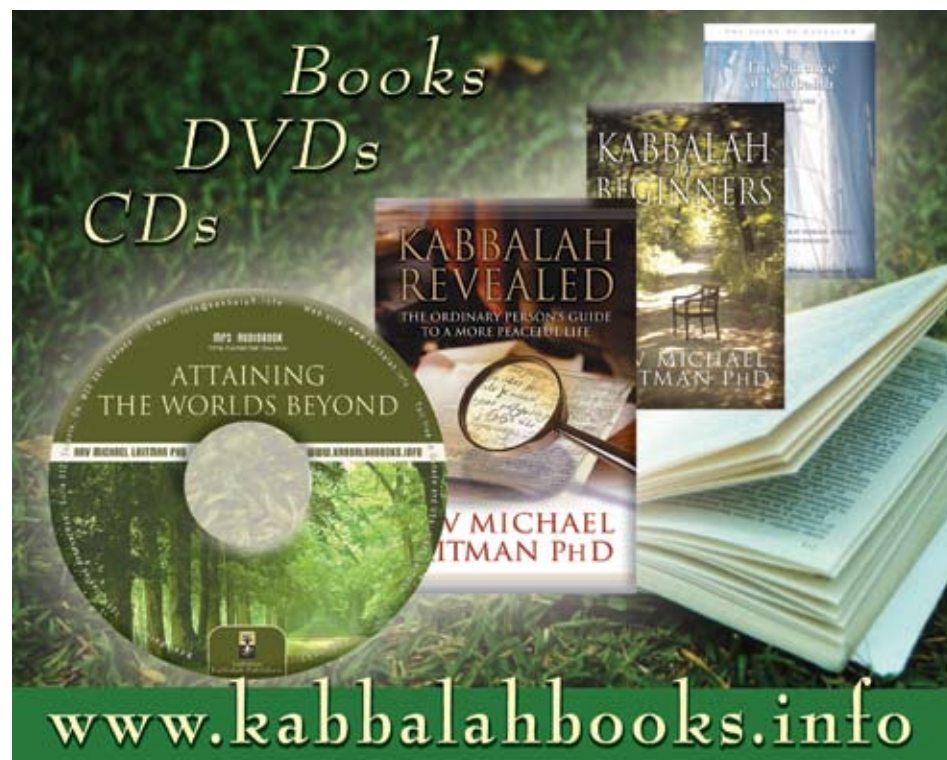
### *Wanting to Understand Life's Secret*

The sensation that awakened in *Adam ha Rishon* awakens in many of us today. The emptiness and dissatisfaction from life are the key reasons for today's prevalence of depression. Humankind is now discovering that we cannot satisfy our incessantly growing desires. At the same time, just like *Adam*

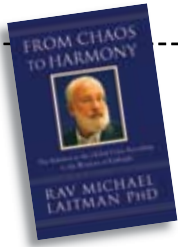
*ha Rishon*, we are beginning to need to understand the very reason for our existence.

Because of this need, Baal HaSulam continued to develop the wisdom of Kabbalah, to provide an answer to the question awakening in thousands today: "What is the meaning of my life?" ■

[WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
www.kabtoday.com/links/52](http://www.kabtoday.com/links/52)







### FROM CHAOS TO HARMONY

“Originally all people were internally connected. We felt and thought of ourselves as a single human being, and this is exactly how Nature treats us.”

■ Kabbalah Icons

# THE RABASH

## BARUCH SHALOM HALEVI ASHLAG (1907-1991)

by Eli Vinokur

Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (The Rabash), son and successor of Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) was a hidden Kabbalist. Despite his high spiritual level, the Rabash was a humble man, and spent his time studying and writing. Even so, it is hard to find words to describe even a fraction of his enormous contribution to our generation and to future generations.

### The Golden Lineage

In many ways, the Rabash was the last of a “golden lineage,” the final link in the chain of the greatest Kabbalists. This line started with Abraham the Patriarch and ended with Rabash’s father, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, followed by Rabash himself. His role in this line is perhaps the most significant for us, as he connects us to all those great Kabbalists. With his works, he adapted the method of Kabbalah to our generation.

Although he was at the apex of the spiritual ladder, the Rabash was very well connected to ordinary folk who simply wanted to know if there was something higher than this world could offer. Because of his high spiritual degree, the Rabash understood why those of us living at the close of



the 20<sup>th</sup> century needed to discover life’s secret. He was able to adapt the wisdom of Kabbalah in a comfortable, straightforward, appropriate language for our generation. In doing so, he introduced us to a wondrous, eternal world, and paved the surest way for us to get there.

### Leaving Home

When Baruch Ashlag was 13 years old, his father decided it was time to leave Poland and move to Israel. Baal HaSulam hoped to find more Kabbalists

in Israel who would join him in disseminating Kabbalah. Therefore, in 1921, the Ashlag family left Warsaw and settled in Jerusalem.

In Israel (Palestine at the time), the Rabash was ordained as a rabbi by Rabbi Avraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, and Rabbi Chaim Sonnenfeld, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and the spiritual and political leader of Israel’s orthodox community. Rabash was only seventeen years old when he was ordained.

### His Father’s Student

Rabash felt the desire to discover life’s secret early in his life and pursued it determinedly. His only wish was to become a student of his father—the greatest Kabbalist of the generation. He wanted to continue in his father’s footsteps and delve in the study of Kabbalah. He knew that nothing but Kabbalah would satisfy the desire that burned in his heart.

Indeed, once Rabash proved his intentions were sincere, Baal HaSulam accepted him in his group of students. To attend his father’s lessons, Rabash had to march several kilometers nightly, from the old city of Jerusalem to his father’s home in the neighborhood of Givat Shaul. On his way, he had to sneak past road agents and through barriers of the British military forces, which were part of the British Mandate (1922-1948) to govern the land of Israel.

Despite the harsh conditions in Jerusalem of the early 1930s, Baruch Ashlag had a strong desire to cling to his father’s way, and never missed a lesson or an event that his father attended. He stayed glued to his father’s side, accompanying him on all his trips, doing his errands and serving him in every possible way.

### ■ Questions & Answers

#### Why is it said that it is forbidden to study Kabbalah before the age of 40?

According to the wisdom of Kabbalah, age 40 signifies the degree in one’s spiritual evolution when one can attain the spiritual forces. At this degree, a person acquires the powers of bestowal, the power to give. After obtaining those forces, one begins to actively affect reality and thus changes the world.

The number 40 does not refer to a person’s physical age, but rather to one’s spiritual degree. Many Kabbalists studied Kabbalah long before the age of 40. The Holy Ari and Rabbi Nachman of Breslau, for instance, both great Kabbalists, never even made it to the age of 40 and passed away at the age of 38. The Vilna Gaon (GRA) wrote Kabbalah books even before his Bar Mitzva (age 13). Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, author of the *Sulam* commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, began to study Kabbalah at a very early age, as well. At 26 he was already composing Kabbalistic texts.

Kabbalists established this limitation on the study of Kabbalah to prevent people from studying before they were ready for it. The Kabbalists waited until the ego would complete its evolution, and humankind would understand that there was nothing left to study but this ancient wisdom. Today, there are no limitations on the study of the wisdom of Kabbalah, and Kabbalists are writing that now is the “Time to Act,” as Rabbi Ashlag puts it.

## Kabbalah TV Online

free live daily lessons, films and videos

[www.kab.tv/eng](http://www.kab.tv/eng)



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ZOHAR

“By inwardly using his potential abilities, anyone can easily move in spiritual space, from his present state to the state of perfect infinity and merging with the Creator.”



In time, Baruch became Baal HaSulam's closest student and began to study separately with him. His father taught him *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* and *The Book of Zohar*. Rabbi Ashlag also answered his son's questions and prepared him for the role that Rabash was about to undertake—disseminating the wisdom of Kabbalah to the masses in the clearest and most suitable language for our time.

### I Heard

Rabash, the dedicated student, wrote down everything he'd heard from his father in a notebook he titled, *Shamati (I Heard)*. He gathered thousands of notes documenting Baal HaSulam's explanations of a person's spiritual work. At his deathbed, the Rabash endowed the notebook to his personal assistant and student, Rav Michael Laitman, who later published it as a book, carrying the same title.

The Rabash was his father's student and personal assistant for more than thirty years. During that entire period, he absorbed his father's teachings and his spirit of love for the nation and the world at large. He imbibed the recognition that we will be awarded complete redemption only by spreading the wisdom of Kabbalah throughout the nation and the world over. Years later, Rabash's students asserted that this spirit had been his “hallmark” through his entire life, the essential message he had bequeathed to his students.

### Connected to the World, Yet Isolated from It

Like his father before him, the Rabash did not want to be celebrated or extolled as a Kabbalist. He refused to accept official duties that were offered to him. Instead of being revered and a leader of many, Rabash dedicated his entire time and efforts to internal work and to preparing Kabbalah students. They would disseminate the wisdom of Kabbalah and continue on Baal HaSulam's path with sincerity.

Internally, the Rabash was connected to the entire world. Externally, however, he was a secluded man. His widow, Feiga Ashlag, testifies that “Even our neighbors didn't know that he was teaching the wisdom of the hidden.”

But despite his modesty, those who really searched found their way to the Rabash. His student and assistant, Rav Michael Laitman, says that among those who approached him were renowned rabbis who would discreetly come to Rabash's house to study the wisdom of the hidden.

In his work with new students, Rabash developed his unique contemporary method. He wrote weekly articles in which he described in simple words each phase of a person's internal work along the path to spirituality. Thus, he entrusted us with a true treasure, a complete, tested method that can bring every person to perceive the spiritual world.

These weekly articles were collected and compiled into a series of books called *Shlavey HaSulam (Rungs of the Ladder)*. The Rabash left behind him many study groups in Israel and elsewhere in the world. These groups continue to study his books

and those of Baal HaSulam. The Rabash succeeded where others did not by presenting us with the best way to discover the deepest aspect of reality: the Higher World. ■

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
[www.kabtoday.com/links/53](http://www.kabtoday.com/links/53)



## BNEI BARUCH

“Only through the expansion of the wisdom of Kabbalah in the masses will we obtain complete redemption.”

Rav Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),  
“Introduction to the book *Tree of Life*”

After the demise of the Rabash in 1991, his student and personal assistant, Rav Michael Laitman established a group of Kabbalists that he named after his teacher—“Bnei Baruch,” or “Sons of Baruch.” The group's goal is to continue on the Rabash's way and disseminate his method in the masses.

Bnei Baruch has now become an international movement with hundreds of thousands of students in Israel and the world over. These students study Kabbalah from authentic sources and spread the wisdom to all who wish to learn, free of charge.

Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag was unique. He was a hidden Kabbalist whose vocation was to educate a new generation of Kabbalists by nurturing a new spiritual method that was appropriate for contemporary students. He was convinced that if he could adapt the method of Kabbalah to our time, it would be his greatest contribution to humanity.

Rabbi Ashlag wanted to promote a brighter future for everyone in the world, and he succeeded. All we need to do is to use this failsafe method he developed. When we do, we will be rewarded with the revelation of the complete, true, and eternal reality, discovered by every Kabbalist throughout the generations.

## A MITZVA

A *Mitzva* is usually thought of as a set of bodily actions or rituals that we must carry out. But those actions are, in fact, only symbols of inner actions one should do.

*The Book of Zohar* (vol. 1 p. 242 in the *Sulam* commentary) explains that our soul consists of 613 desires. In the beginning, the soul is “corrupted.” This means that our 613 desires are oriented toward self-gratification, or “egoism.”

We “correct” our soul by learning how to use each desire to benefit others. This is called “altruism.” A correction of a desire is called “keeping a *Mitzva*.” Since our soul consists of 613 desires, it is written that one must keep 613 *Mitzvot* (plural for *Mitzva*).

“Each item in the 613 *Mitzvot* in the Torah revolves on the axis of the one *Mitzva*, ‘love thy friend as thyself.’ This axis can only be sustainable within the framework of a whole nation, whose members are all willing and ready for it.”

Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),  
“The Revelation of Godliness”

BNEI BARUCH WORLD CENTER FOR KABBALAH STUDIES

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.com | Press | Archive | Contact Us | About Us

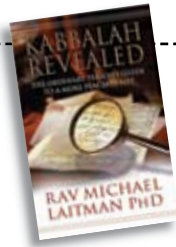
What is Kabbalah?  
● What is Kabbalah?  
● Why am I looking for something spiritual?  
● What does Kabbalah teach me?  
● What does studying Kabbalah do for me?  
● What is reality?  
● Why do I feel bad?  
● Why Kabbalah?  
● Rav Michael Laitman's questions on Kabbalah

Introduction to Kabbalah  
● Beginner's Guide  
● Videos  
● Preface  
● Introductory Lectures  
● Articles for Beginners  
● Time to Act  
● Disclosing the Secrets  
● The Sixth Sense  
● Who am I?  
● Freedom of Will  
● Selected topics from Kabbalah M. Laitman  
● Talk about Kabbalah

2007 08:43  
WHAT IS THE...  
... KABBALAH? ...  
... Reality video  
... Click here to

www.kabbalah.info





## KABBALAH REVEALED

“Originally all people were internally connected. We felt and thought of ourselves as a single human being, and this is exactly how Nature treats us.”

# SOUL SPLITTING

by Aviram Sadeh

No one likes to be stuck in a traffic jam, to wander in crowded shopping malls or wait forever in line for the cashier at the supermarket. Sometimes we wonder why these crowds exist.

While we might agree to share the world with a few friends and kin, and perhaps with a few more dozens or hundreds of people, the need for the other seven billion is less clear. Indeed, why are there so many people in the world?

## Brazilian Coffee & Swiss Watches

Common sense shows us that having relationships with other people is to our benefit. If we were alone in the world, eating even a slice of bread would require that we sowed the wheat, grew it, harvested, ground, kneaded, and baked it. We'd even have to build the oven. Instead, we can go to the nearest grocery store and buy it for a few dollars. And how much time do we work for it? Probably just a few minutes.

Presently, we work several hours a day and enjoy the products of the rest of humanity. We enjoy great Belgian chocolate, American fast food, Swiss watches, and Brazilian coffee. The Chinese make toy cars for our children, the Japanese make the real cars that we drive, and we make a living and benefit from all these.

But is this a good enough reason for so many people to exist? Here's an interesting question: if there were one billion people fewer in the world, would we feel that something was missing?

## In the Kingdom of Desire

Kabbalists tell us that we all come from one soul, called “the soul of *Adam ha Rishon*” (The First Man), which was cre-



ated by the Creator. They also explain that the Creator's nature is that of complete love and benevolence, and that He created the soul of *Adam ha Rishon* with an entirely opposite nature: a desire to receive delight and pleasure.

The task of the soul of *Adam ha Rishon* is to become similar to the nature of the Creator, becoming as loving and giving as Him. To the extent that the soul succeeds, it will be awarded the greatest pleasure in reality.

## Pleasure before Contact

Kabbalists explain that when the soul of *Adam ha Rishon* was created, it was in contact with the Creator. But the pleasure it derived from this contact was restricted, since it did not come through the soul's independent effort.

The Creator, on the other hand, wanted the soul of *Adam ha Rishon* to evolve on its own. For that purpose, in a premeditated act, he exposed it to greater pleasures. When the soul received these pleasures, it discovered how much it enjoyed them, actually preferring these pleasures to the contact with the Creator. In consequence, the attitude of this soul toward the Creator changed immediately and it lost contact with Him.

This experience can be compared to a person who is praying

to win the lottery, and promises that if he wins, he will donate half of the win to charity. But once he wins the lottery, the pleasure he is exposed to overcomes him and his priorities change. He “forgets” his promise, and suddenly finds many avenues of investment that are much more appealing than donating the money to charity.

## Fragments of Pleasure

As a result of the disconnection from the Creator, the soul of *Adam ha Rishon* was disconnected from the spiritual world and shattered into many fragments, called “particular souls” or “individual souls.” According to the wisdom of Kabbalah, this process is called “the breaking of the soul of *Adam ha Rishon*.”

The soul of *Adam ha Rishon* became fragmented into many particular souls because the burden of all the pleasures that appeared to it was too much for one soul to carry while maintaining contact with the Creator, the giver of the pleasure.

As the process continued, souls came down to this world and clothed themselves in human bodies. Similarly, if we want to move a weight of one ton, we cannot ask a single person to do it. But if we divided the ton into a thousand little weights of one kilogram, and gave a thousand people

**EACH OF US IS  
A PIECE IN A PUZZLE  
THAT WAS ONCE  
A SINGLE  
COMMON SOUL.  
THAT SOUL WAS  
SHATTERED INTO  
7 BILLION PIECES  
AND NOW IT IS TIME  
FOR CORRECTION—  
TO REGROUP  
THE PIECES**

one piece each, we could easily move this weight.

In much the same way, after the breaking, each soul was awarded very small pleasures compared to the huge pleasure that the common soul had initially experienced. Now, each piece would gradually learn how to receive its intended pleasure while maintaining contact with the Creator.

There is a story by Baal HaSulam that concisely expresses the breaking process and its purpose: “There is an allegory about a king who wanted to send a large sum of gold coins to his son, who was overseas. Alas, all the people in his country were thieves and deceitful, and he had no loyal messengers. What did he do? He divided the coins into pennies and sent them with many messengers. Thus, the pleasure of stealing was not worth blemishing the king's honor.”

Baal HaSulam, *Tree of Life*

## Ceasing to Reincarnate

Today we are already past the breaking stage. Each of us is a messenger of the king, carrying pennies from the Creator's treasure. Our mission is to do what the king ordered, to resume contact with the Creator while we are still alive. Until we place the coin in its place, we will continue to come back into this world.

Kabbalists refer to this process as *Tikkun* (correction). The meaning of *Tikkun* is the ability to incorporate in our lives the awareness that we are all on the same journey, aspiring to the same goal.

The *Tikkun* unfolds in two primary stages. In the first stage, we repeatedly return to this world without knowing the purpose of our lives. The first stage prepares the ground for the next stage, when the desire awakens in us to know the purpose of our lives. Only after this awakening begins do we consciously embark upon the *Tikkun*.

However, we can accelerate the process. Kabbalists, those who have already traversed the correction process, can teach us how to correct our own pieces. When we do, we will climb to the top of the spiritual ladder and will no longer have to reincarnate into this world.

## The Whole is (Much) More than the Sum of Its Parts

The purpose of studying the wisdom of Kabbalah is to help each of us, pieces of the soul of *Adam ha Rishon*, to restore our unity in the quickest possible way. When each of us corrects his or her share, we will thus realize the goal for which we came into this world and we will be awarded tremendous pleasures, since the whole is worth much more than the sum of its parts.

When the correction mission is completed, all the pieces will join into a single, great soul, the corrected soul of *Adam ha Rishon*. A wondrous light filled with love, the light that the Creator wanted to give while *Adam's* soul was still whole, will shine in our souls. This (corrected) state is called *Gmar Tikkun*, or the “end of correction.” ■

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
[www.kabtoday.com/links/54](http://www.kabtoday.com/links/54)



## ATTAINING THE WORLDS BEYOND

“All the worlds, as well as everything that we believe to exist outside of us, in fact exist only in relation to us.”



■ Kabbalah Sources

## BAAL HASULAM ON THE PERCEPTION OF REALITY

Our five senses and our imagination do not offer us anything more than the disclosure of the actions of the essence, but not of the essence itself. For example, the sense of sight offers us only shadows of the visible essence, according to how they are formed opposite the light. Similarly, the sense of hearing is but a force of striking of some essence on the air. The air is rejected because of its force, strikes the drum in our ear, and we hear that there is some essence in our proximity.

The sense of smell is but air that comes out of the essence, strikes out nerves of scent, and we smell. Also, the sense of taste is but a result of the touching of some essence on our nerves of taste. Thus, all that these four senses offer us is but manifestations of the operations that stem from some essence, and nothing of the essence itself.

Even (with) the sense of touch, the strongest of the senses, separating hot from cold, and solid from soft, all these are but manifestations of operations within the essence; they are but incidents of the essence. The hot can be chilled, the cold can be heated; the solid can be made liquid through chemical operations, and the liquid can be made into air, meaning only gas, where any discernment in our five senses has been expired. Yet, the essence still

exists, because you can once more turn the air into liquid, and the liquid into solid.

Thus, you evidently see that the five senses do not reveal to us any essence at all, but only incidents and manifestations of operations of the essence. It is known that what we cannot feel, we also cannot imagine; and what we cannot imagine, we also cannot contemplate; we have no way of perceiving it.

It follows, that the thought has no perception in the essence whatsoever. Moreover, we do not even know our own essence. I feel and know that I occupy a certain space in the world, that I am solid, warm, and that I think, and other such manifestations of the operations of my essence. Yet, if you ask me what is my own essence, from which all these manifestations stem, I do not know what to reply to you.

You therefore see that providence has prevented from us the attainment of any essence. We attain only manifestations and reflections of operations that stem from the essences.

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

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
[www.kabtoday.com/links/55](http://www.kabtoday.com/links/55)

■ Sneak-a-Peek @ the book *Kabbalah, Science and the Meaning of Life*

## CONTRADICTIONARY PHENOMENA

It seems hard to believe that researchers would agree to the statement that “we create the world-picture before our eyes.” This is because that would mean that there is nothing more to research. And researchers are customarily regarded as people who aspire to change the world. But changing the world is impossible using the traditional methods of research. At this point, Kabbalah provides researchers with tools that will enable them to research themselves, and thus change the world.

In other words, Kabbalah will assist an honest researcher to achieve what he or she wanted from the beginning—to change the world. However, the change will be internal, not external. The wisdom of Kabbalah will enable science and human perception to evolve into the next phase, beyond time, space, and motion. In that state, all the phenomena that today appear contradictory to researchers will merge.

Now we can also understand how our desires gradually evolve. Having developed from desires to wealth to desires for honor and domination, and finally to the desire for knowledge, it is now time for the desire for spirituality, the desire that induces our exposure of the wisdom of Kabbalah.

A scientist who studies the wisdom of Kabbalah is acquainted with the foundation of Creation. Such a scientist will be surprised to discover how tightly matters are connected to the rules discovered in the material world. Subsequently, this congruence between spiritual laws and physical laws will help the researcher to resolve problems in every field of contemporary life.

In ecology, psychology, social or political science, in every field of science we are faced with the absence of the “right formulae.” Things did not used to be so complex. In Newton’s time, for example, discovering only a few formulae sufficed

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

to explain everything. But today we have climbed to a new level of research in matter; at this level, we lack the formula that explains the general conduct of matters.

If science claims to engage in humans and the world they live in, Kabbalah states that in all our fields of research, we actually research ourselves, not the world around us. In physics, chemistry, physiology, ecology, or any other science, we research not the outside world, but our inner world, our inner vessels. Modern science is discovering that traditional research has exhausted itself. All that is needed now is to see that the entire world is actually within us.

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL  
[www.kabtoday.com/links/56](http://www.kabtoday.com/links/56)

# WHAT IS (AND IS NOT) KABBALAH?

There are three reasons why Kabbalah is called "the hidden wisdom":

1. Purposeful Concealment: In the past, Kabbalists taught only a few worthy, highly developed people in each generation who possessed qualities that were not yet developed in the rest of humanity, until recently. These qualities allowed them to understand and use the wisdom of Kabbalah correctly. This is why Kabbalists hid their wisdom from the public eye.

2. The Language of Branches: All Kabbalistic books use words that seem to refer to objects and people. But in fact, not a single word in any Kabbalistic book refers to the physical world. Hence, if you are not taught how to read these books by an authentic Kabbalist, you will not be able to understand them. No matter how bright you are, you'll end up with a product of your imagination and nothing else.

3. Comprehension depends on one's readiness: Kabbalah reveals the purpose and nature of the system we call "life." Thus, unless a person has a powerful need to ask about the purpose of life, he or she will not be able to hear the answer. Today, however, many people all over the world are seeking Kabbalah.

So let's clear up the misunderstandings. First, let's look at what Kabbalah is not

**KABBALAH HAS BEEN CLOUDED IN CONFUSION,  
LEGEND, MYTH, AND MISREPRESENTATION  
BECAUSE AUTHENTIC KABBALAH HAS BEEN HIDDEN  
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS ...  
UNTIL TODAY!**

IT IS NOT AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH...

magic, mysticism, witchcraft, divination, cults, healing, philosophy, theory, parapsychology, ESP, telepathy, clairvoyance, new age, psycho-kinesis, superstition, dream interpretation, phrenology, tarot cards, mantra's, yoga,	blessings, religion, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, red strings, holy water, numerology, meditation, self-help, past life regressions, holistic medicine, faith healing, aromatherapy, secret societies, reiki, hypnosis,	channeling, transmutation, phrenology, astrology, astral travel or projection, lucid dreaming, spiritualism, communicating with the dead, out of body experiences, magnetism, voodoo, freemasonry, theosophy, reflexology, UFOs, creationism, fanaticism, or any other belief...
---	--	--

...ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED HAVE BORROWED AND MISINTERPRETED THE PRINCIPLES OF KABBALAH OVER THE YEARS.

So what is Kabbalah? Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag defines Kabbalah this way: "This wisdom is no more and no less than a sequence of roots, which hang down by way of cause and effect, in fixed, determined rules, interweaving to a single, exalted goal described as 'the revelation of His Godliness to His creatures in this world.'"

This means there is a Higher Force, and there are governing forces that descend from this Higher Force to bring about our existence in this world. We're familiar with physical forces such as gravity, electromagnetism, and the power of thought. But there are forces of a higher order that act while remaining hidden from us, just as we know the effects of electricity, but can't see it or know exactly what it is.

The ultimate comprehensive force—the Creator—is the sum of all of the world's forces and is the highest level in the line of higher governing forces. This Higher Force gave birth to five worlds and a barrier separating them from our world.

The science of Kabbalah doesn't study our world and the people in it the way traditional science does. It investigates everything that exists beyond that barrier.

There is nothing other than the Force descending from Above in accordance with the "determined rules." These rules, as Ashlag writes, are fixed; they are absolute and they are everywhere. And ultimately, they are all directed so that we can reveal the Governing Force of Nature while we exist in this world.

## 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](http://www.kab.tv)), the Online Kabbalah Education Center ([www.arionline.info](http://www.arionline.info)), and [www.kabbalah.info](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:english@kabbalah.info)

**Web:** [www.kabbalah.info](http://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