

KABBALAH TODAY

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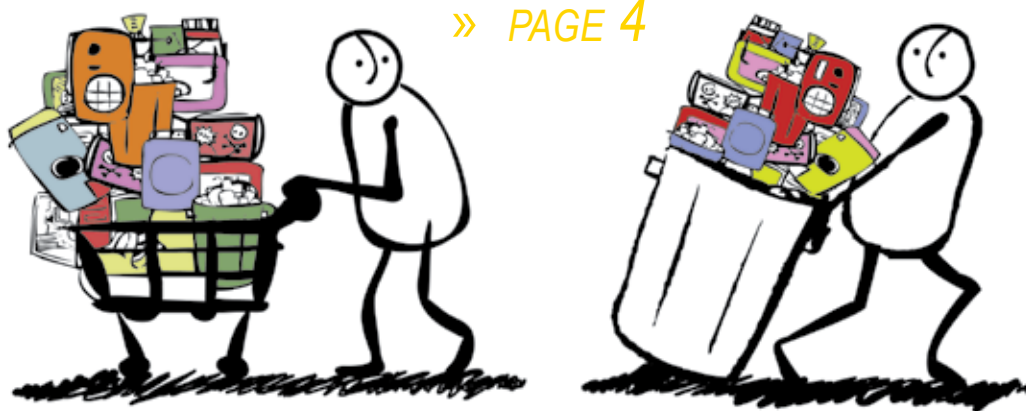
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GENERATION I

**IN OUR GENERATION—GENERATION "I"—EVERY PERSON IS UNIQUE.
BUT THE TRUE ART IS KNOWING HOW TO BE UNIQUE**

by Chaim Ratz

Back in the eighties, Douglas Coupland popularized the term "Generation X," referring to the new generation. This quickly became a hot topic, and a pop culture formed around the notion, seeking to decipher the unique qualities of the new generation. Going beyond mere curiosity, interest in the new generation was fueled by giant corporations that endeavored to find the right marketing strategy for millions of Generation X youngsters.

Today, we present "Generation I"—a generation that is typically concerned with one thing—*itself!*

iPod, iTunes, iPhone, iLife, iPhoto, iDVD, iWeb and iMovie all demonstrate that Apple Inc. and its brilliant CEO, Steve Jobs, have figured out the "I" trend of our generation,

and more importantly, the way to market products to a generation that lives and breathes "I." Apple hit the nail on the head by putting the consumer's "I" at the center of its marketing strategy.

Taking a longer view, it's easy to see that iPod and other "i-Gadgets" are but examples of a much more comprehensive process that's taking place today. People are becoming obsessed with themselves, as evidenced by the huge popularity of daily reality shows. And the "I" trend doesn't just dictate strategies for the mass media and giant corporations; it also appears in every other realm of life.

Why is this happening? Where does such an intense feeling of uniqueness, characteristic of our generation, come from? And is there a way for us to use it as a springboard for positive change?

The Spark

"The quality of uniqueness extends to us directly from the Creator, who is single in the world, and is the root of all Creations."

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), "Peace in the World"

In his article, "Peace in the World," Baal HaSulam explains that the feeling of uniqueness is present in the heart of each and every person. It's because human beings originate from the Creator, and just as the Creator is One, Unique and Unified, we also feel that we are singular and unique.

But we didn't always feel this way. Originally, at the point of our creation, all of us were part of one collective entity called "the common soul." This was the Creator's sole creation and was inseparably unified with Him through bonds of love.

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Editor's Note

FULFILLMENT—NOT COMPENSATION

For this issue of *Kabbalah Today*, we decided to explore the characteristics of our culture and civilization—from the Kabbalistic perspective, of course. Here's what we found: Whether it's our consumption-mania, the ever-growing obesity problem, or the fact that 50% of American couples today are getting divorced, there is one thing that stands out—real, satisfying fulfillment is missing in our lives. Or, to be Kabbalistically accurate, we lack *spiritual* fulfillment.

"The Untold Story of: a Consumer Nation" shows that our never-ending chase for more "stuff" has blinded us to the only thing that Kabbalists say would make us happy—the realization of our spiritual purpose.

But in the 21st century, our spiritual need is growing bigger than ever. "Obesity: A Lack of Spiritual Food?" shows that as long as we don't know how to address our spiritual lack, we try to compensate for it by any means possible—one of them being food.

A healthy relationship, for instance, is known to be one of the most fulfilling things ever, but today's divorce statistics prove that our relationships lack something in order to survive. "Man, Women and the Snake Between Them" goes back to our spiritual roots—Adam and Eve—to show us what that missing factor is.

Altogether, the above articles and the rest of this issue explain that the fulfillment we yearn for is attained through spiritual transformation: Discovering the interconnection between us, and thus rising to a new, *fulfilling* level of existence.

“Each individual must accept upon himself love for the others, and hatred of selfishness.”

Kabbalist Baruch Ashlag (Rabash),
“The Need for Love of Friends”

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But as this common soul began to develop, it split into individual souls, sparks of the initial soul that “dressed” into physical bodies.

This is how our reality was formed, where every person has a unique, individual spark of the common soul. This spark inspires us to reestablish our prior adhesion with its source, the Creator. But until we become aware of this aspiration and learn how to properly realize it, we only perceive it as a growing quality of uniqueness.

“Since man’s soul extends from the Creator—who is One and Unique and all is His—therefore man, who extends from Him, also feels that all the Creations of the world should be under his governance and exist for the sake of his own benefit... And all the difference between people is their choices: One chooses to exploit others by attaining low passions, the other—by attaining governance, and the third—by attaining honor.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Peace in the World”

Baal HaSulam explains that the problem is the way we use our quality of uniqueness—for self benefit, ignoring how it affects others. Often we will use it deliberately at the expense of others. In fact, the egoistic



use of our most exalted quality is actually the cause for all the evils in our world!

“Although we have clarified its sublime and lofty reason: that this quality extends to us directly from the Creator... nevertheless, since the sensation of uniqueness had settled into our narrow egoism, its action became ruin and destruction, to the extent that it is the source of all ruins that were and will be in the world.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Peace in the World”

GENERATION I

At a Crossroads

Is there anything we can do to change our egoistic, destructive use of the quality of uniqueness? Baal HaSulam says that there is.

He explains that the Creator leads us to a crossroads and lets us choose which path to take. On the one hand, we can channel our quality of uniqueness towards giving and caring for others. By doing so, we use this quality the same way as the Creator, and thus eliminate the gap separating us from Him.

However, without even being aware of it, most of us choose the other alternative: using the quality of uniqueness for our own good. In other words, we desire to be greater than others, and by so doing, we increase the alienation between us. Baal HaSulam illustrates the severity of this situation with the following metaphor:

Our body is made of billions of cells, where each cell operates autonomously, realizing its own, unique purpose. Although the cells operate as individual units for “self-profit,” they are united by one common goal—to provide life and

energy to the whole body. Each cell has its own self-interest, but it values the common goal even more—and that’s why the body stays alive.

However, as soon as one cell stops working for the sake of the whole body and begins working only for its own good, it starts a chain reaction called “cancer.” The first cancerous cell infects other cells with its “egoistic” tendency, causing a disintegration of the whole body.

And herein lies the problem with our modern society: The “self-interest” disease is spreading throughout humanity’s collective body, even as we speak.

The Way

“Indeed there are two sides to this coin of uniqueness, for if we look at it from the side of its equivalence with the world’s Unique One, it works only in the form of ‘bestowal upon the other,’ as the Creator is all bestowal, and has nothing of the form of reception...”

Hence, the uniqueness that extends to us from Him must also act only in forms of ‘bestowal upon the other’ and nothing of self-reception whatsoever.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Peace in the World”

We don’t need to repress our inherent quality of uniqueness in order to become “healthy cells” of the collective human body; in fact, we couldn’t do so even if we tried. We simply need to learn how to use this quality the right way. This means changing the intention behind our actions from “self-benefit” to “bestowal upon others.”

By doing so, one becomes similar to the Creator, as the Creator is pure bestowal. One begins climbing the spiritual ladder, returning to one’s source. And the higher one climbs, the more one attains the Creator’s quality of bestowal, until becoming just like Him.

Therefore, the quality of uniqueness is the most wonderful thing that each of us has: When we endow it with the intention to love and bestow upon others, we rise to a completely new level of existence—the level of the Creator.

And when man becomes like the Creator, he fulfills the role of his individual soul in the puzzle of the common soul, and becomes One, Unique and Unified.

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extras FROM GENERATION “I” - TO GENERATION “WE”

Kabbalah suggests that the best way to get from Generation I, where we all feel alienated and hostile, to Generation We, where we feel connected and safe—is through a new kind of education. Believe it or not, one of the principal means of education is—children’s games!

The games children play today, are all about winning by being the fastest or the smartest, or stated simply, “better than everyone else.” To go from this to Generation We, parents can encourage their children to play games where the winner is the one who is best at connecting with others.

From a young age, children will realize the benefits of being connected with others and will develop a mindset that is harmonious with Nature—where everything is already harmoniously interconnected.

In addition to showing children how we triumph by connecting with others, these games should also show that without such a connection, we fail. The games will show the child that being the best, triumphing, and winning, can only happen when everyone wins. This will help the children make that inner transition from I to We, and they will win—together with everyone else.

Such games and educational systems can pave the way to a new, interconnected mentality, suitable for the 21st century. Our times—of growing globalization along with growing egoism—necessitate that a transition will take place from the “I mentality” to the “We mentality.” Through games that enable such a transition, children and parents alike will learn a fundamental truth: that winning can only happen together with everyone, not alone.



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“Spiritual bonding is not intelligible at all in any way other than through sharing similar attributes, and, therefore, by shaping our attributes to resemble His attributes, we bond with Him.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“A Speech for the Completion of the Zohar”

MAN, WOMAN, AND THE SNAKE BETWEEN THEM

FOR CENTURIES, THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE HAS CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS ALIKE. IT'S TIME TO KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF THE STORY, WHO THAT CUNNING LITTLE SNAKE WAS, AND OF COURSE, HOW ALL THIS RELATES TO THE FACT THAT 50% OF AMERICAN COUPLES TODAY ARE GETTING DIVORCED

by Cheryl Hall

They're the most talked about couple in history. She is the seducer, the unfaithful and reckless one, who lured him to do the forbidden. He is “the father of humanity,” the moral victim and the enlightened one, who failed to restrain his insubordinate wife and was lured to sin.

Or, you may prefer the modern version. She is graceful, abstinent, and pure, filled with the agony of regret over what she caused Him. He is rude, reckless, and vengeful because on that fateful day, he fell for a woman's charms.

No, we're not talking about another celebrity couple on its way to a fashionable divorce. Ladies and gents, we give you Adam, Eve, and the Snake—the first romantic triangle in history.

Garden of Eden

“These days, divorce statistics are not looking good for lasting marriages in the U.S. The divorce rate is currently about 50%, leaving millions of Americans wondering what to do with the division in their family, home, and finances,” states *Online Lawyer Source*.

Understanding the story of Adam and Eve can shed some much-needed light on the rift between the genders. But to do so, we must penetrate deep into the true, hidden meaning of this famous story.

First, we must be aware that, like all Biblical stories, this one is also written in a special, *symbolic* language. Every word alludes to the processes taking place on

reality's higher level, which is naturally concealed from our grasp. If we can learn to decipher that language, we would discover our spiritual roots and our true roles as men and women. So let's start—with the beginning.

In the Beginning

The wisdom of Kabbalah explains that there is one all-inclusive force operating in reality, called “the Creator.” The quality of this force is that of complete, unconditional love and bestowal, and hence its purpose is only one—to give pleasure.

In order to actualize His will to bestow, He created a creature, or a soul, that would receive all His abundance. This soul is called “*Adam HaRishon*” (“The First Man”), or simply “*Adam*”—man.

And that's exactly what the Garden of Eden story describes. It reveals how Adam, the soul, the single creature that existed, carelessly frolicked about in the Garden of Eden, until the Creator decided to do something to speed up its development: “*The Lord said, 'It is not good that Man be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him.'*” (Genesis, 2:18).

As already mentioned, Adam was not a physical man, but a spiritual entity, just like the “Garden of Eden” was not a physical place, but a spiritual level of reality. In fact, it was the best possible state of existence, so why did the Creator intervene in this perfect, carefree existence?

Because the soul had only a small, undeveloped desire to

receive, and the Creator could not shower it with all the abundance He had in store. So in order for the soul to grow and mature, the Creator took it through a “maturation path.”

Two Parts of One Whole

In order for the soul to reach the state where it can be filled with infinite, eternal pleasure, it first had to learn the meaning of both reception and bestowal. For this reason, the Creator split it into two halves: “a masculine half”—the attribute of giving, and a “feminine half”—the attribute of receiving.

Only by cooperating and finding the proper connection between them can the two parts of the soul—Adam and Eve—create a whole, perfect vessel in which the Creator's abundance can reside.

Tree of Knowledge

So what does “eating of the Tree of Knowledge” have to do with all this? Kabbalah explains that “to eat” means to receive the Creator's pleasure. And the Tree of Knowledge is the complete pleasure that the Creator wants to give, however the soul was yet unable to receive, and hence it's called the “forbidden fruit.”

The soul, now consisting of Adam and Eve, hadn't completed its process of development. So by eating the “forbidden fruit,” (receiving all of the Creator's pleasure), it would be overpowered by the pleasure and lose its connection with the Cre-



Today, the Story Continues

Adam and Eve represent the spiritual roots of our souls. Although in the spiritual world, we are united as one entity; in the corporeal world we are disconnected, unable to understand each other.

What can we do about it? First, Kabbalah says that spouses should realize the existence of that snake between them. They have to understand that the ego is the only source of every problem in a relationship. Usually, the snake controls us so cunningly, we can't even see that it's the root cause of any alienation between us.

Second, spouses should realize that marriage is more than an institution invented by humans. It is part of a comprehensive, spiritual process of reconnecting the two parts of the soul. Realizing this will make it easier for spouses to cooperate. However, *we cannot succeed if we try bridging our gaps only on the level of this world, for the sake of our mundane goals.*

If we want our relationships to survive, we must imbue them with their true, *spiritual* meaning. And that can be done only when both spouses are aware of their mutual, spiritual goal.

This is what Kabbalists meant by “Man, woman and the Divine Presence between them.” (*Babylonian Talmud*) The spiritual unity between the two separate parts of the soul is what creates harmony, and within that unity, the Creator is revealed.

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ator—the quality of bestowal. In other words, the soul would fall to a level where it was completely detached from the Creator, and was entirely controlled by the ego—the corporeal world.

At first, they successfully stayed away from the “forbidden fruit”—until the Creator, once again, intervened. It's because the soul needed to descend to the corporeal world in order to fully develop, and the Creator wanted to “accelerate” the process. This time, He recruited the most devious of all for the job—“the snake.”

The Snake

This isn't quite the familiar animal of the reptilian family. “Snake” refers to the ego that resides in each and every one of us. In the Garden of Eden story, the snake (the ego) coaxes Eve (the soul's will to receive) to encourage Adam (the soul's ability to give, like the Creator) to taste the forbidden fruit (to receive all of the Creator's pleasure), even though they are not ready for it yet. As a result, they both disconnect from the Creator.

The pleasure of tasting that forbidden fruit was so intense, it forced the soul to forget all about the Creator and the fact that this pleasure came from Him.

As a result, Adam and Eve's relationship with the Creator was reversed. They were “expelled from the Garden of Eden”—they lost their spiritual level and fell to the corporeal level, called “our world.”

“It is necessary to do every thing in order to bestow. Otherwise, we are found to be in the empty vacuum—empty of light, that this is called concealing and concealment... when one is involved in self love.”

Kabbalist Baruch Ashlag (Rabash),
“What are the Powers which are Needed in the Work”

The Untold Story of: A CONSUMER NATION

by Riggan Shilstone

Annie Leonard, an expert in international sustainability and environmental health issues, spent ten years tracking “stuff” from its beginning as raw materials until it ends up in the trash. Her documentary, *The Story of Stuff* (www.storyofstuff.com), is as entertaining as it is educational, and has been viewed by over two million people.

Annie states the problem quite simply: “We have become a nation of consumers. Our primary identity has become that of being consumers. Not mothers, teachers, farmers—but consumers.” But her deeper concern is that U.S. consumption-mania destroys our balance with nature and ruins people’s lives. And all this happens away from the public eye. Here are just a few of the facts she uncovered:

- In the past three decades alone, one third of the planet’s natural resources have been consumed.
- 75% of global fisheries are fished at or beyond capacity. 85% of the planet’s original forests are gone.
- The U.S. has only 5% of the world’s population, but uses 30% of the world’s resources and creates 30% of the world’s waste. If everyone consumed at U.S. rates, we would need 3-5 planets.
- U.S. industry releases over four billion pounds of toxic chemicals a year. Over 100,000 synthetic chemicals are used in commerce.
- Toxics found in the products we use concentrate in our bodies. In fact, human breast milk tops the food chain as having the highest level of toxic contaminants.
- Each person in the U.S. makes 4.5 pounds of garbage a day, twice what we made 30 years ago.
- Even if we could recycle 100% of the waste, it wouldn’t make a dent in the problem; for every can of garbage we put out on the curb, the equivalent of 70 cans were made upstream.

STUFF. IT FILLS OUR CLOSETS, OUR GARAGES, AND OUR LIVES. WE GAUGE SUCCESS IN LIFE BY THE STUFF WE OWN, AND SPEND INCREDIBLE AMOUNTS OF TIME SHOPPING FOR IT. A NEW DOCUMENTARY, “THE STORY OF STUFF,” SHOWS HOW OUR ENTIRE LIVES HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER BY “STUFF.” THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH SHOWS WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

But there’s more to the story. Annie reveals that “It didn’t just happen—it was designed.”

Why Shopping Has Become the National Pastime

Perhaps the most shocking fact revealed by Annie’s extensive research is that our “throwaway society” was carefully orchestrated by the government of the United States in order to revitalize the economy after World War II. At the time, retailing analyst Victor Lebow proposed an ambitious plan: “Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life; that we convert the buying and the use of goods into rituals; that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate.”

And that’s how the consumerism ball started rolling. Everyone in the U.S. is inundated with over 3,000 ads a day, telling them to buy more “stuff.” Companies design products to become obsolete as quickly as possible. Shelves are constantly loaded with disposable products for our convenience. The result?

“We shop and shop and shop, keep the materials flowing! And flow they do,” in Annie’s simple words. Our entire lives are being narrowed down to working, shopping, and then working again to pay off for the stuff we just bought. And with such an endless treadmill, it’s no surprise

that polls show that our national happiness is actually declining.

Is this really how we want to run our lives and our economy? Do we really have to keep subjecting our lives to a system that ruins people’s lives, destroys the environment, takes us completely out of balance with nature and—at the end of the day—doesn’t really make us happy?

Kabbalah

Explains the Will to Consume

The Story of Stuff concludes by talking about a variety of “green” strategies to improve the situation. However, Annie also realizes that “Things are really going to start moving when we see the connections, when we see the big picture.”

As it happens, the wisdom of Kabbalah is all about seeing these “connections.” It explains that we have to delve *behind* the scenes and reveal that the driving force that motivates our “will to consume” and the systems that nourish it, is no other than our very nature—human egoism.

That’s why we so quickly adopted Lebow’s consumer strategy—it played right into our egoistic nature! However, what he didn’t take into account was that one day we would start to realize our true, *spiritual* purpose. And expecting consumerism to provide “spiritual satisfaction” shows just how



clueless he was about the real meaning of this term.

From Kabbalah’s perspective (or any other perspective), it’s crystal clear that no consumer goods will ever bring us spiritual satisfaction—or in simpler words—true, lasting happiness. Spiritual satisfaction can only be attained by harmonizing with nature’s underlying quality of complete love and bestowal.

But since this quality is hidden to us, what we feel is just our lack of balance with it—reflected by all the troubles we see around us, whether between ourselves or between us and nature. Kabbalists say that being balanced with nature’s quality of bestowal is the one and only way for us to be truly happy. Moreover, acquiring this quality will grant us a whole new perception, and we will experience life on a completely different level.

But in order to do that, there is one thing that we must change first—our egoistic nature.

Change Starts

Only From Within

Kabbalah explains that the way we run our personal lives, and the way we run the whole planet, is a direct outcome of our inherent nature. So if we want anything to change on the outside, we have to break free of the ego’s grip on our choices and values. And Kabbalah provides us with the way to do just that.

Our purpose is far more exalted than being slaves to our own consumption system. Neither does it amount to just a “green way of life” or a better use of resources. Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) writes that “*The purpose of the whole Creation is to adhere to the Creator by the equivalence of form.*” (“The Freedom”)

In plain English, this means that man’s purpose is to balance himself with nature *internally*, to balance his inherent egoism with nature’s inherent altruism, and thus sense the perfect, eternal level of reality.

Once we make our inner transformation, Annie’s vision of a “greener, unified economy” will also come true. By attaining nature’s quality of bestowal, people will transform themselves, and hence we will naturally transform our earthly systems as well. But the change, says Kabbalah, can only start from within.

“As long as we do not raise our goal above the corporeal life, we will have no corporeal revival, because the spiritual and the corporeal in us cannot live in one basket.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag
(Baal HaSulam),
“Exile and Redemption”

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“The will to receive is imprinted in every creature in disparity of form from the Creator. For that reason the soul was separated from it as an organ severed from the body.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“The Freedom”

OBESITY: A LACK OF SPIRITUAL FOOD?

EVERYONE TODAY IS COUNTING THEIR CALORIES—BUT THE OBESITY PROBLEM ONLY KEEPS GROWING. KABBALAH EXPLAINS THAT THIS EPIDEMIC IS YET ANOTHER SYMPTOM THAT THE MODERN HUMAN BEING IS NOT GETTING HIS “SPIRITUAL FOOD”

by Asaf Ohayon

It's no secret that obesity and overweight are increasing every year. According to *The National Center for Health Statistics*, during the past 20 years there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in the United States, and in 2003, 66% of U.S. adults were either overweight or obese.

“Even children have gained weight,” reports *Live Science Staff*. “The average weight for a 10-year-old boy in 1963 was 74.2 pounds; by 2002 the average weight was nearly 85 pounds. Among girls, that figure went from 77.4 to 88 pounds.” *The World Health Organization* estimates that by 2015, approximately 2.3 billion adults will be overweight, and more than 700 million will be obese.

This epidemic is not only costing people their self-esteem, well-being and health, but also loads of money. According to *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*, the cost of obesity in the United States in 2000 was over \$117 billion. The money is spent on everything from diet methods to the treatment of diseases linked to obesity, not to mention the billions of dollars businesses are

losing due to their employees' obesity-related illnesses.

In fact, the effects of obesity are felt everywhere. A CNN special on November 14th revealed that airlines are planning to charge a controversial “fat tax,” because overweight people mean greater fuel expenditures for the airlines and less seating space for slimmer customers. Some surgeons are refusing to operate on overweight people because of the increased risks involved, and even Disneyland has been affected—it has closed down and “renovated” some of its rides because too many oversized customers are causing them to malfunction—according to an article in *Wired Network*.

But perhaps worse of all are the health concerns involved. *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* states that the more overweight a person is, the more likely he or she is to have health problems. Australian nutritionist John Tickell states that diabetes II—a disease associated with obesity, is the fastest growing disease in the world. Other obesity-related diseases include hypertension, coronary heart disease, strokes, and cancer.

The Real Hunger Within

Undeniably, some people are overweight because of inherited, genetic factors. But this accounts for only 20% of the overweight people, according to nutritionist John Tickell.

The other 80% are obese or overweight simply because they overeat—a trend that has been on a dramatic rise for the past 20 years.

Why? Tickell thinks that “It's all in the attitude; it's all in the human brain.” This is what determines whether a person will be fat or slim, and will eat healthy or not.

EMedicine Health voiced a similar opinion, stating that some of the reasons for overeating may be: “Depression, hopelessness, anger, boredom, and many other reasons that have nothing to do with hunger.” In other words, “People's feelings influence their eating habits, causing them to overeat.”

Kabbalah narrows the culprit down even further—it's the feeling of inner emptiness arising from our inability to fulfill our growing egoism. We are compelled to compensate for that inner void, the lack of fulfillment and the feeling of emptiness, by any means possible—one of them being food.

In other words, the obesity epidemic, spreading worldwide today, is yet another symptom of the emptiness felt by the modern human being.

Fulfillment— Not Compensation

The rise of human egoism makes many of us today feel unsatisfied, no matter what we do. We always keep “wanting something,” and no matter how many possessions we acquire, we still feel empty inside.



That constant emptiness makes us look for compensation, and for some of us, that compensation is to constantly keep eating.

But no matter how much food we consume, our inner void remains unfulfilled, and Kabbalah explains that it's simply because *what we are yearning for is, in fact, non-physical*. Unknowingly, a spiritual desire is evolving within all people, and in the 21st century, this desire is greater (and hungrier) than ever before, demanding its fulfillment. That fulfillment can only be *spiritual*, or if you will, “spiritual food.”

So the wisdom of Kabbalah doesn't tell a person to start a diet. Instead, it treats the root of problem, showing us how to fulfill that spiritual desire—our deepest and most profound deficiency. When we finally address the real lack, thoughts like, “I want something... but I don't know exactly what—maybe a pint of Ben and Jerry's,” will simply disappear. As a result of engaging spiritually, a person starts thinking on a completely different level. One starts to experience life as an ongoing adventure, and at every moment of life, one feels energized and fulfilled *from within*.

Today's accelerating rates of obesity and overweight are but a sign that people are yearning for a fulfillment they're not getting—spiritual fulfillment. If we realize this, and learn how to fulfill ourselves, we will no longer need anything “extra” on the outside.

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“...I find a great need to break an iron wall that has been separating us from the wisdom of Kabbalah since the ruin of the Temple to this generation.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“Introduction to Talmud Eser Sefirot”



THIS IS NOT
KABBALAH

KABBALAH: USER MANUAL

FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Although we often feel like isolated individuals and see a world of schisms, Kabbalists say that we are all interconnected and interdependent. Much like the cells of a living body, we are all parts of a single entity called “the collective soul.”

Our individual souls are bound together by an Upper Force that can only be described as complete, unconditional love and bestowal. This force not only connects us together, but all other parts of Creation as well—it is Nature’s all-inclusive force, “the Creator.”

Those who have developed the ability to perceive this force and the collective human soul are called “Kabbalists.” They explain that this ability lies within every one of us, but remains dormant until we develop it. And from their perspective, it is evident that in the coming phase of human evolution, all people will discover that they are united, will connect to the Upper Force that unites them, and will thereby find true happiness.

To help us get there, Kabbalists gave us the wisdom of Kabbalah—a method by which we can develop our ability to perceive humanity’s collective soul, and connect to the Creator—the Upper Force that enlivens the whole of Creation.

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

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

Is Kabbalah a religion?

No. 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.

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.

What is Kabbalistic meditation?

There is no Kabbalistic meditation. Kabbalah teaches a person how to transcend egoism and connect to the quality that prevails in Nature—unconditional love and bestowal.

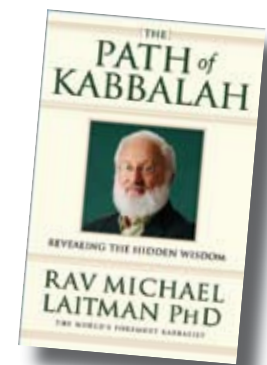
Are there any amulets in Kabbalah?

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

■ Sneak-a-Peek @ the book *Path of Kabbalah*

EXODUS— THE WORLDWIDE, 21ST CENTURY VERSION

THE DRAMATIC STORY OF THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT IS MUCH MORE THAN A MILESTONE ON THE HEBREW CALENDAR. ACCORDING TO KABBALAH, IT DESCRIBES THE LIBERATION FROM EGOISM, AND THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY IS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE IT



All the worlds (this world included) are states that reside within us. We will find them nowhere outside us. In other words, it is not we who are inside the worlds, but the worlds that are inside us. Outside us there is only the Creator, the Upper Light.

People in our world are convinced that they are inside some kind of existence, a reality that was created before we came inside it. But this is an illusion. There is nothing outside us but the Light of the Creator. That Light affects our senses in such a way that we feel it as solid, liquid, or gas, as vegetative or as animate. Everything we can imagine and can see around us is built inside our own senses, making us feel as though everything exists outside us. But the truth is that there is nothing outside, only the Creator.

This world is the lowest point that a Kabbalist attains. It is the total opposite of the Creator and is termed, “the exile in Egypt.” The natural power that works on us in this state, the power of our egoistic nature, doesn’t allow us to advance anywhere except to care for ourselves. This is called “the state of Pharaoh.”

Our egoism doesn’t let us feel the sublime and perfect state. It is egoism, man’s inner and vicious force called “Pharaoh,” that the Torah speaks of at length, whereas the force that frees one of that state is called “Moses.” *Pharaoh, Moses and everything that is written about the exodus describe spiritual states and emotions.*

Our current state is the lowest possible. It is a state of absolute slumber and even unconsciousness. We have no sensation whatsoever of who or where we are. It is even a lower state than “this world,” since defining our

state as “this world” implies that we are already aware that there is another world. It is so low that in it, we cannot feel any spirituality.

The Torah is not a historic epic, though there is a correlation between the text and human history. But this is only because the construction of the worlds is based on the same principle: everything that happens in one spiritual world is reflected in its adjacent lower world, down to our own.

Everything that humankind will have to go through during its ascent through the worlds must be felt by each and every individual in each of the worlds, especially our own.

The exodus from Egypt—the exodus from egoism—still awaits us all. And in the 21st century, we are closer than ever before to making this transition—from egoism to a humanity of bestowal and love. Once we begin this transition, we’ll start experiencing our connection to the spiritual, eternal level of reality, which is only felt when we detach from our egos, or “come out of Egypt.” The wisdom of Kabbalah explains that just by starting to *think* in this direction, we hasten our course of development and save ourselves a lot of suffering, since our thoughts become similar to the inclusive plan of Creation.



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“...all the bodies in the world will unite into a single body and a single heart. And only then will all the happiness intended for humanity be revealed in all its glory.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam),
“The Freedom”

WE ARE ALL IN DEEP (DRINKING) WATER

ACCORDING TO THE LATEST RESEARCH, WE CAN START THINKING OF OUR WATER FAUCETS, AND EVEN STORE BOUGHT BOTTLED WATER, AS AN ALL-PURPOSE PHARMACY. WHETHER IT'S ANTI-DEPRESSANTS OR ANTIBIOTICS, PRESCRIPTION OR OVER THE COUNTER—IF OTHERS ARE TAKING IT, SO ARE YOU

by Keren Applebaum

Connected Through Water

An Associated Press investigation, published on March 10th in a CNN article called, “Prescription Drugs Found in Drinking Water Across U.S.” unequivocally states that “A vast array of pharmaceuticals—including antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers and sex hormones—have been found in the drinking water supplies of at least 41 million Americans.”

Although the study was focused on the U.S., it made clear that the situation is similar worldwide. In recent years, drug prescriptions have risen to record heights, and many unmetabolized or unused drugs are being flushed into water reservoirs. Even though the water is treated, cleansed and processed before it is sold to consumers, small amounts of the

drugs nevertheless remain in the water. “Even users of bottled water and home filtration systems don’t necessarily avoid exposure,” stated CNN.

You probably already know that medication isn’t always healthy. “Recent laboratory research has found that small amounts of medication have affected human embryonic kidney cells, human blood cells and human breast cancer cells,” explained the CNN article. And obviously, the drugs contaminating our waterways are also “damaging wildlife across the nation and around the globe...”

Try Drinking This Up

We knew about globalization, and even about the butterfly effect, but with this new research, what we have before us is an almost surreal pic-

ture that does not fit within the bounds of common sense so easily: Another person’s consumption of drugs equals my consumption of drugs. The state of another person’s health directly affects my own, and what’s happening to the body of another person directly affects what is happening to my body.

This time, we aren’t talking about uncertain psychological effects or abstract “interconnectedness” that people often relate to the globalization process. Rather, we have clear, undeniable evidence that says that our bodies and our health are directly interconnected and interdependent on the bodies and health of all other people living on Earth.

So the next time you see someone taking medication, assume that you are taking it together.

Seeing Beneath the Water’s Surface

As shocking as the new research on drinking water may be, it only shows us half of the picture: It shows how we’re externally connected to each other. But in fact, we are only witnessing a physical outcome of our internal connection. We’d be much more surprised if we knew just how internally interconnected and interdependent we are.

Kabbalists explain that our reality is divided into two parts: the revealed part and the concealed part. And the greatest secret that awaits our discovery is the true, internal connection among us—our connection on the level of our souls. There, all people are connected to each other literally as one—one spiritual body, of which we are all cells.



Once we discover this connection, we will know and feel that everyone in the world is dependent on everyone else’s goodwill.

Hence, the drinking water crisis is just another step toward realizing how closely we are all connected within the single “organism” of our earthy civilization.

 WEB VERSION & RELATED MATERIAL
www.kabtoday.com/links/145

extras TRANSPLANTING OUR ATTITUDES

People who have received organ transplants often say that they suddenly have different preferences, behavior, and manners. A person may suddenly develop an interest in the arts, and a person who once had a fear of heights may become an avid mountain-climber.

Why does this happen? It’s because the cells of the implanted organ have their own “minds,” if you will, which remember the qualities they shared with the body of the organ’s previous owner. Hence, the new recipient takes on certain qualities and habits of the person who had the organ before him.

Kabbalah explains that humans—the individual cells of humanity—are just as tightly interconnected within the organism called “human civilization.” And just as qualities, habits and characteristics can pass from the whole body to an organ, and back from the organ to the whole body, so we all share our properties with one another and with the whole of humanity.

Hence, a change in any “cell” or “organ” of the human civilization will cause the entire body—humanity—to adopt the same changes. So if we want to affect positive change in the world—we must only change within. Even one person or one community that adopts the qualities of love and bestowal will immediately influence the whole world to move in the same direction.

The method of Kabbalah was designed expressly for this purpose. It’s a method to develop a direct, personal contact with nature’s quality of love and bestowal, and hence to reverse the current attitudes that cause corruption, exploitation, alienation, and other menaces.

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Kabbalah and the Meaning of Life - Michael Laitman's Personal Blog



Michael Laitman

Founder and president of the Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Education & Research Institute, which is dedicated to teaching and sharing authentic Kabbalah. Professor of Ontology, PhD in Philosophy and Kabbalah, and MSc in bio-Cybernetics. Father of three and grandfather of three.

LAITMAN.COM—READ A KABBALIST'S PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, HIS TAKE ON CURRENT EVENTS, ASK WHATEVER YOU LIKE, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE. HERE'S A SAMPLE...

Questions

A question answered on April 6th: Why do you reveal all of this secret knowledge to the masses?

A question answered on April 4th: How did man evolve on Earth? You wrote that millions of years ago a primitive man appeared on Earth. How did he get here?

A question answered on April 3rd: What do you mean by saying that sex is the root of all our desires? What does Kabbalah have to say about everything that's going on today surrounding sex, like pornography, prostitution, and so on?

A question answered on March 31st: Do you think increasing availability of information instantly over the Internet and the advent of mobile devices such as the iPhone will increase interest in Kabbalah, and how do you perceive the future of human technology as a vehicle for attainment of the Upper Light? [Read more →](#)

ASK THE KABBALIST

Let There Be Light

Posted on April 9th, 2008 at 12:43 pm

Every person's soul is like a mirror reflecting sunlight.

A light beam descends, reflects off a soul, and withdraws into space.

Humankind, the civilization of egoists, is like a vast mirror array, reflecting light in different directions, making a sea of chaotic light.

However, merge the reflective light beams to be as segments of one immense parabolic source, and what do you have? At first, it looks like all beams are aimed differently, but as a whole, the light beams aim a common light at a common center. Their correct merger sparks a critical temperature, brings about a new substance—plasma—and bursts into flames.

And this is how each person's light arouses the fire of love among friends. Their unity with one another, together with their aim at a common goal, produces a new state that's unimaginable and unreachable using our common sense: adhesion with the Creator, an ascent to the Creator's level. Such a state is unimaginable prior to achieving it, because it's created only when everyone unites.

According to legend, Archimedes also set enemy ships on fire by aiming polished bronze... [Read more →](#)

SPIRITUAL IMPRESSIONS

Economic Crisis

Posted on March 24th, 2008 at 8:57 pm

The ego driving us to increase profits at each other's expense is in complete contradiction to the balance between nature's elements, which is vital to nature's harmonious existence.

The events surrounding the American and global economy prove that this time it's serious - the global economy is in a deep crisis. What is causing this crazy turbulence and how can the erosion be curbed? Kabbalah provides an explanation along with suggestions for solving the crisis.

Just as with any social system, interdependency is the name of the game. Crises where one element "infects" others and brings the market to the verge of collapse, are part of the signs of economic globalization. This is why we are seeing credit and real estate bubbles in the U.S. bursting and bringing about an infectious collapse of the stock exchange, in banks, companies and hedge funds all over the world.

Having said that, trying to solve economic crises using known models is destined to fail. It turns out that the economic system cannot be controlled or accurately predicted, and that one move... [Read more →](#)

NEWS FROM KABBALAH'S PERSPECTIVE

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 us, please write to:

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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.

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