

KABBALAH TODAY

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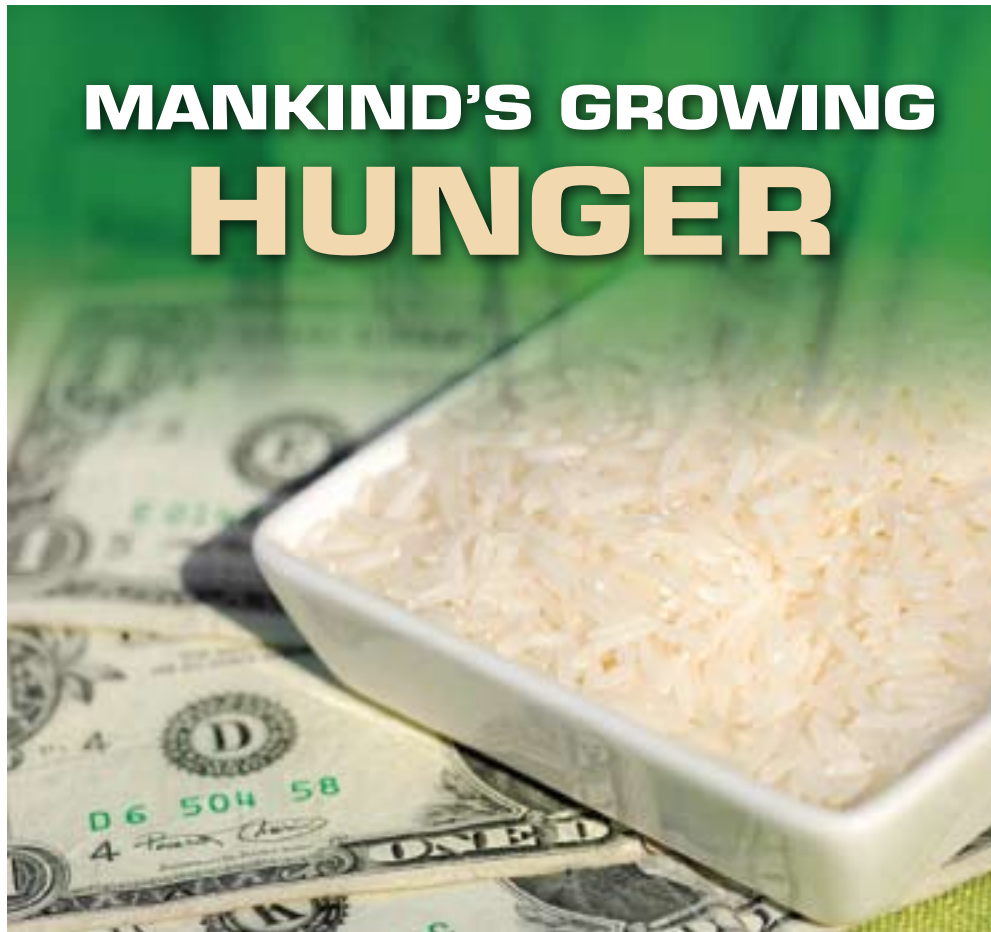


THE STORY OF COGWHEELS

A story about children and parents alike.

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MANKIND'S GROWING HUNGER



The current food crisis has been declared a “silent tsunami” in recent headlines. Kabbalah explains the root of the problem, and shows us **HOW TO AVERT THIS GROWING THREAT**

by *Riggan Shilstone*

Actually, food shortages are nothing new—they have shaped civilizations since the days when Pharaohs ruled Egypt. In the past 50 years alone, famines in Africa, North Korea, China, and Cambodia have claimed millions of lives. So why are world leaders today so alarmed by the current situation?

In Pharaoh's time, a famine in Egypt didn't affect tribes wandering the plains of America. In contrast, today's crisis ripples across the entire world. Global food prices have risen 83% in the past three years, making it almost impossible for the world's poorest nations to feed their people. More than 70 countries spanning every continent are now facing critical shortages. Moreover, famine is no longer limited to third world countries. Even developed countries like the United States are facing soaring food prices that are impoverishing the once-comfortable middle class. This time, hunger is truly global.

CREATING THE CRISIS

Experts have identified many contributing factors to the crisis, but the simple fact is that the demand for food is growing faster than the supply available. There are an estimated 6.5 billion people living on the planet today. That means the population has more than doubled in less than 50 years. That's a lot of mouths to feed!

In addition, our consumption patterns are changing, with the United States leading the way. Americans eat and eat and eat! Today, 64% of Americans are obese or overweight. And the problem isn't just how much we eat, but what we eat. The cows that supply us with hamburgers, steaks and dairy products eat grain, and lots of it. This means there is less grain available for human consumption, and the land that could be used to grow crops is instead used for grazing.

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Editor's Note

SHEDDING SPIRITUAL LIGHT ON MODERN CRISES

The worldwide food crisis is the topic of the day, appearing in every newspaper and looming in the minds of everyone. In this issue of *Kabbalah Today* we felt the vital importance of addressing this global calamity, and offering a glimmer of hope to the worried public. “Mankind's Growing Hunger” shows that the way out of the crisis is already here, and it depends entirely on us.

Equally vital are the issues of climate change and global warming, which seem to be spinning so out of our control that the more informed about them we become, the more inclined we are to simply sit idle. “Global Warming—So What!?” shows the solution that's right in front of us, or rather, right *within* us.

In parallel to current events that are increasingly occupying our minds, we also present authentic, timeless Kabbalistic texts. Baal HaSulam's “Allegory of the Lost Friends in the Desert” is a beautiful portrayal of the treasure that Kabbalists so anxiously want to show to mankind, which is lost in the desert of corporeality.

And if we want to reach out to humanity, what better place to start than our children! In this issue, we present a new section—*Kabbalah Today KIDS*, featuring a story that will enlighten kids and adults alike, and explain how we can find our way to unity, joy and perfection.

Enjoy all this and much more in the 15th issue of *Kabbalah Today!*

“The whole wisdom of Kabbalah is only to know the guidance of the Higher Will, why It has created these creatures, want It wants of them, what will be the end of all the cycles of the world...”

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato (Ramchal), *Daat Tvunot*

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As developing countries such as China become more affluent, they are adopting our eating patterns, placing further demands on the system. Obesity is on the rise worldwide, and the demand for meat is skyrocketing.

The net result is that an estimated 100 million people need assistance just to survive. Already, hunger-related causes claim the life of a child every five seconds. And when parents are unable to feed their children, they get desperate. Protests have been staged from London to Yemen and from Mexico to Africa, and they have turned violent in several countries.

It seems incredible that people are fighting over food, and children are starving to death amidst the so-called progress of the 21st century. It may surprise you to know that the earth is actually capable of feeding everyone! Agriculture around the globe today produces 17% more calories per person than it did 30 years ago. According to a CNN article on May 8, 2008, top economist Jeffrey D. Sachs estimates that it would cost every person in the developed world \$10 to double Africa's food production. However, these rich countries seem to have “left the poorest of the poor to their misery.”

While in principle, everyone could be happy, in reality our vast resources are being consumed by a relative few while others go without the necessities of life.

SEEING THE FULL PICTURE

The wisdom of Kabbalah explains that we can't solve anything before we acknowledge the root of the problem—our egoistic nature. Kabbalists, who have risen above egoism and attained a connection with nature's altruistic force, explain that this altruistic force is continuously pushing us to be balanced and harmonized with it. At the same time, however, our egoism is steadily growing. The increasing contrast between our egoistic nature and the higher, altruistic force of nature results in all the crises we see around us, whether economic, ecological, or the recent food crisis.

Some people try to fix things through external actions, such as handing out food or

donating money, but this only scratches the surface while blurring the true source of the problem. If we don't fix our egoistic nature, we haven't really fixed anything. The imbalances will keep growing, the problems will worsen, and the suffering will affect more and more people until no one will be able to escape. Eventually, the suffering will be so extreme that we will be forced to realize that all our problems are caused by one thing—our egoistic nature.

CREATING A NEW SCENARIO

Kabbalah suggests that we can avert this scenario by creating a new scenario, one in which we decide to change our egoistic nature before our suffering leaves us no other choice. The method of Kabbalah is like a magnifying glass that helps us see the root of the problem. It teaches us how to develop in harmony with nature—how to perceive ourselves as one integrated human organism, instead of as separate individuals.

The food crisis is a reflection of the discord between our growing egoism and the altruistic force that is pushing us to work as one body. It shows us that the problem is in how we relate to each other. Presently, people don't feel their interconnectedness. Some people gorge themselves while others are starving.

Imagine what it would be like if those who over-consumed immediately felt the hunger pangs of those who were forced to go without. How long do you think it would take us to solve the crisis? Over-consumption would stop almost immediately, and everyone would go out of their way to make sure that others had plenty to eat!

It's hard for us to acknowledge that we are the source of our problems. We will explore all possible alternatives before we accept the only true solution—the need to change ourselves. Hence, Kabbalists offer us their method, which will lift us above our egoism and open our eyes to the reality that is right in front of us. Then, we will not only stop going against our higher development, but we will also discover its beauty, and continue the process of our own accord.



THIS IS NOT KABBALAH

KABBALAH: USER MANUAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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.

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.

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“Everything that was, is and will be – the entire Universe, was built according to the principle of “cause and effect”. There is no beginning and no end. There is only cause and effect.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Preface to the Wisdom of Kabbalah”

THE GATEKEEPER

Who is the guard standing at the entrance to the spiritual world who decides who shall enter and who shall not? A journey following Kafka, Baal Hasulam, two parables, and **ONE GATE**

by Chaim Ratz

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) may well be the author who best expresses the rising impotence we feel in our present existence. The “Kafkaic world” is dark, sullen and menacing. Its heroes are helpless and incapable, wandering about as they attempt (and fail) to overcome their misfortunes.

One of Kafka’s most famous stories, “Before the Law,” is about a villager who sits in front of “the gate of the law,” asking for permission to enter. Ironically, the gate is wide open, but the villager is afraid to go through it without the gatekeeper’s permission. The gatekeeper has warned him that there are more guards further ahead, each one stronger than the previous one.

Broken by the insurmountable obstacles, the villager makes the typical Kafkaic decision—to sit by the gate and hope that it will eventually open. From time to time, he makes futile attempts to persuade the guard to let him pass, trying to warm him up with clever schemes and pleas. But years pass by, the villager grows old, and still the gate re-

mains closed as before.

At the dusk of his life, the villager takes a chance and asks the guard: How can it be that everyone wants to enter the gate of the law, but I am the only one who has asked for permission?

“This entrance was meant for you only,” replied the guard. “And now I am going to close it.”

THE GATE THAT CONCEALS THE ANSWERS

The desire to pass through “the gate of the law,” to discover the system of forces that governs our lives, is not new. Mankind has always sought to discover the concealed laws of the universe, gain control over them, and use them for personal benefit.

In the 21st century, this desire has reached new heights. We have sent rockets into space, walked on the moon, established worldwide communication networks, and developed countless machines and instruments. However, we are still in the dark about our spiri-

tual nature, our essence and our purpose.

We still don’t have answers to our deepest questions, such as: *Who runs our lives? What is the source of our reality? What is the meaning of it all?* And just like the villager in Kafka’s story, we often feel that we are governed by an unknown set of laws that no one has ever really deciphered.

So who is that gatekeeper and why does he refuse to let us enter?

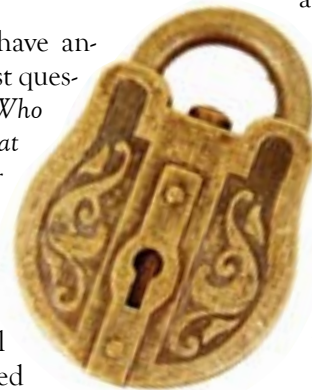
In the introduction to his work, *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (*The Study of the Ten Sefirot*), Baal HaSulam hints at the answer with a parable that’s reminiscent of Kafka’s story:

“It is rather like a king who wished to select all his loyal beloved and bring them into his palace... However, he appointed many of his servants to guard the palace gate and all the roads leading to it. He ordered them to cunningly mislead all those who came near and divert them from the path...

Clearly, all the people who began running towards the king’s palace were cunningly rejected by the diligent guards. Many of them overpowered the guards and came near the entrance to the palace. But the gatekeepers were most diligent, distracting and rejecting anyone who drew near with great ploy, until one despaired and returned as he had come.

So they came and went, and regained strength and came back, and so on and so forth for days and years, until they grew weary of trying any further.”

At first, it’s hard to understand what the king was doing: Did he really want to bring those who love him into his palace? His actions indicate the contrary, for if he really wanted them to enter, wouldn’t it have been simpler to open the gate and let them enter?



The dilemma becomes resolved later in the parable when we learn that this is the king’s way of finding out who truly wants to reach his palace:

“And only the courageous ones, whose patience prevailed and who overcame those guards and opened the gate, were immediately privileged to be welcomed by the king ... of course, from that moment on, they no longer had to face those guards, since they were awarded with serving and attending before the glorious light of the king’s presence within his palace.”

THE KEY

“The king’s palace” isn’t some beautiful hideout, laden with precious treasures and jewels. According to Kabbalists, it is a person’s new perception of reality, when all of his

desires are governed by the all-inclusive spiritual law—complete bestowal—the quality of the Creator. When we uncover this quality of bestowal within us and place it over the egoistic desires, we will discover what Baal HaSulam allegorically calls “the glorious light of the king’s presence”—that our desires are fulfilled with infinite abundance.

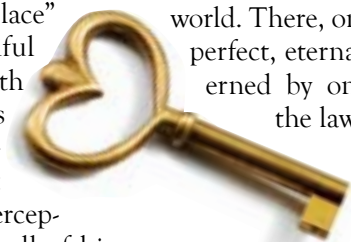
But more than that, we will realize that this concealed law has always affected us, even when we were not aware of it. And that’s when the gates of the spiritual law open wide before us.

So who are those guards we must overcome on the way to the king’s palace—to the Creator’s quality of bestowal? They are our egoistic desires. Unlike what we might think, we are not supposed to eliminate our desires. Instead, we need to learn how to use the basic egoistic will we were born with, for the sake of bestowal. We must acquire new *intentions*—of loving and giving—that will change the way we use our desires.

THE PATH

Much like the villager in Kafka’s story, we sometimes think that if we wait long enough or pray hard enough, then the gate will open by itself. But Kabbalists clearly tell us that everything depends on us, and to help us overcome our inner guards, they have given us a method of inner change and development.

Unlike the pessimistic spirit of Kafka’s story, Baal HaSulam’s story holds great hope for change. Kabbalists who successfully crossed the gate tell us that on the other side, reality turns out to be completely opposite to the Kafkaic reality, to our reality in this world. There, one discovers a perfect, eternal reality, governed by only one law—the law of love.



“The main part of person’s work is only to come to a feeling of the Creator’s existence.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), *Shamati*



ASK THE KABBALIST

Kabbalist Dr. Michael Laitman answers questions on his weekly live TV show, “Ask the Kabbalist” and on his personal blog - www.laitman.com

**THURSDAY
13:00 EDT**
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EDUCATION, RELATIONSHIPS, ANGELS, AND THE 72 NAMES OF GOD

Q: What is your vision of schools in the future?

A: Schools should teach children “the wisdom of life.” That is, they should explain the purpose of life, the inclusive law of nature, what’s really happening “behind the scenes” of our world, and why the forces of Nature influence us the way they do. This education will help children understand how best to relate to everything that happens to them in daily life, as well as how to relate to others.

Children will then see life as transparent—they will see the underlying, inclusive force behind reality, called “the Creator,” and they will be close to it, as if it were a friend. If children receive such an education, they will stay out of trouble and not waste their lives chasing false goals, only to be disillusioned in the end. They will truly succeed in life.

Q: “Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.” How is it possible to bridge the gaps between spouses?

A: Bridging the gap between the sexes starts by understanding where this gap comes from. Men and women are two parts

of Creation, and as such, their mutual understanding can only come from finding the middle ground—a spiritual bond. By so doing, these two different parts of Creation will complement one another and help each other develop spiritually. The wisdom of Kabbalah teaches us how to create that connection.

Today, it’s almost impossible for modern men and women to connect because their egos are bigger than ever before. In the past, people’s egos were smaller and they managed to live together without creating a spiritual bond. Today, however, they have greater desires, and it’s impossible to reconcile their differences without a method to take control of the ego and develop a spiritual connection. This is also the reason why so many couples today are getting divorced: They just can’t stand each other! And the truth is, it’s not their fault—they just lack the method to understand and manage with the other sex, the other part of Creation.

Hence, the only solution is to reveal the method of connection to couples. Today’s increasing gaps between men

and women can no longer be bridged by regular means, because these are two different forms of egoism.

The method of Kabbalah enables men and women to rise above their egos and bond, and this is what is meant by the Kabbalistic verse, “Man, woman and the Divine Presence between them” (*Babylonian Talmud*).

Q: Recently, I read that the Kabbalah Centre claims to have the copyrights for the 72 names of God, and from now on, anyone who wants to use them will have to get their official approval. What are these 72 names? And can anyone claim exclusivity over the names of God?

A: The 72 names are the “Light of *Hochma* (wisdom)” that shines upon us and fulfills the “vessel of *Hasadim* (Mercy)” within our soul. Only Kabbalists who reach the spiritual level called “*Gar of Atzilut*” are able to sense such a powerful fulfillment within their soul, also called “Light of AB SAG.”

It doesn’t matter whether or not you understand these Kabbalistic terms. What’s impor-

tant is to realize that these notions are completely detached from our corporeal world and have nothing to do with the misconceptions some people attribute to them, like “holy water,” charms, or blessings.

People who look for corporeal fulfillment, such as wealth or luck in romance, sometimes think that “special objects,” amulets, spells, or name combinations will help them find what they’re looking for. However, all these gimmicks are completely unrelated to what the 72 names really stand for. These names symbolize different aspects of the quality of the Creator—the quality of pure bestowal.

When a person is on the true spiritual path, he desires to attain these qualities of bestowal—the 72 names. His goal is to develop inner qualities that are similar to these names, but to do so, he must reach very advanced levels of connecting to the Creator, resembling Him. Only once a person attains these high, spiritual levels, can he reveal the exalted Lights in his corrected soul.

In contrast, when people try to play around with letters and names, or to create lucky charms, this may have a psychological influence on them, but will bring no spiritual influence whatsoever. While these things may provide some people with psychological comfort, they will not solve the root of their problems.

In truth, every desire that awakens in us expresses an un-

conscious longing for spirituality. But in order for us to become conscious of this, we must first grow disillusioned from looking for true fulfillment in all the means of this world. As soon as we are ready, we discover the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah, which teaches us about spirituality and our life’s purpose. Kabbalah explains the structure of the spiritual worlds and shows how we can equalize with the quality of the Creator. That is when we start our path to discovering the 72 names of the Creator.

Q: Do angels and demons exist in our world? The Kabbalists describe angels and demons in their books, while using words, names and descriptions of our world. So how does Kabbalah define angels and demons?

A: They are defined only as forces. All in all, there is nothing in the universe but forces. These forces work on us, depicting all kinds of shapes and images within us, like on a TV or a computer screen. Everything we see in our world is the product of how these forces are displayed within us.

In the spiritual world, there are no images whatsoever, but only forces and qualities. When we sense spirituality, we sense spiritual forces working on us. In Kabbalah, names such as angels, devils, demons and so forth are only used to indicate forces. For instance, you can call the force of gravity, “the angel of gravity” if you like!



Michael Laitman's
Personal Blog

laitman.com

Kabbalah
and the
Meaning
of Life

“If man in this world wishes to exist in harmony with the general law of the universe, he is bound to change and adapt himself to it.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “Love for the Creator and Love for the Created Beings”

by Asaf Ohayon

There are university departments devoted to the issue of climate change, including Climatology and Environmental Studies. Activist groups worldwide are working to raise people’s awareness of the global climate trends; news on television and the Internet shows viewers satellite pictures of changes in ocean temperatures and melting glaciers; there is an abundance of scientific manuscripts, newspaper articles, and congressional hearings devoted to the issue.

Even pop culture has joined the campaign, as evidenced by the documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, about Al Gore’s activist work, and the children’s animation film, *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, about three cute and furry animals trying to survive the breakdown of a glacial dam. Hollywood stars like Leonardo DiCaprio are spokespersons for environmental awareness. DiCaprio has already appeared on the cover of *Vanity Fair* paired with a baby polar bear on a broken glacier in southeast Iceland; he’s spoken about it on *Oprah*, and warns in his film, *The 11th Hour*, that “human beings face extinction as a result of the environmental crisis.”

Other celebrities jumping on the bandwagon are Charlize Theron, Natalie Portman, Tom Hanks, Susan Sarandon and Salma Hayek—just to name a few.

THE RESULT OF BEING INFORMED

The news is becoming more dramatic by the day. Before our eyes, we can see Antarctic ice shelves collapsing and fall-



With the abundant information available to the mass public today, everyone knows about global warming and climate change. But as it turns out, knowing and caring do not always go hand in hand

ing into the ocean, and can witness disastrous hurricanes striking the coastlines of America.

There is no debate between scientists about the existence of global warming, neither about its causes nor its potential consequences. An article in *Science Magazine* stated that out of 928 published papers on climate change, none disagreed with the fact that human activity is changing the climate.

But more than all this, what’s truly disturbing is the fact that the more we know about global warming and the threats it poses—the less we seem to care! A recent survey of 1100 Americans, conducted by scientists from the Texas A&M University, showed that

“The more informed one is about global warming, the less one feels personally responsible for this problem and the less one is concerned for global warming” (*Risk Analysis*, Vol.28, Issue 1, Feb 08). In total contradiction to what we would expect, research shows that the more actively the media publicizes the problem, and the more informed we are, the less concerned about it we become!

THE ANTIDOTE TO INDIFFERENCE

Perhaps our indifference can be attributed to the fact that no one has been able to offer any viable solutions for the impending disaster, or maybe it’s

because we feel too overwhelmed by the overabundance of disturbing facts. Hence we choose to simply push the problem aside, for the time being. But clearly we cannot ignore it when it begins affecting us personally—for example, when you happen to be that person in New Orleans whose entire family is wiped out by Hurricane Katrina. Because of the global nature of the problem, any one of us can be next—so why don’t we care?!

Kabbalah explains it very simply: What’s preventing us from thinking soberly and effectively about the problem is our cunning, narrow egoistic perception. It blinds us from seeing the broader perspective, from being able to evaluate the full gravity of the situation. Moreover, our ego blinds us to the fact that we are causing this to ourselves, and are therefore able to prevent it!

The fact is, we don’t have to tread “the path of suffering”—as Kabbalah calls it. If we develop a perception of bestowal—an altruistic perception, perception of the connections between us and of the bigger picture of reality, we will put an end to our growing imbalance with Nature and correct our actions in line with what Nature desires from us.

Therefore, to change the menacing trend of climate change and global warming, we must first change our indifference to them. That is why it is essential to spread the method of Kabbalah throughout the world—the means to develop a perception that will make us care, and enable us to truly affect change.

OUR PLANET IS ONLY AS BIG AS A HOUSE!

“And that is how I made another crucial discovery: Our entire planet is only as big as a house!” (Antoine de Saint Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

A Cnet News Blog Post called “Proof of Six Degrees of Separation” states, “In a research paper from June 2007, titled ‘Worldwide Buzz: Planetary-Scale Views on an Instant-Messaging Network,’ Eric Horvitz of Microsoft Research and Jure Leskovec of Carnegie Mellon University analyzed 30 billion conversations among 240 million people using Microsoft Instant Messenger in June 2006. It turned out that the average path length, or degree of separation, among the anonymized users probed was 6.6. Six degrees of separation posits that a person is a step away from people they know and two steps distant from people known by the people they know—thus the

magic number six.”

This fascinating research once again shows how we are all connected to each other. But like all the research we perform in this world, it reveals only the external connection between us. The wisdom of Kabbalah allows us to discover a much greater truth: How we are all internally connected.

Discovering our connection on the physical level is just a step towards discovering our innate connection on a deeper, spiritual level of nature. There, we are fully dependent on each other, working together as the cells of a single, integral organism.



EXTRAS

“If we could see that in reality we constantly give to one another, we would have no problem attaching the correct intention to this action.”

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

FROM RACIAL RIFTS TO SPIRITUAL HARMONY



Why were we all created different? So far, this seems to have brought us nothing but schisms. Kabbalah explains how to put the pieces together

by Keren Applebaum

The 2008 Presidential elections are bringing one of America’s most painful and long-standing social adversities to the forefront: the problem of racial inequality, discrimination and racism. “Although public discussions of racism appear to be taboo in the campaign, most observers know that it exists consciously or subconsciously in the minds of many Americans as a crucial factor affecting their voting behavior,” reports *The China Post*.

On one hand, America has come a long way since the colonial era, when slavery, segregation, Indian reservations, and internment camps were the daily reality. Nevertheless, if you speak to representatives of any American ethnic group, they’re likely to say that they have felt the sting of racism when dealing with other groups. Daily, the media is filled with reports of hate crimes whose victims were targeted on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Claiming they have the right to freedom of speech and opinion, hundreds of supremacist, separatist, racist, and hate groups are openly operating in the United States. The Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Project counted 844 active hate groups in the United

States in 2006. These include such well-known organizations as The Ku Klux Klan, the National Alliance, National Socialist Movement, and the Aryan Nations. No one is left untouched by this phenomenon—whether Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Latin Americans, Jews, Muslims, white Americans, and others.

Of course, America is not the only place in the world with this problem, and perhaps more vivid manifestations of racism can be seen in nations like Darfur, where racism leads to genocide. However, in America the problem of racial inequality and hate stands out most acutely because America has always been a nation of diversity, commonly known as “the melting pot”—from its very first days, it was composed of a wholesome mixture of races and nationalities.

But instead of being resolved, the problem of racial hate seems only to have grown worse in recent years. The SPLC Intelligence Report states that “2007 was another year marked by staggering levels of racist hate in America,” and “The number of hate groups operating in America increased last year to 888, a rise of 48% since 2000.”

If Americans haven’t been able to overcome their racial differences in such an optimal setting for doing so, then what hope do other countries have for resolving this universal evil? Are we doomed to forever continue hating and hurting each other over our inborn qualities, like skin color and ethnic origin?

MOVING BEYOND DIFFERENCES AND INTO HARMONY

“...the purpose of Creation lies on the shoulders of the whole human race, whether black, white or yellow.”

Kabbalist Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), “The Arvur” (“Mutual Guarantee”)

Kabbalah explains that hatred of other races stems from our egoistic nature, which automatically dislikes anyone who is different and feels drawn to those who are similar. Our egoistic perception makes us see anyone who’s different from us as alien, separate and disconnected from ourselves.

However, Kabbalists also explain that we are all tightly interconnected and exist as one perfect, harmonious organism. This organism’s perfection and harmony is created precisely thanks to the differences that exist between us! In other words, *harmony can only be created when opposites join together.*

In light of this, our situation is quite simple: By nature, there are many differences between us and we are not sup-

posed to eliminate those differences, for even if we tried, it would be impossible. Rather, we should find a way to join our differences together and thus achieve harmony.

It’s not that Kabbalists are utopian, expecting us to love our differences despite our nature. In fact, they’re saying that our present nature will never allow us to relate to each other this way.

The only way to merge our differences is to transform our nature. We have to rise above our narrow, egoistic perceptions and see a much broader picture—the spiritual level of reality. In other words, we must first develop a new perception that’s outside our egoism—and then we will see that precisely our differences and diversities create a perfect, harmonious picture, which Kabbalists call “the common human soul.”

At that moment, all our differences will seem to vanish because they will be united by a higher quality of oneness, as Baal HaSulam writes, “... 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.” (“The Freedom”)

Then we will understand why we were created with our differences and will justify their existence. We will rise from the narrow perception of, “What’s different from me is alien to me,” to the perception of, “What’s different from me complements me and creates harmony with me.”



“Whatever the Creator does when we are not connected, gives us nothing. We cannot benefit from something which is not present in us, that is, the Creator.”

Kabbalist Baruch Ashlag (Rabash), “Above Reason in Divine Service”

KABBALAH SOURCES

THE ALLEGORY OF THE LOST FRIENDS IN THE DESERT

Through this captivating allegory, Baal HaSulam expresses his profound desire to show what Kabbalah can give to humanity, and why it is hard for humanity to see this gift

“There is an allegory about friends who were lost in the desert, hungry and thirsty. One of them had found a settlement filled with every delight. Then, he remembered his poor brothers, but he had already drawn far away from them and did not know where they were. What did he do? He began shouting out loud and blowing a horn, hoping that his poor, hungry friends would hear his voice and draw closer to him, and also come to that abundant settlement, filled with every delight.

So is the matter before us: We, too, have been lost in the terrible desert along with all of humanity, and now we have found a great treasure, filled with every delight—the books of Kabbalah that satiate our craving souls and fill us with lushness and contentment.

Yet, the memory of our friends, left hopelessly in the terrible desert, remains carved within our hearts. Indeed, the distance between us is great, and the words are not heard. Hence, we have set up this horn, to blow loudly, hoping our brothers will hear it and draw near to us and be as happy as we are.

Know, our brothers, flesh and blood, that the whole essence of the wisdom of Kabbalah is the knowledge of how the world went from its elevated, heavenly place, down to our lowly state. It is therefore very easy to find in the wisdom of Kabbalah all the future corrections destined to come, from the perfect worlds that preceded us. And thus we know how to correct our ways henceforth...

... We evolve and improve by being pushed from behind by suffering

and bloodshed. This is so because we have no artifice by which to obtain a mirror to see within man, and all the more so, the interior of the souls and the worlds; how they descended to such a dreadful ruin as exists today.

Imagine, for example, that a historic book were to be found today that described the last generations... Then, our leaders would seek out every remedy to arrange life here accordingly... the terrible slaughters and suffering would cease, and everything would peacefully fall into place.

Now, this book lies here before you, clearly stating all the wisdom of statesmanship and all the arrangements of both public and individual that will take place at the end of days. It is the book of Kabbalah, laying out the corrected worlds, which emerged in perfection...

Open these books and you will find all the good conducts that will appear at the end of days. From those you will learn the good lesson by which to settle today's mundane affairs as well, as we can learn from history how to correct the future.

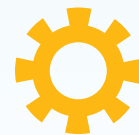
I have felt for all that until I can no longer restrain myself. And I have resolved to disclose the ways of correction of our definite future that I have found by observation and by what is written in these books. And I shall call upon the people of the world with this horn, which I think should suffice to gather all the unique ones who will begin to study and delve in the books, and they will determine themselves and the entire world to a scale of merit.”

KABBALAH TODAY

KIDS

The Story of COGWHEELS

This is a story about all of us—about children and parents, about where we came from, how we got here, and how we will return Home—to a place called **“THE SINGLE SOUL”**



Once upon a time, we were all connected together like **COGWHEELS**, bound by bonds of mutual **LOVE**.

Every one of us was connected to all the others, and there was no difference or distance between us.

We shared everything with each other, and anything that was mine was also yours. We were called **“THE SINGLE SOUL,”** and we were truly, truly **HAPPY**. ☺

⚙️ But suddenly, everything changed.

Suddenly, egoistic desires arose within us and destroyed our **UNITY** and our **HAPPINESS**.

We broke apart from one another and descended into this world—a dark, lonely and unjust place. Instead of being ruled by **LOVE**, this world is ruled by the laws of **EGOTISM**.

Soon, we began to dominate and use our neighbors for our own gain.

We desired honor and fame so others would be jealous of us.

We wished to acquire money—and lots of it! After all, money can get us anything we want—can't it?

Well, it turned out none of this made us happy. Instead, we started hating each other even more.

One day, we became so desperate, that we suddenly recalled how things had been long ago. Then, we had been **HAPPY** because we were all connected to each other—just like **COGWHEELS**.

As soon as we remembered this, we longed to **LOVE** each other again, to reunite and come back to that wonderful place called **“THE SINGLE SOUL.”**

And so we did.

We all **REUNITED**—and once again understood what **TRUE HAPPINESS** is.



SNEAK-A-PEEK



Excerpt from Kabbalah, Science and the Meaning of Life

OPENING OUR EYES

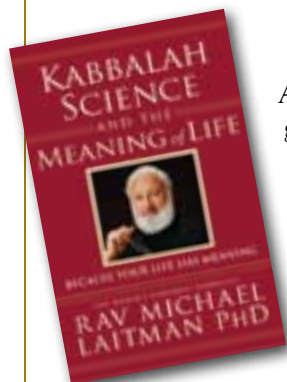
All of reality is a single, unchanging thought of bestowal and giving. Kabbalists refer to this thought by the name, "The Thought of Creation." They say that its essence is the Creator's will to be good to His creations. If we do not relate similarly to that encompassing thought of reality, we are imbalanced with it, which we experience as suffering.

Of course, we do not naturally feel it. And even after we do, we find it hard to understand. But if we saw that this was how reality operates, we would change our ways.

Thus, our only goal should be to open our eyes and see that such is indeed the case. The wisdom of Kabbalah helps us to see it; when we do, we most certainly change.

If I saw that something could improve my situation, I would pursue it in any way possible. And if I had to give something to induce improvement, I would give it, as long as it improved my state of being. The primary difficulty is, therefore, to open our eyes and see what is presently hidden from us.

All our evolutionary states are preordained in the Thought of Creation, but the way and the pace at which we traverse them depend entirely on us. Indeed, we can tread the whole trail even today, and equalize with the Thought of Creation.



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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: info@kabbalah.info

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