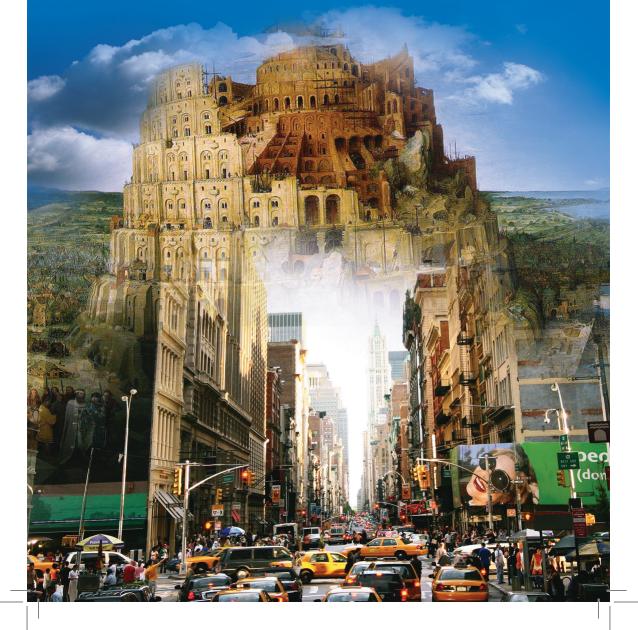
# WHO ARE YOU, PEOPLE OF ISRAEL?





Time and time again we are pressed and terrorized until we feel helplessness and pointlessness. Being Jewish, I wonder at the purpose of this relentless suffering we experience. Indeed, why can't we escape these torments? Why is there no end to these ordeals that seem to repeat themselves every generation?

As our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents suffered hatred during WWII, we, too, are underway to experience similar "treatment" from the rest of the world. Some among us believe that the past cannot return, that the atrocities and the way people treated one another in ancient times, or when the Nazis were in power, are unfeasible today. And yet, we see how easily humanity is reverting to that state. And once again, we are the only ones at stake.

I have written this booklet because Jews the world over are afraid. The pages before you are an attempt to answer questions that Jews face everywhere, an effort to present the solution we are required to pursue.

I have tried to be as brief and as concrete as possible, as I'm aware of the restless nature of our generation. And yet, it is my sincere hope and wish that you will find it helpful. You will find further explanations in the link at the end of the booklet.

With love,

Dr. Michael Laitman

#### Where We Are Now

Humanity is at a crossroads. On the one hand, we are all dependent on one another for our survival, an offshoot of globalization. On the other hand, we hate being so interdependent; we want to break free and be on our own. It is an unsustainable, highly flammable situation. We are required to decide where to go from here. To make the right decision, as well as to understand how we, the Jewish people, are involved in this predicament, we need to look into the past, to ancient Babylon, some 4,000 years back in time.

#### Where We Come From

It is well known that the people of Israel came from ancient Babylon, between today's Iraq and Iran. Some 4,000 years ago, a thriving civilization sprawled over that vast, fertile land, and its people felt connected, sharing the same fate. In the words of the Torah, "The whole earth was of one language and of one speech" (Genesis, 11:1).

But as their ties grew stronger, so did their egos. They began to exploit one another and became hateful of each other. So while the Babylonians felt connected to each other, they also grew alienated from one another due to the egoistic nature intensifying within them.



In consequence, the Babylonians felt caught between a rock and a hard place, not knowing what to do. They began to search for a solution to their plight.

# **Two Solutions to the Crisis**

Searching for a solution to their conflict led the people of Babylon to form two conflicting views. The first was the view of Nimrod, king of Babylon, and the second was the view of Abraham—then a renowned Babylonian sage.

David Altshuler, author of *Metzudat David (David's Fortress)*, writes in his commentary on Chronicles One, "Until the days of Nimrod, all the people were equal, and no one prevailed over another so as to rule one another. But Nimrod began to prevail and rule the land."

In truth, Nimrod made a perfectly reasonable case concerning the emerging hatred among the Babylonians. He argued that they should move beyond the boundaries of Babylon and disperse. When they are far from one another, he asserted, they would be able to live in peace.

Conversely, Abraham's argument was that dispersion would solve nothing. He explained that according to Nature's law of evolution, human society is bound to become united. As a result, he strove to unite the Babylonians and to build a perfect society. Succinctly, Abraham's method entailed connecting people above their personal egos. When he began to advocate his method among his countryfolk, "thousands and tens of thousands assembled around him, and ... He planted this tenet in their hearts," writes Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah*, Part 1). The rest of the people chose Nimrod's way: dispersion, similar to quarrelsome neighbors trying to stay out of each other's way. These dispersed people gradually became what we now know as "human society."

Only today, some 4,000 years down the line, can we begin to realize which of them was right, Abraham or Nimrod.

#### The Basis of the People of Israel

Abraham and his disciples were forced out of Babylon and wandered to a land that later became known as "the land of Israel." This group of disciples aspired toward unity and cohesion in accord with the tenet, "love your neighbor as yourself." The ego was relentlessly growing within them, too, setting them apart, but they exerted in unity nonetheless. In the words of Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah*, *Shoftim* (Judges), "Do for others what you would like them to do for you."

Thus, through the connection they obtained among them, above their egos, Abraham's disciples were astounded to discover something entirely new—"the force of unity," Nature's hidden power. Where Are You, People of Israel?

Science tells us that every substance in reality consists of two opposite forces—connection and separation—and these forces balance themselves out. But individuals, and human society as a whole, evolve using only the negative force—the ego. According to Nature's plan, we are required to *consciously* compensate for the negative force with the positive force of unity.

Alas, we possess none of it. Rather, this force exists in Nature and we must discover it through building positive connections among us. When Abraham and his disciples compensated for the power of the ego among them with the force of unity, they discovered the wisdom of maintaining balance. They called that method, "the wisdom of Kabbalah."

# Abraham's Method—the Wisdom of Kabbalah

The wisdom of Kabbalah explains how to unearth Nature's positive force and balance our egos. It argues that it is predefined in Nature's plan that in the end, all parts of Nature, including the human society, will achieve unity.

## **Israel Means Straight to the Creator**

Abraham's disciples called themselves *Ysrael* (Israel) after their desire to go *Yashar El* (straight to G-d, the Creator). That is, they wished to discover Nature's force of unity so as to balance the

ego that stood between them. Through their unity, they found themselves immersed in the force of unity, the upper force.

Israel called the state of connection to Nature's upper force that they had discovered, "the upper world." They also learned that in the process of human development, the rest of the Babylonians who followed Nimrod's advice, dispersed throughout the world, and have become today's humanity—would also have to achieve unity. That contradiction between the people of Israel, which formed through unity, and the rest of humanity, which formed as a result of separation, is felt even today.

#### **Exile**

Once Abraham's disciples, the people of Israel, left Babylon, they lived in unity for approximately 2,000 years. They did experience struggles during that period, but throughout those years unity was the key tenet that kept the people together, and their conflicts were meant for one purpose only—to intensify the love among them.

However, approximately 2,000 years ago, the ego burst among them at such intensity that they could not maintain their unity. Unfounded hatred and egotism broke out among them and inflicted exile on them. This exile, more than anything else, is exile from unity.

The alienation within the Israeli nation caused them to disperse among the nations. Additionally, the separation among them



caused Kabbalists to conceal their wisdom, which then became the secret of a chosen few: the Kabbalists in each generation.

## **Back to the Present**

These days, humanity is approaching a very similar state to that of ancient Babylon, a state of mutual dependence, on the one hand, and mutual hatred and alienation, on the other hand. And because we are completely interdependent in our "global village," Nimrod's method of drawing apart is no longer feasible.

To achieve balance we are now required to use Abraham's method; this is why it is the nation of Israel that must lead the healing of the pains of human society. Unless we, the Jewish people, do it of our own volition, the nations of the world will coerce us to do it, by force. On that note, it is interesting to read the words of Henry Ford, founder of the Ford motor company, and a notorious anti-Semite, in his book, *The International Jew—The World's Foremost Problem*: "Society has a large claim against him [the Jew] that he ... begin to fulfill ... the ancient prophecy that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

#### **The Roots of Anti-Semitism**

After thousands of years of exerting to build a successful human society using Nimrod's method, the nations of the world are giving up. Moreover, they understand that the solution to their problems is neither technological, nor economic or military. Subconsciously, they feel that the solution lies in unity, that the method of connection exists in the people of Israel, and therefore recognize that they are dependent on the Jews. This causes them to blame the Jews because they possess the key to the world's happiness.

Indeed, when the Israeli nation fell from its moral height of love of others, hatred of Israel among the nations commenced. And thus, through anti-Semitism, the nations of the world prod us to disclose the method of connection. Rav Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, pointed to that fact with his words, "Amalek, Hitler, and so forth, awaken us toward redemption" (*Essays of the Raiah*, Vol. 1).

But the people of Israel is unaware that it is holding the key to the world's happiness, and that the very source of anti-Semitism is that the Jews are carrying within them the method of connection, the key to happiness, the wisdom of Kabbalah.

#### **Mandatory Disclosure of the Wisdom**

As the world groans under the pressure of two conflicting forces—the global force of connection, and the separating power of the ego, we are falling into the state that existed in ancient Babylon prior to the dispersion. Alas, today we cannot draw apart and sedate our egos. Our only option is to work on our



connection, on our unity. We are required to add to our world the positive force that balances the negative power of our ego.

The people of Israel, descendants of the ancient Babylonians who followed Abraham, must implement the wisdom of connection, namely the wisdom of Kabbalah. They are required to set an example to the whole of humanity, and thus become a "light for the nations."

# The Key to Happiness

The laws of Nature dictate that we will all achieve a state of unity. However, there are two ways we can come to that happy end: 1) a path of world suffering wars, catastrophes, plagues, and natural disasters, or 2) a path of gradual balancing of the ego, the path that Abraham planted in his disciples. The latter is the one we suggest.

# **Kabbalah for All**

Only through love can we succeed, or as *The Book of Zohar* puts it, "Everything stands on love" (Portion, *VaEtchanan*), since "love your neighbor as yourself" is the great rule of the Torah, as Rabbi Akiva asserts. This is the essence of the change that the wisdom of Kabbalah is offering to humanity. The result of proper connections and unity among us will be the revelation of the positive force, and complete disappearance of all problems. In his essay, "Introduction to the Book, *Panim Meirot uMasbirot*" (*Shining and Welcoming Face*), Kabbalist, Rav Yehuda Ashlag writes, "It is written in *The Zohar*: 'With this composition [*The Book of Zohar*], the Children of Israel will be redeemed from exile.' Also, in many other places, [it is written that] only through the expansion of the wisdom of Kabbalah in the masses will we obtain complete redemption."

Our organization has set for itself the goal of following the footsteps of the great Kabbalists and disclosing the method of connection to the entire world. We have branches in 64 countries, and more than two million students worldwide. These students have but one hope—to achieve unity the *right* way.





# Our Sages' Words about Our Unity and Vocation

"In the generation of Babylon, there was separation in the human race. The correction of people gathering and assembling for the work of G-d began with Abraham the patriarch and his descendants. Abraham the patriarch was wandering and calling out the name of the Lord until a great assembly gathered unto him, and they were named, 'the people of the house of Abraham.' The matter developed and grew until it became the assembly of Israel, where all become one bundle, doing the Creator's will wholeheartedly."

Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein, Shem MiShmuel [A Name Out of Samuel], Haazinu [Give Ear], TARAP (1920)

"There was none such as Abraham in charity and in establishing peace between people, for he was the father of many nations. This is the reason he unites and makes peace among all creations."

The Maharal of Prague, The Mighty Deeds of the Lord

"And they were all one nation, and one heart, and one language." They loathed the coveted land and went to the land of Shinar, where they found a great and vast land. Rabbi Akiva says, "They cast the kingdom of heaven away from them, and made Nimrod their king.""

#### Pirkey de Rabbi Eliezer [Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer], Chapter 24

"Love your neighbor as yourself' is the great rule of Torah, to include in unity and peace, which is the essence of vitality, persistence, and correction of the whole of creation—by people of differing opinions merging together with love, unity, and peace."

Rabbi Nathan Sternhertz, L*ikutey Halachot* [*Assorted Rules*], "Blessings for Seeing and Personal Blessings," Rule no. 4

"Let us assume the positive commandment of 'love your neighbor as yourself,' and let us aim to love each one from Israel as one's own soul, for by that, one's prayer ascends merged with all of Israel."

The Holy ARI, Gate to Reincarnations

"Our nation's success depends only on brotherly love, on connecting as one family."

Rabbi Shmuel David Luzzatto

*"Eretz Ysrael* means that one has a *Ratzon* (desire) *Yashar El* (straight to the Creator), where one has no desires of self-love, but of love of others.

Rav Baruch Ashlag (The Rabash), The Writings of Rabash, Vol. 1

"No calamity comes to the world but for Israel."

Babylonian Talmud, Masechet Yevamot

"The construction of the world, which is currently crumpled by the dreadful storms of a blood-filled sword, requires the construction of the Israeli nation. The construction of the nation and the revealing of its spirit are one and the same, and it is one with the construction of the world, which is crumpling and awaits a force full of unity and sublimity, and all that is in the



soul of the Assembly of Israel. The spirit of the Lord is filled with it, and the spirit of one whose soul pounds within cannot be calm at this time, without calling on all the forces in the nation: 'Wake up and arise to your duty!'"

The Raiah [Rav Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook], *Orot (Lights)*, Chapter 9

"It is upon the Israeli nation to qualify itself and all the people of the world through Torah and *Mitzvot* (commandments), to develop until they take upon themselves that sublime work of the love of others, which is the ladder to the purpose of Creation, being adhesion with the Creator.

Rav Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), "*The Arvut*" (Mutual Guarantee)

"Moses wished to complete the correction of the world at that time. This is why he took the mixed multitude, as he thought that thus would be the correction of the world, to be done at the end of days ... However, he did not succeed because of the corruptions that occurred along the way."

Rav Moshe Chaim Lozzatto (Ramchal), *The Commentary of Ramchal on the Torah, BaMidbar* [Numbers]

"Since we were ruined by unfounded hatred, and the world was ruined with us, we will be rebuilt by unfounded love, and the world will be rebuilt with us."

The Raiah [Rav Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook], Orot Kodesh (Sacred Lights), Vol. 3

## Where to Go from Here

*Like a Bundle of Reeds* is a TV series based on a book of the same title, originally broadcast on JLTV, with Dr. Michael Laitman, *Like a Bundle of Reeds* executive editor Chaim Ratz, and other guests exploring topics relevant to every Jew today:

- Are we Jews different from other nations?
- Why was I born Jewish?
- Why is there anti-Semitism?
- Could the Holocaust happen again?
- What can I do?
- Why are there Jews?

Watch episodes from the TV series & download the *Like a Bundle of Reeds* eBook for free at www.bundleofreeds.com, and sign up for e-mail notifications about the upcoming *Like a Bundle of Reeds* TV shows and free courses.



#### **About Michael Laitman**

Michael Laitman is a Professor of Ontology, a PhD in Philosophy and Kabbalah, and an MSc in Medical Bio-Cybernetics. He is the founder and president of the ARI Institute.



Prof. Laitman teaches free live daily lessons on Kabbalah to an audience of approximately two million people worldwide, simultaneously interpreted into eight languages: English, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian, Russian, French, Turkish, and German.

To date, Laitman has published more than 40 books, translated into 35 languages. Notable recent publications are *Like a Bundle of Reeds: why unity and mutual guarantee are today's call of the hour, A Guide to the New World: why mutual guarantee is the key to our recovery from the global crisis, The Psychology of the Integral Society, and Self-Interest vs. Altruism in the Global Era: how society can turn self-interests into mutual benefit.* 

Additionally, Laitman's articles and interviews have appeared on important media outlets such as *Bloomberg TV*, *Fox News* (Radio), *Chicago Tribune*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and *The Miami Herald*.