

KABBALAH
for the
STUDENT



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KABBALAH FOR THE STUDENT

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FOREWORD

Why are we here? What does the future hold? How can we avoid suffering and feel tranquil and safe? These are questions we would all like to answer. The wisdom of Kabbalah provides the answers to these questions and to many more. It allows us to ask any question and experience the intimate, profound fulfillment that comes with answering the deepest questions to the fullest. This is why it is called “the wisdom of the hidden.”

Kabbalah teaches that we all want to enjoy. Kabbalists call this desire “the will to receive delight and pleasure,” or simply, “the will to receive.” This desire propels all of our actions, thoughts, and feelings, and Kabbalah depicts how we can realize our desires and fulfill our wishes.

Although the wisdom of Kabbalah often tends to sound technical or obscure, it is important to remember that this is a very practical science. The people who mastered it and wrote about it were just like you and me. They were seeking solutions to the same questions we all want to answer: “Why are we born?” “What happens after we die?” “Why is there suffering?” and “Can I experience lasting pleasure, and if so, how?” And when they found the answers to these questions and implemented them in their own lives, they wrote the texts within this collection, so we may know them, too.

In this compilation, you will find precise explanations as to how you can achieve that sublime feeling of unbounded pleasure and complete control of your life.

Kabbalah teaches how to enjoy life here and now. It explains such concepts as “the next world,” “souls,” “reincarnation,” and “life and death.”

How can we, novices, experience such perceptions? How can we discover the true picture of reality?

Each of us builds his or her own priorities in life. Some matters are more important to us, some are less so, and some we prefer to put off. But regardless of the level of importance, we categorize our priorities according to a single measurement: our purpose in life.

Some people will strive tirelessly for love, some crave money, and others desire honor or knowledge. But most people prefer not to put all their eggs in one basket by focusing on fulfilling one desire. They settle for a little of everything and suppress any strong desire that emerges in them and demands too much of their attention.

The Kabbalists who wrote the texts you will read here are of the first, uncompromising kind. They set a very clear goal before them: to show humankind how to achieve eternal life—filled with pleasure and unbounded, fulfilled emotions. To achieve this, they studied the will to receive delight and pleasure that exists in each of us.

The greatest Kabbalists who lived in our time are also the ones who explained the rules of the wisdom of Kabbalah in the clearest and simplest style. The two prime Kabbalists whose writings appear in this book are Rav Yehuda Ashlag, known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder) for his *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, and his son, Rav Baruch Ashlag, who expanded and interpreted his father's explanations. Rav Michael Laitman, Rav Baruch Ashlag's prime student and personal assistant, teaches us how to correctly interpret the texts, and how to use them to achieve the purpose for which we were created.

We, Bnei Baruch, wish you joy and fulfillment in your study, and rapid spiritual growth.

THE TREE OF LIFE – A POEM

*Behold that before the emanations were emanated and the creatures were created,
The Upper Simple Light had filled the whole existence.
And there was no vacancy, such as an empty air, a hollow,
But all was filled with that Simple, Boundless Light.
And there was no such part as head, or end,
But everything was One, Simple Light, balanced evenly and equally,
And it was called “the Light of Ein Sof (Infinity).”
And when upon His simple will, came the desire to create the worlds and emanate
the emanations,
To bring to light the perfection of His deeds, His names, His appellations,
Which was the cause of the creation of the worlds,
Then the Ein Sof restricted Himself, in His middle point, precisely at the center,
And He restricted that Light, and drew far off to the sides around that middle point.
And there remained an empty space, an empty air, a vacuum
Precisely from the middle point.
And that restriction was equally around that empty, middle point,
So that the space was evenly circled around it.
And after the restriction, when the vacant space remained empty
Precisely in the middle of the Light of Ein Sof,
A place was formed, where the Emanations, Creations, Formations, and Actions might reside.
Then from the Light of Ein Sof, a single line hung down from Above, lowered into that space.
And through that line, He emanated, created, formed, and made all the worlds.*

Prior to these four worlds, there was one Light of Ein Sof, whose Name is One, in wondrous, hidden unity,

And even in the angels closest to Him

There is no force and no attainment in The Ein Sof,

As there is no mind of a created that could attain Him,

For He has no place, no boundary, no name.

-The Ari, The Tree of Life, Part One, Gate One

The Messiah sits at the gate to Jerusalem and awaits people worthy of redemption. He is fettered, and he needs whole people to untie his chains. He has had more than his fill of pious adherents; now he is fervently seeking men of truth.

*-From the sayings of The Rabbi of Kotzk,
There Is None So Whole as a Broken Heart, p 115*

TIME
for
SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT

TIME TO ACT

For a long time now, my conscience has burdened me with a demand to come out and create a fundamental composition regarding the essence of Judaism, religion, and the wisdom of Kabbalah, and spread it among the nation, so people will come to know and properly understand these exalted matters in their true meaning.

Previously in Israel, prior to the development of the printing industry, there were no fallacious books among us relating to the essence of Judaism, as there were almost no writers who could not stand behind their words, for the simple reason that in most cases, an irresponsible person is not famous.

Therefore, if, by chance, one dared to write such a composition, no scribe would copy it, as he would not be paid for his labor, which, for the most part, was quite considerable. Thus, such a composition was doomed from the start to be lost.

In those days, knowledgeable people, too, had no interest in writing such books, since the populace did not need that knowledge. Quite the contrary, they had an interest in hiding it in secret chambers for the reason that “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.” We were commanded to conceal the essence of the Torah and the work from those who did not need it, or were unworthy of it, and to not degrade it by displaying it in shop windows for the lusting eyes of the boasting, because thus the glory of God demands.

But ever since the printing of books has become popular, and writers are no longer in need of scribes, the price of books has been reduced. This has paved the way for irresponsible writers to publish whatever books they please, for money or for glory. But they do not take their own actions into account and do not examine the consequences of their work.

From that time on, publications of the aforementioned kind have significantly increased, without any learning or reception mouth-to-mouth from a qualified Rav, and even without knowledge of earlier books that dealt with this topic. Such writers fabricate theories of their own empty shells, and relate their words to the most exalted matters, to thus portray the essence of the nation and its fabulous treasure. As fools, they know not how to be scrupulous, nor have a way by which to learn it. They instill faulty views to generations, and in return for their petty lusts they sin and make the nations sin for generations to come.

Recently, their stench has soared upward because they have plunged their nails into the wisdom of the Kabbalah, not minding that this wisdom has been locked and chained behind a thousand doors to this day, that no person may understand the true meaning of even a single word of it, much less the connection between one word and the next.

That is because in all the genuine books that were written to this day, there are but clues that barely suffice for a knowledgeable disciple to understand their true meaning, from the mouth of a wise and qualified Kabbalist sage. And there, too, “the arrowsnake make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and brood under her shadow.” These days, such conspirators multiply, who make such delights that disgust those who behold them.

Some of them even go as far as to presume and to assume the place of the leaders of the generation, and they pretend to know the difference between the ancient books and tell which of them is worthy of study and which is not, since it is filled with fallacies, and they arouse contempt and wrath. Until today, the work of scrutiny had been limited to one in ten leaders of a generation; and now the ignorant abuse it.

Therefore, the perception of these matters by the public has been greatly corrupted. In addition, there is an atmosphere of frivolity and people think that a glance at one’s leisure is sufficient for the study of such exalted matters. They skim over the ocean of wisdom and the essence of Judaism in a glance, like that angel, and draw conclusions based on their own mood.

These are the reasons that have prompted me to go out of my way and decide that it is time to “do for the Lord” and salvage what can still be salvaged. Thus, I have taken upon myself to reveal some of the true essence, which relates to the above matter, and spread it among the nation.

DISCLOSING A PORTION, COVERING TWO

There is an idiom among great sages when they come to disclose a profound matter: they begin their words with, “I am disclosing a portion and covering two portions.” Our sages took great care not to utter words needlessly, as our sages instructed, “A word is a rock; silence is two.”

This means that if you have a priceless word whose worth is one rock, know that not saying it is worth two rocks. This refers to those uttering needless words without pertinent content or use except to decorate the tongue in the eyes of the beholders. This was strictly forbidden in the eyes of our sages, as is known to those who examine their words. Hence, we must be attentive to understand this common idiom of theirs.

THREE KINDS OF CONCEALMENT OF THE WISDOM

There are three parts to the secrets of the Torah. Each part has its own reason for being concealed. They are called by the following names:

- 1. Unnecessary**
- 2. Impossible**
- 3. The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him**

There is not a single fraction of this wisdom where scrutinies of these three parts do not apply, and I will clarify them one at a time.

1. UNNECESSARY

This means that no benefit will stem from its disclosing. Of course, this is not such a great loss because there is only the issue of the cleanness of the mind here, to warn of those actions defined as “so what,” meaning so what if I did this, there is no harm in it.

But you should know that, in the eyes of the sages, the “so what” is considered the worst corruptor. This is because all the destructors in the world, those that have been and those that will be, are the “so what” kind of people. This means that they occupy themselves and others in needless things. Hence, sages would not accept any student before they were certain that he would be cautious in his ways, so as not to reveal what was not necessary.

2. IMPOSSIBLE

This means that the language does not compel them to say anything of their quality, due to their great sublimity and spirituality. Hence, any attempt to clothe them in words may only mislead the examiners and deflect them to a false path, which is considered the worst of all iniquities. Therefore, to reveal anything in these matters, permission from Above is required. This is the second part of the concealment of the wisdom. Yet, this permission, too, requires explanation.

PERMISSION FROM ABOVE

This is explained in the book, *The Gate to Rashbi's Words*, by the Ari, in *The Zohar, Parashat Mishpatim*, p 100. It reads as follows, “Know that some of the souls of the righteous are of the Surrounding-Light kind, and some are of the Inner-Light kind. Those that are of the Surrounding-Light kind have the power to speak of the secrets of the Torah by way of concealment and intimation, so their words will be understood only by those worthy of understanding them.

“Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai’s soul was of the Surrounding-Light kind. Hence, he had the power to clothe the words and teach them in a way that even if he taught them to many, only the worthy of understanding would understand. This is why he was given ‘permission’ to write *The Book of Zohar*.

“The permission was not ‘granted’ to write a book in this wisdom to his teachers or to the first ones who preceded them, even though they were certainly more proficient in this wisdom than he. But the reason is that they did not have the power to dress the matters as did he. This is the meaning of what is written, ‘Yochai’s son knew how to guard his ways.’ Now you can understand the great concealment in *The Book of Zohar*, written by Rashbi, that not every mind can grasp his words.”

His words in essence: Explaining matters in the wisdom of truth is not dependent whatsoever upon the greatness or smallness of the Kabbalist sage. Rather, it is about the illumination of a soul dedicated to this: the illumination of this soul is considered “giving permission” from Above to disclose the Higher

Wisdom. We therefore learn that one who has not been rewarded with this permission must not make clarifications in this wisdom, as he cannot clothe the subtle matters in their suitable words in a way that will not fail the students.

For this reason we did not find a single book in the wisdom of truth that precedes Rashbi's *The Book of Zohar*, since all the books in the wisdom prior to his are not categorized as interpretations of the wisdom. Instead, they are mere intimations, without any order of cause and consequence, as it is known to those who find knowledge, thus far understanding his words.

I should add, as I had received from books and from authors, that since the time of Rashbi and his students, the authors of *The Zohar*, until the time of the Ari there was not a single writer who understood the words of *The Zohar* and the *Tikkunim* (corrections) like the Ari. All the compositions before his time are mere inklings in this wisdom, including the books of the sage, Ramak.

And the same words that were said about the Rashbi should be said about the Ari himself—that his predecessors were not given permission from Above to disclose the interpretations of the wisdom, and that he was given this permission. And also, this does not distinguish any greatness or smallness at all, since it is possible that the virtue of his formers was much greater than the Ari's, but they were not given permission for it at all. For this reason, they refrained from writing commentaries that relate to the actual wisdom, but settled for brief intimations that were not in any way linked to one another.

For this reason, since the books of the Ari appeared in the world, all who study the wisdom of Kabbalah have left their hands from all the books of the Ramak, and all the first and the great ones that preceded the Ari, as it is known among those who engage in this wisdom. They have attached their spiritual lives solely to the writings of the Ari in a way that the essential books, considered proper interpretations of this wisdom, are only *The Book of Zohar*, the *Tikkunim* and following them, the books of the Ari.

3. THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD IS WITH THEM THAT FEAR HIM

This means that the secrets of the Torah are revealed only to those who fear His Name, who keep His Glory with their hearts and souls, and who never commit any blasphemy. This is the third part of the concealment of the wisdom.

This part of the concealment is the strictest, as this kind of disclosure has failed many. From the midst of those stem all the charmers, whisperers, and “practical” Kabbalists, who hunt souls with their cunningness, and the mystics, who use withered wisdom that came from under the hands of unworthy students,

to draw bodily benefit for themselves or for others. The world has suffered much from it, and is suffering still.

You should know that the root of the concealment was only this part. From here the sages took excessive strictness in testing the students, as they said (*Hagiga* 13), “heads of chapters are given only to a chief justice, and to one whose heart is worried,” and “*Maase Beresheet* is not to be explored in pairs, neither is *Merkava* to be explored alone.” There are many others like that, and all this fear is for the above reason.

For this reason, few are the ones who have been rewarded with this wisdom, and even those who passed all their tests and examinations are sworn by the most serious oaths to not reveal anything of those three parts.

Do not misunderstand my words, in that I have divided the concealment of the wisdom into three parts. I do not mean that the wisdom of truth itself is divided into these three parts. Rather, I mean that these three parts stem from every single detail of this wisdom, since they are the only three manners of scrutiny that are always applied to this wisdom.

However, here we should ask, “If it is true that the firmness of the concealment of the wisdom is so strict, from where were all the thousands of compositions in this wisdom taken?” The answer is that there is a difference between the first two parts and the last part. The prime burden lies only in the above third part, for the reason explained above.

But the first two parts are not under constant prohibition. This is because sometimes an issue in the “unnecessary” is reversed, stops being unnecessary for some reason, and becomes necessary. Also, the part, “impossible,” sometimes becomes possible. This is so for two reasons: either because of the evolution of the generation or by being given permission from Above, as it happened to the Rashbi and to the Ari, and to smaller extents to their formers. All the genuine books written in the wisdom emerge from these discernments.

This is what they mean by their idiom, “I am disclosing a portion and covering two portions.” They mean that it happened that they revealed a new thing that was not discovered by their predecessors. And this is why they imply that they are only revealing one portion, meaning he is revealing the first part of the three parts of concealment, and leaves two parts concealed.

This indicates that something happened, which is the reason for that disclosure: either the “unnecessary” received the form of “necessary,” or “permission from Above” was granted, as I have explained above. This is the meaning of the idiom, “I am disclosing a portion.”

The readers of these tracts, which I intend to print during the year, should know that they are all innovations, which are not introduced purely as such, in their precise content, in any book preceding mine. I received them mouth to mouth from my teacher, who was authorized for it, meaning he, too, received from his teachers mouth to mouth.

And although I had received them under all the conditions of covering and watchfulness, by the necessity introduced in my essay, "Time to Act," the "unnecessary" part has been inverted for me and became "necessary." Hence, I have revealed this portion with complete permission, as I have explained above. Yet I will keep the other two portions as I am commanded.

THE ESSENCE OF THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH

Before I go about elucidating the history of the wisdom of Kabbalah, conversed about by many, I find it necessary to begin with a thorough clarification of the essence of this wisdom, which I believe so few know. And naturally, it is impossible to speak of the history of something before we know the thing itself.

Although this knowledge is wider and deeper than the ocean, I will make an utmost effort, with all the strength and knowledge I have acquired in this field, to clarify and illuminate it from all angles, enough for any soul to draw the right conclusions, as they truly are, leaving no room for error, as is often the case in such matters.

WHAT DOES THE WISDOM REVOLVE AROUND?

This question comes to the mind of every right-minded person. To properly address it, I will provide a reliable and lasting definition: this wisdom is no more and no less than a sequence of roots, which hang down by way of cause and consequence, by fixed, determined rules, interweaving to a single, exalted goal described as “the revelation of His Godliness to His creatures in this world.”

And here there is a conduct of particular and general:

General—the whole of humanity, obligated to eventually come to this immense evolvment, as it is written, “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11, 9). “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Jeremiah 31, 33). “Yet thy Teacher shall not hide Himself any more, but thine eyes shall see thy Teacher” (Isaiah 30, 20).

Particular—that even before the perfection of the whole of humanity, this rule is implemented in a chosen few individuals in every generation. These are the ones who are endowed, in each generation, with certain degrees of revelation of His Godliness. And these are the prophets and the men of God.

And as our sages said, “There is no generation without such that are as Abraham and Jacob.” Thus you see that the revelation of His Godliness is implemented in each generation, as our sages, whom we find trustworthy, proclaim.

THE MULTIPLICITY OF PARTZUFIM, SEFIROT, AND WORLDS

However, according to the above, a question arises—since this wisdom has but one, special, and clear role, why is there the matter of the multiplicity of *Partzufim*, *Sefirot*, and interchangeable connections, which are so abundant in the books of Kabbalah?

Indeed, if you take the body of a small animal, whose only task is to nourish itself so it may exist in this world for enough time to father and carry on its species, you will find in it a complex structure of millions of fibers and tendons, as physiologists and anatomists have discovered. And there is much there that humans have yet to find. From the above, you can conclude the vast variety of issues and channels that need to connect in order to achieve and to reveal that sublime goal.

TWO CONDUCTS—FROM ABOVE DOWNWARDS AND FROM BELOW UPWARDS

This wisdom is generally divided into two parallel, identical orders, like two drops in a pond. The only difference between them is that the first order extends from Above downwards, to this world, and the second order traverses from below upwards, precisely by the same routes and make-ups imprinted at the root when they appeared from Above downwards.

The first order is called “the order of descent of the worlds, *Partzufim*, and *Sefirot*,” in all their occurrences, whether lasting or transient. The second order is called “attainments or degrees of prophecy and Holy Spirit.” A person rewarded with it must follow the same trails and inlets, and gradually attain each detail and each degree, precisely by the same rules that were imprinted in them upon their emanation from Above downwards.

A revelation of Godliness does not appear at once, but gradually, over a period of time, depending on the cleansing of the attaining, until one discovers all the degrees from Above downwards. And because they come in an order of

attainment, one after the other and one above the other, as do rungs of a ladder, they are called “degrees” (steps).

ABSTRACT NAMES

Many believe that all the words and the names in the wisdom of Kabbalah are a kind of abstract names. This is so because it deals with Godliness and spirituality, which are above time and space, where even our imagination has no hold. For this reason they have decided that surely, these matters speak only of abstract names, or even more sublime and exalted than abstract names, as they are completely and from the outset, devoid of elements that are imagined.

But that is not the case. On the contrary, Kabbalah uses only names and appellations that are concrete and real. It is an unbending rule for all Kabbalists that, “Anything we do not attain, we do not define by a name and a word.”

Here you must know that the word “attainment” (Heb: *Hasaga*) implies the ultimate degree of understanding. It derives from the phrase, “that thy hand shall reach” (Heb: *Ki Tasig Yadcha*). That means that before something becomes utterly lucid, as though gripped in one’s hand, Kabbalists do not consider it attained, but understood, comprehended, and so on.

THE ACTUALITY OF THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH

Actual things are found even in the corporeal reality set before our eyes, although we have neither perception nor image of their essence. Such are the electricity and the magnet, called “fluidum.”

Nevertheless, who can say that these names are not real, when we vividly and satisfactorily know their actions? We could not be more indifferent to the fact that we have no perception of the essence of the subject itself, namely electricity itself.

This name is as tangible and as close to us as though it were entirely perceived by our senses. Even little children are familiar with the word, “electricity,” as well as they are familiar with words such as bread, sugar, and so on.

Moreover, if you wish to exercise your tools of scrutiny a bit, I shall tell you that as a whole, as there is no perception of the Creator whatsoever, so is it impossible to attain the essence of any of His creatures, even the tangible objects that we feel with our hands.

Thus, all we know about our friends and relatives in the world of action before us are nothing more than “acquaintance with their actions.” These are prompted and born by the association of their encounter with our senses, which

render us complete satisfaction although we have no perception whatsoever of the essence of the subject.

Furthermore, you have no perception or attainment whatsoever even of your own essence. Everything you know about your own essence is nothing more than a series of actions extending from your essence.

Now you can easily conclude that all the names and appellations that appear in books of Kabbalah are indeed real and factual, although we have no attainment in the subject matter whatsoever. It is so because those who engage in it have the complete satisfaction with their inclusive perception of its ultimate wholeness, meaning a mere perception of actions, prompted and born of the association of the Upper Light and its perceivers.

However, it is quite sufficient, for this is the rule: "All that is measured and extracted from His Providence so as to be realized into the nature of Creation, is completely satisfactory." Similarly, one cannot wish for a sixth finger on one hand, because the five fingers are quite sufficient.

THE CORPOREAL TERMS AND THE PHYSICAL NAMES IN BOOKS OF KABBALAH

Any reasonable person will understand that when dealing with spiritual matters, much less with Godliness, we have no words or letters with which to contemplate. This is because our whole vocabulary is but combinations of the letters of our senses and imagination. Yet, how can they be of assistance where there are neither imagination nor senses?

Even if we take the subtlest word that can be used in such matters, meaning the word, "Upper Light," or even "Simple Light," it is still imaginary and borrowed from the light of the sun, or a candlelight, or a light of contentment one feels upon resolving some great doubt. Yet, how can we use them in spiritual matters and Godly ways? They offer the examiner nothing more than falsehood and deceit.

It is particularly so where one needs to find some rationale in these words to help one in the negotiations customary in the research of the wisdom. Here the sage must use rigorously accurate definitions for the eyes of the observers.

And should the sage fail with but a single unsuccessful word, he is certain to confuse and mislead the readers. They will not understand at all what he is saying there, before it, after it, and everything connected to that word, as is known to anyone who examines books of wisdom.

Thus, one should wonder how is it possible for Kabbalists to use false words to explain the interconnections in this wisdom? Also, it is known that there is no definition through a false name, for the lie has no legs and no stance.

Indeed, here you need to have prior knowledge of the Law of Root and Branch by which the worlds relate to one another.

THE LAW OF ROOT AND BRANCH BY WHICH THE WORLDS ARE RELATED

Kabbalists have found that the form of the four worlds, named *Atzilut*, *Beria*, *Yetzira*, and *Assiya*, beginning with the first, highest world, called *Atzilut*, and ending in this corporeal, tangible world, called *Assiya*, is exactly the same in every item and event. This means that everything that eventuates and occurs in the first world is found unchanged in the next world, below it, too. It is likewise in all the worlds that follow it, down to this tangible world.

There is no difference between them, but only a different degree, perceived in the substance of the elements of reality in each world. The substance of the elements of reality in the first, Uppermost world, is purer than in all the ones below it. And the substance of the elements of reality in the second world is coarser than in that of the first world, but purer than all that is of a lower degree.

This continues similarly down to this world before us, whose substance of the elements in reality is coarser and darker than in all the worlds preceding it. However, the shapes and the elements of reality and all their occurrences come unchanged and equal in every world, both in quantity and quality.

They compared it to the conduct of a seal and its imprint: all the shapes in the seal are perfectly transferred in every detail and intricacy to the imprinted object. So it is with the worlds, where each lower world is an imprint of the world Above it. Hence, all the forms in the Higher World are meticulously copied, in both quantity and quality, to the lower world.

Thus, there is not an element of reality, or an occurrence of reality in a lower world, that you will not find its likeness in the world Above it, as identical as two drops in a pond. And they are called “Root and Branch.” That means that the item in the lower world is deemed a branch of its pattern, found in the Higher World, being the root of the lower element, as this is where that item in the lower world was imprinted and made to be.

That was the intention of our sages when they said, “You haven’t a blade of grass below that has not a fortune and a guard above that strike it and tells

it, 'Grow!'" It follows that the root, called "fortune," compels it to grow and assume its attribute in quantity and quality, as with the seal and the imprint. This is the law of Root and Branch, which applies to every detail and occurrence of reality, in every single world, in relation to the world Above it.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE KABBALISTS IS A LANGUAGE OF BRANCHES

This means that the branches indicate to their roots, being their molds that necessarily exist in the Upper World. This is because there is nothing in the reality of the lower world that does not stem from its Superior World. As with the seal and the imprint, the root in the Upper World compels its branch in the lower one to reveal its entire form and feature, as our sages said, that the fortune in the world Above, related to the grass in the world below, strikes it, forcing it to complete its growth. Because of that, each and every branch in this world well defines its mold, situated in the Higher World.

Thus, Kabbalists have found a set and annotated vocabulary, sufficient to create an excellent spoken language. It enables them to converse with one another of the dealings in the Spiritual Roots in the Upper Worlds by merely mentioning the tangible branch in this world that is well defined to our corporeal senses.

The listeners understand the Upper Root to which this corporeal branch points because it is related to it, being its imprint. Thus, all the beings of the tangible creation and all their instances have become to them like well-defined words and names, indicating the High Spiritual Roots. Although there cannot be a verbal expression in their spiritual place, as it is above any imagination, they have earned the right to be expressed by utterance through their branches, arranged before our senses here in the tangible world.

That is the nature of the spoken language among Kabbalists, by which they convey their spiritual attainments from person to person and from generation to generation, both by word of mouth and in writing. They fully understand one another, with all the required accuracy needed for negotiating in research of the wisdom, with precise definitions one cannot fail in. This is so because each branch has its own natural, unique definition, and this absolute definition indicates to its root in the Higher World.

Bear in mind that this Language of Branches of the wisdom of Kabbalah is better suited to explain the terms of the wisdom than all our ordinary tongues. It is known from the theory of nominalism that the languages have been

disrupted in the mouths of the crowd. In other words, due to excessive use of the words, they have been emptied of their accurate contents, resulting in great difficulties to convey precise deductions from one to another by word of mouth or in writing.

This is not case with the Kabbalah's language of branches: it is derived from the names of the creations and their occurrences, set before our eyes, and defined by the unchangeable laws of nature. The readers and the listeners will never be misled into a misunderstanding of the words being offered to them, since the natural definitions are utterly unwavering and cannot be breached.

CONVEYANCE FROM A WISE KABBALIST TO AN UNDERSTANDING RECEIVER

Thus wrote the RAMBAM in his introduction to his commentary on the Torah: "And I bring with true covenant to all who scrutinize this book, that of all the clues that I write in the secrets of the Torah, I resolutely assert that my words will not be grasped by any mind or intelligence, except from the mouth of a wise Kabbalist to the ear of an understanding receiver." Such as that, Rav Chaim Vital wrote in his introduction to *The Tree of Life*, and also, in the words of our sages (*Hagiga*, 11): "One does not study the Kabbalah on one's own, unless he is wise and understands with his own mind."

Their words are thoroughly understood when they say that one must receive from a wise Kabbalist. But why the necessity for the disciple to first be wise and understanding with his own mind? Moreover, if he isn't so, then he must not be taught, be he the most righteous person in the world. Additionally, if one is already wise and understands with his own mind, what need has he to learn from others?

From the aforesaid, their words are understood with utter simplicity: we have seen that all the words and utterances our lips pronounce cannot help us convey even a single word from the spiritual, Godly matters, above the imaginary time and space. Instead, there is a special language for these matters, being the Language of the Branches, indicating their relation to their Upper Roots.

However, this language, though extremely suitable for its task of delving into the studies of this wisdom, more than other languages, is only so if the listener is wise in his own right, meaning that he knows and understands the way the branches relate to their roots. It is because these relations are not at all clear when looking from the lower upwards. In other words, it is impossible to find any deduction or semblance in the Upper Roots by observing the lower branches.

Quite the contrary, the lower is studied from the Higher. Thus, one must first attain the Upper Roots, the way they are in spirituality, above any imagination, but with pure attainment. And once he has thoroughly attained the Upper Roots with his own mind, he may examine the tangible branches in this world and know how each branch relates to its root in the Upper World, in all its orders, in quantity and quality.

When one knows and thoroughly comprehends all that, there is a common language between him and his teacher, namely the Language of the Branches. Using it, the Kabbalist sage may convey the studies in the wisdom, conducted in the Upper, Spiritual Worlds, both the ones he had received from his teachers, as well as his expansions in the wisdom, which he had discovered by himself. This is because now they have a common language and they understand each other.

However, when a disciple is not wise and comprehends the language on his own, meaning how the branches indicate to their roots, naturally, the teacher cannot convey even a single word of this spiritual wisdom, much less negotiate with him in the scrutiny of the wisdom. This is so because they have no common language they can use, and they become like mute. Thus, it is necessary that the wisdom of Kabbalah will not be taught unless he is wise and understands with his own mind.

We must ask further: How then, has the disciple grown so wise as to know the relations of branch and root through tracing the Upper Roots? The answer is that here one's efforts are in vain; it is the Creator's help that we need! He fills those who capture His fondness with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to acquire sublime attainments. Here it is impossible to be assisted by any flesh and blood!

Indeed, once He has grown fond of a person and has endowed him with the sublime attainment, one is then ready to come and receive the vastness of the wisdom of Kabbalah from a wise Kabbalist, for only now do they have a common language.

APPELLATIONS ALIEN TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT

With all that is said above, you will understand why we sometimes find appellations and terms quite alien to the human spirit in books of Kabbalah. They are abundant in the fundamental books of Kabbalah, which are *The Zohar*, the *Tikkunim*, and the books of the Ari. It is indeed bewildering why these sages used such lowly appellations to express such exalted, holy notions.

Yet, you will fully understand it once you have acquired the above conceptions. This is because it is now clear that no language in the world can be used to explain that wisdom, except one that is intended for just that end, namely the Language of the Branches, relating to their Upper Roots.

Thus, obviously, no branch or occurrence of a branch should be neglected because of its inferior degree, or not be used to express the desired concept in the interconnections in the wisdom, as there is no other branch in our world to take its place.

As no two hairs suck from the same foramen, we do not have two branches that relate to a single root. Hence, by leaving an incident unused, we lose the spiritual concept corresponding to it in the Upper World, as we have not a single word to utter in its place and indicate that root. In addition, such an incident would impair the entire wisdom in all its vastness, since now there is a missing link in the chain of the wisdom connected to that concept.

This mutilates the entire wisdom, for there is no other wisdom in the world where matters are so fused and intertwined by way of cause and effect, primary and consequential, as is the wisdom of Kabbalah, connected head to toe just like a long chain. Therefore, upon the temporary loss of but a small cognizance, the entire wisdom darkens before our eyes, for all its issues are tied to one another very strongly, literally fusing into one.

Now you will not wonder at the occasional use of alien appellations. They have no freedom of choice with appellations, to replace the bad with the good, or the good with the bad. They must always use the branch or the incident, which precisely points to its Upper Root in all its necessary measure. Moreover, the matters must be expanded so as to provide an accurate definition for the eyes of their fellow observers.

ABOUT BNEI BARUCH

Bnei Baruch is an international group of Kabbalists who share the wisdom of Kabbalah with the entire world. The study materials (in over 30 languages) are authentic Kabbalah texts that were passed down from generation to generation.

HISTORY AND ORIGIN

In 1991, following the passing of his teacher, Rav Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (The Rabash), Michael Laitman, Professor of Ontology and the Theory of Knowledge, PhD in Philosophy and Kabbalah, and MSc in Medical Bio-Cybernetics, established a Kabbalah study group called “Bnei Baruch.” He called it Bnei Baruch (Sons of Baruch) to commemorate his mentor, whose side he never left in the final twelve years of his life, from 1979 to 1991. Dr. Laitman had been Ashlag’s prime student and personal assistant, and is recognized as the successor to Rabash’s teaching method.

The Rabash was the firstborn son and successor of Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag, the greatest Kabbalist of the 20th century. Rav Ashlag authored the most authoritative and comprehensive commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, titled *The Sulam* (Ladder) *Commentary*. He was the first to reveal the complete method for spiritual ascent, and thus was known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder).

Bnei Baruch bases its entire study method on the path paved by these two great spiritual leaders.

THE STUDY METHOD

The unique study method developed by Baal HaSulam and his son, the Rabash, is taught and applied on a daily basis by Bnei Baruch. This method relies on authentic Kabbalah sources such as *The Book of Zohar*, by Rabbi Shimon Bar-

Yochai, *The Tree of Life*, by the Ari, and *The Study of the Ten Sefirot*, by Baal HaSulam.

While the study relies on authentic Kabbalah sources, it is carried out in simple language and uses a scientific, contemporary approach. The unique combination of an academic study method and personal experiences broadens the students' perspective and awards them a new perception of the reality they live in. Those on the spiritual path are thus given the necessary tools to study themselves and their surrounding reality.

Bnei Baruch is a diverse movement of tens of thousands of students worldwide. Students can choose their own paths and intensity of their studies according to their unique conditions and abilities.

THE MESSAGE

The essence of the message disseminated by Bnei Baruch is universal: unity of the people, unity of nations and love of man.

For millennia, Kabbalists have been teaching that love of man should be the foundation of all human relations. This love prevailed in the days of Abraham, Moses, and the group of Kabbalists that they established. If we make room for these seasoned, yet contemporary values, we will discover that we possess the power to put differences aside and unite.

The wisdom of Kabbalah, hidden for millennia, has been waiting for the time when we would be sufficiently developed and ready to implement its message. Now, it is emerging as a solution that can unite diverse factions everywhere, enabling us, as individuals and as a society, to meet today's challenges.

ACTIVITIES

Bnei Baruch was established on the premise that "only by expansion of the wisdom of Kabbalah to the public can we be awarded complete redemption" (Baal HaSulam). Therefore, Bnei Baruch offers a variety of ways for people to explore and discover the purpose of their lives, providing careful guidance for beginners and advanced students alike.

Internet

Bnei Baruch's international website, www.kab.info, presents the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah using essays, books, and original texts. It is by far the most expansive source of authentic Kabbalah material on the Internet, containing a unique, extensive library for readers to thoroughly explore the wisdom of

Kabbalah. Additionally, the media archive, www.kabbalahmedia.info, contains thousands of media items, downloadable books, and a vast reservoir of texts, video and audio files in many languages.

Bnei Baruch's online Learning Center offers free Kabbalah courses for beginners, initiating students into this profound body of knowledge in the comfort of their own homes.

Dr. Laitman's daily lessons are also aired live on www.kab.tv, along with complementary texts and diagrams.

All these services are provided free of charge.

Television

In Israel, Bnei Baruch established its own channel, no. 66 on both cable and satellite, which broadcasts 24/7 Kabbalah TV. The channel is also aired on the Internet at www.kab.tv. All broadcasts on the channel are free of charge. Programs are adapted for all levels, from complete beginners to the most advanced.

Conferences

Twice a year, students gather for a weekend of study and socializing at conferences in various locations in the U.S., as well as an annual convention in Israel. These gatherings provide a great setting for meeting like-minded people, for bonding, and for expanding one's understanding of the wisdom.

KABBALAH BOOKS

Bnei Baruch publishes authentic books, written by Baal HaSulam, his son, the Rabash, as well as books by Dr. Michael Laitman. The books of Rav Ashlag and Rabash are essential for complete understanding of the teachings of authentic Kabbalah, explained in Laitman's lessons.

Dr. Laitman writes his books in a clear, contemporary style based on the key concepts of Baal HaSulam. These books are a vital link between today's readers and the original texts. All the books are available for sale, as well as for free download.

PAPER

Kabbalah Today is a free paper produced and disseminated by Bnei Baruch in many languages, including English, Hebrew, Spanish, and Russian. It is apolitical, non-commercial, and written in a clear, contemporary style. The

purpose of *Kabbalah Today* is to expose the vast knowledge hidden in the wisdom of Kabbalah at no cost and in a clear, engaging style for readers everywhere.

KABBALAH LESSONS

As Kabbalists have been doing for centuries, Laitman gives a daily lesson. The lessons are given in Hebrew and are simultaneously interpreted into seven languages—English, Russian, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Turkish—by skilled and experienced interpreters. As with everything else, the live broadcast is free of charge.

FUNDING

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization for teaching and sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah. To maintain its independence and purity of intentions, Bnei Baruch is not supported, funded, or otherwise tied to any government or political organization.

Since the bulk of its activity is provided free of charge, the prime sources of funding for the group's activities are donations and tithing—contributed by students on a voluntary basis—and Dr. Laitman's books, which are sold at cost.

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