

# The Path of Kabbalah



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KABBALAH PUBLISHERS

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## THE PATH OF KABBALAH

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Published by Laitman Kabbalah Publishers,  
1057 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 532, Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1, Canada.

Printed in Canada.

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ISBN: 0-9732315-9-9

FIRST EDITION: DECEMBER 2005

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# Part One: The Beginning

## CHAPTER 1.1 THE GREAT ILLUSION

*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness (Exodus 20:3).*

Judaism forbids idolatry and any kind of fetishism. This prohibition envelops the most fundamental principle in Judaism: that everything we see is only a figment of our imaginations.

Over the years, many of us have consciously or unconsciously adopted this principle after realizing that, by changing our perspective, we might be able to better cope with our day-to-day problems. This perspective determines our reactions, our feelings, and ultimately our reality. What, then, is the actual reality around us?

Today, Kabbalists can state a principle that Jews concealed for thousands of years: that there is no reality at all, but something called “His Essence,” the “Upper Force.” This Force operates in such a way that one sees Him as an image of a certain reality, which we call “my world.”

We are all able to see and feel varying images and sensations depending on our sensory organs and inner properties. All our sensations are subjective and exist only with regard to our feelings.

However, because the sensory organs of non-human creatures would differ from ours, they would see the world as completely different from us. In fact, it is possible that another creature’s sensory organs would be so different from ours, it might exist in a different dimension without ever encountering us.

The closer one’s properties are to the properties of the Upper Force, the closer the image of “my world” comes to the actual reality, and the less distorted it is by one’s egoistic attributes. Since the property

of the Upper Force is altruism, when one attains that quality and bonds with the Upper Force, one learns to feel reality as it is. All of the above is mentioned only to emphasize that all our sensations are personal and might change in time.

The only way for us to approach the right perspective of reality is by studying Kabbalah, since it is the only study that deals with the part of reality that humanity has yet to attain. But it is not enough to merely study the text because we are reading about the unknown. We must also direct ourselves to the right vision and be prepared for a truer, and as yet concealed, feeling.

Everything exists inside us. Outside us there is only the Upper Force, the Creator. We cannot feel Him in any other way than by how He works on our sensory organs. Only through these sensations can we guess anything about the Creator.

Hence, the study of Kabbalah must be correctly directed; thoughts must be focused on studying the inner attributes that we are still unable to see in ourselves.

All the worlds, *Partzufim*, *Sefirot*, names, everything the Kabbalah speaks of, exists in us and will be revealed in us, depending on the degree of our correction. We will find our inner Moses and Aaron, King David and the angels, the evil, the righteous, and the degrees of attainment called “Jerusalem,” “the Temple” and more. Every word in the Torah speaks of our own forces and our levels of ability to sense the Creator.

That is the only topic of discussion of the Torah. That is also the only thing we speak of in our daily lives, because we talk about our feelings. In fact, all we feel is the influence of the Creator. Everything around us is no more than the influence of the Creator on each and every one of us.

Hence, to discern the actual picture of the world, we must find what we read inside us, as we read the Torah, because every written word exists within us—it just hasn’t been discovered.

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We feel what the books speak of in accordance with our spiritual growth, hence the importance of the study from genuine sources of Kabbalah: the *Zohar*, the writing of the Ari, and the writings of Ashlag. This is the safest way to attain the correction of our feelings and attributes, and our spiritual ascent.

The best way to make progress is to study while remembering that these books actually speak of what is within me, that all this already exists somewhere inside me. All these worlds and *Partzufim* are things that I must discover within. They are my own properties.

The more we acquire control over these attributes, the more we will feel how the Creator operates inside us. Although we will never be able to feel Him “outside” us, we will understand how He operates inside us because, “By your actions we know you.”

And since we sit together as a group, studying our still-concealed real properties, we are collaborating in the study of how the Creator operates inside us. We have a common goal, a common thought, and one area of experimentation—our own feelings.

This results in a collective goal, thought, and desire that in time creates in the group the feeling of one body and common properties—a feeling that there are no separate entities, but only one, “man,” and before him, the One Creator.

This thought must be directed inwardly toward changing our qualities in search of the Creator within us. Instead of the ordinary reading of the Torah, we discover the Torah “as a spice,” as a means for correction. It is also called a “potion of life,” for it pours into us the sensation of the Creator, the Light of eternity and wholeness.

People who study from the wrong books are denied this remedy and remain with their properties. They do not discover the Creator, and their Torah becomes dry, concealing the purpose of Creation even more than before.

CHAPTER 1.2  
BETWEEN CREATOR AND CREATURE

The question, “Who am I?” exists in everyone. But when that question can no longer be put aside, then it relates to the Creator: “Who is He?” This is because the Creator is inside us, the Source of the human “self.” Hence, no matter how many times we ask ourselves, “Who am I?” the question still relates to the Creator. The “self” is a consequence. Our desires, our every movement, everything we do is, in fact, created by the Creator.

The notion that everything we say and think, even when we speak of the Creator and ourselves, is the work of the Creator, is virtually impossible for us to perceive.

So where is the “self”? There is no “self.” The “self” is the work of nature, created by the Creator. The “self” clothes us, yet everything we do is actually His doing. The question, “Who am I?” can only exist outside the Creator. We are different from the Creator only in wanting to resemble Him and to attain His degree.

The will to receive is essentially the desire of us creatures to enjoy, corresponding to the abundance and pleasure that come from the Creator. We feel that will to receive and the Creator wants us to enjoy it. If we feel an abstract will to receive, it is not a creature, it is nature, God. If one works according to nature’s guidance, one is like a beast that hasn’t even a spark of a Godly soul.

Only if our will to receive is clothed with an intention that monitors its use and corrects it, can we regard ourselves as creatures enlivened intentionally by the Creator, and not just another rock, animal or bird. But that depends on us.

Our desires to drink, eat, sleep, marry, and have children are natural and come from the Creator. We can’t escape or altogether change them. However, we can robe the will to receive with an aim and build a correct way to use that desire. The extent and depth of this aim depend



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solely on us. That is what we call, “Creation.” We must search for the right way to use our natures, our desires.

Nature comes from the Creator, and our job is to know how to use it. The “point in the heart” is the way we relate to our nature as given to us by the Creator, as well as our ability to use it correctly. The heart itself consists of our desires, our yearning for pleasure.

Anything that is not the Creator is regarded as “the creature,” limited by nature and divided by four degrees of desire: still, vegetative, animate, and speaking (man). Man is the only degree that can use nature with a special, self-created aim. It is called the “point in the heart.”

The first phase is the “fetus,” the root coarseness: when one nullifies oneself completely, melts, so to speak, in the Creator. After that, the creature must gradually rise to the degree of the Creator and overcome the differences that exist between the Creator and the creature.

Using this aim, we seemingly build the Creator within us, but all along we feel the “self,” because the “self” is really the Creator. By attaining the Creator and equalizing in form with Him, we attain our own unique “self.”

The Creator wants a Creation that can retain its independence even when it feels the Creator, seemingly producing a “dual Creator”—the first being the Creator Himself, and the second, Creation, operating precisely like the Creator.

The creature’s will to receive is completely identical to the Creator’s Will to bestow, also named “bestowal in order to bestow.” The will to receive does not vanish or becomes lost, and the creature retains its independence by using the desires that it wants to return to the Creator. That is where they are equal. The creature’s purpose is to attain complete wholeness while retaining its nature. The Creator couldn’t have created an incomplete creature. He had to create a creature equal to Him. And the way to do it was by creating a creature and giving it the possibility of attaining the degree of the Creator by itself.

That is the meaning of “perfection.” When that is attained, there is a clear sensation that there is nothing other than the Creator and the creature. The creature discovers that it doesn’t exist without the Creator, but the Creator cannot be called a Creator if there isn’t a creature, just as a woman cannot be called a mother if she doesn’t have a child.

It is only possible to attain spirituality when there is a desire for it. But where does one find it if one doesn’t even know what it is?

Let’s say that we are pushed a little to awaken in us an interest in spirituality, but in the end, the truth is that we still know nothing. If we knew what it was, and still wanted it, at least to a certain extent, things would have been easier.

But spirituality is purposely hidden from us. If we were to enter it with our current will to receive, we would never be able to change it. In order to enter spirituality, we must want it. But wanting means knowing, trying, feeling how good it is. There is a law that states that, “The expansion of the Light, and its departure, make the vessel fit for its task.”

In order to attain spirituality one must turn to the Creator with a special prayer to discover spirituality, not for self-gain, but for the will to bestow. After that, that desire to discover spirituality must be used correctly through the work with the group and the teacher.

Thus, there must first be a great desire for spirituality. It is not given as a choice, but extends from the Creator. There will come a time when more and more souls will be ready for spirituality. Man always follows his desire. Before the study of the wisdom of Kabbalah, one is led from Above, and when one opens a book, the Creator seemingly steps away from the student, like a parent teaching an infant to walk. At first, the mother holds her baby, but she slowly backs off when the child begins stumbling toward her. We approach spirituality in much the same way, gaining more and more independence.

There are things we can and cannot work with. I can’t say that something doesn’t hurt me when it does. I rely on my feelings, and no philosophy will help me in this case. This is the limit of my “self.” It is

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impossible for me to realize my desires if I only rely on my feelings without any concrete basis.

When one attains spirituality, it is a different feeling altogether. We discover that our inner feelings arise from the actions of the Creator. We learn that man and the Creator are one and the same thing. There is no contradiction between them; they want the same thing, and there isn't even a cause and consequence. This is called the "unity of the degree."

Yet we must act as we actually feel. On the one hand, we read inspiring essays that say, "He is One and His name is One," but we still have to act according to our current levels of spirituality.

There is nothing missing in spirituality. For example, when an experience is over, it still remains, although it is no longer present in my current feeling. This is called "there is no absence in spirituality." Any situation that is experienced remains and is stored until the end of correction.

In fact, I am already at the highest degree, or the lowest, depending on my feeling. I cannot imagine any other situation, let alone feel it. Our bestial nature should know that redemption can only come from Above. Then we can advance.

We have a will to receive. That will comes from Above and is constantly increasing, growing farther from the Creator through the impure worlds, and acquiring its final shape of egoism. That state is called "our world."

One begins one's advancement within the impure system and acquires the aim to bestow. With this aim, one begins to correct the will to receive until reaching one's *Bar Mitzvah* age (thirteen years old, a certain spiritual degree).

The Light comes from Above, depending on the correction of one's desires, and fills the creature. This means that the soul—the Light of Correction—clothes the body (the will to receive). The soul, or Light, passes through the holy worlds, and this is the time of correction. If we render pleasure to the Creator in the act of reception, it is called "be-

stowal.” The Talmud states that if a respectable man marries, he doesn’t have to give a ring to his bride. On the contrary, his willingness to marry her is sufficient because she respects him.

Such reception is tantamount to pure bestowal. If man works in this way toward the Creator when receiving from Him, with the aim of bringing contentment to the Creator, it is called “equivalence of form.”

At first, one restricts oneself, saying, “I don’t want to receive anything for myself unless the Creator wants it and it pleases Him.” Only under that condition is man willing to receive pleasure. The desire that the Creator created and the pleasure that He gives serve as a condition upon which the relationship with the Creator is based. Man agrees to receive from the Creator only if he is certain that he will please the Creator by receiving from Him.

However, in order to do that we must first meet the Creator, feel Him, and build a connection with Him. There is an inconceivable difference between receiving for self-gratification and receiving to bestow to the Creator. Such a contact is a gift of God.

Two things come from the Creator: body and soul, or Light and vessel. The Light helps the body receive the soul, becomes the giver, and turns the will to receive into bestowal until the will to receive is filled with Light. The situations we go through over the 6,000 degrees move us at any given moment toward the end of correction. At the end of correction, we will attain eternal and perfect pleasure and unity with the Creator.

Without attaining equivalence of attributes with the Creator, we will only be able to experience pleasures of the “still” degree, but not of the “vegetative, animate, and speaking” degrees. An impure system is necessary to increase the will to receive, so that afterwards, using the aim to bestow, it will be filled with Light exactly according to its intensity.

CHAPTER 1.3  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

A person in this world has no soul. There is only one thing to do if we want to understand and realize our true essence, and that is to embark on a spiritual quest with all the zest, eagerness, and willingness to change that we can summon—a quest to discover the soul. The journey begins at the exact place where we felt our very first desire for spirituality, the “point in the heart.”

This point is the embryonic soul that demands our return to our spiritual roots. The soul is drawn to the Creator and takes us along. We don’t know where we are being pulled because the Creator is as yet concealed from us. But this point in the soul urges us on to an unknown destination, even though it is still not a “real” soul. When we begin to work on our spiritual side, the point gradually expands and grows. However, it remains dark because we feel a greater and greater desire for something, hence the darkness.

When this point finally grows to the right size, we acquire a screen to surround it, the aim to give, and the Light enters this point. The Light sorts the desires in the point to five parts that correspond to the attributes of the Light: *Keter*, *Hochma*, *Bina*, *Zeir Anpin*, and *Malchut*. Thus, one acquires a soul.

The smallest desire is in *Keter* and the greatest is in *Malchut*. The attribute of reception is smaller in *Keter* and *Hochma* than in the other desires; therefore, *Keter* and *Hochma* are considered “giving” desires. When one is in that state it is called *Katnut* (smallness, infancy).

If we in this world have only beastly and corporeal desires, then we live like everything else on earth. Our next state begins only when the “point in the heart” appears in us. Then, we begin to feel a mysterious attraction to spirituality that we cannot ease, even though we do not know what spirituality is.

If we study Kabbalah at that state, we cross the barrier and enter the spiritual world. This is the third situation. At that stage, a screen

## OUR OTHER BOOKS

***A Guide to the Hidden Wisdom of Kabbalah (with ten complete Kabbalah lessons)***: provides the reader with a solid foundation for understanding the role of Kabbalah in our world. The content was designed to allow individuals all over the world to begin traversing the initial stages of spiritual ascent toward the apprehension of the upper realms.

***Attaining the Worlds Beyond***: is a first step toward discovering the ultimate fulfillment of spiritual ascent in our lifetime. This book reaches out to all those who are searching for answers, who are seeking a logical and reliable way to understand the world's phenomena. This magnificent introduction to the wisdom of Kabbalah provides a new kind of awareness that enlightens the mind, invigorates the heart, and moves the reader to the depths of their soul.

***The Science of Kabbalah***: is the first in a series of texts that Rav Michael Laitman, Kabbalist and scientist, designed to introduce readers to the special language and terminology of the Kabbalah. Here, Rav Laitman reveals authentic Kabbalah in a manner that is both rational and mature. Readers are gradually led to an understanding of the logical design of the Universe and the life whose home it is.

*The Science of Kabbalah*, a revolutionary work that is unmatched in its clarity, depth, and appeal to the intellect, will enable readers to approach the more technical works of Baal HaSulam (Rav Yehuda Ashlag), such as *Talmud Eser Sefirot* and *Zohar*.

Although scientists and philosophers will delight in its illumination, laymen will also enjoy the satisfying answers to the riddles of life that only authentic Kabbalah provides. Now, travel through the pages and prepare for an astonishing journey into the Upper Worlds.

***Introduction to the Book of Zohar***: is the second in a series written by Kabbalist and scientist Rav Michael Laitman, which will prepare readers to understand the hidden message of "The Zohar". Among the many helpful topics dealt with in this companion text to *The Science of Kabbalah*, readers are introduced to the "language of roots and branches," without which the stories in *The Zohar* are mere fable and legend. Introduction to *The Book of Zohar* will certainly furnish readers with the necessary tools to understand authentic Kabbalah as it was originally meant to be, as a means to attain the Upper Worlds.

***Kabbalah for Beginners:*** By reading this book you will be able to take your first step in understanding the roots of human behaviour and the laws of nature. The contents present the essential principals of the Kabbalistic approach and describe the wisdom of Kabbalah and the way it works. *Kabbalah for Beginners* is intended for those searching for a sensible and reliable method of studying the phenomenon of this world for those seeking to understand the reason for suffering and pleasure, for those seeking answers to the major questions in life. Kabbalah is an accurate method to investigate and define man's position in the universe. The wisdom of Kabbalah tells us why man exists, why he is born, why he lives, what the purpose of his life is, where he comes from, and where he is going after he completes his life in this world.

***The Kabbalah Experience:*** Never has the language of Kabbalah been as clear and accessible as it is here, in this compelling, informative collection. The depth of wisdom revealed in the questions and answers of this book will inspire reflection and contemplation. Readers will also begin to experience a growing sense of enlightenment while simply absorbing the words on every page.

*The Kabbalah Experience* is a guide from the past to the future, revealing situations that all students of Kabbalah will experience at some point on their journeys. For those who cherish every moment in life, the author offers unparalleled insights into the timeless wisdom of Kabbalah.

## About Bnei Baruch

**B**nei Baruch is a non-profit group centered in Israel that is spreading the wisdom of Kabbalah to accelerate the spirituality of mankind. Kabbalist Michael Laitman PhD, who was the disciple and personal assistant to Kabbalist, Rav Baruch Ashlag, the son of Kabbalist Rav Yehuda Ashlag (author of the *Sulam* Commentary on *The Zohar*), follows in the footsteps of his mentor in guiding the group.

Rav Laitman's scientific method provides individuals of all faiths, religions and cultures the precise tools necessary for embarking on a highly efficient path of self-discovery and spiritual ascent. The focus is primarily on inner processes that individuals undergo at their own pace. Bnei Baruch welcomes people of all ages and lifestyles to engage in this rewarding process.

In recent years, an awakening of a massive worldwide quest for the answers to life's questions has been underway. Society has lost its ability to see reality for what it is and in its place easily formed viewpoints and opinions have appeared.

Bnei Baruch reaches out to all those who seek awareness beyond the standard view. It offers practical guidance and a reliable method for understanding the world's phenomena. The group's unique method not only helps overcome the trials and tribulations of everyday life, but initiates a process in which individuals extend themselves beyond the standard boundaries and limitations of today's world.

Kabbalist Rav Yehuda Ashlag left a study method for this generation, which essentially 'trains' individuals to behave as if they have already achieved the perfection of the Upper Worlds, here in our world.

In the words of Rav Yehuda Ashlag, "This method is a practical way to apprehend the Upper World and the source of our existence while still living in this world. A Kabbalist is a researcher who studies his nature using this proven, time-tested and accurate method. Through this method, one attains perfection, and takes control over one's life. In this way, one realizes one's true purpose in life. Just as a person cannot function properly in this world having no knowledge of it, so also one's soul cannot function properly in the Upper World having no knowledge of it. The wisdom of Kabbalah provides this knowledge."

The goal-orientated nature of these studies enables a person to apply this knowledge on both an individual and collective basis in order to enhance and promote the spirituality of humankind, and indeed the entire world.



## HOW TO CONTACT BNEI BARUCH

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