

WHAT IS KABBALAH?

Kabbalah is a Jewish spiritual philosophy which illuminates the nature of God, the creation of the world, the descent of the soul, and the purpose of life on this earth and beyond. It is grounded in traditional Jewish religious practice (belief in the sacredness of the Torah and the observance of the 613 “mitzvoth”).

The seminal literature of this mystical system first appeared in scholarly Medieval Jewish circles. Around the end of the 13th century the “Zohar” or Book of Brilliance appeared and was presented as ancient esoteric wisdom. Couched in parables and legends, it provided unique and profound interpretations of the Old Testament.

The development of the system of “Sephirot” (energy emanations of the Divine arranged on a Cosmic Tree of Life) followed, with implications for use by well-trained adepts in prayer, meditation and spiritual evolution. Many translations and commentaries followed, but all shared the original focus of a dynamic universe portrayed in this map of consciousness known as the Tree of Life.

The 16th and 17th century Kabbalists of S’fat in Northern Israel, and the miracle working Rabbis of 18th and 19th century Eastern Europe, added new dimensions to the study, teaching and application of Kabbalah to both personal and community life.

This complex system has a truly simple goal, to teach us that human beings hold the imprint of the Divine and have within them the capacity to bring down the flow of light energy into this physical dimension. Humans, created in God’s image, are thus endowed with the ability to serve as the bridge between heaven and earth and are capable of impacting on the direction of the universe.

Numerous contemporary books on Kabbalah are now available in modern languages to guide us through this energy system, which contains amazing psychological and spiritual insights. Centers that specialize in Jewish mysticism and courses in a variety of settings add to our capacity to use the system for personal growth.

Rabbi Leah Novick – October 2018

