

intro

Mysticism. It's that body of knowledge that deals with the more mysterious, spiritual aspects of life, ideas that describe realities we might believe in but can't see with our physical eyes. It makes life more exciting and hopeful but, at the end of the day, not being grounded in everyday practical reality, mysticism can just seem superfluous to many.

What about Kabbalah? Called "Jewish Mysticism," it is often viewed the same way by many including, and sometimes *especially*, those very knowledgeable in the more "practical" areas of Torah learning, like *Mishnah*, *Gemora*, and *Poskim*.¹ This is not the case, and if it ever was, it was along time ago:

Since the *Chachmas HaEmes*² became revealed and known to all

¹ The responsa of rabbis over the centuries to *balachic* questions that have arisen over the ages.

² Literally, Wisdom of Truth, another name for Kabbalah.

Torah scholars, the inheritance of *Kebillas Ya'akov*³ through Moshe *Rabbeinu* from the mouth of God, anyone who denies is called a *kofer*.⁴ They deny a portion of *Torah Sh'b'al Peh*,⁵ and remove themselves from *Emunas Klal Yisroel* (Faith of the Jewish People). From the time it was made known to the Jewish people, that of the time of the Ramban,⁶ there has not been a single *chacham* . . . [who has disputed it]. Before this it was hidden and revealed only to a few fitting people of the generation. . . But from the time of the Ramban, it has been known to the entire Jewish people, and no *chacham* from all the *Chochmei Yisroel* whose waters we drink through their commentaries on Talmud and *Poskim*, have doubted it. For someone who has merited to see it, the words speak for themselves, those of the holy *Zohar* testifying they are from the Rashb"i, and the words of the Arizal testifying to the power of the Ari. It is the essence of truth itself. (*Drushei Olam HaTobu, Cbelek 1, Drush 5, Siman 7, Os 8*)

For all true wisdom⁷ is nothing but wisdom that shows the truth of faith, to understand everything that is created or done in the world, how it comes from the Supreme Will, and how everything behaves in the correct manner as per the One God, *blessed is He*, to bring everything to its ultimate perfection in the end. (*Sefer "Klach," Pischei Chochmah, Pesach 1*)

³ Assembly of Ya'akov, another name for the Jewish People.

⁴ Apostate.

⁵ The Oral Law or Tradition.

⁶ Rabbi Moshe *ben* Nachman (1194–1270).

⁷ Hebrew: *Chochmas HaEmes*, another name for *Kabbalah*.

Kabbalah has had a long, complicated, and fascinating history. But unlike revealed Torah, which becomes less clear with each passing generation, Kabbalah has become increasingly more revealed. Divine Providence has seen to this, and with good reason:

The *Maskilim* are from the side of *Binab*,⁸ which is the Tree of Life. Regarding them it says, “*And the Maskilim—the wise—will shine like the zobar—brightness—of the sky*” (*Daniel 12:3*), that is with your *Sefer HaZobar*,⁹ which is from the light of the *Imma Ila’a* [called] “*Teshwab*.”¹⁰ They will not need to be tested¹¹ because in the future the Jewish people¹² will taste from the Tree of Life, which is this *Sefer HaZobar*. They will leave exile in mercy because of it. . . (*Raya Mehemna, Naso 124b*)

Everyone knows that there were two main trees in the Garden of Eden, the *Aitz HaDa’as Tov v’Ra*, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the *Aitz HaChaim*, the Tree of Life. What most people do not

⁸ Their souls come from the *Binab* of *Atzilus*, and extremely high level. This level is called “Tree of Life,” which it is the main aspect of life and *mochin* for *Zebr Anpin*.

⁹ What will cause them to emanate light like the *zobar* of the sky? The *Zobar* they have learned.

¹⁰ *Imma Ila’a*—Upper Mother—is the name of the *partzuf* on the level of *Binab*—Understanding, considered to be the source of *teshwab*—repentance. This is even higher than the level of the general *Binab* because it is within the level above, *Atzilus*.

¹¹ That is, with *chevlei Moshiach*, the birth pangs of Moshiach, such as increased *chutzpah* and the War of Gog and Magog.

¹² Even those who had previously only concerned themselves with the non-kabbalistic aspects of Torah (*Mesok Midvasb*).

know is that every aspect of Torah learning except Kabbalah falls under the category of the *Aitz HaDa'as*, because they deal with good and evil, pure and impure, permissible and forbidden. The knowledge of the *Aitz HaChaim*, which is Kabbalah, only deals with the good and the pure.

The reason is simple:

This is the main *tikun* of Kabbalah over all other parts of Torah. The rest of Torah is clothed in matters of this world, which is not the case with Kabbalah, and specifically the words of the Arizal, built upon the *Idros* and *Sifra D'Tzniusa*,¹³ and the deep secrets of the holy *Zohar*. All of its topics deals with *Atzilus* and the worlds of *Ain Sof*. Therefore, *Chochmas HaKabbalah* is called *Nistar*,¹⁴ since all of its matters deal with the uppermost worlds that cannot be known or grasped. They are hidden from all, which is not the case with the revealed sections of the holy Torah. (*Drushei Olam HaTohu*, *Chelek 1*, *Drush 5*, *Siman 7*, *Os 8*)

We are what we learn. A person can only really learn what resonates with them, though sometimes it can take years sometimes and *Hashgochab Pratis*¹⁵ to find out what does and what doesn't. Until then, they can remain unaware of so many important concepts that will dramatically affect their approach to life, or even save it. What then?

¹³ *Idra Rabba*, *Idra Zuta*, and *Sifra D'Tzniusa* are the three main sections of the *Zohar* that deal with the *kabbalistic* origins of Creation, the highest level of knowledge known to man.

¹⁴ Hidden.

¹⁵ Divine Providence.

It remains for those who have already entered *Pardes*¹⁶ to share what they have learned with those who have not. It is up to those who understand to make it understandable to those who do not. And now, so close to the end of history as prophecies about the end of days come true on a daily basis, that obligation is both great and immediate. And being a part of that transmission process, on whatever level a person can, is the greatest merit one can have.

¹⁶ Literally, orchard, but an acronym for *Pshat*, *Remez*, *Drush*, and *Sod*, the four levels of Torah learning from the most obvious to the most *kabbalistic* (*Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 11).