



Kabbalah Articles

www.tzfat-kabbalah.org

*this document is for personal use only, for any other use, ask for promising in writing from the Tzfat Kabbalah Center: office@tzfat-kabbalah.org

Articles:

Introduction	Page 2
The Kabbalistic and Bible Codes	Page 2
The Sephirot	Page 4
Teaching Kabbalah - Why?	Page 5
Kabbalah Study and 'Tikun Olam'	Page 6
The Zohar	Page 7
The 7 Noahide laws in Kabbalah	Page 8
The Seven Species and the Seven Sephirot	Page 10
The Four Elements in Kabbalah	Page 11

Introduction

The idea here is to present authentic Kabbalistic content in a clear and simple matter that can be understood by everyone, regardless of background. In the article and FAQ section, from time to time we will carry articles on Kabbalah-related topics.

These articles are mainly aimed at people who are not experts in the secrets of the Kabbalah, but who are interested in becoming familiar with Kabbalistic ideas in the simplest way possible.

From time to time articles will appear in a more in-depth way which will deal with the theoretical Kabbalah in a more intense fashion.

We will also present questions that usually come up with Kabbalah students, especially beginners, and provide qualified answers to them.

We will be happy to receive your questions on anything connected with Tzfat Kabbalah, general and private issues connected with the enquirer's world.

The Kabbalistic and Bible Codes

Over the past decade or so, after many books were written and much research done on hidden Bible codes, the subject has fostered growing world interest. It has produced fascinating items in the print and electronic media, and in almost every language. What is encoded within the Bible's letters? Can the codes be used to predict the future? Can we benefit from using the encoded messages? To whom are these deeply imbedded secrets from the Prophets, Psalms and the Torah directed?

Dozens of articles have been written about these and other questions, but all agree on one basic point: there is indeed something very special and mysterious in these Bible codes.

On the background of this general interest in Bible codes and encoding, the idea of the existence of mystical and Kabbalistic codes has taken on new significance and popularity.

What is a code?

The Bible code is based on several methods of analyzing and examining a Biblical text. Most come from the Torah itself (the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The Torah is seen as an organic textual unit, composed of different combinations of letters. Several analytical tools and textual decoding methods combined with mathematical rules, geometric forms and ancient knowledge are utilized in deciphering the texts.

The deciphered codes reveal strata of fascinating knowledge and deep insights of cosmological significance, including how to understand historical events, Bible stories, Kabbalistic secrets, and even contain implications for personal development and meaning.

In the past, dealing in Biblical codes was considered the exclusive realm of Kabbalists and those knowledgeable in mystical secrets, about which the Talmud says, "they knew how to

count the letters of the Torah". Today, modern technology and state-of-the-art computer programs have allowed freer access to Biblical codes to a much wider audience.

However, it cannot be emphasized enough that without a basic knowledge of Torah, encoding and qualified Kabbalistic tradition, dealing in such codes may be fascinating and exciting, but will never be more than just entertainment.

Types of Encoding

Among the multiple encoding methods hidden within Biblical texts, the following are the most common:

- 13 Attributes— The oldest method passed on to Moses at Mt. Sinai, meaning 13 ancient methods of thousands of years duration, through which the Biblical text is analyzed in order to attain its deepest and most secret meaning.
- Omitting/Skipping over Letters – When certain letters spaced a certain distance apart (intervals) from one another are combined, a new word is obtained that sheds light on a text's inner meaning.
- Interchanging Letters – Switch the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet, "Alef" with the last letter, "Tav", the second letter "Bet" with the next-to-last letter "Shin" and so forth. Here again a new word is formed which is the 'horizon' of the original text.
- Numerology (Gematria)— The numerical value of each letter and word teaches about their energies and the frequency of the same combination of letters and names provide an important analytical tool for Kabbalistic numerology.
- Matrixes – Crosswise letters in different geometric patterns and you can reveal very meaningful processes encoded in different writings and texts.

The Kabbalistic Code

The inner dimension of the Torah, the Kabbalah, teaches that the word 'kabbalah' [receiving] is related to the term 'hakbalah' [parallel]. Kabbalistic doctrine teaches how the ordered world is explained in terms of models of spiritual worlds, running parallel to the physical universe. When we want to understand the Bible code on the spiritual level, amazing and wonderful insights of upper worlds spread out before us, insights about the spiritual processes and experiential worlds of the soul. Bible stories and characters become living situations and live experiences when their accompanying codes are understood.

This is the same with the cognitive processes we experience every day, which are transformed into an exciting tapestry of spiritual experiences we learn to identify and activate through the letters of the Kabbalistic code.

The Personal Code

One especially fascinating aspect of the Bible-Kabbalistic Code is the personal code that enables each and every one of us to reach self-fulfillment and purpose in life by discovering the meanings of the letters of our name.

Combining several computer programs, a person's name is found in the Torah, within the weekly portion read in synagogues the week the person was born, and the method of omitting letters (intervals) is used. From the verses, words and letters of the person's name, his or her special powers and strengths are identified, as well as how to use them. Kabbalah teaches that the letters of a person's name have important impact on his or her life, and they form the 'conduit of abundance', through which all superior influences flow into the person's life. Therefore, when parents name their children, this is really a form of prophecy, since the parents were given a certain prophetic power to match their children with the 'proper' names.

The personal code has an especially uncanny power of accuracy, because it takes into account the birth date and birth hour, and cross references them with the letters of the person's name in the Biblical code of the Torah portion of the week the person was born.

Kabbalistic tradition emphasizes that no prophetic implications can be made on the basis of codes. The codes teach us how to better understand our realities, to be better able to connect with the inner meanings of personal and global events and live according to our deepest insights, which were planted in the Book of Books- the Bible.

The Sephirot

The "Ten Sephirot" model constitutes the spiritual code according to which the entire universe was created.

Each one of the Sephirot expresses a special characteristic of Divine spiritual abundance, which pours forth in the entire creation and trickles down through the spiritual worlds until it reaches the physical world.

The ten Sephirot are the root and source of "The Ten Expressions" that created the world: the 10 times where it says in the Book of Genesis "let there be light", "the heavens", etc.

The Ten Sephirot divide up into two groups:

Brain/Mind: Wisdom, understanding and knowledge

Emotive Attributes: Kindness, severity, beauty, victory, splendor, foundation and kingship.

The Hebrew word "Sephira" means "light", like a bright and shining sapphire stone.

The Holy Zohar calls the spheres "improvements" [Tikunim], which imply jewelry. That is to say, just like jewelry improves a person in terms of beauty, so do the ten spheres add beauty with the 'infinite light' that flows in them.

Jewish mysticism teaches that all of creation comes from four spiritual worlds: emanation, creation, formation and action. Each one contains the system of the 10 Sephirot, which change according to the substance of their corresponding spiritual world.

In the uppermost world – the world of emanation– the spheres are described as purely Divine forces, and as they descend to the physical world, the Divine lights condense into the spheres and disappear within the vessels that contain them.

This process continues until our tangible and physical world, which is called the 'world of physicalaction', where the lights of the Sephirot disappear, leaving us to see only the physical and temporal world, without being able to see the spiritual forces within it. Therefore, according to Kabbalah, creation is called "the world" [Olam in Hebrew], which comes from the Hebrew root 'Alem', or disappear. By its very nature, the world conceals the spiritual forces that flow in it.

Only by using spiritual-Kabbalistic practice, which is called 'Hitbonenut' (contemplation, meditation), and which is extensively explained in Hassidic literature, can the person identify the spiritual source and substance of the world around him, and use this understandings wisely and beneficially.

In our world, one can find an exact copy of the form of the 10 Sephirot in the body and soul of man who was created in the Creator's image.

The form of the 10 Sephirot is also called the "Tree of Life", and teaches us how each one of the Sephirot is connected with the qualities and abilities of man's soul:

Wisdom – essence of intelligence, ability to inspire and invent.

Understanding – broadening the understanding of details.

Knowledge – Ability to delve deeper and conscious communication.

Kindness – the quality of influence and giving.

Severity - The quality of reducing and lessening influence.

Beauty – Mixing and balancing the influence.

Victory – The victory over obstacles on the way to influence.

Splendor – Valid decision to be implemented.

Foundation – Communication that impacts the recipient.

Kingship – The actual influence

The revelations regarding the powers of the soul as they appear in Kabbalistic literature shed new and fascinating light on the psychological, conscious and emotional processes we experience, and delineate the way for spiritual growth in a very special and experiential manner.

Kabbalah explain the events and processes going on in upper worlds, using mostly parables taken from the soul of man. We must always remember that these are only parables, and that the upper spiritual worlds and the Divine arena have no definable physical form at all.

Teaching Kabbalah - Why?

The Kabbalah stresses the importance of kindness and true unconditional giving, and with no expectation of reward.

In this context, the parallels and symmetry between The Creator and Man are emphasized ("Kabbalah" from the Hebrew word "Hakballah", which means parallel), as G-d said at the outset of Creation: "Let us make man in our image."

Man is like his Creator: Just as G-d created Man and everything else, and influences his entire creation with unbridled and unconditional kindness ("The world is built through

kindness" –Psalms 89) to both the spiritual worlds as well as the physical world, and with altruistic love, so is Man capable of internalizing and acting this quality of kindness and giving.

Man is assured that if he behaves this way toward his fellow man he will merit 'abundance from above'. However, man must still give of himself and have an impact without any promise or expectation of benefit.

Therefore, the person who studies the wonderful wisdom found in Kabbalistic literature and the inner dimension of the Torah, would do well by spreading this acquired wisdom and insight to others who have not yet had the privilege to do so.

A person who shares this wonderful wisdom with others, will merit even greater wisdom and insight, and attain even greater heights in his or her own understanding of the world of Kabbalah.

This is true of the material sphere as well as the spiritual, and even beyond: A person who influences and gives on the spiritual level will be assured great success on the material level as well.

Kabbalah Study and 'Tikun Olam'

Rabbi Akiva, one of the greatest Kabbalists who lived over 2000 years ago, who was the teacher of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai the author of the Zohar, taught the most ethical and moral code ever known to Man: "Love thy neighbor as Thyself", and described it as being a "Major rule of the Torah".

There is a direct and close link between learning the inner dimension of the Torah, to social awareness, connecting between people, showing concern for the welfare of others and loving one's fellow Man.

In addition, studying the secrets of the Torah contributes to higher consciousness and reinforcement of important personal and global values, like: peace, freedom, harmony, tolerance, spirituality and personal development.

Among the Jewish People, we see that the study of Kabbalah and the Torah's inner dimension unites all strata: the religiously observant with people quite far from Jewish tradition, Diaspora Jewry with Israelis, youth with adults, modern intellectuals with the more conservative and traditional.

All find a common language and fertile ground for joint activities surrounding the spiritual-Kabbalistic tradition, which maintains and promote Jewish identity.

In this context, we see how Jewish tradition projects universal values, appreciated and valued the world over, and which positively impact all of humanity.

Each and every person, anywhere in the world, who studies the wisdom of Kabbalah and connects with its messages and instructions, refines his or her personality, and becomes a positive influence on his or her environment, family and friends.

Each person who joins the circle of students of the original Tzfat Kabbalah and follows its ways, adds more divine light to the world. He or she helps repair the world (Tikun Olam) and turn it into an earthly Garden of Eden, just as once existed at the beginning of Creation.

Kabbalistic Sages in every generation promise that the study of Kabbalah and the inner dimension of the Torah, will bring all of Humanity closer to the wonderful revelations of the '7th millennium' .

The activities at the 'International Center for Tzfat Kabbalah' promotes these important universal and human values, emphasizing the unifying factor of our very special common spiritual heritage.

The Zohar

The Zohar ("Splendor, radiance") is widely considered the most important book of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism. It is a mystical commentary on the Torah (the five books of Moses), written in the ancient Aramaic language.

It contains a mystical discussion of the nature of G-d, the origin and structure of the universe, the nature of souls, the spiritual worlds, The Redemption, good and evil, and related topics.

Most of the Zohar was written in an exalted, eccentric style of Aramaic, the language that was spoken in Israel during the Roman Period in the first centuries of the Common Era, the time the Zohar was written.

After the Zohar was written, it was not revealed for more than a thousand years. The Zohar was for the first time publicly revealed in Spain in the 13th century, and was published by a Jewish Kabbalist named Rabbi Moshe de Leon.

Rabbi Moshe De Leon himself ascribed this work to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai of the 2nd century. Jewish tradition holds that during a time of Roman persecution, Rabbi Shimon hid in a cave in the village of Peki'in, in the Upper Galilee for 13 years, studying the Torah with his son, Rabbi Elazar. During this time he has been inspired by Elijah the Prophet to write the Zohar.

After its revelation, the Zohar was spread among the Jewish people with remarkable swiftness. Scarcely fifty years had passed since its appearance in Spain before it was quoted by many Kabbalists, worldwide.

Even representatives of non-mysticism oriented Judaism began to regard it as a sacred book and to invoke its authority in the decision of some Halachic questions.

The scholars were attracted by the Zohar's glorification of man, its doctrine of immortality, and its high ethical principles,

According to the Zohar, the moral perfection of man influences the ideal world of the Sephirot; for although the Sephirot expect everything from the Ein Sof (infinity), the Ein Sof itself is influenced by man: he alone can bring about the divine effusion.

By the practice of virtue and by moral perfection, man may increase the outpouring of heavenly grace. Even physical life is subservient to virtue. This, says the Zohar, is indicated in the words "For G-d had not caused it to rain" (Gen. 2:5), which means that there had not yet been beneficent action in heaven, because man had not yet been created to pray for it.

The Zohar assumes four kinds of Biblical exegesis: Peshat ("simple/literal meaning"), Remez ("hint/allusion"), Derash ("interpretative/anagogical), and Sod ("secret/mystic"). The initial letters of the words (P, R, D, S) form together the word PaRDeS ("paradise/orchard"), which became the designation for the fourfold meaning of which the mystical sense is the highest part. Note also the similarity to the word and concept of "paradise."

The mystic allegory in the Zohar is based on the principle that all visible things, including natural phenomena, have both an exoteric reality and an esoteric reality, the latter of which instructs Man in that which is invisible.

This principle is the necessary corollary of the fundamental doctrine of the Zohar. According to that doctrine, as the universe is a gradation of emanations, it follows that the human mind may recognize in each effect the supreme mark, and thus ascend to the cause of all causes.

The Zohar is not considered complete without the addition of certain appendixes: These supplementary portions are printed as part of the text with separate titles, or in separate columns. They are as follows:

- Sifra di-Tsni`uta, consisting of five chapters, in which are chiefly discussed the questions involved in the Creation, such as the transition from the infinite to the finite, that from absolute unity to many different and separated created beings, that from pure intelligence to matter, etc.
- Idra Rabbah, in which the teachings of the preceding portion are enlarged upon and developed. and Idra Zuta, giving a résumé of the two preceding sections.
- Raza de Razin, ("Secret of Secrets") dealing with the connection of the soul with the body.
- Sefer Hekalot, describing the seven heavenly halls, and the Garden of Eden.
- Raya Mehemna, giving a conversation between Moses, the prophet Elijah, and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai on the allegorical import of the Commandments.
- Sitre Torah, on various topics.
- Midrash ha-Ne'elam, explaining passages of Scripture mystically by way of hints and gematria (Kabbalistic numerology).

The 7 Noahide laws in Kabbalah

The 7 Noahide laws in Kabbalah: Kabbalah for a better world

introduction

The Jewish tradition teaches that the Torah given at Mount Sinai has messages for all humanity, whether Jewish or not. The Torah (as explained in the Talmud - Sanhedrin 58b) presents seven principles of faith, for all humanity. These principles are the pillars of human

civilization, and are named the "Seven Noahide laws" since all humans are descended from Noah. They are:

1. Do not worship idols (belief in the oneness of the creator)
2. Do not curse the creator (proper use of the power of speech)
3. Do not murder (the sanctity of life)
5. Do not steal (the respect others' property)
4. Do not be sexually immoral (strengthening family life)
6. Do not eat a limb removed from a live animal (respect all created beings)
7. Set up courts of justice (promote moral values)

Maimonides, the great Kabbalist and master of Jewish law from the 12th century, explains the spiritual background of the observation of these principles and how they were given at Mount Sinai to all human beings.

Today, there are many active groups of people all over the world, who faithfully observe the Seven Laws of Noah and are inspired by the Kabbalistic ideas that are reflected in them.

The 7 Sefirot and the 7 laws

Kabbalah teaches that the seven Noahide laws correspond to the seven emotive powers of the soul - the seven Sefirot.

Chesed: ("loving kindness") prohibition against adultery.

Gevurah: ("severity", might) prohibition against murder.

Tiferet: ("beauty") prohibition against theft.

Netzach: ("victory," "eternity")prohibition against idol worship.

Hod: ("splendor") prohibition against blasphemy.

Yesod: ("foundation") prohibition against eating flesh torn from a live animal or drinking its blood.

Malchut: ("kingship") establishing a legal system.

That adultery is a perversion of love and murder is a perversion of might is obvious. Theft is a perversion of beauty, since beauty is the trait that enables one to relate to another with concern and consideration.

Faith in the oneness of the creator represents man's victory over evil whose power is its ability to misdirect one's faith. The perversion of faith is idol worship. Blasphemy is a perversion of the soul's acknowledgment and expression of thanks to the creator.

While the first five and the last one of the Noahide laws were given to Adam at the outset of creation, the sixth was first given to Noah after the Flood. The Torah refers to Noah as the "righteous one", the "foundation" (yesod) of his generation. The first 10 generations of mankind had been instructed by G-d to be vegetarian. After the Flood, G-d permitted Noah and his descendants to eat animal flesh in general, but forbade them to eat limbs amputated from a living animal, or to drink blood from a living animal.

The seventh Noahide law is a positive one. It is the commandment to establish a legal system in order to instruct and judge righteously and in this way to regulate and rectify

society. This commandment corresponds to the power of Malchut ("kingship"), for law is the foundation of any kingdom. Malchut receives input from the other powers of the soul, as it is said: "All the rivers [the six powers] flow into the sea [malchut]." In the body of man, Malchut corresponds to the mouth, whose function is to direct and instruct.

The Seven Species and the Seven Sephirot

When we think of the 15th of Shvat festival, which symbolizes the love for the fruits of the Land of Israel and the seven species with which it was blessed (wheat, barley, grapes, pomegranates, figs, olives and dates), it is important to note the words of the Holy Ari, the greatest of the Tzfat kabbalists, regarding the relationship between the seven species and the sephirot. In his book, *Likutei Torah*, the Ari teaches us about the connection between the seven species and the seven Sephirot in the following order:

Wheat = kindness
Barley = Severity
Grapes = Beauty
Figs = Victory
Pomegranates = splendor
Olives = Foundation
Dates = Kingship

From this, we learn about seven different types of spiritual growth:

Wheat (kindness) – Wheat is known as "human food," from which we prepare bread, which is human nourishment. Wheat implies spiritual work with our divine soul - the 'higher' soul.

Barley (Severity) – Barley is defined in the Talmud as animal food. Barley implies spiritual work with the "animal soul," the lower soul within humans.

Grapes (Beauty) – We use grapes to make wine, which is considered a joyous drink. Grapes imply spiritual work and growth out of happiness.

Figs (Victory) – It is said that in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve clothed themselves in fig leaves. The figs imply corrective spiritual work with "the garments of the soul": thought, speech and action.

Pomegranates (splendor) – The plentiful seeds of the pomegranate symbolize the Mitzvot and good deeds that people do in the world. The pomegranates imply spiritual work on repairing the world – 'Tikun Olam'.

Olives (Foundation) – Olives are a bitter fruit that becomes a tasty, pleasant food. The olives imply the spiritual work of transforming things that seem useless, or even not positive, to good, useful and positive things.

Dates (Kingship) – Dates take 70 years to grow. The dates teach us that spiritual growth comes with investment, effort and persistence that grant the true achievements.

Visitors to Tzfat enjoy seeing the fruits of the seven species, which grow beautifully in the alleyways of the Old City. The popular custom of holding a Tu B'shvat Seder also originated in the teachings of the 16th-century Tzfat kabbalists.

The Four Elements in Kabbalah

According to Kabbalah, the Universe is consisted of a combination of four basic elements: fire, air, water and earth.

Every material and spiritual being consists of a unique combination of these four elements. Each of the four basic elements of the material world has fundamental characteristics, which are expressed, for instance, in its gravitational pull, temperature, state of mass, molecular density, dissemination and motion in space and so forth. Thus these basic elements are clearly much more fundamental than the elements on Mendeleev's Periodic Table, which is used in chemistry.

The behavior of the basic elements in the physical dimension also teaches us about their characteristics in the spiritual dimension, as well as their appearance and activity in the human mental forces.

The four basic elements of fire, air, water and earth are mentioned in the early Kabbalah literature. The ancient sources in which the elements are mentioned include:

The Book of Zohar (Part 2, page 23, 2; page 254, 2; Part 3, page 225, 1 and elsewhere). In the Book of the Zohar, the four basic elements are mentioned in the context of the creation of Adam - the first human, referring to the parallels between these elements and the four corners of the earth, the four ministering angels (Raphael, Uriel, Michael and Gabriel) and more. A fascinating association noted in the Book of the Zohar is that between the four basic elements and the four Kabbalists who entered the orchard – the Pardes (as told in the *Hagigah* Tractate of the Talmud) – the Zohar explains that each of the Kabbalah sages was drawn to his origins in one of the four basic elements. According to the Talmud, only Rabbi Akiva, whose origins lay in the element of water, managed to leave the mystical orchard (*Pardes*) safely.

In the ancient text of the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah, chapter 14) the four elements are mentioned in the description of the order of their place in creation, above one another. This appears in the chapter on the gifts presented by the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel at the dedication of the Tabernacle in the desert.

Maimonides provides an extensive discussion of the four basic elements and their interrelationships on the physical plane, interfacing with the spiritual plane, in the *Book of Science* (*Laws of the foundations of Torah*, end of chapter 3 and beginning of chapter 4).

The Book of Creation (Sefer Yetzira), the earliest of the Kabbalah texts, lists only three basic elements – fire, air and water – as the essential elements. The element of earth is only mentioned in the later literature mentioned above. In his book, *The Orchard of Pomegranates* (Portal 11, chapter 3), the 16th Century Tzfat Kabbalist Rabbi Moshe Cordovero presents an example that may explain why the element of earth is mentioned

and "revealed" only later: water in a pot near fire, with the air in between. After the water is heated, bits of earth (scale) develop, which emerge as the element of earth.

The Hassidic teachings (*the Book of Ma'amarim* 5743 – 1983) tell us that the three elements – fire, air and water – are parallel to the Sefirot of kindness, Severity and Beauty. These include the Sefira of kingship, which is hidden in them and discovered only later.

A parallel is also drawn with the *Divine Chariot* – the '*Merkavah*' (as described by the Prophet Ezekiel), which is essentially composed of the three Fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who constitute the three 'legs' of the Chariot, and represent the Sefirot of kindness, Severity and Beauty. A fourth leg was added to the Chariot only later, in the form of King David, who represents the Sefira of kingship.

In the book of Tanya (chapter 1), the four basic elements are mentioned as the origin of the unfavorable characteristics of the natural-animal soul of the human: fire is the source of anger and pride; water is the source of persecution after physical pleasures; air is the source of foolishness, idol talk, and boasting and earth is the source of depression, laziness and heaviness.

In contrast, the *Tanya* also describes the presence of the four basic elements in the higher, divine soul and in the intellectual soul (chapter 3, Igeret HaKodesh chapter 15 and elsewhere).

In the spiritual work of the divine soul, the element of fire is the source of spiritual enthusiasm, love and passion for G-dliness. Water is the source of mental and spiritual devotion in divine study, and the source of higher love: the joyful love of G-d. The element of air is the source of speech in the inner dimensions of the Torah – in the higher worlds, and of the spiritual meditation, contemplation and intention in praying. Earth is the source of the feeling of self nullification before the divine presence, and it symbolizes the stability of spiritual growth.