

Pitfalls of Jewish Mysticism: False Jewish Messiahs, Kabbalah & the New Age

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Kabbalah and Jewish Messiahs

Kabbalah ("Received [knowledge]") is derived from early Gnostic/pagan /esoteric attempts to form a Jewish spirituality and later developed in Medieval Spain into a set of mystical speculations with the writing of the Zohar.

More is available online on the [history of kabbalah](#); It is also exposed in quotes of [Avram Yehoshua](#)

Its spread in Western and Eastern Europe as Jews was affected by various factors:

1. Their difficult life in exile in the Early and Middle Ages under forced poverty and persecution.
2. Corrupted interpretation of Biblical Messianic prophecies to prevent Yeshua from being identified along with the removal of Messianic texts such as Isaiah 53 from the regular cycle of synagogue readings.
3. Alienation from Talmudic exegesis combined with erroneous descriptions of Messiah's purpose as harbinger of a new Law and what these changes would mean.
4. Attraction to spiritism, mysticism, esoteric "secret knowledge," and fascination with alchemy and magic.
5. Spiritual hunger and zeal for the Messiah, as well as puzzlement at his delay as evidenced by this [document](#), a first response to the announcement of a new prophet Mohammed among the Saracens (Arabs).
6. The persistence of belief that Messiah would be a political deliverer that would re-gather the people in the land, deliver them from their enemies, restore the nation and reinstate the Temple worship in Jerusalem.
7. The repeated failed messianic expectations from false messiahs.

The Origins of Kabbalah

✦ Jewish esoteric (secret) tradition

- Rooted in **mysticism, occultism, and false Messianism**.
- **Contemplation of divine secrets** attributed to Moses (or other biblical figures) as revealed by G-D to them
- All reality is One and it is all God (**pantheism**)

✦ Ein Sof (One Essence without end), 10 Sefirot (concentric emanations)

✦ Mystic origins

- 7th BCE: **Assyrian Tree of Life** (Assur) Dr. Simo Parpola, a researcher at the University of Helsinki, has made some suggestive findings on the matter, particularly concerning an analysis of the Sefirot. He matched the characteristics of En Sof on the nodes of the Sepiroth to the gods of Assyria, and was able to even find textual parallels between these Assyrian gods and the characteristics of god. The Assyrians assigned specific numbers to their gods, similar to how the Sepiroth assigns numbers to its nodes. However, the Assyrians use a sexagesimal number system, whereas the Sepiroth is decimal. With the Assyrian numbers, additional layers of meaning and mystical relevance appear in the Sepiroth. Normally, floating above the Assyrian Tree of Life was the god Assur, this corresponds to En Sof, which is also, via a series of transformations, derived from the Assyrian word Assur
- 6th BCE: **2nd Temple apocalyptic mysticism**, Merkhabah (chariot) Heichalot (Heavenly palace) Sefer Razel HaMalach (supposedly transmitted to Adam, after his expulsion from Eden by the angel Razel); Sefer Ha Razim (astro-magical text text partly based on a magical manual of late antiquity); **Hekalot Rabbati, The Book of Jubilees** written around the time of King John Hyrcanus, refers to mysterious writings of Jared, Cain, and Noah, and presents Abraham as the renewer, and Levi as the permanent guardian, of these ancient writings. It offers a cosmogony based upon the twenty-two letters of the [Hebrew alphabet](#), and connected with Jewish chronology and Messianology, while at the same time insisting upon the heptad (7) as the holy number rather than upon the decadic (10) system adopted by the later haggadists and the Sefer Yetzirah.
- 5rd BCE: confluence of **Pythagoreanism** (numerology, transmigration of soul) and Persian **Zoroastrianism** of the Sassanid era
- **Ben Sira warns against esoteric knowledge**, saying: "You shall have no business with secret things" (Sirach iii. 22; compare Talmud Hagigah 13a; Midrash Genesis Rabbah viii.).
- 2nd CE: **Gnosticism** (dualism : God's power not absolute, world we live in created by demiurge, source of evil) & **Neoplatonism** (matter emanates from pure essence in thickening stages).
- 2nd - 1st BCE: **Apocalyptic literature belonging to the second and first pre-Christian centuries contained some elements that carry over to later Kabbalah. According to Josephus such writings were in the possession of the Essenes, and were jealously guarded by them against**

- disclosure, for which they claimed a hoary antiquity (see Philo, "De Vita Contemplativa," iii., and Hippolytus, "Refutation of all Heresies," ix. 27). That books containing secret lore were kept hidden away by (or for) the "enlightened" is stated in IV Esdras xiv. 45-46, where Pseudo-Ezra is told to publish the twenty-four books of the canon openly that the worthy and the unworthy may alike read, but to keep the seventy other books hidden in order to "deliver them only to such as be wise" (compare Dan. xii. 10); for in them are the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the stream of knowledge.
- 1st CE **Sefer Yetzirah**. Also [Shimon Bar Yochai](#), also known as "Rashbi": Mishnaic sage, student of Rabbi Akiva, lived in the era of the Tannaim (scholars of the Mishnah) in the area of what is today Israel during the Roman period, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. He was one of the most eminent disciples of Rabbi Akiva, and is attributed by many with the authorship of the *Zohar*. The 33rd day of the Omer period between Pesach and Shavuot, [Lag Ba'omer](#) is traditionally regarded as his Yahrzeit (the anniversary of the death). 18th of the Jewish month of Iyar, also marks Bar Kokhba's revolt against the Romans, and the end of a period of mourning for thousands of students of Rabbi Akiva, who died in a plague in the preceding 32 days. Jewish legend records that when his funeral began, a ring of fire encircled Rabbi Shimon's coffin, which proceeded to propel itself like a hovercraft to the hillside of Mt. Meron in the Galilee. When Rabbi Shimon's son, Rabbi Elazar, later passed away, he had been living in the village of Akbara. The Jews of the town left his body in an attic for 22 years, during which no deaths, sicknesses, or tragedies befell the town. They dared not move his body, nor enter the attic. However, after 22 years, Rabbi Shimon appeared in a dream to select people, instructing them to bring his son, Rabbi Elazar, to be interred next to him in Meron. It has been an age-old Jewish tradition to pray to G-d at the burial site of Rabbi Shimon and his son Elazar. In addition, many traditional "first haircuts" are given to 3-year-old budding Torah scholars at the site. The non-stop 24-hr. current celebration of the Jewish holiday [Lag BaOmer](#) is perhaps the largest-attended Jewish celebration in the world, attracting Jews of every stripe and type: secular, religious, Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Hassidic, and Litvak.
 - 9th C.E. **Sefer HaBahir**. Aaron of Baghdad brought secrets of Merkabah mysticism & Sefer Yetzirah to Europe and these became mixed with folk beliefs & superstitions in demons & witches. Kabbalists ascribed authorship of the Bahir to R. Nehunya, a rabbi of the Mishnaic era, who lived around 100 CE. Medieval Kabbalists write that the Bahir did not come down to them as a unified book, but rather in pieces found in scattered scrolls and booklets. The scattered and broken nature of the Bahir's text, which sometimes ends discussion in mid-sentence, and which often randomly jumps from topic to topic, supports this claim. However, modern scholars of Kabbalah now hold that at least part of the Bahir was an adaptation of an older work, the *Sefer Raza Rabba*. This older book is mentioned in some of the works of the Geonim; however no complete copies of *Sefer Raza Rabba* are still in existence. However, quotes from this book can still be found in some older works. Many scholars of Kabbalah hold that the Bahir adds gnostic elements to the older work. There is a striking affinity between the symbolism of Sefer ha-Bahir, on the one hand, and the speculations of the Gnostics, and the theory of the "aeons," on the other. RAMBAN, Nachmanides in his commentary on the Torah, (Genesis 1) is one of the first to quote the work under the title Midrash R. Nehunya ben ha-Kanah. ("R. Nehunya b. ha-Kanah said," the opening sentence). It was first **published in the 12th century**, in southern France. Historians suspect Rabbi [Yitzhak Saggi Nehor](#), also known as Isaac the Blind, wrote it at that time. An important problem in this ascription is that "eyn sof" ("that which is without end") as a term naming God does not occur in the Bahir though it does in the works of Isaac the Blind.
 - 11th CE: Flourishes in Provence & Castille
 - 12th CE: **Abulafia's meditation system** sees mystical meanings to Hebrew letters of square script → Gematria (numerology) as "Bible code." It has allowed rabbinic pearl-stringing based on numerological correspondences or phonemic (letter) correspondences even though meanings are totally different Ex: Isaac walking on his head.
 - ✦ **ZOHAR (Book of Splendor)** Main source
 - 1st CE.: **Shimon Bar Yochai**, legendary author of Zohar: mystical commentary on Torah followed by parables of donkey driver or mysterious wise child who astonished rabbis.
 - 13th CE: **author Rabbi Moses de Leon of Guadalajara** (1280-86): mystical commentary on the Torah in Aramaic (23 vols.)
 - **Hekalot Rabbati, Sefer HaBahir, Torat Hakana, Sefer P'liyah, Midrash Otiyot d'Rabbi Akiva**, and the Zohar claim to be from the talmudic era, though it is clear now that some of these works, most notably the Bahir and Zohar, are actually medieval works pseudographically ascribed to the ancient past.
 - 16th CE Isaac Luria, Ari the Lion. Lurianic cosmology.
 - ✦ **Doctrines of Kabbalah**

- **Creation** (Luria): The world we live in is made of the fragments of the universe that G-D had intended to create, but which literally burst while He wavs assembling it. Some of these shards still carry traces of the divine light. So long as they are polluted by matter, those sparks are the source of evil. Prayer and observance change the universe by freeing these sparks from the dross. When the work of repairing the world (tikkun olam) is completed, Messiah will come to bring a new world. Human intervention is needed to achieve redemption. Meditation (Abulafia): Eventually the sefirot became stages of spiritual ascent, going up the ladder of abstraction until one is fully lost or absorbed in the mystery of oneness (theosophy not theology). There are 4 stages or 4 worlds taken from Isaiah 43:7 "All who are linked to My name, whom I have created, formed and made for my glory" 1. Asiyah (doing/making) 2. yetsirah (formation) 3. Beriayah (creation) 4. Atsilut (linked to G-D's Name)
- **TzimTzum: Isaac Ben Solomon Luria Ashkenazi (1535-1572) or ARI (The Lion** from acronym Ashkenazi Rabbi Itzhak) brought a new cosmology: Tzimtzum (G-D withdrew a portion of Himself to make room for creation), Shevirah (shattering, with fragments of Kelipot or shards of the 7 lower sefirot) as remnant sparks of divine light) and tikkun olam. Arizal's psychological system, upon which is based his devotional and meditational Kabbalah, is closely connected with his metaphysical doctrines. From the five figures, he says, emanated five souls, *Neshamah* ("Soul"), *Ru'ach* ("Wind"), *Nefesh* ("Spirit"), *Chayah* ("Life"), and *Yechidah* ("Singular"); the first of these being the *lowest*, and the last the *highest*. (Source: [Etz Chayim](#)). Man's soul is the connecting link between the infinite and the finite, and as such is of a manifold character. All the souls destined for the human race were created together with the various organs of Adam. As there are superior and inferior organs, so there are superior and inferior souls, according to the organs with which they are respectively coupled. Thus there are souls of the brain, souls of the eye, souls of the hand, etc. Each human soul is a spark (*nitzotz*) from Adam. The first sin of the first man caused confusion among the various classes of souls: the superior intermingled with the inferior; good with evil; so that even the purest soul received an admixture of evil, or, as Luria calls it, of the element of the "shells" (*Kelipoth*). From the lowest classes of souls proceeded the pagan world, while from the higher emanated the Israelitish world. But, in consequence of the confusion, the former are not wholly deprived of the original good, and the latter are not altogether free from sin. This state of confusion, which gives a continual impulse toward evil, will cease with the arrival of the Messiah, who will establish the moral system of the world upon a new basis. Until that time man's soul, because of its deficiencies, can not return to its source, and has to wander not only through the bodies of men and of animals, but even through inanimate things such as wood, rivers, and stones.
- **Gilgul (Reincarnation)**: To this doctrine of gilgulim (reincarnation of souls) Arizal added the theory of the impregnation (*ibbur*) of souls; that is to say, if a purified soul has neglected some religious duties on earth, it must return to the earthly life, and, attaching itself to the soul of a living man, unite with it in order to make good such neglect. Further, the departed soul of a man freed from sin appears again on earth to support a weak soul which feels unequal to its task. However, this union, which may extend to three souls at one time, can only take place between souls of homogeneous character; that is, between those which are sparks of the same Adamite organ. The dispersion of Israel has for its purpose the salvation of men's souls; as the purified souls of Israelites will full fill the prophecy of becoming "A lamplight unto the nations," influencing the souls of men of other races in order to free them from demoniacal influences. According to Arizal, man bears on his forehead a mark by which one may learn the nature of his soul: to which degree and class it belongs; the relation existing between it and the superior world; the wanderings it has already accomplished; the means by which it can contribute to the establishment of the new moral system of the world; how it can be freed from demoniacal influences; and to which soul it should be united in order to become purified. This union can be effected by formulas of conjuration. The Sabbateans did use Rabbi Luria's concepts of nitzotzot trapped in kelippot and pure souls being mixed with the impure (see below) to justify some of their antinomian actions.
- **Messiah: Myth of Joseph Della Reina** a Spanish Kabbalist broke into a church to capture the demon Samael & compel him to use his powers to protect the Jews. According to a rabbi Abraham who wrote in 1519, his misadventure delayed the coming of messiah by 40 years. 1649: Nothing happened then Shabbetai Zvi boasted he would take the sultan's crown in 1666 and deliver women from the curse of Eve.

✦ **Pre-Modern & Modern Kabbalah**

- Hasidic folk mysticism (18th cent. Europe)
- Martin Buber & Abraham Joshua Herschel also claimed as mystics.
- Jewish Renewal Movement (60s); Hollywood version; Yitzhak Kaduri.
- Abraham Isaac Kook's utopian mysticism (20th CE Israel)
- Phillip Berg's Kabbalah Learning Center, Safed, Israel (Lurianic)
- Many non-Jewish forms of kabbalah (Christian, Hermetic, Pagan)

✦ **Dangerous errors**

- Jewish Meditation & Divining: sign/oracle 'אָת' (1 Cor 1:22-23)

- Luria's Tikkun Olan (ethical obligation to repair the world through mitzvot) is human effort to redeem self and the world (Hasid ascetic)
 - Failed resurrection gives way to belief in reincarnation (gilgul)
 - Jewish supremacy myth spurs antisemitism: "Without Jews, Goyim cannot exist"
 - **The "Kabbalah of Yeshua" by Zusha Kalet** (Kabbalah Nation Publishing, 2007) combines messianic faith with kabbalistic doctrines. This intriguing book is divided into two parts: 1. Yeshua and 2. Kabbalah, which is the soul of the Torah and includes writings like the Zohar, Bahir and Sefer Yetzirah. The purpose of studying Kabbalah is to understand more profoundly and to increase one's faith in Messiah, according to the author, whose explanation of Kabbalah is of the theosophical variety.
- ✦ **A sign?**
- **In 2006, Kabbalist sage [Yitzhak Kaduri](#) died leaving a note that claims to reveal the name of Messiah:** "With the biblical name of Jesus (Yeshua), the Rabbi and kabbalist described the Messiah using six words and hinting that the initial letters form the name of the Messiah. The secret note said: *'Concerning the letter abbreviation of the Messiah's name, He will lift the people and prove that his word and law are valid. This I have signed in the month of mercy, Yitzhak Kaduri'* The Hebrew sentence (translated above in bold) with the hidden name of the Messiah reads: **Yarim Ha'Am Veyokhiakh Shedvaro Vektorato Omdim**. The initials spell the Hebrew name of Jesus, Yehoshua. Yehoshua and Yeshua are effectively the same name, derived from the same Hebrew root of the word 'salvation' as documented in Zechariah 6:11 and Ezra 3:2.
- ✦ **Kabbalistic Controversies:**
- **The Zohar sanctions killing of Gentiles, including Christians?** Allegations: "Take the life of the Kliphoth [Gentile and Christian] and kill them, and you will please God the same as one who offers incense to Him." (Sefer or Israel 177b) "The people of the earth are idolaters, and it has been written of them, 'Let them be wiped off the face of the earth.'" (I 25, Pranaitis translation, "The Talmud Unmasked," p. 80) "When these shall be exterminated, it will be as if God had made heaven and earth on that day." (I, Bereshith, 25b) "At the moment when the Holy One, blessed be he, will exterminate all the goyim of the world...the Lord alone will appear great on that day." (Sec. Vayschlah, folio 177b, de Pauly translation) "It is certain our captivity will last until the princes of the Gentiles who worship idols are destroyed." (I, 219, Pranaitis, p. 80) "In the palaces of the fourth heaven are those who lamented over Sion and Jerusalem, and all those who destroyed idolatrous nations, and those who killed off people who worship idols..." (I, 38b, 39a)
 - **Zohar & Talmud feed anti-semitism of Protocols as in Michael Higger's *The Jewish Utopia*,** (The Lord Baltimore Press, 1932; Emissary Publications) provides extensive references from the Babylonian Talmud, describing enlightened monotheism under messiah. But the Talmud teaches such tranquillity will be dearly bought; a time of Gentile anguish is necessary to displace Gentiles from their control of the nations and dominion of Jews. Such suffering will be so great, says the Talmud, that even "the Almighty Himself will bewail it." The Nations must suffer first.

"Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,
but we preach Christ crucified:
a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."
1 Cor 1:22-23

A Non-Exhaustive List of Famous Self-Proclaimed Jewish Messiahs

- ♦ [Shimon Bar Kosiba](#) supported by rabbi Akiva who started the Sabatian movement (2nd century)
- ♦ **Three Persian Messiahs:** Abu Isa (Ishaq ben Ya'qub Obadiah Abu 'Isa al-Isfahani), called himself the forerunner of Messiah, [Yudghan \(Judah of Hamadan\)](#), and his son Mushka who were influenced by Sufism and Islam, spiritualized the Torah, declared laws of Sabbath and Festivals not binding in the Diaspora and declared both Jesus and Mohammed prophets (7th-11th)
- ♦ [Serenus of Syria](#) (8th century) Serenus is the latin form of Sha're Zedek. His name is also rendered as Severus by Gregorius bar Hebraeus. He abolished prayer, the ketubah and some of the incest laws and also promised the return of Jews to their promised land, causing many Spanish Jews to emigrate to Palestine. Natronai Gaon in a responsum gives a life account and exposes his false messiahship.
- ♦ [Moses al-Dar'i](#), a Moroccan teacher claimed Messiah would come at Passover 1127 to free the Almoravid countries from the Moors, bringing many Jews to bankruptcy in the fever of messianic expectation. The Messiah never showed up.
- ♦ The **Yemenite Messiahs** (12th Century): the Messiah of Bayhan, Suleiman Jamal, Shukr Kuhayl I, Yehuda b. Shalom, Shukr Kuhayl II, Yusuf Abdallah.

- 12th century: [David Alroy](#) claimed to be a descendent of David was born in Bagdad during the Crusades. [Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia](#), a speculative mystic from Saragossa, Spain who developed a system of meditation focusing on letter combinations made false messianic claims based on the kabbalah. He lived at the time when the Zohar was composed (principally, at least) by Rabbi Moses de Leon of Guadalajara, Spain, around 1280-86, spreading what was kept "secret" knowledge. This knowledge interpreted Targumic passages on the Messiah. Even Nachmanides (RAMBAN) was accused of breaking the secret in his Torah commentaries.
- [David Re'uveni](#) whose appearance in Spain, brought legends of the lost tribes from the East that impressed Viterbo and Clemens in the Vatican, the King of Portugal and Jewish authorities of Europe monarchs during the Inquisition. A Portuguese courtier of Jewish heritage, Diogo Pires, was caught up in the drama, circumcised himself, changed his name to **Shlomo Molkho**, traveled with Re'uveni and by himself, impressing leading figures—legalists and mystics—with his devotion and miraculous learning. His reputation and the power of his message was temporarily magnified by Charles' execution of him in the bonfires of the Inquisition, a "holy burnt offering" which the foremost rabbinic authority of the time, R. Yosef Karo, yearned to become.
- Molkho made a strong impression on the **two Messiahs of Safed** in the Galilee, [Isaac Luria](#) and his successor [Hayim Vital](#) (15th-16th centuries). They were heavily steeped in the Kabbalah.
- Later messiahs such as [Asher Lämmlein](#) (16th) and [Moses Guibbory](#) (19th)
- The infamous [Shabtai Zvi \(Sabbatai Zvi\)](#), was promoted by his prophet Nathan of Gaza in the Ottoman Empire, (17th century) who started the line of Sabbatian line of Messiahs until Jacob Frank.
- **Barukhia Russo/Osman Baba** called the "second" after Shabtai Zvi (Sabbatian line) extended in his movement the antinomian theme (conversion to Islam, or Christianity, even reversing the 10 commandments!!!), revealing the covert and duplicitous methods of the group.
- [Jacob Joseph Frank](#) was the third in the Sabbatian line and his movement (the Frankists) spread the deception to all Europe became one of the roots of the modern Jewish movements—including the Enlightenment (Haskalah), Reform Judaism, and Hasidism. His daughter Eva became the only female Jewish Messiah.
- The long chain of [Hasidic messiahs](#) such as Israel ben Eliezer, **Israel Baal Shem Tov**, Rav. **Nachman of Bratslav** of the Besht Rabbinate, and the most recent in Brooklyn Rebbe **Menachem Mendel Schneersohn** (1902-1994) of the Lubavitch Rabbinate (Chabad movement)

Biographical information on ancient false claimants of Messiahship throughout history is available¹ in print and online the following false messiahs in their historical contexts:

[Judas the Galilean](#) ; [The Samaritan Prophet](#) ; [King Herod Agrippa](#) ; [Theudas](#) ; [The Egyptian Prophet](#) ; [Anonymous prophet](#) ; [Menahem](#) ; [John of Gischala](#) ; [Simon bar Giora](#) ; [Jonathan the Weaver](#) ; [Lukuas](#) (not the Luke of the Gospel) ; [Moses of Crete](#)

Harris Lenowitz notes that Jewish Messiahs after the 1st century C.E. appear only outside the land of Israel except for Luria and Vital in the 16th century. His scholar's conclusion is that "Messiah events have largely ceased; accounts continue to flourish along with practices associated with earlier messiahs. Taken together, both developments point to a dissolution of the tensions integral to the problems of associated Jewish identity formations and to a dissolution of the Jewish messiah." However we disagree that the "Messiah event" is a phenomenon that can be reduced to a problem in Jewish identity. The first century appearance of [Yeshua](#) as the first Messiah had nothing to do with a 1st century crisis of Jewish identity but has more to do with the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures. Also the first century context shows that Yeshua's claim of his messiahship was not politically motivated as was often the case with others. See our [Messianic Prophecy](#) slideshow.

Judgment and Curse on the Nation:

God indicted Israel and punished it through the **Temple's Destruction**, the **expulsion from the land**, and the veil on the nation as a judgment on the false shepherds. Israel & Judah plunged into darkness, with all sorts of error and division, as the light of His Spirit was poured on Yeshua's apostles and the Messianic church. Religious rulers in the Diaspora set up an apostate system called Rabbinic Judaism.

False Shepherds & the Good Shepherd

All Jewish leaders who have rejected the Messiahship of Yeshua fit the prophetic profile of "false shepherds." (Jer 8:8, Jer 10: 21, Jer 12:10, Jer 2:22, Jer 23:1-3, Jer 25:33-37, Jer 50:5-7, Ezk 34:1-3, Ezk 7-10, Zec 10:2-4, Zec 11:4-17.) But also the Lord supplied the Good Shepherd whom He had promised (Jer 3:14-18) Yeshua is He (John 10).

The Veil

Yeshua said, "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him." (John 5:43)

A "veil" has resulted from the Messianic rejection (Is 6:9-13, Is 42:18-19, Is 56:10-11). This veil makes it difficult for the Jews to "see" Messiah Yeshua. The image is marred by centuries of false teaching and persecution, while Messiah became the light of the Gentiles. But the veil is only for a time, until "the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled (2 Cor 3:15-16, Rom 11:25, Rom 9:33, 1 Peter 2:8, Rom 11).

Maimonides on Messiah

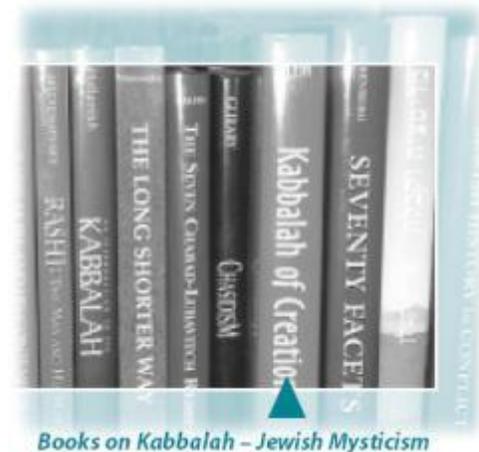
See what Maimonides said about Jewish Messiahs in Harris Lenowitz² online article entitled The Two Jewish Messiahs. See [Maimonides on Messiah](#) Here is an extract:

"Maimonides, in particular, engaged the topic of the messiah in several responses to letters of inquiry or reports relating to five events. The letters and his responses constitute accounts. In general, Maimonides takes a position on the question of the moral standards to be applied to the messiahs and also a position on the question of the responsibilities to be exercised by the rabbinic authorities of their communities. In those cases where Maimonides knows something about the conduct of the messiahs, he determines that they can be good people in their conduct in general and helpful, particularly if they call the community's attention to the correction of misconduct, "reprove them and summon them to repentance." This corresponds to his new, revised theoretical two-messiah program. If "[the messiah in question] is a king who arises from the house of David, meditates on the Torah, occupies himself with the commandments in accord with the oral and written Torah, and prevails on all Jews to do so and fights the battles of God," he may be considered the messiah. If he succeeds and is prepared to rebuild the Temple on its site and regather the dispersed Jews, then he is assuredly the messiah. This represents the last approach to the problem of the failure of the messiah. There are, once again, some impossible terms involved here, such as Davidic lineage, unevicted for more than a millennium."

The Kabbalah Today (Exerpt from Zev's newsletter)

There are 200,000 Lubavitchers (members of an ultra- Orthodox Jewish sect) of which many believe that their late Rabbi Schneerson is the Messiah of Israel. Instead of focusing on the Jewish Bible (Tanakh), Lubavitchers' base their theology and doctrine on a **book called Tanya**. That's only 200,000 Jews, however millions of Jewish people believe in reincarnation, which is taught in **Kabbalah** based on a **set of Jewish books called "the Zohar."** All Chassidic Jews and the majority of Orthodox Jews believe that Kabbalah and the Zohar are valid Jewish teachings.

Kabbalah is a religious mystical system of Judaism claiming insight into the divine nature and secret



knowledge of God, and the laws of nature and light in the universe. **Zohar** is a Hebrew word that means "**splendor**" or "**radiance**." The Zohar is a mystical commentary on the Torah, originally written in Aramaic. At one point the Zohar was only to be studied by Jews who were well-versed in the Talmud, but today all Jews are encouraged to read and study all 23 volumes of the mystical Zohar.

Organizations like the "The Kabbalah Learning Center" have outlets in cities throughout the world with many Jews and even non-Jews attending classes. Famous singer/actress Madonna has given millions

of dollars to promote Kabbalah and the Zohar, which has peaked the interest of Jewish youth to the lies and deceptions of the **Zohar**. The Zohar, and commentaries on the Zohar, have become very popular books in the last decade teaching on all types of Jewish subjects such as: healing, life after death, redemption, etc., which is leading our Jewish people further away from the truth of Biblical Judaism and their need for a Messiah to take away their sins.

"Of course I believe in reincarnation," Sarah said. "Zev, it's a Jewish concept, from the Kabbalah!" Sarah, whom I have known for the past year was raised in a traditional Jewish home, and is studying the Zohar and other aspects of Kabbalah. "Okay Sarah, so tell me who you were in your past life?" I asked. Sarah shrugged her shoulders and replied, "**I don't know!**" Like most Jews, Sarah does not read the Tanakh (Jewish Bible), but she is drawn to other Jewish books like the Zohar because of their mystical nature.

I showed her in our Jewish Bible (2 Samuel 12:22-23), how reincarnation is not a Jewish concept. I had her read from the Prophet Samuel, where it says: After King David's first son died, David said: "**Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.**" I also showed Sarah, (Job 7:9-10): "When a cloud vanishes, it is gone. So he who goes down to Sheol does not come up. He will not return again to his house, nor will his place know him anymore." Sarah then said, "Okay, I guess our Jewish Bible does not believe in reincarnation. However Zev, Kabbalah and the Zohar are really, really interesting and through Kabbalah, I am able to reach my full potential as a Jew."

It's obvious that Jewish people believe in reincarnation because it solves the problem of everlasting life for them. There is no longer a need to acknowledge your sins and the need for atonement. Reincarnation is a "feel good concept" because it gives you immortality.

About eight years ago, my cousin Svi (an Orthodox Jew) was trying to do everything to get me to stop believing in Yeshua (Jesus). One day he said, "Zev will you please come with me to visit a rabbi in Sefad?" This rabbi was very well respected by all of my family and the people in Sefad. I wanted to appease my cousin so I agreed to go. The town of Sefad is known as the Kaballistic center of Israel and close to where my cousin lives.

The rabbi and his wife were very nice and they did their best to convince me that Yeshua was not the Messiah of Israel. I politely listened to everything they had to say and to my surprise, near the end of our meeting this well-respected rabbi told me that in one of his past lives he was Marie Antoinette!

I almost burst into laughter but I kept a straight face. When we left the rabbis house I said to my cousin Svi, "And you think that I'm crazy for believing in Yeshua? Don't you think this rabbi is off his rocker for believing that he was Marie Antoinette in a past life?" Unfortunately, like most Orthodox Jews, my cousin accepts that reincarnation, along with the study of Kaballah and the Zohar, are very Jewish!

A man was standing outside a Kaballistic Center and he invited me in. "Shalom, my name is Uri," he said. "I feel a very good 'aura' around you, I can tell that you have a good soul," he said to me. "Do you read the Zohar?" he asked. I replied, "No, I don't read the Zohar because I read the Tanakh and Brit Chadashah (the Jewish Bible and the New Testament)."

"That's great," Uri replied. "Yeshua was a good man and one of the greatest Kaballists who ever lived! He was a master of the Zohar and therefore you should want to read it too because it will open the "divine spark" hidden within you. "What's your name?" he asked me. "Zev," I replied. "Zev, the more you bring the Zohar into your life, the stronger your connection with the Light becomes. The Zohar is both practical and powerful and each week there is a special reading where you can tap into the Creator's Light," explained Uri.

Uri and I spoke for about 45 minutes, going over the Zohar and how it contradicts the Messianic Prophecies and the teachings of the Jewish Bible. I was surprised at how many Israelis and Jewish tourists walked into the store to buy

the Zohar and other books, during the short time we spoke. Uri, a master Kaballist, explained to me why I should believe in Kabbalah and I explained to him the sin in mankind and in his own life. However, Uri's response was that 'his sin' is dealt with in each life. "In each life, the soul is prepared to be a better person in the next life, until hopefully one day there is no more sin. You see our 'Karma' has certain layers of negativity around it which stops us from 'connecting to The Light.' When a person removes all the layers, then they connect with The Light and they don't have to come back anymore. This happens to righteous people, and then they go to what we call heaven or paradise," explained Uri.

Kaballah is pervasive in both Israeli society and Jewish communities around the world. You will see flyers posted in libraries, restaurants, public hallways, and just about everywhere advertising Kaballistic classes and books to read.

The following day I was back in Jerusalem and I walked passed a store called **Olam Katan** (in Hebrew means "small world") - **Spiritual Books and World Music**. I was greeted by the owner, Reuven, who invited me in and told me about classes he holds on various subjects of Kabbalah. Many of the books in the store were on Kabbalah and the Zohar. There were even more books based on Hinduism, Buddhism, and all types of eastern religious philosophies which is the basis of the New Age Movement.



Uri explaining courses they offer in the Kabbalah Center located in the city of Sefad.



Books in the Jerusalem bookstore based on Buddhism and healing.

Right away I told the store owner that I was a believer in Yeshua. "Really, well we have books on Jesus too," Reuven said, as he led me to another section of the store while he kept talking . . . "You know, Jesus was a great spiritualist and miracle healer, so I have many books about Jesus." I must say that I was appalled! **One of the books was called, "Jesus the Magician,"** another was called, "Was Jesus influenced by Buddhism," another "The Imitation of Christ," and the list went on and on. The reality is that Kabbalah, the Zohar, and all these books are based on eastern religions and not on Biblical Judaism.

There is overwhelming proof that the Jewish people are open to "spiritual things" because millions of them believe in Kabbalah and other Jewish books and teachings. The problem is that they are not hearing the Gospel Message because Christians who know the truth, are not taking it to them.

Many non-Jews who are also studying Kabbalah such as movie star Demi Moore and singers Mick Jagger, Britney Spears, and Madonna, are influencing Jewish people to study the Zohar.

Madonna, who recently visited Israel to attend Kabbalah seminars, has already spent \$6.5 million on a Kabbalah Center in London's Old Jewish area as well as \$21.6 million on funding a Kabbalah Grammar School in New York. Madonna has been influencing many Jewish people away from the truth of Messiah Yeshua.

The forthcoming **Messianic Prophecy Bible** addresses issues such as reincarnation and refute the doctrines of Kabbalah and New Age teaching, as well as prove that Yeshua fulfilled the Messianic Prophecies, and that He takes away the sins of the world.

¹ Rabow, Jerry. *50 Jewish Messiahs*. Gefen Publishing House, 2002

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/9652292885/inktomi-bkasin-20/ref%3Dnosim/104-6637493-6751141>RUBIN, Scott. *The*

² *Jewish Messiahs* by Harris Lenowitz: *A Messianic Jewish Review*.

http://www.jewsforjesus.org/other/outtakes/01-01/JEW_MESSIAHS/jewishmessiahs.htm