

1. Wendy Solomon, *New energy drink puts fizz in Kabbalah* (Allentown Morning Call, 4/1/05)

Combine medieval Jewish mysticism, a fizzy strawberry-flavored drink loaded with vitamins and a splash of holy water and you have the perfect fusion of two of the hottest fads sweeping the country: Kabbalah and energy drinks... What is Kabbalah Energy Drink? A \$2 can of sweetened, carbonated, caffeinated, vitamin-charged water to which some Canadian mountain spring water blessed by a rabbi is added. Red Bull, the leader in the nearly \$1 billion energy drink market, can't say that...

"Frankly, I think it's marketing," says Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, of Congregation Sons of Israel, an Orthodox synagogue in Allentown. "The original kabbalists weren't marketing products with logos and the like... I wouldn't be surprised to see Kabbalah Apple Juice because apples are mentioned in the Song of Songs. They could branch out in Kabbalah Communion Wafers, I suppose. Why limit it? It's a much bigger market," he says.

What is Kabbalah?

2. Professor Isaiah Tishby (20th century Israel), *Wisdom of the Zohar*, pg. 229

Kabbalistic teaching... is extremely wide-ranging, impinging on every area of existence and seeking solutions from a religio-mystical point of view to the mysteries of the world and the problems of life.

3. Professor Gershom Scholem (20th century Israel), *Origins of the Kabbalah* pg. 11

The Kabbalistic movement in Judaism cannot be described adequately according to the categories of the history of philosophy; it can only be explained in terms of the history of religions, however close its connection with philosophy...

4. Rabbi Chaim Vital (16th century Israel), *Shaar haMitzvot* 1a

[W]ith regards to Torah study, which is one of the 248 positive mitzvot, one does not fulfill this mitzvah unless one studies the PaRDeS of the Torah, which is the acronym of Pshat, Remez, Drash, and Sod. Within each of these aspects each must strive to achieve. If one does not do this, one is missing an aspect of the mitzvah of Torah study...

5. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th century Israel), *Or Ne'erav* 4:1

When one studies this wisdom (Kabbalah), he will be escorted by the angels and the righteous from the Garden of Eden. This is not true of any other branch of Torah study.

6. Rabbi Shlomo Luria (16th century Poland), *Maharshal* 98

I saw that all of my holy mentors and ancestors, who served the great ones, practiced only the words of the Talmud and halachic authorities. If Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai [author of the Zohar] were to stand before us, screaming that we should alter ancestral custom, we would not listen; the law does not follow most of his rulings, as Rabbi Yosef Karo wrote.

7. Rabbi Binyamin Ettlinger (19th century Germany), *Binyan Tzion* 173

[W]e refrain from learning from midrash [of the Zohar] only if there is an opposing teaching in the Talmud. However, when there is no contradiction in the Talmud, why wouldn't we learn from midrash?

8. Talmud, *Chagigah* 11b

One may not teach matters related to Creation with two students, and matters related to the *Merkavah* even with one, unless he is wise and understands on his own.

9. Talmud, *Chagigah* 14b

Four entered *Pardes*... Ben Azzai gazed and died, Ben Zoma gazed and was harmed, Acher chopped down the growth and Rabbi Akiva exited safely.

A Brief History of Kabbalah

10. Talmud, *Yoma* 28b

Rav said: Abraham fulfilled the entire Torah, as Genesis 26:5 says, "Because Abraham listened to My voice, and he guarded My preserve, My commands, My statutes and My teachings."

11. Midrash, *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:11

Genesis 12:5 says, "And the *nefesh* they made in Charan." Abraham converted the men; Sarah converted the women.

12. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (18th century Lithuania/Russia), *Nefesh haChaim* I 21

Just as a person's entire body ascends and is purified by involvement in Torah and mitzvot, so all of the realms... are purified and elevated. A righteous person who truly serves [G-d] will not focus his mind and thoughts [elsewhere] while serving G-d, even to elevate and purify his body and spirit, but [he will intend] only for the purity of his thought and intent to ascend and focus above, for the repair and purification of the holy realms. This was the entire service of the *avot* and early righteous ones, who fulfilled the Torah before it was given...

13. Zohar 1:122b

Sarah came to the world and left and did not have anything [impure] stick to her... Because nothing stuck to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah merited elevated life for herself, her husband and her children after her.

14. Genesis 3:24

And He exiled the man, and He settled the cherubim, and the spinning sword blade, east of Eden...

15. Genesis 15:9-12, 17

And He said to Abram, "Take for Me a three-year old calf, a three-year old goat, a three-year old ram, a turtledove and a pigeon." And he took all of these for G-d, and he split them in their middles, and he placed the half of each opposite the other, but he did not divide the birds. And a raven descended upon the carcasses, and Abram settled them. And the sun was setting, and a deep sleep fell on Abram, and terror, great darkness fell upon him... And the sun was setting, and there was a great darkness, and a smoking furnace and fiery torch passed between the parts.

16. Ezekiel 1:5-8, 15-16

And from its midst, the image of four chayot. This was their appearance: The appearance of a man for them. Four faces for one, and four wings for one, and their leg was a straight leg and their foot was like that of a calf, and sparking like radiant copper. And they had the hands of man beneath their wings on their four corners, and faces and wings for the four of them... And I saw the chayot, and there was one wheel on the ground beside the chayot, for its four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their form was like tarshish, one form for all four of them, and their appearance and form was as a wheel within a wheel.

17. Talmud, Sanhedrin 65b

Rava created a man and sent him before Rabbi Zera. Rabbi Zera spoke to him, but he did not respond. Rabbi Zera said: You must be from the magicians; return to your dust.

Rav Chanina and Rav Oshia sat all Friday immersed in *Sefer Yetzirah*, and they created a fat calf and ate it.

18. Talmud, Bava Batra 134a

They said that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai did not leave any verse, mishnah, talmudic discussion, legal tradition, biblical analysis, biblical decree, rabbinic decree, logical argument, pleonasm, astronomy lesson, Gematria, parable, demonic oaths, speech of people among the palm trees, speech of the angels, large matter or great matter. Large matters are the accounts of the *Merkavah*, small matters are the questions of Abayye and Rava.

19. Talmud, Shabbat 33b

They saw people plowing and planting, and they said, "They abandon eternal life and involve themselves in temporary life!" Wherever they turned their eyes, it was burned.

The Chain of Kabbalah

20. The books 10th cent. *Sefer Yetzirah*; 12th cent. *Bahir*; 13th cent. *Zohar*

21. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (20th century), Introduction to *Sefer Yetzirah*, pg. XXIII

The most careful analysis, however, reveals a number of strata in the text. The earliest parts of the book appear very ancient, possibly antedating the Talmudic era. A considerable amount of the text appears to have been added later on, possibly as a gloss or commentary.

22. The chain 13th c. Gerona/Provence → 15th/16th c. Tzefat → 18th/19th c. Chasidim and Mitnagdim