

## **Kabbalah and its Contemporary Revival**

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Kabbalah, a word whose meaning in Hebrew is “reception”, or “something received”, is a Jewish tradition that emerged in the late medieval period, became central in Jewish cultures in the early modern period, and had a considerable impact on non-Jewish European culture. The central place of Kabbalah diminished in the modern period, and by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only very small circles studied and practiced Kabbalah. Yet, since the 1980’s, a very significant revival of Kabbalah has occurred. Today, there is much interest in Kabbalah, and many Kabbalistic groups are active in Israel, the United States, and Europe.

In this essay, I would like to offer a short survey of Kabbalah and its history, and to focus on its contemporary revival. Following a brief discussion of Kabbalah and its place in Jewish culture, I will present some of the major contemporary Kabbalistic movements, and discuss the main characteristics of contemporary Kabbalah. I will suggest that the contemporary forms of Kabbalah emerged and were shaped in the context of New Age and Postmodern culture.

Since the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, several traditions, texts and practices were perceived and transmitted as part of an ancient, Jewish esoteric tradition, called “Kabbalah”. These texts and practices include a large variety of themes. I will discuss only a few of the more prevalent and central ones.

A major component of most Kabbalistic doctrines (and I should emphasize that there is a large variety of different Kabbalistic doctrines and movements), which scholars refer to as “theosophy”, is the theory of the “sefirot” (a word in Hebrew that originally meant “numbers”). According to Kabbalistic doctrines the divine world is comprised of ten sefirot. These are divine attributes, or emanations of God, which are also described as part of the human-like form of God, and include masculine and feminine components. The sefirot are portrayed as a dynamic system, and the dynamics between the sefirot, especially between the male and female sefirot, affect our world. When there are harmonious relations between the sefirot, harmony is found in the world. When the sefirot are separated and in conflict with each other, chaos and suffering reigns.

A second related Kabbalistic idea, which scholars refer to as “theurgy” is that human beings can influence (positively or negatively) the dynamics between the sefirot and the condition of the divine system. Negative human behavior (i.e., moral and religious transgressions), damage the harmony of the divine world, distance the sefirot from each other, and thus bring chaos, suffering, and pain to our

world, and especially to the Jewish people. Proper moral and religious conduct, on the other hand, restores harmony to the divine world, brings the sefirot closer to each other and repairs the damage in the divine system. The Hebrew word for this is “tikkun” - repair.

The primary goal of human beings (first and foremost of Jewish adult males) is to repair the divine world, and thus redeem our world. The way to do this is to strictly follow the Jewish religious precepts and ritual conduct. From this point of view, Kabbalah can be regarded as a conservative ideology whose main role was to justify, preserve and enhance the observance of Jewish religious law, the “Halacha”. Most late medieval and early modern forms of Kabbalah accepted these ideas, and hence they are referred to by scholars as Theosophical-Theurgical Kabbalah.

Another trend of early Kabbalah, which developed in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, also in Spain, is the “Prophetic Kabbalah”. This type of Kabbalah, which was much influenced by medieval Jewish Philosophy, and probably also by Sufism, is much less interested in theosophy and theurgy. Rather, its main interest is practicing techniques for uniting with the divine intellect and attaining prophecy. The techniques for attaining prophecy are comprised mostly of combining and reciting Hebrew letters and divine names.

Apart from these major themes of Kabbalah, there are many other Kabbalistic doctrines and practices. These include theories concerning the structure of the human soul, belief in re-incarnation, practices of saint veneration, exorcism of evil spirits, writing of amulets and magical use of divine names (some of these practices are called practical Kabbalah).

I would like to turn now to a short survey of the history of Kabbalah.

The first Kabbalistic circles appeared in the south of France, and later, in Spain, in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The source and origins of Kabbalah are debated by scholars. Some scholars believe that the origins of Kabbalah lie in Gnostic circles, while others regard it as a new elaboration of earlier Jewish ideas from the Talmudic period. Scholars also observed the influence of Neoplatonism on Kabbalah, and some suggested Christian influences.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century several Kabbalistic circles were active in Spain. At the end of this century, the Zohar was written. This is a collection of texts, mostly theosophical-theurgical homilies on the Torah, which was attributed to the second century sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Eventually, this text was canonized and became the most authoritative and venerated book of Kabbalah.

In the second part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Abraham Abulafia established the school of prophetic Kabbalah, which was mentioned before. Although Abraham Abulafia was criticized and rejected by other Kabbalists, his form of Kabbalah had a considerable influence on later Kabbalistic schools.

After the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, Kabbalah spread to other Jewish centers to which

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the Spanish exiles arrived: Italy, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire, including the land of Israel. Several centers of Kabbalah were created in that period. The most prominent one was in Safed, in the upper Galilee. It was there that Rabbi Isaac Luria, who became known as Ha-Ari, developed an innovative theosophical-theurgical Kabbalistic system, known as Lurianic Kabbalah, which became the most authoritative and influential Kabbalistic system in later periods. During the same period, in Europe, first in Italy, and later in other centers, Christian thinkers began to be interested in Kabbalah and to develop a Christian form of Kabbalah. Christian Kabbalah was based on Jewish Kabbalistic concepts, yet differed very much from Jewish forms of Kabbalah. The first Christian Kabbalist was the famous Renaissance scholar, Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494). According to the Christian Kabbalists, Kabbalah was an ancient Jewish doctrine that proved the truths of Christianity, and could be used in order to convince the Jews to convert to Christianity.

During the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Kabbalah was dispersed to many Jewish communities around the world, and became prevalent in the large Jewish centers in Eastern Europe. During that period, Kabbalah became known to larger sectors of the Jewish population and spread beyond the elite intellectual circles that had studied and practiced Kabbalah in earlier periods. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalah had become accepted by all communities in the Jewish world. It became the normative theology of Judaism, and integrated into Jewish ritual and prayer. The Zohar became part of the Jewish canon, and Lurianic Kabbala was accepted as the most authoritative Kabbalistic doctrine.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, three major schools and movements, based on the Kabbalah, were developed. The most famous and influential of these movements was the Hasidic movement, which was founded in Eastern Europe, by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, known as the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760). The movement founded by him spread in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and became very successful. During this period, different Hasidic schools and dynasties developed, many of them still active today.

Another school of Kabbala developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in Lithuania. The school was founded by the most prominent Halachic authority in that period, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo, known as the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797), who was a fierce opponent of the Hasidic movement. His followers are still known today as Lithuanians, or as “The Opponents” (Mitnagdim). A third school of Kabbalah was developed at that time in the middle East, by a Kabbalist from Yemen, Rabbi Shalom Sharabi (1720-1777), who stood at the head of the Beth-El Kabbalistic Yehsiva in Jerusalem. This school became the most influential Kabbalistic school in the middle East.

All of these schools accepted the authority of the Zohar and of Lurianic Kabbalah. Yet, each of

them emphasized different aspects in their doctrines and practices. The Hssidic movement integrated Kabbalistic ideas and practices in their daily lives, and advocated a popular approach to the Kabbalah. They offered a psychological understanding of Kabbalah, which concentrated on human emotions and experiences. The Hasidic movement was divided into different groups, each of them following a different charismatic rabbi, a Zadik (righteous one) who was perceived as a conduit between the community and the divine world.

The disciples of the Vilna Gaon, the Lituansians or “Opponents”, developed a very different form of Kabbalah. They held an esoteric and elitist approach to Kabbalah. It was studied by only a few, advanced students, and did not become part of the daily life of the followers of this school, although it was integrated with their ethical teaching.

The Kabbalah of the followers of Rabbi Sharabi and the Beth El Yeshiva was also elitist and esoteric. This school developed a scholastic study of the Lurianic writings, as well as a special form of meditative prayer, in which the Kabbalists concentrated on divine names and letter combinations.

During the same period in which the three above mentioned Kabbalah-based schools were established, another Jewish movement emerged in western Europe – the Jewish enlightenment movement, the Haskalah. Its founding figure was the Jewish-German philosopher, Moshe Mendelsohn (1729-1786). The Haskalah movement adopted the values of the European enlightenment movement, and aspired to reform Jewish culture according to those values. In the context of this endeavor, the Maskilim rejected Kabbalah and Hasidism, which they regarded as the main obstacle to Jewish integration within modern European culture.

The Haskalah movement had a decisive influence on modern Jewish culture. Most modern Jewish movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century emerged from the Haskala and adopted its values – these movement include the reform, conservative and modern orthodox Jewish movements, as well as the secular socialist and national Jewish movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

All Jewish sectors that adopted the western-European, modern, enlightened ideals and values rejected the authority and sanctity of the Kabbalah. Hence, knowledge and practice of Kabbalah almost completely disappeared from the modern Jewish cultural systems of the liberal orthodox, reform, conservative, secular and national Jewish movements. On the other hand, Kabbalah was studied, practiced and perceived as sacred and authoritative in Jewish communities that rejected, or were less exposed to the values of European enlightenment and the Jewish Haskalah. Kabbalah preserved its central place in the culture of Hasidic and Lithuanian communities in Eastern Europe, and remained central in the Jewish communities in the Middle East and in North Africa. Thus, a very distinct divide existed in modern Jewish cultures regarding the Kabbalah. While in some Jewish

communities, especially in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Kabbalah was practiced, studied and venerated, in other communities, especially in Western Europe and the United States, Kabbalah was ignored and rejected.

Although Kabbalah came to be perceived as fundamentally opposed to modern ideas and values, there were some attempts, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to create modern forms of Kabbalah, and to integrate Kabbalistic ideas with modern European ideologies. One of the most interesting attempts at such integration was by Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (1885-1954), a Kabbalist from Poland, who immigrated to Palestine in the 1920's. Ashlag created a new Kabbalistic doctrine, which combined Lurianic Kabbalah with communist and socialist ideas. According to Ashlag, human perfection is the transformation of human egoism to divine-like altruism. This can be achieved only in a communist Kabbalistic community. As we shall see later, some of the most prominent contemporary Kabbalistic movements emerged out of Ashlag's Kabbalistic movement.

Another prominent Rabbi who integrated in his thought Kabbalistic ideas and modern ideology, was Rabbi Isaac Ha-Cohen Kook (1865-1935). Rabbi Kook, who immigrated to Palestine from Latvia in 1904, and eventually became the chief Rabbi of the land of Israel, formed a modern Jewish national-religious ideology, which was influenced by modern European philosophy and by the Kabbalah. Kook became the main ideologist of the Israeli national-religious movement, and later, of the right-wing, settler movement, Gush-Emunim.

Renewed interest in Kabbalah emerged at the time in some modern Jewish circles, which adopted neo-romantic and national ideas. These scholars, the most famous amongst them were Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Gershom Scholem (1897-1982), came from a Jewish enlightened background. Although they did not practice Kabbalah and did not accept its doctrines as sacred and authoritative, they did not reject or disparage Kabbalah. On the contrary, they valued Kabbalah and Hasidism, identified them as forms of Jewish mysticism, and regarded them as vital powers in the history of the Jewish Nation.

Before turning to examine contemporary Kabbalah, I would like to mention that modern forms of Kabbalah were also created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries within non-Jewish, esoteric circles in Europe and the United States. The occult Kabbalah that was created in these circles was based mostly on Christian-Kabbalistic sources. Yet, in contrast to earlier Christian Kabbalists, the occultists who were interested in Kabbalah (such as Eliphas Levi, Papus, Madame Blavatsky, and members of the Golden Dawn), did not regard Kabbalah as carrying a Christological message. Rather they regarded Kabbalah as a universal occult-magical system.

I would like to turn now to the contemporary revival of Kabbalah. Notwithstanding the important

role Kabbalah still played in Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and the attempts to create modern forms of Kabbalah in Europe and the land of Israel in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kabbalah and Hasidism became peripheral in most forms of Jewish culture, especially after World War Two, and the foundation of the State of Israel. The destruction of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, the immigration of Jewish communities from Arab countries, and the dominance of secular socialist ideology in Israel all contributed to the marginalization of Kabbalah and Hasidism. Indeed, until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seemed that Kabbalah was disappearing from the Jewish cultural scene.

Yet, and in quite a dramatic way, renewed interest in Kabbalah and Hasidism emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is still growing, in Israel, in Jewish communities around the world, and in global western culture. The renewal of Kabbalah and Hasidism comes in a variety of forms, and in different sectors. Today, there are hundreds of different Kabbalistic and Hasidic movements, people study different forms of Kabbala, turn to charismatic Kabbalists for advice and healing, and practice a variety of traditional and innovative Kabbalistic rituals. Furthermore, Kabbalistic themes are integrated in high and popular culture, including literature, cinema, pop music and the arts. As there is such a large variety of contemporary forms of Kabbalah and Hasidism. I will mention only a few of them.

Since the 1980's there has been a revival and reconstruction of North-African Kabbalistic saint veneration. Today, there are several contemporary Kabbalists of North African origin, who are perceived as having supernatural powers. Many people, not only of North African decent, turn to these Kabbalists for advice and blessing, and participate in rituals organized by them. Amongst the followers of these Kabbalists are prominent Israeli business tycoons and leading politicians. One of the most prominent contemporary Kabbalists of this type is Baruch Abuhaziera (b. 1941), known as Baba Baruch, the son of the most venerated 20<sup>th</sup> century North-African Jewish Saint, Israel Abuhazeira, the Baba Sali (1889-1984). The Baba Baruch has many admirers, and the grave of his father in the southern development town Netivot, is a location for an annual pilgrimage.

Another famous contemporary Kabbalist of North African descent is Rabbi Yaakov Ifargan (b.1964) who is known as Ha-Rentgen, the x-ray, due to his diagnostic and healing powers. Ha-Rentgen has many followers, who consult with him, and participate in the midnight Kabbalistic ceremonies he conducts near the gravesite of his father (also buried in Netivot).

Other Kabbalists who became prominent in Israeli public at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century emerged from the world of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalistic schools in Jerusalem, who followed the Kabbalistic system and practices of Rabbi Shalom Sharabi. The most prominent Kabbalist of this circle was

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Rabbi Isaac Kaduri. (~1898-2006). Originally from Bagdad, he was already past his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday when his name spread in Israel as a powerful kabbalist. Kaduri, whose expertise was writing amulets, gained considerable influence in Israeli politics, and his amulets were used as part of the Sephardi ultraorthodox party *Shas* election campaigns. Kaduri was more than a hundred years old when he died. His funeral was one of the biggest in Israel, attended by the president and prime minister of the state of Israel.

Another, younger Kabbalist of this school is Rabbi David Basri (b. 1941), who stands at the head of a Kabbalistic Yeshiva Ha-Shalom in Jerusalem. Basri, also of Jewish Iraqi decent, became known in the late 1990's, as an expert in Lurianic Kabbalistic rituals. In 1999, he performed a public ritual, in which he exorcised a dead spirit (Dybuk). Such exorcisms, which have been prevalent in Jewish culture since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, almost completely disappeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before their revival by Basri. A few years ago Basri attempted another exorcism. This time, the possessed youth resided in Brasil, and Basri conducted the exorcism ceremony through Skype.

Apart from the revival of North African Kabbalah, and the revival of Kabbalists of the Shalom Sharabi school, there is a significant revival of neo-Hasidic groups. The most prominent and visible of the contemporary Hasidic movements is the Habad movement, which began, already in the 1950's, to be very active in the United States and Israel, under the leadership of the Habad Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Shneerson, known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe. One of the major aims of the Habad movement was to hasten the coming of the Messiah. Since the 1990's many of the Habad Hasidim identified their aging Rabbi as the Messiah, and even today, after his death, they publicly declare him Messiah and await his return.

Another very active and visible neo-Hasidic movement (actually, movements), are the Breslov Hasidim, who follow the teaching, and believe in the almost divine status, of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Breslov. Breslov Hasidism, which almost disappeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, is very popular today, and attracts many followers. Breslov Hasidim are very visible in the Israeli public arena. They dance and sing in the streets, and graffiti carrying the name of Rabbi Nachman can be seen everywhere in Israel. Thousands of Breslov Hasidim participate in the annual pilgrimage to the grave of Rabbi Nachman in Uman, in the Ukraine.

Other contemporary movements today are based on the teaching of the communist Kabbalist, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag. The largest contemporary neo-Kabbalah movement today, The Kabbalah Center, was founded in the 1960's in the United States, by a follower of Ashlag's Kabbalah, Rabbi Philip Berg. In the 1990's, the Kabbalah Center became an international movement, with branches in Israel, the United States, South America, and Europe. The Kabbalah Center integrates many New

Age motifs into its teaching and in contrast to all the other contemporary Kabbalah movements that I mentioned previously, it caters not only to Jews, but presents Kabbalah as a universal wisdom tradition that is open to anyone who is interested in studying and practicing it. In the 1990's several pop celebrities joined the Kabbalah Center, most famous amongst them Madonna.

Another growing neo-Kabbalah movement, which is also based on the teaching of Rabbi Ashlag, is Bnei Baruch, headed by Michael Laitman. Laitman, who immigrated from Russia to Israel in the 1970's, studied at the Kabbalah Center, and later with the son of Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, Rabbi Baruch Ashlag. In the 1990's Laitman established the Bnei Baruch movement, whose center is in Israel, but which has branches all over the world. It is especially successful in Russian commonwealth countries. Similar to the Kabbalah Center, Bnei Baruch claims that Kabbalah is universal, and has many non-Jews amongst its members.

There are many other groups and individuals who are interested in, or practice various forms of Kabbalah. But I would like to turn now and examine the characteristics of contemporary Kabbalah, and the reasons for the resurgence of Kabbalah from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

First, it is important to notice the great variety of contemporary Kabbalistic and Hasidic groups, and the differences between them. Indeed, this great variety can be seen as one of the characteristics of contemporary Kabbalah. Never before in history has such a large variety of Kabbalistic and Hasidic movements existed. Another characteristic is the eclecticism, syncretism, and hybridity of contemporary Kabbalah. Although many of the groups originated in a specific school of Kabbalah, most contemporary Kabbalistic movements integrate themes and practices from other Kabbalistic traditions, as well as from other traditions and cultures, including contemporary pop culture. The hybridity of contemporary Kabbalah is also reflected in the social composition of most movements, which include amongst their members people from a variety of ethnic, religious, national and social backgrounds

Contemporary Kabbalah and Hasidism adopt many themes and practices from previous forms of Kabbalah. They teach about the sefirot, venerate the Zohar, and regard Lurianic Kabbalah as sacred and authoritative. Yet, the emphasis in contemporary Kabbalah is very different to that of earlier forms of Kabbalah. Theosophical and theurgical elements exist in contemporary Kabbalah, but they are downplayed in most movements. Instead, most contemporary Kabbalistic movements emphasize the psychological elements in Kabbalah and promote Kabbalah as contributing to individual spiritual well-being. Also, although many contemporary Kabbalists today observe Jewish religious law, many neo-Kabbalistic movements do not present Kabbalah as essentially connected to Jewish law, and as I have mentioned, some of them are open to non-Jews.

Another interesting feature of contemporary Kabbalah is its emphasis on the more practical aspects of Kabbalah. Kabbalists today are less interested in the “grand narratives” of the Kabbalah, in its myths and elaborated theology. Instead of studying, interpreting and developing new theories, Kabbalah followers today are interested in the healing power of Kabbalah, in the charismatic powers of Kabbalistic saints, in meditation techniques, and in using Kabbalah for personal well-being and spiritual growth.

Another interesting characteristic of contemporary Kabbalah – possibly the most striking in comparison with earlier Kabbalah – is its exoteric, rather than esoteric nature. Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalah was usually regarded as esoteric, highly secretive knowledge whose study was limited mostly to Jewish males with comprehensive Jewish education. Today, almost all Kabbalistic movements, including the ultra-orthodox ones, present Kabbalah as open knowledge, approve of the dissemination of Kabbalah to the larger public, and allow it to be taught to non-observant Jews, to women, and to gentiles.

Another characteristic of contemporary Kabbala is its commodification. Although Kabbala, like any other cultural system, always had its economic and commercial aspects, today the commercial side of Kabbalah is much more visible. Kabbalah today is integrated into the capitalistic system and it is produced, advertised and sold in similar ways to other material and cultural products.

Finally, I would like to observe the New Age character of many of the contemporary Kabbalistic and Hasidic groups. Many of the groups I have mentioned adopt and integrate New Age themes and practices, such as the belief in the dawning of the new age, belief in self spirituality, meditation techniques, alternative medicine, Yoga and martial arts. Furthermore many of the characteristics of contemporary Kabbalah that I have enumerated above also characterize New Age culture. Eclecticism and syncretism, emphasis on healing and spiritual practices (and less on doctrines and beliefs), the psychologization of religious traditions, and the co-modification of spirituality, characterize New Age culture, as they do contemporary Kabbalah. From this perspective, I believe that the emergence of the new age of Kabbalah indeed should be understood in the context of the emergence of New Age culture.

Before concluding, I would like to address the question of the social, historical, and cultural factors and contexts which enabled the reemergence of Kabbalah in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, and shaped its new formations. As I said, contemporary Kabbalah emerged in the context, and more or less at the same period, in which New Age culture emerged in the western world and became a global phenomenon. I would like to suggest that the emergence of new forms of Kabbalah, as well as of New Age Movements, should be understood within the framework of postmodern culture. Both the emergence

of New Kabbalah, as well as other New Age phenomena (such as for instance western Yoga, western forms of Buddhism, or Neo-Sufism), can be seen as related to the weakening of the grand narratives of western modernity, and the interest in alternative spiritual cultures, which were marginalized or ignored by the dominant ideologies of western modernity. In the Israeli case, interest in Kabbalah, which was marginalized and disparaged by modern western Jewish movements, emerged due to the decline of the hegemony of the Zionist and secular-socialist ideology in the 1970's and the growing cultural power of marginalized sectors in Israeli society.

Furthermore, I would like to suggest that many of the characteristics of contemporary Kabbalah can be seen as expressions of postmodern cultural logic. Thus, for instance, the hybrid and eclectic nature of contemporary Kabbalah can be seen as an expression of the hybrid and eclectic nature of postmodernity, whose primary aesthetics forms are collage, montage, and pastiche. Similarly, the practical emphasis of today's Kabbalah is related to the decline of interest in theoretical knowledge in contemporary societies, and the importance given today in many areas (including academia) to practical knowledge and efficiency. The psychological emphasis of contemporary Kabbalah (as well as of other New Age movements) is part of the postmodern shift from the collective norms and values of the 1950's and 1960's, towards a much more competitive individualism, as the central value in an entrepreneurial culture. The exoteric nature of today's Kabbalah, its perception as open knowledge and the simple ways in which it is usually presented (which are perceived as superficiality by its critics), are typical of other forms of postmodern culture which are fascinated by surfaces (and screens) and are much less interested in the hidden depths that lie behind them. Finally, the commodification of Kabbalah is part of the postmodern expansion of the logic of late capitalism to cultural, and spiritual, fields.

In conclusion, postmodern culture enabled and enhanced the revival of interest in Kabbalah and Hasidism. Kabbalistic and Hasidic movements, themes, and practices (which were marginalized and rejected in modern Jewish culture) gained renewed cultural value from the late 20th century. The new forms of contemporary Kabbalah are based on earlier traditions and practices, yet they differ significantly from earlier forms, and carry distinct New Age and postmodern characteristics.

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**For further reading:**

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