

Defining the Qabalah

So what is the [Qabalah](#), and why is it important? Why bother to learn it, and what benefit will you gain from studying it? These are very serious questions, and if I am going to engage your mind and imagination, they had better be answered in the first few pages or I will lose your interest altogether. I won't stultify you with complex definitions, long and drawn-out history lessons, or attempts to regale you with all sorts of mystic mumble jumble. The Qabalah is actually quite simple and succinct—believe it or not! It has some very specific uses that are revolutionary and remarkable, allowing the average [occultist](#) to comprehend and master all sorts of diverse spiritual ideas, systems, and theological aspects. In fact, it can organize and give meaning to nearly everything that is concerned with mysticism, occultism, religion, and magic. If you think that sounds like quite a tall order to fill, you are correct, but the Qabalah does that and much more.

Qabalah comes from the Hebrew verb root *QBL*, which means "to receive or accept instruction, to undertake." What that means is that the Qabalah is a kind of mystical knowledge that is directly received or apprehended from the source, which is the Godhead. Ironically, the word *qabalah* in Modern Hebrew is a very common term because it is used to denote a kind of business receipt or transaction (something received, or giving information). Yet to really understand what the word means, we have to penetrate deeper into its more esoteric meaning. So the esoteric definition of the word Qabalah indicates a kind of oral tradition or knowledge, passed from master to student.

Often, arcane books on the subject divide the Qabalah into the mystical or spiritual Qabalah, which is a form of occult speculation, and the practical Qabalah, which is a form of magic or occultism. Since the very beginning of its inception, the Qabalah served the purposes and functions of occult speculation, practical magical applications, and ecstatic spiritual practices.

The Qabalah has the following basic functions and uses in modern occultism. Keep in mind that these are just the basic functions, so there are likely many more, and with a lot more detail, too.

Qabalah is a model of the various spirit worlds and how they are symbolically structured.

This modeling is accomplished through a diagram that is called the [Tree of Life](#). It also helps to have a really good imagination and to understand that the spirit world is not quite in the same place as the material world that we interact with on a daily basis.

Qabalah is a meta-system and a system of meta-knowledge. It assists in the organization of other religious, spiritual, and occult systems, and it reveals the relationships between those different systems. Meta-knowledge is a form of abstracted knowledge that gives meaning and definition to other attributes of knowledge; in other words, it is a kind of knowledge about knowledge.

What kind of knowledge, you might ask? The knowledge of reality, of the self and the world in which it exists—this is called *ontology* (the study of reality). This meta-system and meta-knowledge are represented by what is known as "tables of [correspondences](#)," where the attributes of the Qabalah are compared to the attributes of every conceivable category in any spiritual, occultic, or religious system. That declaration might seem to be a bit vague or grandiose, but as we proceed together in filling out the details about what the Qabalah is, it will make a lot of sense.

Qabalah is a system of cosmology and cosmogony.

Cosmology is the evolution, structure, and constituent parts of the universe. The cosmology of the Qabalah is based on a more spiritual perspective of the universe, so it concerns itself with the phenomena of Spirit and its domain, and how it interacts with the worlds of mind and matter.

Cosmogony is the theory or model about the origin of the universe or how it was created. Keep in mind that the Qabalah promotes the "mind before matter" model with regard to cosmogony, as opposed to the "matter before mind" model that science promotes. What this means is that, like the biblical and other creation myths, consciousness existed as a unified field before the material universe unfolded, and that it had a direct part to play in that unfolding. We would call this unified field of consciousness that existed before any material thing the *Universal Mind* or the *Monad* (first being, or the One) that engaged itself with the design, fashioning, and ensouling of the spiritual and material universes.

Both the occult/religious model (mind before matter) and the scientific model (matter before mind) are correct. They just represent two different perspectives. The occult model is a meta-physical system that promotes the idea that matter is imbued with consciousness and, as a result, sentience and spirit are innate to physical matter. The occult model does not attempt to determine how the material universe was actually formed, since science has done a good job explaining the origin of the universe and everything in it. Problems arise when the mythic concept of creation in the occult model is confused with the actual evolution and derivation of the material universe. As occultists, we need to have a foot in both the scientific and the religious camps, and realize that our perspective changes the way things are defined but not determined. We also need to understand that something that is a myth is neither false nor based on ignorance. Myths are powerful allegorical symbols that explain our reality in a deeper and more spiritual manner.

These are very important points, since they act as the foundation for understanding and making sense out of occult beliefs and practices, and the way that spiritual and [paranormal](#) phenomena appear to function in the material world. What is defined by this perspective is a living, knowing universe, endowed with a meaningful destiny and guided by a unified super intelligence. That stands in stark contrast to the random, soul-less, meaningless, materialized, and autonomous universe that science promotes.

Qabalah is a practical methodology that makes itself very useful for the practice of magic and what is called "theurgistic ascension."

hat might sound like a complex term simply represents a system of practical magic that allows the practitioner to ascend through the planes of the spirit world and obtain union with the One. One thing you should keep in mind is that the Qabalah has many important practical applications. It isn't just a lot of philosophy or mystical speculation.

Magicians use the Qabalah to fashion [sigils](#), [talismans](#), word formulas, acronyms, and ciphers, and to determine the intrinsic [numerological](#) relationship between words and phrases. It is also an occult map of the Inner Planes and a system of correspondences. A practical Qabalist is often, but not always, a practitioner of ritual or [ceremonial magic](#) who uses meditation, contemplation, and theurgy to ultimately achieve full and total enlightenment, or at-one-ment, with the Godhead. This is the purpose of the Qabalah, and it is also the purpose of most forms of higher magic as well.

To recap the uses of the Qabalah, we can say that it has the following five functional applications:

- Map or model of the Spirit world
- Meta-system and meta-knowledge system
- Cosmology and cosmogony
- Practical system of correspondences, formulas, acronyms, ciphers, sigils, and numerology
- System of magic, meditation, and contemplation