

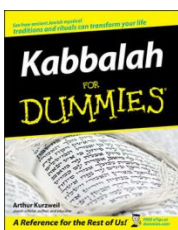


Kabbalah For Dummies Cheat Sheet

By: [Arthur Kurzweil](#) Updated: 03-02-2022 From The Book: [Kabbalah For Dummies](#)



Kabbalah For Dummies



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Understanding Kabbalah starts with studying the fundamental essences, or *sefirot*, and the core written works central to Kabbalah traditionalists. Discover some common blessings and prayers you can impart daily and the major holy days in Kabbalah.

The sefirot: Ten fundamental essences of Kabbalah

A fundamental notion in Kabbalah is the belief that the world is created and sustained by ten channels (*sefirot*) of divine plenty. The sefirot are complex, each with many different meanings and gradation. Two of them, Keter and Da'at, are interchangeable depending on whether the sefirot are seen from God's viewpoint or from the human perspective.

The lower seven sefirot directly act on the world (while those sefirot above them are abstract aspects of consciousness) and they each have a biblical personality associated with them. These associations work in two ways: One can understand more about the biblical figures through the sefirot connected with them, and one can learn more about the nature of each sefirah when seeing its corresponding biblical figure.

Keter (crown): Keter is divine will and the source of all delight and pleasure. Keter contains all the powers that activate the soul.

Chochmah (wisdom): Chochmah is intuitive grasp and intuitive knowledge. It's also that which distinguishes and creates.

Binah (understanding): Binah is the analytical and synthetic power of the mind. It's the source of logical analysis.

Da'at (knowledge): Da'at is the accumulation of that which is known. It's the abstract ascertaining of facts and the crystallization of awareness in terms of conclusions.

Chesed (loving kindness): Chesed is the irrepressible impulse to expand. It's the source of love, the inclination toward things, and that which gives of itself. The biblical personality associated with Chesed is Abraham.

Gevurah (strength): Gevurah is restraint and concentration. It's the inward withdrawal of forces and the energy source of hate, fear, terror, justice, restraint,

and control. The biblical personality associated with Gevurah is Isaac.

Tiferet (beauty): Tiferet is harmony, truth, compassion, and beauty. It's the balance of the powers of attraction and repulsion. The biblical personality associated with Tiferet is Jacob.

Netzach (victory): Netzach is the source of conquest and the capacity for overcoming. It's the urge to get things done. The biblical personality associated with Netzach is Moses.

Hod (splendor): Hod is persistence or holding on. It's the power to repudiate obstacles and to persevere; it's also the source of humility. The biblical personality associated with Hod is Aaron.

Yesod (foundation): Yesod is the vehicle or the carrier from one thing or condition to another. It's the power of connection and the capacity or will to build bridges, to make connections, and to relate to others. The biblical personality associated with Yesod is Joseph.

Malkhut (kingdom): Malkhut is sovereignty, rule, and the ultimate receptacle. It's the realization of potential and the Divine Presence. The biblical personality associated with Malkhut is David.

The classic works of Kabbalah

If you're interested in learning about Kabbalah, the collection of books listed here alphabetically, is considered a body of the most important written books for traditional Kabbalists throughout history:

The Bahir: Composed of 60 paragraphs; a mystical commentary on verses from the book of Genesis; considered to be one of the major early works of Kabbalah

The Midrash: Compilations of writings created during the centuries following the compiling of the Talmud that serve to explicate the biblical text. The two main divisions are *Midrash Halacha* (legal explorations) and *Midrash Aggadah* (folklore).

The Mishnah: Compilation of the oral traditions of Judaism codified by Rabbi Judah the Prince around 200 CE

Sefer Yetzirah: One of the earliest Kabbalistic books; deals with the fundamentals of Kabbalah, particularly the ten sefirot

The Shulkhan Aruch: Literally "the prepared table;" the authoritative code of Jewish Law compiled by the great Kabbalist, Rabbi Joseph Karo, in the 16th century

The Talmud: Composed of the Mishnah, the Gemara (Rabbinic commentaries on the Mishnah, containing legal discussions, legends, history, technical information, and more) and major commentaries on both; a multivolume work first edited around 550 CE and added to over the centuries

Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures of Judaism, comprised of 24 books, beginning with the Five Books of Moses, continuing with the books of the Prophets (such as Isaiah and Jeremiah), and concluding with the books of Writings (such as Psalms,

Proverbs, and Song of Songs)

The Torah: The Five Books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)

The Zohar: Literally “splendor;” a group of books on many mystical subjects. Often considered the most important Kabbalistic work, it is traditionally attributed to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a 2nd-century Jewish sage

Common daily blessings and prayers of Kabbalah

When practicing Kabbalah, every moment of the day is a chance to impart a blessing. These common blessings are ways of saying thanks all day long:

Upon waking up in the morning: “I am grateful to you living and eternal God, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion. Abundant is your faithfulness.”

Before studying holy texts: “Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with the holy commandments and has commanded us to engross ourselves in the words of Torah.”

Prayer said twice a day, in the morning and at night: “Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one.”

Prayer to bless your children with every Friday night: “May God bless you and safeguard you. May God illuminate his countenance for you and be gracious to you. May God turn his countenance to you and give you peace.”

Blessing to be said upon hearing bad news: “Blessed is the true judge.”

Blessing to say at any time in praise of God: “Baruch HaShem” (*bah-rukhh ha-shem*; Blessed is God)

Major holy days of Kabbalah

In Kabbalah, holy days are especially focused spiritual experiences with the continual awareness that God is the center of everything. The major Kabbalah holy days, which are the same holy days on the Jewish calendar, are observed beginning at sundown and ending at sundown.

Every week:

Shabbat. Shabbat is the weekly day of rest and the holiest day on the calendar of the Kabbalist. It’s observed one day a week from Friday beginning just before sundown and through Saturday beyond sundown. (Check a sunset chart for your community to know when Shabbat begins on any given Friday).

Every month:

Rosh Chodesh. Literally, the “head of the month,” Rosh Chodesh is the first day of any new month, and is marked by special prayers. In ancient times, Rosh Chodesh was a significant festival day when each new month would be

established based on the arrival of the new moon.

Fall holy days:

Rosh Hashanah (the new year): Rosh Hashanah begins an intense ten-day period of prayer and introspection known to Kabbalists as the *Days of Awe*. This holiday is observed in the early fall, and is celebrated on the first and second days of the Hebrew month of Tishre.

Yom Kippur (the day of atonement): Yom Kippur is a day of praying, fasting, and exalted celebration that's observed ten days after Rosh Hashanah. It marks the end of the Days of Awe.

Succot (booths): Succot, which is called the *Season of Our Joy*, is an eight-day holiday celebrating the gifts received from God. During this holiday, as its name implies, Kabbalists eat, study, receive guests and sometimes even sleep in temporary huts or booths, recalling the temporary housing used by the Children of Israel in the wilderness. It begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Tishre, which is also the fifth day after Yom Kippur.

Shemini Atzeret (the eighth day of assembly): This special festive holy day marks the end of the high holy day period that begins in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah. Shemini Atzeret immediately follows the last day of Succot.

Simchat Torah (rejoicing in the Torah): A joyful holiday marking the end of the yearly cycle of reading the Torah publicly each Shabbat and the beginning of a new cycle. It's held on the eighth day after the first day of Succot.

Winter holy days:

Chanukah (the festival of lights): Chanukah celebrates the dedication of one's life to God and the recognition of God's miracles. It's an eight-day holiday that's marked by the lighting of candles and meditation on the light of the flames. Chanukah begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev.

Purim (lottery): Purim celebrates the miraculous elements within every moment of every day and focuses on the awareness of God's hidden hand in all of history. It's marked by the public reading of the biblical Book of Esther on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar, in the late winter.

Spring holy days:

Pesach (Passover): Pesach, known as the *Festival of Freedom*, is a commemoration and celebration of the Children of Israel's exodus from ancient Egypt, and it's a time for spiritual preparation for receiving the Torah. Pesach is an eight-day holiday beginning on the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Nissan. (In Israel, Pesach lasts only seven days.)

The Counting of the Omer: Kabbalists count each of the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot in recollection of the counting of a barley offering when the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem. Kabbalists use the 49 days, which are seven weeks of seven days each, to meditate on the meaning of each of the ten sefirot.

Lag B'Omer: Tradition records that a plague halted on the thirty-third day of the Counting of the Omer, transforming the day into a celebration. Also, the author of the Zohar, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, died on this day, so his greatness is recalled on Lag B'Omer each year.

Shavuot (the festival of weeks): Shavuot commemorates God giving the Torah at Mount Sinai. Kabbalists observe this holiday by staying awake all night and studying holy texts. Shavuot falls 50 days from the first day of Pesach.

Summer holy days:

Tisha b'Av (the ninth of the month of Av): Tisha b'Av is a day of mourning and fasting in remembrance of the calamities of Jewish history, including the destruction on two occasions of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Tisha b'Av is usually observed in August.

About This Article

This article is from the book: [Kabbalah For Dummies](#)

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