

# Kabbalah In English

## A Guide to English Language Resources for the Student of Traditional Rabbinic Kabbalah

This listing is not meant to be complete, or even thorough. Rather, it is meant to make the reader aware of what is available in English out of the vast group of works written in Hebrew (and sometimes Aramaic, Yiddish, or Ladino) on Kabbalistic subjects. Kabbalah is for purposes of this guide the traditional Orthodox Kabbalah of Jewish tradition; Christian and modern Gentile developments of that tradition are irrelevant here. Nor is it meant to be a formal bibliography, although I hope I include enough information for anyone who wishes to track down a copy on their own.

Certain publishers are heavily represented here, and indeed merely sending away for their catalogues will yield results for the enquirer. Among the most important:

- *Jewish Publication Society*
- *Soncino Press*
- [Paulist Press](#), notably the series called "Classics of Western Spirituality"
- *Kehot Publication Society*, which specializes in the works of Chabad (Lubavitcher) Chasidism.
- [Breslov Research Institute](#), which specializes in the works of and works inspired by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (Bratslav)
- [Yale University Press](#), especially its "Judaica" series
- *Schocken Books*

One further side note: Rabbinical writers are often referred to by something other than their actual name. Usually either an acronym based on the initials of the actual name, most often prefaced by "R" for Rabbi (as in Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak), or else by the title of their most important work (thus the first Lubavitcher Rabbi is sometimes referred to as the Tanya, or more respectfully, the Baal haTanya, and Yosef Karo is often called Bet Yosef, which is actually his magnum opus on Jewish law). The acronym formula is most widespread in medieval times, the title formula in more recent centuries, although examples of both are found throughout the literature. A further twist is made by the fact that authors often included a reference to their own name in their titles, as in the Karo example: Bet Yosef means House of Joseph.

The fundamental work of Kabbalah is the Bible, and more specifically the Pentateuch (Torah). The best English translation of the Bible is that of the Jewish Publication Society, published in one volume editions as "Tanakh". It is also desirable to have an edition of the Bible in which Hebrew is printed with English, due to the subtleties of Kabbalistic interpretation. The best bilingual text is probably that of Koren Publishers (Jerusalem) for two reasons: the Hebrew text is published in a font almost calligraphic in

appearance, and is formatted to imitate traditional Hebrew paragraphing and page formats; and the various names of persons and places are transliterated directly from the Hebrew, instead of merely using the traditional Greek derived forms of most other versions. Both of these versions, as well as all other Jewish Bibles, adhere to the Masoretic text, which has considerable differences not only in verbal phrasing but also chapter division and order of the Biblical books from the usual Christian versions.

But the Scripture alone can not show the meanings within. Rabbinic hermeneutics could find a wealth of meaning in the subtlest details of the text, a characteristic that Kabbalistic writing took over. To be able to deal with Kabbalistic texts, and at least be conversant with the literary forms they take, and the references they make to material which their authors assumed "everyone" would know, the student should at a minimum be at least marginally familiar with the following items.

The Talmud is actually two works in one, one of which exists in two recensions. The core work is the Mishnah, a codification of Jewish Law from the second century CE, together with transcriptions of debates, discussions, and teachings of various sages in the next two to three centuries, organized around the Mishnah, called the Gemara. The Talmud thus shares the same structure of the Mishnah--a tractate by tractate enunciation of Jewish law; but, being in form the record of oral teaching, the Gemara wanders far and wide. There are two versions of the Gemara, based on the work of the Academies of Babylonia (Babylonian Talmud/Talmud Bavli) and Palestine (called the Palestinian Talmud or Talmud of the Land of Israel; in Hebrew the title is Talmud Yerushalmi, or Jerusalem Talmud). Not every tractate of the Mishnah accumulated a Gemara, and some tractates have Gemara in one recension but not the other. The Paulist Press has published a volume of selections from the Babylonian Talmud; and other anthologies of varying quality have been published from time to time. The Jewish Publication Society published one tractate, Taanit, in English. The Mishnah is available on its own; the most recent translation is that of Jacob Neusner, published by Yale. Neusner is also the moving force behind a volume by volume translation of the Talmud Yerushalmi (his title is Talmud of the Land of Israel), which is apparently still in the early stages. One section of the Mishnah, Tractate Avot, is often published separately under the title Pirke Avot, Chapters of the "Fathers", or Ethics of the Fathers, and is printed as part of the regular prayerbook: this is the most accessible portion, consisting of wisdom sayings and ethical admonitions of the Mishnaic sages. Adin Steinsaltz is in the course of publishing a volume by volume translation of the Talmud Bavli, but until that is finished, and probably even afterwards, the standard complete translation of the Bavli is that of Soncino Press, originally done in the 1930s, and published in a variety of formats. The best format, and the one most easily available now, contains the translation on facing pages to the original text, which is printed in the standard format established at Vilna in the 19th century, and thus is essentially an edition of the Talmud with the main text translated on facing pages. The Hebrew contains various commentaries normally printed with the Talmud, but these are not translated. But what is translated is probably more than enough for our purposes. If you actually want to buy this item, budget about \$500 and six feet of shelf space.

The Midrash, stemming from the same period as the Talmud, but more concerned with supplying context and elaboration of the Biblical text. Much legendary material is archived here. Midrashim exist on the Torah, the books of Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Song of Songs (together referred to as the five Megillot), and Psalms. Usually all but the last are grouped together as Midrash Rabbah, and an multivolume translation from the Soncino Press is available. Midrash Tehillim (Psalms) has been published in English by Yale University Press. The Pesikta d'Rav Kahana and the Mekhilta are two other compilations of Midrash worth studying, both published by the Jewish Publication Society.

The Siddur, or Prayerbook, which is the most important volume in daily use. There are three main forms: Sabbath and Festival; Daily (meaning Weekday and often includes Sabbath/Festival); High Holy Days, for Rosh Hashanah/ Yom Kippur, known as the Machzor. Different movements in Judaism publish different versions, with more or less traditional prayers, etc. Many are printed for congregational use. For the purposes of Kabbalah students, an Orthodox Siddur is imperative. My personal suggestion is the Artscroll Siddur, published by the Artscroll Press, part of a series published by a heavily Orthodox publisher for the benefit of Jews not heavily immersed in traditional learning. As well as clear printing (sometimes lacking in Siddurim), it contains elementary explanations and comments that bring out the Orthodox Jewish teaching associated with each prayer. It is available in several formats, although I have concerns over the quality of the binding in this series. A visit to a Jewish bookstore, to browse through the multiple versions of the Siddur available, may be the best way to decide what edition of the Siddur will be most helpful to your personal studies. One should also mention the Siddur published by the Kehot Publication Society, a reprint of the Siddur published by the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, one of the great Chasidic rabbis.

Ancillary to this is Rashi and Rambam. Rashi is Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak, author of the most important, because most widespread, commentary on the Bible and the Talmud; even the most uneducated of Jews in premodern times knew what Rashi said about a passage in the Bible, and his glosses are to be found on almost every page of the Talmud. But in English, the student is confined to his commentary on the Pentateuch, in the translation of Silberman, distributed by Feldheim in a five volume set which contains the Torah in Hebrew, the Aramaic Targum (paraphrase) of Onkelos--the standard Aramaic translation of the Torah--and an English translation, with Rashi in English at the bottom. His commentary generally distills the Talmudic teaching, and draws on the Midrash heavily; and in turn lies at the foundation of many later commentators.

Rambam is Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (another acronym), usually called in English by his Greek name, Maimonides. He wrote the first definitive compilation of Jewish law since Talmudic times, the Mishneh Torah, but for the student of Kabbalah it is the Guide for the Perplexed, Moreh Nebuchim, which is of most important. The system of philosophical mysticism which he explains there, and his comments on opposing systems, will give a good idea of the milieu in which Kabbalah came to prominence, and show a mystical alternative to Kabbalah which was not taken up by later generations directly, but did have enormous influence on later Kabbalists. It is available in two

English versions, one published by Dover in one volume, and the other published in two by the University of Chicago. In the same vein, but less mystical in orientation, is the work of Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, available in English from Yale's Judaica Series. Another well known work, more ethical than philosophical, is "Duties of the Heart" by Bachya ibn Pahuda, available in English from Feldheim; and to round out the set, the *Kuzari* of Yehuda haLevi, a philosophical defense of Judaism, available in English from Schocken.

The student may also wish to attain at least minimal knowledge of Hebrew. Almost any textbook aimed at teaching Hebrew will probably suffice-- not merely Biblical Hebrew, but Modern Hebrew as well. The volume I have on my shelf is called "Ha-Yesod: Fundamentals of Hebrew", by Luba Uveeler and Norman Bronznick, and is published by Feldheim. Since Yesod (which means "Foundation") is the name applied to one of the Sefirot, a volume bearing that title would be apropos, if nothing else, for a student of Kabbalah. However, there are probably quite a few alternatives, and one should try to pick what will be best for oneself.

Another valuable addition will be a Hebrew-English dictionary. The one I use is apparently out-of-print, so I will not make any specific suggestions, other than that obviously, the more comprehensive, the better, and that Modern Hebrew has as much bearing here as Biblical Hebrew.

Having acquired, in at least minimal form, the traditional "bellyfull of Talmud", the student can now turn to works that are actually Kabbalistic.

The first core work is the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The only edition to be considered is that of Aryeh Kaplan, published by Weiser. Besides containing the Hebrew text, and separate translations of all the main recensions of this work, it contains Kaplan's comments and explanations, in which Kaplan, speaking as a traditional Kabbalist, explains the *Sefer Yetzirah* in terms of what is now traditional Kabbalistic doctrine: and in doing so manages to explain the traditional doctrine of Kabbalah, as well as give details of esoteric practice not usually found in printed form.

For a more academic treatment of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, I would suggest a work by David Blumenthal, called *Understanding Jewish Mysticism*. Besides the *Sefer Yetzirah* and Blumenthal's own comments, the volume contains a long section of the *Heikhalot Rabbati*, a key text of the Merkavah school which dominated Jewish mysticism in the early centuries CE, and passages from the *Zohar*, again with Blumenthal's comments. For the Merkavah text alone, the tome is worth having, although it is probably out of print by now, having been published by Ktav in 1978. Another version of the *Yetzirah* was published by Leonard Glotzer, closer in treatment to Blumenthal than to Kaplan. It is published by Aronson, under the title "The Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism: The Book of Formation and its Commentaries".

The other core work is the *Zohar*. The fullest translation was published by Soncino, but it is incomplete, the editors leaving out many of the ancillary texts which are included in

complete Hebrew Aramaic editions. Some of these ancillary texts were published by McGregor Mathers in "The Kabbalah Unveiled", and to my knowledge no other translation into English exists; so various portions of the Zoharic corpus remain unavailable in English. Anthologies of Zoharic passages have been published, especially by Scholem under the title "the Zohar", and by Daniel Matt, under the same rubric. The latter is part of the Paulist Press series, and treats the Zohar as poetic prose. Even if other translations are selected, I would recommend purchasing this volume as a supplement. Isaiah Tishby published an extensive (and expensive) selection of Zoharic texts, running to three volumes, with introductory essays and commentaries, under the title "The Wisdom of the Zohar", published by the Littman Library. Books in Print shows that what may be two translations of portions of the Zohar, but the portions translated and the quality remain unknown to me. The Paulist Press has also gathered an anthology based on preZoharic texts in a volume called "The Early Kabbalah"--representing works of the early Kabbalistic circles. The most important of these early texts, the Bahir, is available in a complete translation by Kaplan, from Weiser. Again Kaplan extensively comments on the text in light of later Kabbalistic teaching. Another work, dating close in time to the publication of the Zohar, is the Shaare Orah, or Gates of Light, of Joseph Gikatilla; its Latin translation (Portae Lucis) was influential in Renaissance times, and has recently been translated into English by Avi Weinstein, published by HarperCollins.

Most of the work of the next two or three centuries is not available in English to the best of my knowledge, except as excerpts in anthologies. We therefore skip ahead to the sixteenth century CE, and the writings of Moses Cordevero, called Ramak. His major work, Pardes Rimmonim, Garden of Pomegranates, is not available in English: it is a thorough explanation of Kabbalah on a philosophical basis. His most influential work is also one of the shortest: Tomer Devorah, or Palm Tree of Deborah. It is a work on ethics treated on the basis of Kabbalist theosophy. A translation by Louis Jacobs may or may not be in print, and the work is one of the components of an anthology called "Anthology of Jewish Mysticism," edited by Raphael Ben Zion, published by Judaica Press. The English edition most likely to be available, however, is a translation by Moshe (Moses) Miller, published by Targum Press, distributed by Feldheim, containing the text in both Hebrew and English, and an introduction and notes in English clarifying the Kabbalistic references. Another work, Or Ne'erav, is available in English, but it is one of those many works I have never been able to examine directly.

Cordevero was the precursor and first leading light of the "Safed" Kabbalists, of whom the most important member was Isaac Luria, the Ari, and the second most important member was Yosef Karo (Joseph Caro), author of the the most authoritative code of Jewish Law ever, the Shulchan Aruch, which is based on an even more authoritative compilation, the Bet Yosef, and, more relevant to our purpose, of a spiritual diary detailing his experiences with a maggid, or "spirit guide", which took on the person a of the Mishnah (that is, the spirit personifying the Mishnah), giving him detailed personal advice and teachings for many years. The diary is titled Maggid Mesharim, and to the best of my knowledge no English version exists. There is however a biography which draws on it, by R. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic*.

Luria's Kabbalistic writings are available in English; but they are actually only a few poetic pieces for the Sabbath. Luria was perhaps the most influential Kabbalist of all time, but his teaching was entirely oral. The system as we know it today was put into published form by his chief disciple, Chaim Vital, but most of his work is, again to the best of my knowledge, unavailable in English.

The best volume to use in studying the Safed school is probably another volume of the Paulist Press series, *Safed Spirituality*. This includes a number of different items: the "Rules of Mystical Piety" enunciated by various members of the Safed group--i.e., admonitions for living and details of their own practices in prayer, charity, halachic observance, etc.--and the aforementioned writings of Luria, as well as another well known liturgical poem, *Lechah Dodi*, now enshrined in the standard Friday night prayers, authored by one of the Safed mystics. The second half of the book is the "Reshit Chochmah", by Elijah de Vidas, or rather an abridgement of the same. This work is a moral guide based on Kabbalah written for the general public, and meant to show the ordinary Jew how he could live in harmony with the Lurianic teachings.

The next major figure available in English comes from the 18th century CE, Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (RaMChaL). Luzzatto was an extraordinarily talented mystic and philosopher, and the only major Kabbalist to be a bachelor. Part of the controversy surrounding him arose from the simple fact that he was much younger than usual. His three major works are published by Feldheim, under the English titles "Path of the Just", "Knowing Heart", and "The Way of God", in translations by Shagra Silverstein and Aryeh Kaplan. The first is an ethical treatise, another work that draws on Kabbalah but does not explicitly explain its teachings. The second and third volumes combine philosophy and Kabbalah, especially the third, which, making its way along a formal outline, attempts to explain everything about life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the universe in general from the standpoint of Kabbalah.

Almost immediately after Luzzatto comes the Chasidic movement. Its founder, the Baal Shem Tov (Besht), Israel ben Eliezer, like Luria left little in written form, aside from some letters, and his life when written down was already material for hagiography, the *Shivei haBesht*, "In Praise of the Besht", available in English but more interesting as folklore than Kabbalah. The next generation wrote much more, but little is available in English: the most significant is an anthology of excerpts by Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl [yes, that Chernobyl], published by Paulist Press. It is in the third generation of Chasidic teaching that we hit the two great motherlodes, Breslov and Lubavitch.

Nachmun of Breslov (Bratslav is the more frequent English version, but we will follow the version usually adopted by his followers), the Breslover (Bratslaver) Rebbe, was the greatgrandson of the Besht. He taught, like most Chasidic rabbis, through sermons and less formal talks, transcribed later by his followers as "Likutei Moharan" (the last word being derived from his acronym). Selections have been published in a Hebrew English edition published by the Breslov Research Institute. Other selections and paraphrases of these talks have been anthologized in English by Aryeh Kaplan as "Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom"; there are companion volumes with similar titles and background, all of them

published by Breslov Research Institute. There is also an edition of the Passover Haggadah published by the same organization, entitled "The Breslov Haggadah", containing besides the standard Haggadah text, commentary and appendices drawing on Kabbalistic teaching and Midrash, to give a Chasidic explanation of the Passover story.

The great work of Rabbi Nachman are his "Tales" or "Stories" (Sippurei Ma'assioth). In form they are fairy tales or short fictions, and can be read simply on that level. But in actuality they are allegories packed with Kabbalistic teaching. There are thirteen major tales, of which two were purposely left unfinished, since their conclusion, if fully told, would depict the Messianic redemption. There are also various parables and little stories, not so heavy with Kabbalistic detail, and usually devoted to bringing out a moral point. An edition of the major tales was published by Paulist Press as "The Tales", but the best version to have is "Rabbi Nachman's Stories", again translated by Aryeh Kaplan, and published by the Breslov Research Institute. This includes the major tales, four "Additional Stories", and eleven "Parables", and is thus probably the most complete version available in English. But its real value lies in Kaplan's commentary to the stories, which bring out much of the Kabbalistic details hidden the fairytale form.

The other great Chasidic tradition accessible in English is that of Chabad or Lubavitch, the school founded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, and headed by his descendants until the recent death of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe. The fundamental work here is Likkutei Amarim, better known as Tanya. This is published by Kehot Publication Society in a standard Hebrew/English edition, available in several formats, from large libraryshelf size to pocket size (if you have a roomy pocket). The Tanya is actually composed of five sections: the Tanya proper (the name derives from the opening word), also called Sefer Ben-oni (Book of Souls in an Intermediate State would be an English rendition of the meaning--intermediate between saint and sinner); Shaar Ha Yichud ve-ha-Emunah (Gate of Unity and Faith); Iggeret ha-Teshuvah (Letters on Repentance); Iggeret haKodesh (Holy Letters); and Kuntres Acharon (Latest Discourse). Each of the five sections can be read independently, and the second portion has in fact been translated on its own in the same "Anthology of Jewish Mysticism" mentioned in connection with Tomer Devorah. Part One is a long essay on how a person may, indeed must, raise himself to the level of sanctity called tzaddikut (note that in this work, the sinner is really what most men would call a saint--but the Rebbe presumes his audience already lives on such a level). Part Two is mainly an exposition of pantheism, showing how it is based on the Bible and traditional Kabbalah. Part Three is a semi-mystical presentation of its title topic; Parts Four and Five are collections of letters or portions of letters written to students and followers of the Rebbe on various subjects, and read like pastoral letters with semi-mystical content. All five parts were in fact written for the Rebbe's followers, and thus had a specific audience in mind. Collectively, however, they are the primary exposition of Chabad, and indeed of Chasidic, philosophy and mysticism, in a semi-systematic manner. It should be noted that the Kehot edition contains, as an appendix, a work which is in its own work extremely valuable to the student of Kabbalah, and which we will deal with further on.

Schneur Zalman is known as the Alter (Old) Rebbe, the First Lubavitcher Rebbe, and the Baal haTanya (Master [who wrote] the "Tanya"); so the reader who finds these terms will be forewarned. He was succeeded as head of the Chabad school by his son, Dov Baer (Dobh Baer), called the Mittler (Middle) Rebbe, and then the son-in-law of the latter, Menachem Mendel (who was the nephew of Dov Baer and grandson of Schneur Zalman), known after his chief work, the Tzemach Tzedek (Righteous Plant). Dov Baer himself was an important writer on mystical topics, including one of the few works to treat of ecstasy and contemplation from a Kabbalistic point of view, the Kuntres ha-Hithpa'aluth, or Treatise on Ecstasy. This has been translated by Louis Jacobs as "On Ecstasy: A Tract by Dobh Baer", in two editions dated 1963 and 1976 (and a French translation of the translation published in 1975), both out of print, but presumably available through library loans. A work by the fifth Rebbe, Sholom Dov-Baer Schneersohn, grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, has also been published in English by Kehot, under the title "Kuntres Uma'ayon Habeis Hashem". The work is a combination of mysticism and ethics, and dates from the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. As the title, which means roughly "Essays and Talks in the House of the Lord", indicates, it is a compendium of essays, not a systematic treatise. Kehot also publishes a series of talks originally given by the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel, under the title "Sichot". These are in the classic Chasidic tradition of talks or sermons based on the weekly readings of the Torah. Both these and the "Kuntres Uma'ayon" may give more insight into the general thought of UltraOrthodox piety than Kabbalah per se, however.

The nineteenth century produced material from Chasidic and nonChasidic sources, very little of it available in English. One exception is the partial translation (first chapter only, and then only in abridged form) of the "Nefesh haChaim" (Life of the Soul), by Chaim of Volozhin, a student of the Vilna Gaon, and founder of one of the great Lithuanian yeshivot, a prime exponent of the nonChasidic (Mitnagid) school of thought. The work represents an alternate to the Chabad system, emphasizing the study of Torah which the Chabad teaching seems to neglect in its pursuit of mystical attainment.

The final landmark figure is Abraham Isaac Kook, who in the early decades of this century reformulated Jewish mysticism in response to modern science and Zionism. Among other roles, he was Chief Rabbi of "Palestine" (that is, Israel in British Mandate times). He wrote voluminously, and in English he is represented mostly by anthologies, including one by the Paulist Press, and one edited by Ben Zion Bokser. The Paulist Press edition is the more comprehensive, the Bokser the more enlightening. I know of no complete single work by him available in English.

Besides all these works, there are various anthologies of excerpts and passages available in English. Of particular merit are two, one by Daniel Matt, recently published under the title of "The Essential Kabbalah", and an older work, now almost a standard, Aryeh Kaplan's "Meditation and Kabbalah". The latter especially contains material not otherwise available in English, with, as always, Kaplan's tradition based comments.

Beyond this primary literature, there is also the secondary literature; and in this area the works-to-avoid listing is almost as important as the works-to-read. The first author on this



list is Philip Berg, otherwise known as Philip Gruberger, who is the chief author and head of the "Kabbalah Research Center". Leaving aside the rumours of cult-like activities and what can best be called spiritual quackery with which Berg and his outfit have been charged, the quality of Berg's writings can not be praised. Besides strange translations (such as using "Age of Aquarius" to translate what literally means the "Messianic era" or the "World to Come"), Berg also forces traditional teaching into New Age frameworks, so that what emerges is a highly distorted image of the original, and one not easy to understand at that. He can best be described as a New Age writer who uses traditional Rabbinic terminology to describe non-Rabbinic teaching. What he does preserve whole and true can be found with less effort and greater clarity in many other places.

Next in the works-to-avoid category are all those works of the Golden Dawn tradition--Crowley, Fortune, Regardie, Knight, and all the rest. Unlike Berg, they are worth reading on their own terms, but their terms are not those of Rabbinic Kabbalah. This tradition can not be termed "bad" or "wrong", but for the student concerned with traditional Rabbinic teaching, they will seriously mislead unless one bears in mind that they draw on a very limited number of Rabbinic sources (usually at second or third hand), repeat the errors and idiosyncratic renditions of earlier generations with only small attempts to correct, and add in many extraneous sources that have nothing to do with general Rabbinic tradition, much less Rabbinic Kabbalah. Hence, to use them in studying the Rabbinic Kabbalah requires a furious winnowing that is usually not worth the effort. The problem is less serious with more recent works, which either make more of an effort to present actual Rabbinic teaching, or at least make clear what is not Rabbinic in origin--but for the subject at hand, they still are not very fruitful. They are at their most useful in treating of actual techniques for magic and meditation--but even then one's discretion must be active. One of the less obvious members of this category is Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi (Warren Kenton), whose books contain a mixture of influences. Even his later ones, while more aware of Rabbinic teaching, still remain firmly in the Golden Dawn category.

Returning to works that one should seek out, we come to two works of Lubavitch provenance which for remain in the classic Rabbinic tradition. One is by Nissan Mindel, *The Philosophy of Chabad*, devoted to an detailed explanation of Chabad teaching, some on the level of pure Kabbalah, some more exoterically philosophical. It is actually the second volume of a work expounding the life and teaching of the Baal haTanya; Volume I is the biography, published under the title *Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liady*. Mindel was an executive of the Chabad movement, and the first part of Kehot's "official" translation came from his pen.

The second work is most readily available as an appendix to the same "official" translation: *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism*, by Jacob Immanuel Shochet. Shochet was responsible for Part IV in the Kehot translation of the Tanya, and wrote this work as an aid to the reader. Only 78 pages long, it details the classic Lurianic theosophy, and gives Chasidic teaching on the Sefirot and the Lurianic system. Where others state only part, Shochet gives the details clearly and concisely.

Similar to this, but not confined to Lubavitch teaching, is the work of Aryeh Kaplan. Besides his editions of the Sefer Yetzirah and the Bahir, and his anthology of excerpts from major Kabbalists published as *Meditation and Kabbalah*, there may also be mentioned his works on meditation, *Jewish Meditation* and *Meditation and the Bible*, which examine meditation in the light of current Jewish practices and in the light of Biblical texts and the classical (often Kabbalistic) commentaries on those texts. He also wrote a series of short books expounding various portions of Jewish ritual practice, often in the light of Kabbalah.

Mention should also be made in this context of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. Although not dealing directly with classical Kabbalistic texts, his writings combine Kabbalah and exoteric Jewish philosophy, and at least one volume (*The Long Shorter Way*) is a series of essays linked to the chapters of the Tanya's first part in sequence. Another rabbi, Marc Verman, has produced a book, mixing academic and popular in style, entitled *The History and Varieties of Jewish Meditation*.

Moving to the academic side, we come to the likes of Gershom Scholem and Moshe Idel. Scholem's works are good sources even if one does not agree with his methods or conclusion: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, *On the Origins of the Kabbalah*, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* are the most important, and seem to be in the process of reprinting from Schocken. The same considerations applies to Idel, who besides specific studies of Abraham Abulafia, has produced *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, and another entitled *Golem*. Most of his writings are published by State University of New York (SUNY) Press; the major exception being *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, published by Yale.

Another, less well known, writer is Louis Jacobs, who besides his translation of *Tomer Devorah* and *Tract on Ecstasy*, also wrote a volume called *Hasidic Prayer*, discussing prayer techniques and meditation practices and ritual innovations of the early Chasidim. Also on the subject of early Chasidism, and academic in content, is a book by Rachel Elijor, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God*. Elliot Wolfson is another academic writer, but I have never had the chance to examine any of his writings. Daniel Matt recently produced a small anthology called *The Essential Kabbalah*, which is another collection of excerpts from Kabbalistic literature. A psychologist named Edward Hoffman has produced or edited various volumes on Kabbalah, mostly good as introductions. Rivka Uffenheimer and Joseph Dan are other academic writers on Kabbalah whom I have never had the chance to study. A work by Lawrence Fine, *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, has been suggested to me as especially worthwhile, but I have not personally seen it. And a look at Books in Print shows that there are several others of whom I have never even heard....

It should also be noted that general reference material on Judaism-- ideally, the Encyclopedia Judaica--in terms of both modern practice and history will be needed, if only to consult at the library; and reference material on philosophy and theology and mysticism will also throw light on what influenced Kabbalah, and what it has in common

with, or differs from, other systems. But the choices on both topics would probably require another bibliography or two, so I will leave off here.

So many books, so little space on my bookcases....And I haven't even touched on Internet resources...

[Thanks to RB, MD, CL, and FS for suggestions and comments.]

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