ForeWord Reviews

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Simple Kabbalah
Kim Zetter
Conari Press
978-1-57324-170-0
(February 2000)

Simple Kabbalah is the third in Conari Press' Simple Wisdom Book Series, which seeks to provide accessible books on enlightening topics. Kabbalah is an ancient mystical Hebrew tradition delving into the esoteric understanding of the Old Testament-into matters of the soul, the nature of God, Creation and our spiritual as well as our individual relationship to God and one another.

Journalist-author Zetter writes extensively on Judaism and Israel for newspapers and magazines including the Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle and Jerusalem Post. Her Kabbalah studies began more than ten years ago when she worked and lived in Israel among the Hassidic Community. Among the Kabbalistic key principles is the primary concept that God cannot be known. Ironically, Kabbalists still seek to know whatever aspects of God may be revealed. The "Ineffable Name of God" is substituted by names such as Elohim or Adonai, or even Ein Sof (meaning "without end"). Each of ten attributes emanating form Ein Sof called "sefirot" has a God name as well: Keter, Hochma, Binah, Hesed, Gevwah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malkut. Each serifa teaches us how to help achieve balance in ourselves and helps us to recognize our connection to everything in the Universe. Although some Kabbalists seek ultimate unification with God through learning and practice, others use the Kabbalah as a lifelong practice in which there is no final arrival, only the here and now.

In order to make this rich mystical system of Kabbalah accessible to contemporary inquirers, Zetter provides a brief history, some key principles, its origins in Genesis, the Tree of Life and its practicality. The reason why Kabbalah is so relevant today is its concepts, multi-layered truths and its conscious lifestyle. For all of its emanations or worlds and layers of meaning, Zetter insists on the functionality of the Kabbalah. Simple exercises and

meditations are offered. This orderly easy-to-read work serves its purpose for curious readers seeking a simple yet intelligent introduction. For more serious students, a concise list of recommended books is included. Illustrations add clarification. Simple Kabbalah is an accessible explanation of seemingly impenetrable esoterica.

Sophia Tarila