

The Joint Conference of World Religions

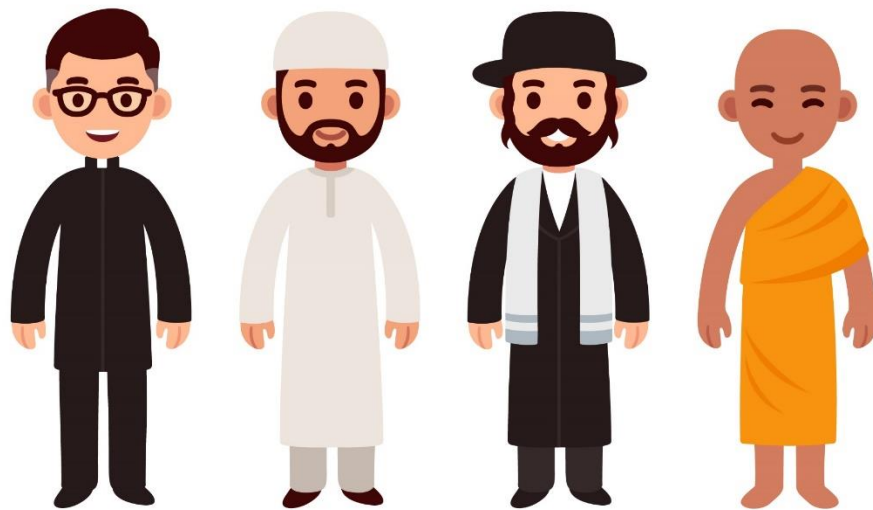
Featured Topic

How to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself



Please Join Us!

JOINT CONFERENCE OF WORLD RELIGIONS



Welcome to all!

It's about loving your neighbor as yourself, I guess.

Easy to say, hard to do...

I'm frustrated, and confused and kind of scared too!

I want to know what to do next!

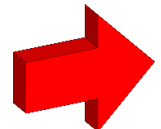
I'm here at a conference of world religions. Hope I learn something new. Turning off my phone now.

Pastor Paul asked me to attend this conference and report back to the group on Sunday. Yes, I'm heading in now. I'll call you later.



Come everyone, please join us...

This way to the Joint Conference of World Religions



THE JOINT CONFERENCE OF WORLD RELIGIONS



Welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us.

Today we will be learning how to take the next steps on our spiritual journey, regardless of our chosen religion.

Today we will step on to the path that conjoins all paths, and we'll be starting at the first intersection, where all the major religions come together and agree.

Although they may word it differently or use their own specific metaphors and symbolism, one thing that all religions can agree on is *this directive*:

We must love our neighbor as our self.



When you get to a certain place on the path the road narrows. Perhaps you've heard of this? *The narrow gate? The road less traveled?* This is it:

The DIRECTIVE

As presented by.....

CHRISTIANITY: *In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the prophets.*

Jesus, Matthew 7:12

ISLAM: *Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.*

The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith

BUDDISM: *Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.*

Udna-Varga 5:18

HINDUISM: *This is the sum of duty: Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.*

Mahabharata 5:1517

TAOISM: *Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.*

T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

JUDAISM: *What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary.*

Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31g

Philosophical discussions of this directive often start with defining *who our neighbor is*. Or perhaps, *what love is*. Today however, we're going to begin at a different place; one that is much more practical.

We're going to begin *with you, yourself*, and how and when *you feel loved* by the people around you, including your own neighbors.

How do you know when somebody *loves* you?



So tell me...

When people speak to me with kindness.

I feel loved when someone notices and appreciates my efforts

When someone invites me to their home for a meal!

I feel most loved when I'm treated with respect.

When someone smiles at me!

I feel loved when someone is courteous and acknowledges my humanity.

I feel loved when someone really listens to me when I'm talking.

I feel loved when someone encourages me or prays for me!

I feel loved when I'm accepted for who I am, not judged or criticized.

Now, let's learn how to treat others the same way!

This information can help us develop the skills we'll need!



All human beings are created in the image of God and we each have a spark of Him inside of us.

This spark is very real, and it is *precisely this spark* that should be acknowledged and honored, both in yourself and in all others.

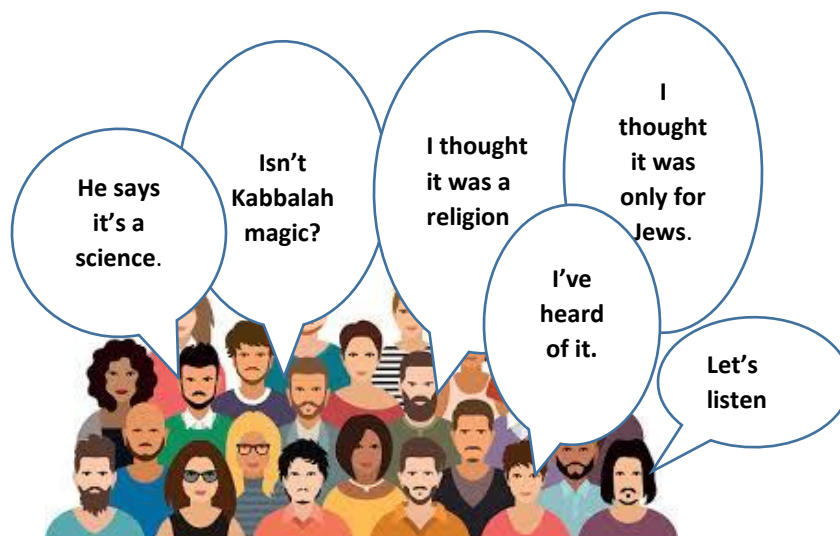
Today you will learn how to do this; how to *love your neighbor as yourself*, and how to make your own Godly spark grow stronger.

The following information is derived from a vast body of knowledge. It is a path well known by ancient prophets and sages, written down over centuries, tried and tested, and has even come to be a respected science in our current day.

It's called *Kabbalah*, or *how to receive* the light and the wisdom of God.

As with any skill or undertaking, if we are serious about it, there comes a time when we graduate from being a beginner to becoming a student.

At this time we are ready for a stronger connection. And we are ready to learn more specifically how to follow the directive we've been given.



Kabbalah and Religion



The word *Kabbalah* means *to receive* light and wisdom from God.

There are a great variety of religious and spiritual paths in the world because there are a great variety of people seeking God's light.

Kabbalah is for everyone who is ready for it. And in this time of the virus, Covid-19, it is especially important to know.

Kabbalah practice begins with the understanding that we each have a spark of God within us. To further awaken and strengthen this spark we must know how to connect to the Godly source.

We do this by **developing Godly qualities, like compassion, empathy, and forgiveness.** Kabbalist's call this *coming into equivalence of form with Him.*

Loving your neighbor as yourself is a demonstration of these qualities.

When a person continuously attempts to do this and they keep on trying (as demonstrated by action), they are noticed, attracted and found by the light.

Slowly but surely, by continuing to develop the qualities of compassion, empathy and forgiveness, we correct and refine our nature.

This is the spiritual or refining process.

For example, by working to transform our natural selfishness into sharing, or our habitual anger into habitual forgiveness **we are actually working together with God's light to transform our internal responses** to the circumstances and the people around us.

We learn to be less reactive to the various feeling and emotional states that come and go in all people. Instead, we control ourselves, remembering the directive *to love our neighbor as our self.*

No, this is not easy. And yes, we must apply ourselves as many have done before us. In these difficult times of seclusion more and more people are called to understanding. There are Jewish Kabbalists, Christian Kabbalists, Muslim Kabbalists, and Buddhist Kabbalists. When we study Kabbalah, we don't forsake our religion or our faith, we enhance it.

So, why Kabbalah?

People may say that they “believe in God” but inside themselves they may not be certain of this at all. Maybe they are still unsure if God is real.

Religions ask their followers to use *faith* to get past this point, to use *faith* as evidence of things unseen and not logically understood.

Kabbalists offer specific teachings about this, **assuring us of God’s constant awareness of us and of our connection to Him.**

Kabbalists call this *the point in the heart*.

Kabbalah shows us how to awaken that spark of God within us, leading us to a consciousness that goes beyond faith and above reason, where we attune ourselves with a higher level of understanding of who we really are.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

That’s the directive.

It’s hard work, yes.

These hard times are your invitation to join us.

You’re on the road. This is the spiritual journey.



More Advanced Methods of Kabbalah (receiving)

Self-Nullification, Intention and Restriction

All Kabbalistic methods are aimed at attuning ourselves to God.



Kabbalists say: *“The lower has to nullify himself in order to receive from the upper. It’s as if you are drowning in the river and someone throws you a rope so that you can hold on to it and reach the shore.”*

¹



Metaphorically speaking, the rope is the light and the wisdom of God.

Catching and connecting to the rope means doing our part.

To receive the rope, we have to set aside our pride and admit that we *need the rope*, and then purposefully put ourselves into proximity to receive it. *How?*

¹Kabbalist, Dr, Michael Laitman, laitman.com

Self-Nullification

To continue the metaphor of catching the rope; we have to *admit that we need the rope* before we can receive it, which is a nice way of saying that we have to get our pride (or ego) out of the way in order to really connect to this wisdom.

We have to admit that *we don't know everything*. That is the state of self-nullification.

It is an internal, psychological state that a person must *choose for himself*.

When you nullify yourself it doesn't mean that you remain silent, or blindly submit to the will of others. Rather, **self-nullification is a purposeful act**, something **you choose to do**, in order to place yourself in line with the directive to love your neighbor as yourself.

Religions have many ways of achieving self-nullification, including prayers, songs and meditations. They all ask that we set aside the ordinary distractions of the world, of the mind and of the body and to open ourselves up to what is beyond. **In this way we make ourselves smaller so that we can open up to what is bigger. That's self-nullification.**

When we are with others, or in a group, nullifying ourselves simply means going with the flow and not pulling away or in a different direction. Instead, we intentionally and willingly cooperate with others. That's self-nullification.

When we nullify ourselves we are much better able to...

Listen to others and hold interest beyond our own skin.

Listen more than we talk.

Push through and say "yes" when our first reaction is "no."

Offer genuine compassion, empathy and forgiveness.

Intention

Intention is an invisible, causative force that's made up of our own mental energy.

Intention permeates everything that we do every day, and once it's seen by a person it can be understood and used quite easily.

Intention is what you want to have happen; *the results you want.*



Intention is always there in the background of everything that you do; it's your own, unseen motivator. Sometimes it's weak, sometimes it's strong, and often you are completely unaware of it, or to be more specific, it's unconscious.

Think of it like this: Your intention is like an invisible GPS device inside you; all you need to do is turn yours on and purposefully set it to proceed in the direction that you want to go.

For example: Let's say you want tickets to see your favorite team play, or you want to pass your upcoming drivers' test. Because these things are important to you, your intention is strong and whether you are aware of it or not, this paves the way towards you successfully achieving these things.

On the other hand, if your intention is weak you'll probably never get in line for the tickets, or study for the test, and the results will reflect your intention.

Intention is an invisible force that's made up of our own mental energy, and its effects can always be seen in the final outcome of everything that we do, whether we are aware of it or not.

Kabbalists point out that the power inherent in our intention is almost completely under our control, and this is very powerful wisdom to make use of. Pausing to focus our good intentions (praying or intending a good outcome) *before we actually do something* is a Kabbalistic tool that **helps to align us with the directive of loving our neighbor as our self.**

Restriction

This advanced Kabbalistic tool taps into our will power and instructs us to pay close attention to our thoughts, words, and deeds, **restricting, or saying *no* to judgmental and unkind thoughts about others.**

Said another way, we work hard to restrict any words or actions that are counterproductive to the directive of loving our neighbor as our self. You may already be using this tool successfully when you restrict yourself from “cussing.”

The Kabbalists remind us that the ability to restrict, or say *no* to unkind words and actions is much easier to develop if we surround ourselves with an encouraging environment. This includes friends and family, the music we listen to, the TV shows we watch, the “news” and all of our forms of input and entertainment.

During this time of the virus (April 2020) we are being forced to restrict many of our outside or social activities. It is a time of tremendous change throughout the world. To take advantage of this forced “restriction” it is good to understand that spending time in quiet, inward reflection benefits the transformational process.

All environmental influences will affect us, whether positive or negative.

The Kabbalistic methods of **self-nullification, intention** and **restriction** help us to be in line with the directive, to *love our neighbor as our self*, and therefore places us in proximity to the light.

Here is one of the most advanced secrets of Kabbalah....



“All matter of earthly Creation contains the desire to receive for itself. The desire for pleasure is natural. The Earth pulls, plus attracts minus. It is the law. All the forces and magnetic fields of the Earth are various kinds of pulling forces. Your thoughts will also have a pulling force. A person desires things and yearns to fill himself. Soon what is needed arrives. Notice that your mind is always calculating: What is to your benefit? How can you avoid harm? How to attract good? Here is the secret: Attract good by wanting things for others as much or more than for yourself.”²

² The Wise Heart, based on the lectures of Kabbalist, Dr. Michael Laitman

What to do next?



First, self-observation



Ask yourself, *how often do I...*

- Make eye contact and smile at others?
- Demonstrate warmth and hospitality?
- Listen carefully to others?
- Avoid harsh judgements?
- Shun or avoid others, because they are different or make me uncomfortable?
- Withhold from others, because I fear there will not be enough for me?
- Discount the opinions of others as they speak, planning what I'll say next?
- Gossip, even though I know I shouldn't?

As you observe and question yourself about these things, notice that you have an interior voice that immediately comes to your defense and quickly justifies your questionable actions, putting the "blame" on someone or something else.

It is good to notice this **automatic defensiveness**, and to understand this as the voice of your ego; its intention is always your *self*-protection, *self*-fulfillment or *self*-aggrandizement. But NOT your spiritual growth. Your ego is not particularly interested in loving your neighbor as yourself. You may have already noticed this.

Coming to better recognize your ego and coming to more honest terms with yourself is a required first step, before the harder work of loving others.

Remember, we ourselves feel loved when somebody....



Acknowledges us

Listens to us

Appreciates us

Shows us respect

Doesn't judge us

Encourages us

Smiles at us

Speaks kindly to us

Prays for us

**Shares hospitality,
warmth and laughter**

For all who hear, feel and see *the directive as a calling*, these methods can lead the Way. So how do we love our neighbor as our self?

We develop the ability to nullify ourselves, moving beyond natural selfishness. In this time of seclusion this includes following the safety measures put forth by our various governments.

We use our intention to love our neighbor as our self, remembering what makes us feel loved and then purposefully treating others this way. We pause before we speak or act (or, in these days of the virus, before we leave our homes), intending health and good fortune for all.

We restrict ourselves from harsh words, actions or thoughts. And even though many of us are restricted against our will at this time, we do our best to rise above our selfish and immature emotional states, and instead, we purposefully demonstrate patience, love and respect, both for others and for ourselves.

The more we do the better we will get at it. And when our seclusion is over and the virus is dead and gone, just think of how grateful and joyful we will be!



We welcome! We listen! We smile! We share!

And even when this is very hard to do, we keep on trying.



Kabbalah offers a direct path to spiritual teachings and stands apart from any religion. Kabbalistic methods are developed slowly and deliberately, always with the intention of bringing us more into alignment with God.

We are made in His image. When we follow His instructions and we try to love others as we love ourselves we become more like Him and He is pleased with us.

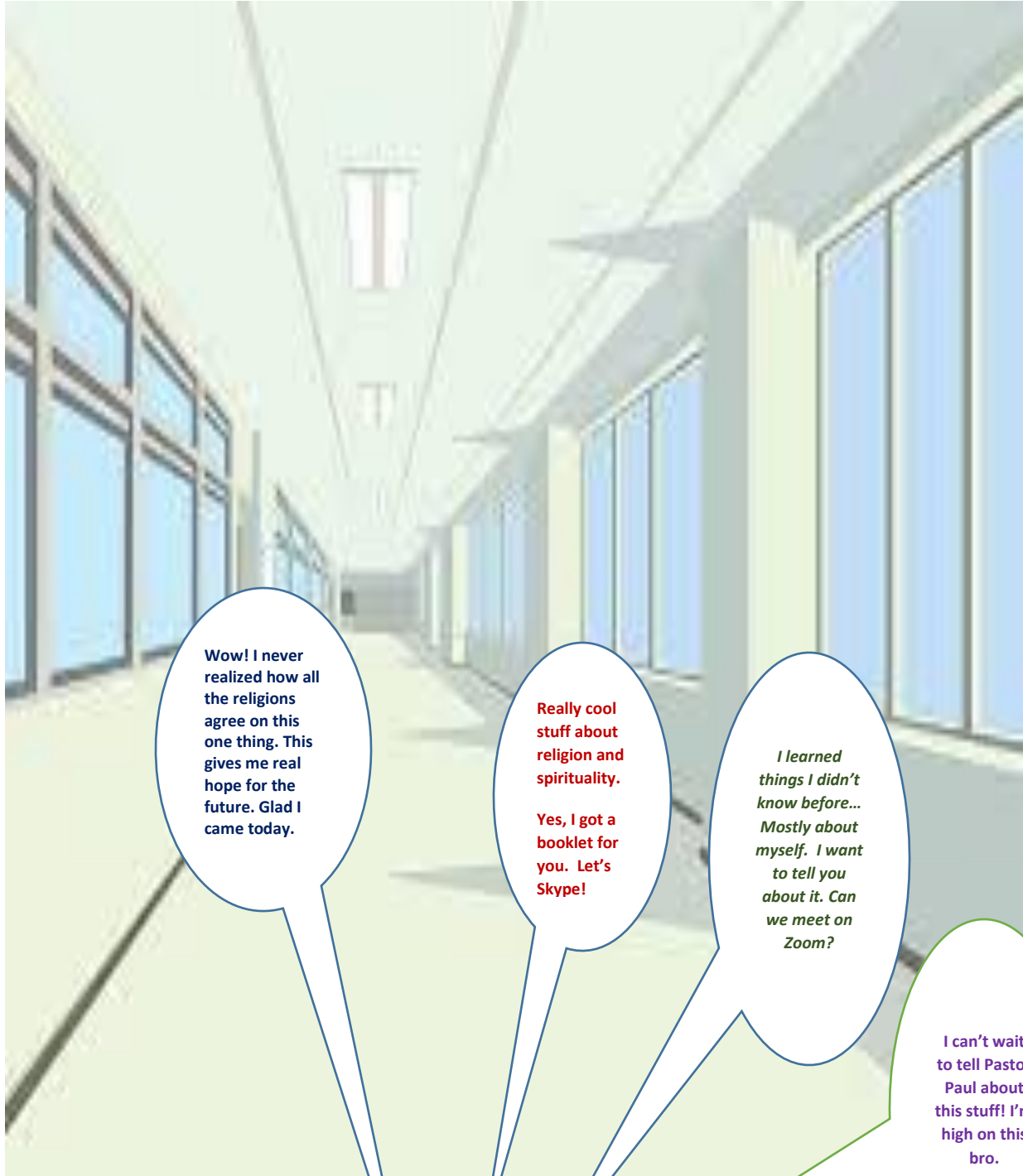


Thank you for (virtually) joining us today. We trust that you are following the current “directive” and sheltering-in-place as and when required.

We are honored to share this information with you and we invite you to share it with your friends, family and religious leaders.

There has never been a time in recent history when loving our neighbors as ourselves has meant more. Our very lives are at stake here. This is the antidote.

Let's do it! Blessing to all.



Wow! I never realized how all the religions agree on this one thing. This gives me real hope for the future. Glad I came today.

Really cool stuff about religion and spirituality.
Yes, I got a booklet for you. Let's Skype!

I learned things I didn't know before... Mostly about myself. I want to tell you about it. Can we meet on Zoom?

I can't wait to tell Pastor Paul about this stuff! I'm high on this bro.



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How to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

By Wendy Barker and Wes Heimlich

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The Joint Conference of World Religions: How to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

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