



# **The Tale of a Veil:** **Jewish Mysticism vs. Jewish Fundamentalism**



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A humorous mystical tale recounts that one day, the Devil (Satan) and one of his disciples were taking a leisurely walk along a busy street in a crowded city. Suddenly, they noticed a man bend down and pick up something from the ground. The man's eyes beamed with joy at what he had found, and he ran off with it overwhelmed with excitement. The disciple asked the Devil what was it that the man had found. "He found a piece of The Truth," the Devil replied. "But Master, is that not bad business for you?" the disciple asked. "No," the Devil responded with a diabolic grin, "I am going to help him organize it!"

Religious Fundamentalism is characterized by a dogmatic attitude of the mind that takes a hold of *a piece* of The Truth and turns it into *The Whole Truth*, or *The Only Truth*, and then establishes tyrannical organizations for the sole purpose of spreading its dogmatic beliefs and silencing anyone who dares challenge its dogmas. In mystical teachings this is referred to as the "Veil of Ignorance" which separates man from God and one religion from another. The famous Nobel-Prize winner, prolific writer and lover of Jewish mysticism, Eli Wiesel, distinguishes mysticism from religion in this way: "All mystical traditions have really the same source. Religions are separate from one another, but mysticism is always uniting." (Wiesel, *An Interview*, 1993, p. 35). The contemporary Chinese mystic, Deng Ming-Dao expresses the same truth in an even more emphatic manner:

**All mystical traditions are one. They are the seed of all religions. Tao. Zen. Tantra. Yoga. Kabbalah. Sufi. Mystic Christianity. Shamanism . . . All cultures know a mystical core that emphasizes continuing refinement, meditation, and unification with the greater Cosmos. ... They all discovered the same thing. There is only one Divine Source in life.** (Ming-Dao, 1992, p. 326.)

The good news is that wherever **true** mystic spirituality flourishes, creativity and peace among nations flourishes; and the bad news is that among most nations of the Earth, religious fundamentalists have managed to silence, imprison, torture and kill off most of their mystics. But because Jews were driven out of their homeland nearly 2800 years ago and were thereby deprived of a central religious-political establishment, Jewish mystics, the Kabbalists, were not killed off by Jewish fundamentalists, but were subjected to severe harassments, ex-communication, and character assassination. This allowed their mystical teaching to continue without interruption although at times they had to teach in secret. This is the real key to Jewish creativity.

Respected scholars and researchers have recently uncovered the tremendously positive impact of Jewish mysticism on some of the world's most brilliant geniuses and on important social, cultural, and political movements. But how does "*Jewish Mysticism*" differ from "*Jewish fundamentalism*" and can it provide a viable alternative for at least some of us today? In the following chart, I have summarized some of the most important differences between these two forms of Judaism. Study and choose for yourself the one that you prefer:

<b>Jewish Fundamentalism</b>	<b>Jewish Mysticism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Takes the stories of the Torah Literally as history</li> <li>● Separates the opposites: men from women, parents from children, Jew from non-Jew, etc.</li> <li>● Discourages freedom of thought and speech</li> <li>● Promotes intolerance and hatred among people</li> <li>● Imposes a rigid legalism and emphasizes secondary laws such as Kashruth at the expense of the Divine spiritual laws of loving kindness freedom, and justice.</li> <li>● Persecutes and tries to silence mystics and scientists who disagree with its dogmas.</li> <li>● Is very narcissistic and sees all goodness, 'chosen-ness' and all Truth as belonging to itself</li> <li>● Teaches blind obedience to religious authorities.</li> <li>● Promotes narrow-mindedness and destruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Studies the symbolic meaning of the Torah</li> <li>● Unites all opposites in harmony but preserves and values differences (<i>Unity in Diversity</i>).</li> <li>● Encourages freedom of thought and speech</li> <li>● Promotes tolerance and peace among people</li> <li>● Encourages conscious adherence to Mizvot to be carried out with the proper intention only as long as they do not violate the principles of loving kindness, freedom, and justice.</li> <li>● Cooperates with scientists and advocates loving compassion even for its opponents.</li> <li>● Avoids narcissism entirely and views all religions and all people as both good and evil.</li> <li>● Teaches direct personal relationship to God.</li> <li>● Promotes openness, Creativity, and Wisdom.</li> </ul>

To learn more about how to love fundamentalist Jews while opposing their harmful views by promoting Jewish mysticism, please contact **H.O.M.A Institute** (Harmony of Opposites in Mystical Alliance) under the directorship of Dr. Baruch Berukhim, Dr. Mitra Makbuleh, Dr. Hooshang Meshkinpur and several other devoted pioneers and volunteers. Phone: 310-980-3838 Address: Dr. Mitra Makbuleh, P.O.Box 4832, Irvine, Ca, 92616

