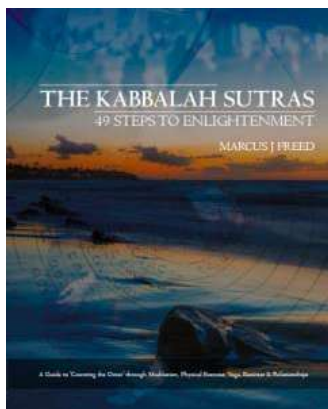


mysticism as a more suitable concept relevant to discourse on the emotional and cultural significance of dance rituals. The author also establishes innovative correlations between the consumption of "spiritual gifts" (24) and the business of spirituality. In chapter 2, Walter discusses the circulation and consumption of Black social dance through a womanist transmodern lens (43) to exemplify how dance is consumed in different cultures. Chapters 3 and 4 address the functionality of aesthetics, spirituality, and transmodern dance motifs in the creation of mystical identity. Chapter 5 examines dance consumption in cyberity and the impact of dance on the human experience in parasocial contexts. In chapter 6, the author urges spiritual empowerment through direct engagement of dance rituals that promote mystical awareness. She also encourages advancement of womanist transmodern discourses relevant to dance and consumer behavior.

*Dance, Consumerism, and Spirituality* will advance scholarship across multiple disciplines. Walter's extensive discourse on dance rituals, mysticism, and consumption will appeal to scholars of dance, anthropology, cultural studies, gender studies, religious studies, sociology, and visual communication. The text would also be a suitable resource for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses emphasizing anthropological or spiritual approaches to dance.

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### ***The Kabbalah Sutras: 49 Steps to Enlightenment***

**Marcus J. Freed** (Los Angeles, CA: Freedthinker Books, 2015)

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[www.marcusjfreed.com](http://www.marcusjfreed.com)

In today's Kabbalistic world there are three main streams: Theosophical, Prophetic, and Practical Kabbalah. Each of the streams provides a different spiritual path, but all have the same end goal: creating a more direct connections with the transcendental. The most developed and well known out of the three is Theosophical Kabbalah, which aspires to deepen our understanding of the world and its relation with the Divine. In its classic form, it requires years of

learning and experience to reach the inner depths of this spiritual practice, but modern era Kabbalah has seen an opening towards the lay world. As part of this modern movement in Kabbalah we see its syncretism with other spiritual practices, especially in meditation, and it is this intersection between classic Kabbalistic teachings and meditation practices, most notably Yoga, that we encounter in Marcus Freed's *Kabbalah Sutras: 49 Steps to Enlightenment*.

In *The Kabbalah Sutras* Freed sets out to offer his readers a practical manual for the improvement of quality of life in general, and more specifically of spiritual life, through the syncretism of Jewish Kabbalistic and Yogi practices. The book is also an application of Kabbalistic principles for the non-Kabbalistic spiritual practitioner. Finally, it aspires to be 'a practical guide to experiencing the [Kabbalistic] teachings in your body' (p.12). Freed writes that "The more we activate the Divine spheres, the *sefirot*, within our body, the more we become attuned to our Godly nature." (p.14) Thus, *The Kabbalah Sutras* are a practice through which we can reveal our God within, working our emotional selves through our physical selves and in contrast to our over-exercised, 'masculine' as the author names it, rational selves.

The book focuses on seven of the ten Kabbalistic *sefirot*, the 'ten categories of universal love'. Freed conceptualizes these seven *sefirot* as 'emotional attributes' connected to the physical body, and as possible channels to the Divine. The '49 Steps' are in fact forty-nine daily practices divided into seven weeks (Sunday to Saturday). They provide a cumulative process, each daily practice within a week building on the practice from the previous day, and culminating with a longer practice on the seventh day. Each week's practice concentrates on one of the *sefirot* as the overarching theme for the week, and each day within the week is a contemplation of one of the seven *sefirot* within the context of the thematic *sefirah* of the week.

Freed presents the reader with a preface to the week, in which he introduces the reader to the weekly *sefirah*, its meaning, its relevance to mundane life, and any other anecdotes that might help shed light on the ways in which a lack of balance in this area can distort one's life. He ends with a set of questions intended to help reveal dysfunctionality and/or bring balance within the weekly *sefirah*. Each daily combination of the weekly *sefirah* with the daily *sefirah* is a Kabbalah sutra. Freed offers practitioners a wide array of applications of these teachings from intimate relations to familial relations, to career related relationships, and to one's own relation with oneself.

Each day begins with a naming of the relevant Kabbalah sutra and the intention behind it. From there Freed continues with contemplation, helping the reader to better understand the meaning of the specific Kabbalah sutra and where it might be relevant to everyday life. This is followed by a 'Today's Practice' section which includes guidelines for yoga practice, and guidelines for gym practice. At the end of each daily sutra the reader is presented with a set of questions to meditate on, and both gym and yoga sequences relating to the part of the body corresponding to the combined *sefirot* of the daily sutra.

As Freed himself attests, the book is not written in a rational linear manner, but rather is a circular contemplation on the *sefirot* as they are arranged as 49 sutras. Thus, this is not a technical manual with the rational structure of a flow chart. This is instead a contemplative work looking to connect physical exercise with spiritual exercise. As such it is not for complete beginners—those just starting out in both physical and spiritual practices. It is a practical guide to any Yoga/Gym practitioner looking to expand their physical practice to the spiritual realm; conversely, it provides a practical guide to any Kabbalah/spiritual practitioner looking to expand their philosophical spiritual practice into the physical realm. As Freed himself notes, the book can be used as a guide to a 49-day program for self-empowerment, and/or as a motivator in either class settings or individual practice.

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