

**This is the third lecture marking the special series on
“Faith, Theology, and Community” commemorating 60 years of
the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel**

Consumer Kabbalah: What Jewish Mysticism Has Meant to the Man and Woman on the Street

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein
Jerusalem

18 December 2025 20:00 IST (13:00 EST; 19:00 CET) via ZOOM

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein is a distinguished Orthodox Jewish friend of the Ecumenical Fraternity. His enduring relationship with the Fraternity reflects a deep commitment to dialogue and cooperation across religious traditions.

For many years, Rabbi Yitzchok served as Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Simon Wiesenthal Center. In this role, he dedicated himself to building bridges between Jewish communities and other faith traditions, advancing tolerance, and combating antisemitism.

In addition, Rabbi Adlerstein has long held the position of Adjunct Chair in Jewish Law at Loyola Law School, where he has taught Jewish legal tradition and engaged students in a formal academic setting.

Rabbi Yitzchok’s upcoming lecture will explore the expansion of Kabbalah. Traditionally, Kabbalah was studied only by select scholars and spiritual elites. Rabbi Yitzchok will examine how this profound mysticism eventually spread beyond small circles of cognoscenti. Central to this development was the school of thought pioneered by Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari, 16th century), who introduced powerful mystical concepts such as *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), the cosmic drama of divine emanations, and the role of human action in restoring spiritual harmony.

These ideas resonated deeply with everyday Jewish practice. Rather than remaining esoteric, Lurianic Kabbalah influenced prayer, rituals, and ethical behavior like the emphasis on *kavanah* (intention) in prayer, mystical interpretations of Sabbath observance, and many other dimensions of Jewish life.

Rabbi Yitzchok’s extensive scholarly and rabbinic experiences make him uniquely positioned to demonstrate the wealth of Jewish mystical thought.

The Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt
Director ETRFI