

cabal

Cabal

A **cabal** is a number of persons united in some close design, usually to promote their private views and interests in a [church](#), [state](#), or other community by [intrigue](#). Cabals are [secret organizations](#) composed of a few designing persons; a political cabal is often called a [junta](#). The term can also be used to refer to the designs of such persons. The term also holds a general meaning of intrigue and conspiracy. Its usage carries strong connotations of shadowy corners and insidious influence; a cabal is more evil and selective than, say, a faction, which is simply selfish.

Because of this negative connotation, few organizations use the term to refer to themselves or their internal subdivisions. Among the exceptions is [Discordianism](#), in which the term is used to refer to an identifiable group within the Discordian tradition.

The term cabal derives from [Kabbalah](#) (which has numerous spelling variations), the mystical interpretation of the [Hebrew](#) scripture, and originally meant either an occult doctrine or a secret.

The term took on its present insidious meaning from a group of ministers of King [Charles II of England](#) ([Sir Thomas Clifford](#), [Lord Arlington](#), the [Duke of Buckingham](#), [Lord Ashley](#), and [Lord Lauderdale](#)), whose initial letters coincidentally spelled Cabal, and who were the signers of the public [Treaty of Dover](#) which allied England to France in a prospective war against the Dutch. It must be said, however, that the so-called [Cabal Ministry](#) can hardly be seen as such - the Scot Lauderdale was not much involved in English governance at all; while the Catholic ministers of the Cabal, Clifford and Arlington, were never much in sympathy with the Protestants, Buckingham and Ashley, nor did Buckingham and Ashley get on very well among themselves. Thus, the "[Cabal Ministry](#)," never very unified in its members' aims and sympathies, fell apart by [1672](#); Lord Ashley, who became Earl of Shaftesbury, still later even became one of Charles II's fiercest opponents. The explanation that the word originated as an [acronym](#) from the names of the group of ministers is a [folk etymology](#), although the coincidence was noted at the time. The group, who came to prominence after the fall of Charles's first prime minister, [Lord Clarendon](#), in [1667](#), was rather called the Cabal because of its secretiveness and lack of responsibility to the "Country party" then out of power.

In [1777](#) a supposed conspiracy, known as the "[Conway Cabal](#)," took place. A series of criticisms of [General George Washington](#)'s leadership abilities as commander-in-chief during the [American Revolution](#) has been taught as a cabal, but little evidence exists for it being an actual conspiracy.

During the rise of [Usenet](#), the term gained great notice as a semi-ironic description of the efforts of people to maintain some order over the chaotic, anarchic Usenet community; see [backbone cabal](#), [There is no Cabal](#). As in this specific case, references to an alleged cabal often fall within the realm of the [conspiracy theory](#).

One recent example of the use of the word Cabal came in an accusation by former [Secretary of State Colin Powell](#)'s chief of staff, [Lawrence Wilkerson](#), who claimed that the [Bush administration's](#) foreign policy is run by a "Cheney-Rumsfeld cabal" demonstrating evil intent (See [\[1\]](#)).

Currently on the [Comedy Central](#) program [The Daily Show](#), the phrase "A global cabal of Jews" is referenced from time to time. It's meant as a spoof on the popular far right wing conspiracy theory that a secret Jewish society is lurking to disempower non-jews, especially Whites. This theory had been one of the inspirations for Hitler's atrocities against Jews leading up to WW2 and is currently a recurring theory in many ultra right-wing, racist, and neo-nazi groups.

Kabbalah

Kabbalah ([Hebrew](#) קַבָּלָה "reception", [Standard Hebrew Qabbala](#), [Tiberian Hebrew Qabbālāh](#); also written variously as **Cabala**, **Cabalah**, **Cabbala**, **Cabbalah**, **Kabala**, **Kabalah**, **Kabbala**, **Qabala**, **Qabalah**, **Kaballah**) is an interpretation ([exegesis](#), [hermeneutic](#)) key, "soul" of the [Torah](#) ([Hebrew Bible](#)), or the religious [mystical](#) system of [Judaism](#) claiming an insight into [divine](#) nature.

Kabbalah became a reference to doctrines of [esoteric knowledge](#) concerning God, God's creation of the universe and the laws of nature, and the path by which adult religious Jews can learn these secrets. Originally, however, the term Kabbalah was used in Talmudic texts, among the Geonim, and by early Rishonim as a reference to the full body of publicly available Jewish teaching. In this sense Kabbalah was used in referring to all of known [Oral Law](#).

Kabbalah, according to the more recent use of the word, stresses the reasons and understanding of the [commandments in the Torah](#), and the cause of events described in the Torah. Kabbalah includes the understanding of the spiritual spheres of [creation](#), and the ways by which [God](#) administers the existence of the universe.

According to [Jewish](#) tradition dating from the 13th century, this knowledge has come down as a revelation to elect saints from a remote past, and preserved only by a privileged few. It is considered part of the Jewish [Oral Law](#) by the majority of religious Jews in modern times, although this was not agreed upon by many medieval [Talmudic](#) scholars, as well as a minority of current [Orthodox](#) rabbis.