Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism

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- Spain and Provence: Crossroads of Jewish Culture
- Jewish Philosophy: Sa‘adiah and Maimonides
- Jewish Mysticism: Haside Ashkenaz (German Pietists) and Kabbalah

Spain and Provence: Crossroads of Jewish Culture

- From 711 **Spain** part of the Islamic world
- **Reconquista** (11th-15th C; more next time) matched by a time of growing influence of Ashkenazic values, texts
- **Provence** tied to Spain by proximity and trade, but also to northern Europe

Jewish Philosophy: Sa‘adiah and Maimonides

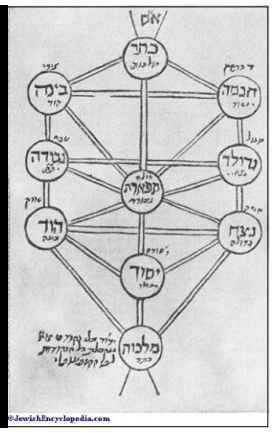
- ***Kalam*** (rationalist theology) and ***Falsafa*** (philosophy)
- R. Sa‘adiah Gaon (882–941)
- Maimonides (R. Moses b. Maimon = Rambam, 1135–1204)

  Maimonidean Controversy: already during his lifetime, and especially when his books arrive in Provence; burned by Dominicans 1232 when brought in by anti-Maimonideans
- Other important philosophical figures:
  - Solomon ibn Gabirol (d. ca 1058, Neoplatonist)
  - Judah Halevi (d. after 1140, by legend upon arrival in Jerusalem, critic of philosophy)

Jewish Mysticism: Haside Ashkenaz (German Pietists)

- Judah he-hasid (“the pious) (d. 1217)
- Eleazar of Worms (d. ca. 1238)
- Pietism, asceticism, speculation about the nature of the Kabod (“Glory”) as the knowable aspect of God
- ***Le-fum tsa‘arah ’agra***, “no pain no gain”
- Connections with 13th Cent Christian pietist movements in Europe

Jewish Mysticism: Kabbalah

- ***Kabbalah*** (lit. “tradition”)
  Mystical tradition in general, **or** the theory of sefirot in particular
- ***Sefirot*** (sephiroth, numerals, “spheres”)
  - Attributes of God that are understood to reflect emanation(s) of God into the world
  - Articulated in ***Bahir*** (circulated 1150–1200, Provence)
- ***Zohar***
  - Traditionally: Simeon b. Yohai (2nd CE)
  - Scholars (& already some contemporaries): Moses de Leon (d. ca 1305)

The Sefirot (lit. numerals, often “spheres”)
From a 1601 publication