SOUTH HAMPSTEAD SYNAGOGUE

INTRODUCTION TO KABBALAH
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OUTLINE OF COURSE

(21/02) 1 History of the Kabbalistic Tradition:
   a) The Bible, Talmud and Zohar
   b) From 16th Century Tsfat to the modern period

(7/03) 2 Applying Kabbalah in the life of the Individual (1)
       Torah Study and Mitzvot
(14/03) 3 Applying Kabbalah in the life of the Individual (2)
        Prayer and Meditation
(21/03) 4 Kabbalah in the Life of a Family:
        Shabbat; Marriage
(28/03) 5 Kabbalah: the Global Perspective:
        From Creation to Redemption, the Jew and the World
1. HISTORY OF THE KABBALISTIC TRADITION:

a) The Bible, Talmud and Zohar
b) From 16th Century Tsfat to the modern period
Scripture

Exodus chs. 19-20: the Theophany at Sinai.

Ezekiel ch. 1: the Chariot.
MISHNAH
Tractate Hagigah 2:1

• “One does not teach laws of immorality to three (students), nor the Work of Creation to two, nor the Chariot to one unless he is wise and understands by himself…”
TALMUD

• Talmud (BT Hag. 14b) – the account of the Four who entered ‘Pardes’ (the secrets of the Torah).

• In general, the Aggadic portion of the Talmud: “most secrets of the Torah are hidden in it”
“In thirty two wondrous paths of Wisdom, G-d, L-rd of Hosts, G-d of Israel... engraved... and created His world..”
The Sacred Sefirot: a flow of Divine Radiance which can be seen as dissolving the duality of Being and non-Being.
THE INFINITE

DIVINE WILL

UNDERSTANDING
contemplation

KNOWLEDGE
commitment

WISDOM
inspiration

SEVERITY
withholding

KINDNESS
giving

MERCY

SUBMISSION
acceptance

VICTORY
over adversity

DEDICATION

KINGSHIP – fulfilment – the feminine
MOSES MAIMONIDES

Guide for the Perplexed
(late 12th cent):
a rational or mystical work?

THE GUIDE
OF THE
PERPLEXED

Moses Maimonides

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by

SHLOMO PINES
With an Introductory Essay by LEO STRAUSS
Volume II

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
Chicago and London
Moses Nachmanides’ (13th cent Barcelona) Commentary on the Torah

Popularising kabbalistic teachings by including them in a popular commentary on the Torah
“Gates of Radiance” – Sha’arei Orah, by R. Joseph ibn Gikatilla (13th cent. Castile)
“Book of the Pious”
Sefer Hasidim – by Rabbi Judah Hasid and mystical pietists of medieval Franco-Germany
THE TSFAT CENTRE IN THE 16TH CENTURY
R. Moshe Cordovero

“The Pomegranate Garden”,
*Pardes Rimonim*

a comprehensive anthology of Kabbalah
R. Joseph Karo

Maggid Mesharim

- A fascinating mystical diary by the author of the Code of Law
R. Isaac Luria (Ari zal) and R. Haim Vital

The “Tree of Life”

Also author(s) of “Eight Gates”
“It is permitted and a duty to reveal this wisdom…”

Rabbi Yitzhak Luria
Popularising the Kabbalah and applying it to daily Jewish Life

“The Two Tablets of the Covenant” – R. Isaiah Halevi Horovitz (17 Cent)
“When will the Messiah come? When your fountains [of spiritual teaching] burst forth to the outside…” (from a letter of the Baal Shem Tov, printed in R. Yakov Yosef’s Ben Porat Yosef, 1781)
R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (d. 1812)
First Edition of Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s Code of Law Shklov 1814
TANYA by R. Shneur Zalman
Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn
6th Habad Rebbe
(1880-1950)
Girls of Ahot HaTemimimimim, Riga 1940
Rabbi Levi Yitzhak and Chana Schneerson
RABBI LEVI YITZHAK’S COMMENTARY ON THE ZOHAR, WRITTEN IN EXILE IN EASTERN USSR, C.1940
Rabbi Menachem Schneerson (d.1994), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, author of many volumes of Kabbalistic-Hasidic Discourses and Teachings
The Lubavitcher Rebbe promoting Spiritual Teachings for Women