

Judaism

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Judaism



- Judaism (Hebrew: יְהוּדָיִת *Yahăḏūṯ*) is the oldest Abrahamic religion. Judaism is monotheistic, and widely an ethnic religion. It comprises the collective spiritual, cultural, and legal traditions of the Jewish people, having originated as an organized religion in the Middle East during the Bronze Age.
- Contemporary Judaism evolved from Yahwism, the cultic religious movement of ancient Israel and Judah, around the 6th/5th century BCE, and is thus considered to be one of the oldest monotheistic religions.
- Religious Jews regard Judaism as their means of observing the Mosaic covenant, which was established between God and the Israelites, their ancestors.
- Jewish religious doctrine encompasses a wide body of texts, practices, theological positions, and forms of organization.

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- . Among Judaism's core texts is the Torah, the first five books of the Tanakh, a collection of ancient Hebrew scriptures. The Tanakh, known in English as the Hebrew Bible, is also referred to as the "Old Testament" in Christianity. In addition to the original written scripture, the supplemental Oral Torah is represented by later texts, such as the Midrash and the Talmud.
- The Hebrew-language word torah can mean "teaching", "law", or "instruction", although "Torah" can also be used as a general term that refers to any Jewish text that expands or elaborates on the original Five Books of Moses. Representing the core of the Jewish spiritual and religious tradition, the Torah is a term and a set of teachings that are explicitly self-positioned as encompassing at least seventy, and potentially infinite, facets and interpretations. Judaism's texts, traditions, and values strongly influenced later Abrahamic religions, including Christianity and Islam.
- Hebraism, like Hellenism, played a seminal role in the formation of Western civilization through its impact as a core background element of Early Christianity.

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- Within Judaism, there are a variety of religious movements, most of which emerged from Rabbinic Judaism, which holds that God revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of both the Written and Oral Torah.
- Historically, all or part of this assertion was challenged by various groups such as the Sadducees and Hellenistic Judaism during the Second Temple period; the Karaites during the early and later medieval period; and among segments of the modern non-Orthodox denominations.
- Some modern branches of Judaism such as Humanistic Judaism may be considered secular or nontheistic. Today, the largest Jewish religious movements are Orthodox Judaism (Haredi and Modern Orthodox), Conservative Judaism, and Reform Judaism. Major sources of difference between these groups are their approaches to halakha (Jewish law), the authority of the rabbinic tradition, and the significance of the State of Israel.

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- Orthodox Judaism maintains that the Torah and halakha are divine in origin, eternal and unalterable, and that they should be strictly followed. Conservative and Reform Judaism are more liberal, with Conservative Judaism generally promoting a more traditionalist interpretation of Judaism's requirements than Reform Judaism.
- A typical Reform position is that halakha should be viewed as a set of general guidelines rather than as a set of restrictions and obligations whose observance is required of all Jews. Historically, special courts enforced halakha; today, these courts still exist but the practice of Judaism is mostly voluntary. Authority on theological and legal matters is not vested in any one person or organization, but in the sacred texts and the rabbis and scholars who interpret them.
- Jews are an ethnoreligious group including those born Jewish (or "ethnic Jews"), in addition to converts to Judaism. In 2021, the world Jewish population was estimated at 15.2 million, or roughly 0.195% of the total world population, although religious observance varies from strict to none. In 2021, about 45.6% of all Jews resided in Israel and another 42.1% resided in the United States and Canada, with most of the remainder living in Europe, and other groups spread throughout Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Judaism Origins



- At its core, the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) is an account of the Israelites' relationship with God from their earliest history until the building of the Second Temple (c. 535 BCE).
- Abraham is hailed as the first Hebrew and the father of the Jewish people. As a reward for his act of faith in one God, he was promised that Isaac, his second son, would inherit the Land of Israel (then called Canaan). Later, the descendants of Isaac's son Jacob were enslaved in Egypt, and God commanded Moses to lead the Exodus from Egypt. At Mount Sinai, they received the Torah—the five books of Moses.
- These books, together with Nevi'im and Ketuvim are known as Torah Shebikhtav as opposed to the Oral Torah, which refers to the Mishnah and the Talmud. Eventually, God led them to the land of Israel where the tabernacle was planted in the city of Shiloh for over 300 years to rally the nation against attacking enemies. As time went on, the spiritual level of the nation declined to the point that God allowed the Philistines to capture the tabernacle. The people of Israel then told Samuel the prophet that they needed to be governed by a permanent king, and Samuel appointed Saul to be their King. When the people pressured Saul into going against a command conveyed to him by Samuel, God told Samuel to appoint David in his stead.



Judaism: Origins

- Rabbinic tradition holds that the details and interpretation of the law, which are called the Oral Torah or oral law, were originally an unwritten tradition based upon what God told Moses on Mount Sinai.
- However, as the persecutions of the Jews increased and the details were in danger of being forgotten, these oral laws were recorded by Rabbi Judah HaNasi (Judah the Prince) in the Mishnah, redacted circa 200 CE.
- The Talmud was a compilation of both the Mishnah and the Gemara, rabbinic commentaries redacted over the next three centuries. The Gemara originated in two major centers of Jewish scholarship, Palestine and Babylonia. Correspondingly, two bodies of analysis developed, and two works of Talmud were created. The older compilation is called the Jerusalem Talmud. It was compiled sometime during the 4th century in Palestine.



Judaism: Origins

- According to critical scholars, the Torah consists of inconsistent texts edited together in a way that calls attention to divergent accounts.
- Several of these scholars, such as Professor Martin Rose and John Bright, suggest that during the First Temple period the people of Israel believed that each nation had its own god, but that their god was superior to other gods.
- Some suggest that strict monotheism developed during the Babylonian Exile, perhaps in reaction to Zoroastrian dualism. In this view, it was only by the Hellenic period that most Jews came to believe that their god was the only god and that the notion of a clearly bounded Jewish nation identical with the Jewish religion formed.
- John Day argues that the origins of biblical Yahweh, El, Asherah, and Ba'al, may be rooted in earlier Canaanite religion, which was centered on a pantheon of gods much like the Greek pantheon.



Judaism: Origins

- According to the Hebrew Bible, a United Monarchy was established under Saul and continued under King David and Solomon with its capital in Jerusalem. After Solomon's reign, the nation split into two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Israel (in the north) and the Kingdom of Judah (in the south).
- The Kingdom of Israel was destroyed around 720 BCE, when it was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian Empire; many people were taken captive from the capital Samaria to Media and the Khabur River valley. The Kingdom of Judah continued as an independent state until it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar II of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 586 BCE.
- The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the First Temple, which was at the center of ancient Jewish worship. The Judeans were exiled to Babylon, in what is regarded as the first Jewish diaspora. Later, many of them returned to their homeland after the subsequent conquest of Babylon by the Persian Achaemenid Empire seventy years later, an event known as the Return to Zion. A Second Temple was constructed and old religious practices were resumed.



Judaism: Origins

- During the early years of the Second Temple, the highest religious authority was a council known as the Great Assembly, led by Ezra the Scribe. Among other accomplishments of the Great Assembly, the last books of the Bible were written at this time and the canon sealed. Hellenistic Judaism spread to Ptolemaic Egypt from the 3rd century BCE, and its creation sparked widespread controversy in Jewish communities, starting "conflicts within Jewish communities about accommodating the cultures of occupying powers."
- During the Great Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE), the Romans sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple. Later, Roman emperor Hadrian built a pagan idol on the Temple Mount and prohibited circumcision; these acts of ethnocide provoked the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–136 CE), after which the Romans banned the study of the Torah and the celebration of Jewish holidays, and forcibly removed virtually all Jews from Judea.
- In 200 CE, however, Jews were granted Roman citizenship and Judaism was recognized as a *religio licita* ("legitimate religion") until the rise of Gnosticism and Early Christianity in the fourth century.



Judaism: Principles of Faith

- Unlike other ancient Near Eastern gods, the Hebrew God is portrayed as unitary and solitary; consequently, the Hebrew God's principal relationships are not with other gods, but with the world, and more specifically, with the people he created.
- Judaism thus begins with ethical monotheism: the belief that God is one and is concerned with the actions of mankind.
- According to the Hebrew Bible, God promised Abraham to make of his offspring a great nation.
- Many generations later, he commanded the nation of Israel to love and worship only one God; that is, the Jewish nation is to reciprocate God's concern for the world.
- He also commanded the Jewish people to love one another; that is, Jews are to imitate God's love for people



Judaism: Principles of Faith

- Thus, although there is an esoteric tradition in Judaism (Kabbalah), Rabbinic scholar Max Kadushin has characterized normative Judaism as "normal mysticism", because it involves everyday personal experiences of God through ways or modes that are common to all Jews. This is played out through the observance of the halakha (Jewish law) and given verbal expression in the Birkat Ha-Mizvot, the short blessings that are spoken every time a positive commandment is to be fulfilled:
 - The ordinary, familiar, everyday things and occurrences we have, constitute occasions for the experience of God. Such things as one's daily sustenance, the very day itself, are felt as manifestations of God's loving-kindness, calling for the Berakhot. Kedushah, holiness, which is nothing else than the imitation of God, is concerned with daily conduct, with being gracious and merciful, with keeping oneself from defilement by idolatry, adultery, and the shedding of blood. The Birkat Ha-Mitzvot evokes the consciousness of holiness at a rabbinic rite, but the objects employed in the majority of these rites are non-holy and of general character, while the several holy objects are non-theurgic. And not only do ordinary things and occurrences bring with them the experience of God. Everything that happens to a man evokes that experience, evil as well as good, for a Berakah is said also at evil tidings. Hence, although the experience of God is like none other, the occasions for experiencing Him, for having a consciousness of Him, are manifold, even if we consider only those that call for Berakot.



Judaism: Principles of Faith

- Whereas Jewish philosophers often debate whether God is immanent or transcendent, and whether people have free will or their lives are determined, halakha is a system through which any Jew acts to bring God into the world.
- Ethical monotheism is central in all sacred or normative texts of Judaism. However, monotheism has not always been followed in practice. The Hebrew Bible (or Tanakh) records and repeatedly condemns the widespread worship of other gods in ancient Israel. In the Greco-Roman era, many different interpretations of monotheism existed in Judaism, including the interpretations that gave rise to Christianity.
- Moreover, some have argued that Judaism is a non-creedal religion that does not require one to believe in God. For some, observance of halakha is more important than belief in God per se. The debate about whether one can speak of authentic or normative Judaism is not only a debate among religious Jews but also among historians.



Judaism: Core Tenets

- In the strict sense, in Judaism, unlike Christianity and Islam, there are no fixed universally binding articles of faith, due to their incorporation into the liturgy. Scholars throughout Jewish history have proposed numerous formulations of Judaism's core tenets, all of which have met with criticism.
- The most popular formulation is Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith, developed in the 12th century. According to Maimonides, any Jew who rejects even one of these principles would be considered an apostate and a heretic. Jewish scholars have held points of view diverging in various ways from Maimonides' principles. Thus, within Reform Judaism only the first five principles are endorsed.
- In Maimonides' time, his list of tenets was criticized by Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo. Albo and the Raavad argued that Maimonides' principles contained too many items that, while true, were not fundamentals of the faith[



Judaism: Core Tenets

- In modern times, Judaism lacks a centralized authority that would dictate an exact religious dogma. Because of this, many different variations on the basic beliefs are considered within the scope of Judaism.
- Even so, all Jewish religious movements are, to a greater or lesser extent, based on the principles of the Hebrew Bible or various commentaries such as the Talmud and Midrash. Judaism also universally recognizes the Biblical Covenant between God and the Patriarch Abraham as well as the additional aspects of the Covenant revealed to Moses, who is considered Judaism's greatest prophet.
- In the Mishnah, a core text of Rabbinic Judaism, acceptance of the Divine origins of this covenant is considered an essential aspect of Judaism and those who reject the Covenant forfeit their share in the World to Come.



Judaism: Religious Texts

- Works of the Talmudic Era (classic rabbinic literature)
- Mishnah and commentaries
- Tosefta and the minor tractates
- Talmud:
- The Babylonian Talmud and commentaries
- Jerusalem Talmud and commentaries
- Midrashic literature:
- Halakhic Midrash
- Aggadic Midrash
- Halakhic literature
- Major codes of Jewish law and custom
- Mishneh Torah and commentaries
- Tur and commentaries
- Shulchan Aruch and commentaries
- Responsa literature
- Thought and ethics
- Jewish philosophy
- Musar literature and other works of Jewish ethics
- Kabbalah
- Hasidic works



Judaism: Ethics

- Jewish ethics may be guided by halakhic traditions, by other moral principles, or by central Jewish virtues.
- Jewish ethical practice is typically understood to be marked by values such as justice, truth, peace, loving-kindness (chesed), compassion, humility, and self-respect.
- Specific Jewish ethical practices include practices of charity (tzedakah) and refraining from negative speech (lashon hara).
- Proper ethical practices regarding sexuality and many other issues are subjects of dispute among Jews.



Judaism: Prayers

- Traditionally, Jews recite prayers three times daily, Shacharit, Mincha, and Ma'ariv with a fourth prayer, Mussaf added on Shabbat and holidays.
- At the heart of each service is the Amidah or Shemoneh Esrei. Another key prayer in many services is the declaration of faith, the Shema Yisrael (or Shema).
- The Shema is the recitation of a verse from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4): Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad—"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God! The Lord is One!"



Judaism: Religious Clothing

- A kippah (Hebrew: **כִּפּוּת** plural kippot; Yiddish: **אַרמלעך**, armulke) is a slightly rounded brimless skullcap worn by many Jews while praying, eating, reciting blessings, or studying Jewish religious texts, and at all times by some Jewish men.
- Tzitzit (Hebrew: **צִיצִית**) (Ashkenazi pronunciation: tzitzis) are special knotted "fringes" or "tassels" found on the four corners of the tallit (Hebrew: **טלית**) (Ashkenazi pronunciation: tallis), or prayer shawl.
- Tefillin (Hebrew: **תפילין**) known in English as phylacteries (from the Greek word **φυλακτήριον**, meaning safeguard or amulet), are two square leather boxes containing biblical verses, attached to the forehead and wound around the left arm by leather straps.
- A kittel (Yiddish: **קיטל**) a white knee-length overgarment, is worn by prayer leaders and some observant traditional Jews on the High Holidays. It is traditional for the head of the household to wear a kittel at the Passover seder in some communities, and some grooms wear one under the wedding canopy.



Judaism: Shabat

- Shabbat, the weekly day of rest lasting from shortly before sundown on Friday night to nightfall on Saturday night, commemorates God's day of rest after six days of creation. It plays a pivotal role in Jewish practice and is governed by a large corpus of religious law.
- At sundown on Friday, the woman of the house welcomes the Shabbat by lighting two or more candles and reciting a blessing. The evening meal begins with the Kiddush, a blessing recited aloud over a cup of wine, and the Mohtzi, a blessing recited over the bread. It is customary to have challah, two braided loaves of bread, on the table.
- During Shabbat, Jews are forbidden to engage in any activity that falls under 39 categories of melakhah, translated literally as "work". In fact, the activities banned on the Sabbath are not "work" in the usual sense: They include such actions as lighting a fire, writing, using money and carrying in the public domain. The prohibition of lighting a fire has been extended in the modern era to driving a car, which involves burning fuel and using electricity.



Judaism: Kabbalah

- Kabbalah or Qabalah (/kəˈbɑːlə, ˈkæbələ/ kə-BAH-lə, KAB-ə-lə; Hebrew: קַבָּלָה, romanized: Qabbālā, lit. 'reception, tradition') is an esoteric method, discipline and school of thought in Jewish mysticism.
- A traditional Kabbalist is called a Mekubbal (מְקַבָּל, Məqūbbāl, 'receiver'). The definition of Kabbalah varies according to the tradition and aims of those following it, from its origin in medieval Judaism to its later adaptations in Western esotericism (Christian Kabbalah and Hermetic Qabalah).
- Jewish Kabbalah is a set of esoteric teachings meant to explain the relationship between the unchanging, eternal God—the mysterious Ein Sof ("אֵין סוֹף, The Infinite")—and the mortal, finite universe (God's creation).
- It forms the foundation of mystical religious interpretations within Judaism



Judaism: Kabbalah

- Traditional practitioners believe its earliest origins pre-date world religions, forming the primordial blueprint for Creation's philosophies, religions, sciences, arts, and political systems.
- Historically, Kabbalah emerged from earlier forms of Jewish mysticism, in 12th- to 13th-century Spain and Southern France, and was reinterpreted during the Jewish mystical renaissance in 16th-century Ottoman Palestine.
- The Zohar, the foundational text of Kabbalah, was composed in the late 13th century. Isaac Luria (16th century) is considered the father of contemporary Kabbalah; Lurianic Kabbalah was popularised in the form of Hasidic Judaism from the 18th century onwards.
- During the 20th century, academic interest in Kabbalistic texts led primarily by the Jewish historian Gershom Scholem has inspired the development of historical research on Kabbalah in the field of Judaic studies.



Judaism: Kabbalah

- According to the Zohar, a foundational text for kabbalistic thought, Torah study can proceed along four levels of interpretation (exegesis). These four levels are called pardes from their initial letters (PRDS Hebrew: פַּרְדֵּי, orchard).
 - Peshat (Hebrew: פֶּשֶׁט lit. "simple"): the direct interpretations of meaning.[16]
 - Remez (Hebrew: רֵמֵז lit. "hint[s]"): the allegoric meanings (through allusion).
 - Derash (Hebrew: דִּרְשָׁה from Heb. darash: "inquire" or "seek"): midrashic (rabbinic) meanings, often with imaginative comparisons with similar words or verses.
 - Sod (Hebrew: סוֹד lit. "secret" or "mystery"): the inner, esoteric (metaphysical) meanings, expressed in kabbalah.
- Kabbalah is considered by its followers as a necessary part of the study of Torah – the study of Torah (the Tanakh and rabbinic literature) being an inherent duty of observant Jews.



Judaism: Kabbalah

- According to the traditional Kabbalistic understanding, Kabbalah dates from Eden. It came down from a remote past as a revelation to elect tzadikim (righteous people), and, for the most part, was preserved only by a privileged few. Talmudic Judaism records its view of the proper protocol for teaching secrets in the Talmud, Tractate Hagigah, 11b-13a, "One should not teach . . . the work of Creation in pairs, nor the work of the Chariot to an individual, unless he is wise and can understand the implications himself etc."
- Contemporary scholarship suggests that various schools of Jewish esotericism arose at different periods of Jewish history, each reflecting not only prior forms of mysticism, but also the intellectual and cultural milieu of that historical period. Answers to questions of transmission, lineage, influence, and innovation vary greatly and cannot be easily summarised.



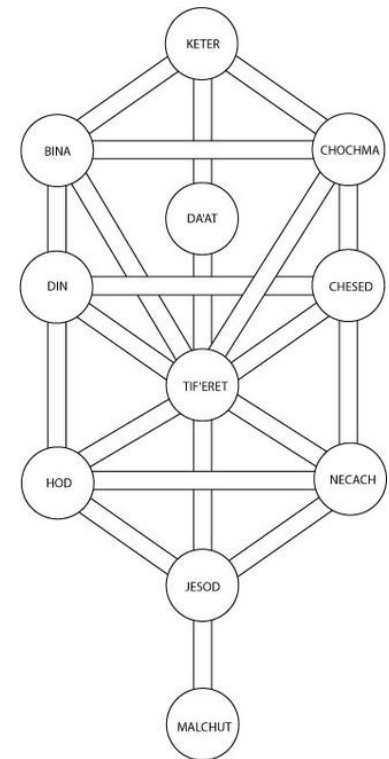
Judaism: Kabbalah

- When read by later generations of Kabbalists, the Torah's description of the creation in the Book of Genesis reveals mysteries about God himself, the true nature of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden (Hebrew: עֵדֶן), the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Hebrew: עֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע), and the Tree of Life (Hebrew: עֵץ הַחַיִּים), as well as the interaction of these supernatural entities with the Serpent (Hebrew: נָחָשׁ), which leads to disaster when they eat the forbidden fruit (Hebrew: פְּרִי הַדַּעַת), as recorded in Genesis 3.
- The Bible provides ample additional material for mythic and mystical speculation. The prophet Ezekiel's visions in particular attracted much mystical speculation, as did Isaiah's Temple vision. Other mystical events include Jacob's vision of the ladder to heaven, and Moses' encounters with the Burning bush and God on Mount Sinai.
- The 72 letter name of God which is used in Jewish mysticism for meditation purposes is derived from the Hebrew verbal utterance [clarification needed] Moses spoke in the presence of an angel, while the Sea of Reeds parted, allowing the Hebrews to escape their approaching attackers. [citation needed] The miracle of the Exodus, which led to Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the Jewish Orthodox view of the acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai, preceded the creation of the first Jewish nation approximately three hundred years before King Saul

Judaism: Ten Sephiroth



- The Sephirot (also spelled "sefirot"; singular sefirah) are the ten emanations and attributes of God with which he continually sustains the existence of the universe. The Zohar and other Kabbalistic texts elaborate on the emergence of the sephirot from a state of concealed potential in the Ein Sof until their manifestation in the mundane world.
- In particular, Moses ben Jacob Cordovero (known as "the Ramak"), describes how God emanated the myriad details of finite reality out of the absolute unity of Divine light via the ten sephirot, or vessels





Judaism: Cosmology

- According to Lurianic cosmology, the sephirot correspond to various levels of creation (ten sephirot in each of the Four Worlds, and four worlds within each of the larger four worlds, each containing ten sephirot, which themselves contain ten sephirot, to an infinite number of possibilities), and are emanated from the Creator for the purpose of creating the universe.
- The sephirot are considered revelations of the Creator's will (ratzon), and they should not be understood as ten different "gods" but as ten different ways the one God reveals his will through the Emanations. It is not God who changes but the ability to perceive God that changes.



Judaism: Tzimtzum

- Tzimtzum (Constriction/Concentration) is the primordial cosmic act whereby God "contracted" His infinite light, leaving a "void" into which the light of existence was poured. This allowed the emergence of independent existence that would not become nullified by the pristine Infinite Light, reconciling the unity of the Ein Sof with the plurality of creation. This changed the first creative act into one of withdrawal/exile, the antithesis of the ultimate Divine Will.
- In contrast, a new emanation after the Tzimtzum shone into the vacuum to begin creation, but led to an initial instability called Tohu (Chaos), leading to a new crisis of Shevirah (Shattering) of the sephirot vessels. The shards of the broken vessels fell down into the lower realms, animated by remnants of their divine light, causing primordial exile within the Divine Persona before the creation of man. Exile and enclothement of higher divinity within lower realms throughout existence requires man to complete the Tikkun olam (Rectification) process. Rectification Above corresponds to the reorganization of the independent sephirot into relating Partzufim (Divine Personas), previously referred to obliquely in the Zohar. From the catastrophe stems the possibility of self-aware Creation, and also the Kelipot (Impure Shells) of previous Medieval kabbalah.
- The metaphorical anthropomorphism of the partzufim accentuates the sexual unifications of the redemption process, while Gilgul reincarnation emerges from the scheme. Uniquely, Lurianism gave formerly private mysticism the urgency of Messianic social involvement.



Judaism: Ethical Process

- Divine creation by means of the Ten Sephirot is an ethical process.
- They represent the different aspects of Morality.
- Loving-Kindness is a possible moral justification found in Chessed, and Gevurah is the Moral Justification of Justice and both are mediated by Mercy which is Rachamim.
- However, these pillars of morality become immoral once they become extremes.
- When Loving-Kindness becomes extreme it can lead to sexual depravity and lack of Justice to the wicked.
- When Justice becomes extreme, it can lead to torture and the Murder of innocents and unfair punishment.



Judaism: The Origin of Evil

- Among problems considered in the Hebrew Kabbalah is the theological issue of the nature and origin of evil. In the views of some Kabbalists this conceives "evil" as a "quality of God", asserting that negativity enters into the essence of the Absolute.
- In this view it is conceived that the Absolute needs evil to "be what it is", i.e., to exist. Foundational texts of Medieval Kabbalism conceived evil as a demonic parallel to the holy, called the Sitra Achra (the "Other Side"), and the qliphoth (the "shells/husks") that cover and conceal the holy, are nurtured from it, and yet also protect it by limiting its revelation.
- Scholem termed this element of the Spanish Kabbalah a "Jewish gnostic" motif, in the sense of dual powers in the divine realm of manifestation. In a radical notion, the root of evil is found within the 10 holy Sephirot, through an imbalance of Gevurah, the power of "Strength/Judgement/Severity".



Judaism: Reincarnation

- Reincarnation, the transmigration of the soul after death, was introduced into Judaism as a central esoteric tenet of Kabbalah from the Medieval period onwards, called Gilgul neshamot ("cycles of the soul").
- The concept does not appear overtly in the Hebrew Bible or classic rabbinic literature, and was rejected by various Medieval Jewish philosophers.
- However, the Kabbalists explained a number of scriptural passages in reference to Gilgulim. The concept became central to the later Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, who systemised it as the personal parallel to the cosmic process of rectification. Through Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidic Judaism, reincarnation entered popular Jewish culture as a literary motif



Judaism: Opposites

- In bringing Theosophical Kabbalah into contemporary intellectual understanding, using tools of modern and postmodern philosophy and psychology, Sanford Drob shows philosophically how every symbol of the Kabbalah embodies the simultaneous dialectical paradox of mystical *Coincidentia oppositorum*, the conjoining of two opposite dualities.
- Thus the Infinite Ein Sof is above the duality of Yesh/Ayin Being/Non-Being transcending Existence/Nothingness (Becoming into Existence through the souls of Man who are the inner dimension of all spiritual and physical worlds, yet simultaneously the Infinite Divine generative lifesource beyond Creation that continuously keeps everything spiritual and physical in existence);
- Sephirot bridge the philosophical problem of the One and the Many; Man is both Divine (Adam Kadmon) and human (invited to project human psychology onto Divinity to understand it); Tzimtzum is both illusion and real from Divine and human perspectives; evil and good imply each other (Kelipah draws from Divinity, good arises only from overcoming evil); Existence is simultaneously partial (Tzimtzum), broken (Shevirah), and whole (Tikun) from different perspectives; God experiences Himself as Other through Man, Man embodies and completes (Tikun) the Divine Persona Above. In Kabbalah's reciprocal Panentheism, Theism and Atheism/Humanism represent two incomplete poles of a mutual dialectic that imply and include each other's partial validity.
- This was expressed by the Chabad Hasidic thinker Aaron of Staroselye, that the truth of any concept is revealed only in its opposite.