



# Western Traditions

Judaism  
Christianity





# Judaism





# Judaism

- ◆ Judaism is a national religion.
- ◆ It's believers trace the origins to a covenant between God and Abraham.
  - ◆ Thus they identify themselves as sons or children of Abraham.
- ◆ There is no historical evidence for this. It is a matter of faith.
- ◆ However there do seem to be roots in Canaan.
- ◆ The story of Joseph and his brothers who had settled in Egypt is the basis for the 12 tribes of Israel. (Israel is another name for Joseph's father, Jacob.)



# Canaan





# Historical Periods

- ◆ First Temple Period – 1200 B.C.
  - ◆ Judaism is originally a temple and sacrifice based religion.
- ◆ Babylonian Exile
  - ◆ 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
    - ◆ The temple was destroyed
    - ◆ Lasted for about 70 years.
- ◆ Second Temple Period
  - ◆ The temple was rebuilt and original religious practices were restored.
  - ◆ The Bible or Tanakh was mostly completed around 450 B.C.
- ◆ Destruction of the Temple
  - ◆ The second temple was destroyed in 66 B.C. completely changing the character of Judaism.
  - ◆ It became a religion of Rabbis instead of priests; learning instead of sacrifice.

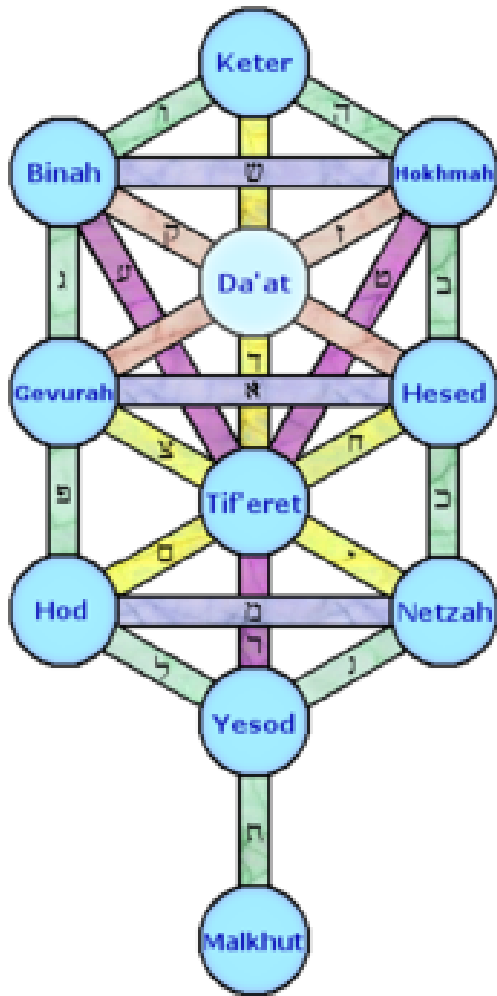


# Kabbalah

- ◆ The mystical school of Judaeism.
  - ◆ It attempts to explain the relationship between the Creator and the created.
  - ◆ Topics:
    - ◆ Reading the Jewish Bible as a code.
    - ◆ Each Hebrew letter has a numerical value.
    - ◆ The Ten Sefirot (The Tree of Life)



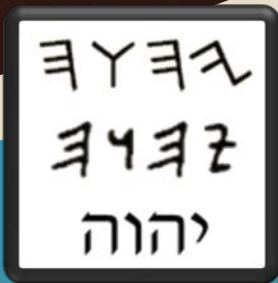
# The Ten Sefirot



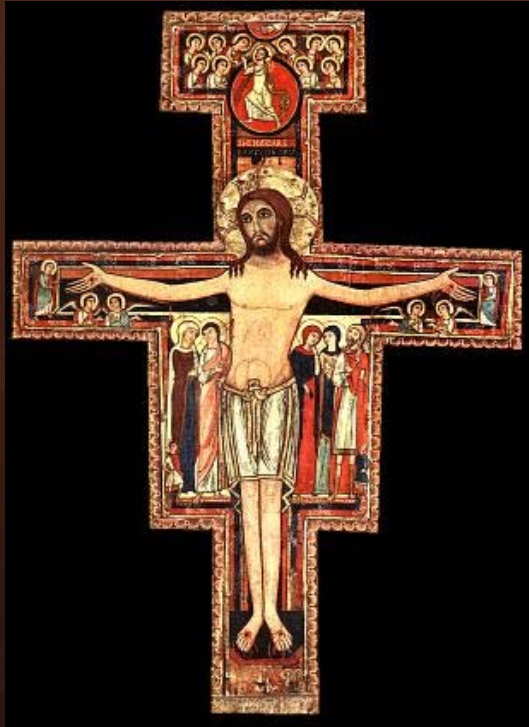
1. Keter - Crown - Divine Plan/ Creator/ infinite light
2. Chokmah - Divine Reality/ Power of Wisdom)
3. Binah - Understanding/ reason (Power of Love)
4. Chesed - Mercy/ Grace/ Love of (intention to emulate) God (Power of Vision)
5. Gevurah - Judgment/ strength/ (Power of Intention)
6. Tipheret - Symmetry/ balance/ compassion (Creative Power)
7. Netzach - Contemplation/ persistence (Power of the Eternal Now)
8. Hod - Surrender/ sincerity/ (Intellectual/ Observational Power)
9. Yesod - Foundation/ coherent knowledge (Power of Manifesting)
10. Malkuth - Lower Crown - Kingdom/ physical presence/ vision and illusion (Power of Healing/ Accomplishment/ Level of Realization of Divine Plan)

# Other Meditation Techniques

- ◆ Breath – in Hebrew, breath means spirit.
- ◆ Candle Gazing – light is a very important image in Judaism.
- ◆ Chanting
- ◆ Meditation on the names of God.
  - ◆ YHVH – spelling of God's name
    - ◆ Cannot be pronounced
    - ◆ Equals 26
      - ◆ There were 26 steps to the Temple.
    - ◆ Adonai – (My Master / My Lord)
    - ◆ Ha-Shem – (The Name)








# Christianity



# Christianity

- ◆ Started in a Jewish context.
  - ◆ The religion of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.
    - ◆ Called the Christ, or annointed one.
  - ◆ Very quickly spread into non-Jewish parts of the Mediterranean
    - ◆ The character of the religion quickly changed.
  - ◆ The beginning of Christianity is marked by diversity.
    - ◆ The concept of unity around centers started at at least 150 years after the life of Jesus.
  - ◆ The Edict of Milan
    - ◆ Published by Constantine the first in 313 A.D. completely changed the character of Christianity.
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# Desert Fathers

- ◆ Group of ascetics in the desert of Egypt.
  - ◆ They went to the desert to escape persecution and to devote themselves to spiritual pursuits.
  - ◆ They were not organized groups.
  - ◆ Everyone had their individual practices.
  - ◆ One common practice, however was recitation of the Psalms (from the Jewish Bible).
    - ◆ They sometimes used stones or knots on strings to count the recitations.




# Rosary

- ◆ Some of the practices of the Desert Fathers were copied by monks in the new Christian monestaries that were growing in the Western and Eastern Mediterranean.
- ◆ Eventually laypeople who did not want to become monks or nuns attached themselves to the monestaries and wanted a spiritual practice of their own.
- ◆ Instead of memorizing the Psalms they would recite one prayer 150 times (the number of the Psalms).
- ◆ They used beaded or knotted string to count the prayers.
- ◆ The first modern rosary was developed by a society named the Confraternity of the Rosary in 1475.





# The Cloud of Unknowing

- ◆ A book written anonymously in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.
  - ◆ It is a book of meditation written in the style of a master telling his pupil how to meditate to know God.
  - ◆ The object is to stare at the cloud of nothingness until God reveals Himself.
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# St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross

- ◆ Two mystics and friends who lived from 1515 to 1582 in Spain.
- ◆ Wrote several books on the spiritual journey.
- ◆ She wrote of four stages of prayer
  - ◆ Mental prayer
  - ◆ Prayer of quiet
  - ◆ Devotion of union
  - ◆ Devotion of ecstasy (rapture)
- ◆ In her book *The Interior Castle* she sees the soul as having 7 chambers and the soul must pass through each chamber to reach the most interior where God is.







# St. John of the Cross

- ◆ A friend of St. Teresa
- ◆ Lived from 1542 – 1591
- ◆ Wrote *The Dark Night of the Soul*
  - ◆ He adds the element that the soul usually has to pass through a “dark night” before it finally unites with God



# St. Ignatius

- ◆ Lived from 1491 – 1556
- ◆ Started the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits – 예수회)
- ◆ The Spiritual Exercises
  - ◆ A four week program
  - ◆ Four main topics
    - ◆ Sin
    - ◆ The Life of Jesus
    - ◆ The Passion of Jesus
    - ◆ The Resurrection of Jesus
  - ◆ The goal is to develop discernment between good and evil.
  - ◆ A person prays about (or meditates on) a specific topic and reports back to a spiritual guide who helps the person understand the experience.