

Chapter 1 : THE JEWISH MYSTIQUE by Ernest van den Haag | Kirkus Reviews

*In his chapter on Jewish vs. black discrimination (p. ): "Justices Cardozo, Brandeis, and Frankfurter became justices of the Supreme Court in spite of being Jewish. Thurgood Marshall became Mr. Justice Marshall because he was a Negro.*

Judaism has ancient mystical teachings. Mysticism was taught only to those who had already learned Torah and Talmud. Jewish mysticism is known as kabbalah, and part of it was written in the Zohar. Kabbalah and its teachings have been distorted by mystics and occultists. One well-known teaching is the Ein Sof and the Ten Sefirot. When non-Jews ask about Judaism, they commonly ask questions like: Do you believe in heaven and hell? In angels or the devil? What happens to the soul after death? What is the nature of G-d and the universe? The answers to questions like these define most religions; in fact, I have heard some people say that the purpose of religion is to answer these kinds of questions. Yet in Judaism, most of these cosmological issues are wide open to personal opinion. The areas of Jewish thought that most extensively discuss these issues, Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism, were traditionally not even taught to people until the age of 40, when they had completed their education in Torah and Talmud. Mysticism in Judaism. Mysticism and mystical experiences have been a part of Judaism since the earliest days. The Torah contains many stories of mystical experiences, from visitations by angels to prophetic dreams and visions. The Talmud considers the existence of the soul and when it becomes attached to the body. Jewish tradition tells that the souls of all Jews were in existence at the time of the Giving of the Torah and were present at the time and agreed to the Covenant. There are many stories of places similar to Christian heaven and purgatory, of wandering souls and reincarnation. The Talmud contains vague hints of a mystical school of thought that was taught only to the most advanced students and was not committed to writing. In the middle ages, many of these mystical teachings were committed to writing in books like the Zohar. Many of these writings were asserted to be secret ancient writings or compilations of secret ancient writings. Like most subjects of Jewish belief, the area of mysticism is wide open to personal interpretation. Some traditional Jews take mysticism very seriously. Mysticism is an integral part of Chasidic Judaism, for example, and passages from kabbalistic sources are routinely included in traditional prayer books. Other traditional Jews take mysticism with a grain of salt. For example, the English word "cabal" a secret group of conspirators is derived from the Hebrew word Kabbalah, but neither the Hebrew word nor the mystical doctrines have any evil implications to Jews. The Misunderstood Doctrine Kabbalah is one of the most grossly misunderstood parts of Judaism. I have received several messages from non-Jews describing Kabbalah as "the dark side of Judaism," describing it as evil or black magic. On the other end of the spectrum, I receive many messages wanting to learn more about the trendy doctrine popularized by various Jewish and non-Jewish celebrities. These misunderstandings stem largely from the fact that the teachings of Kabbalah have been so badly distorted by mystics and occultists. Kabbalah was popular among Christian intellectuals during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, who reinterpreted its doctrines to fit into their Christian dogma. In more recent times, many have wrenched kabbalistic symbolism out of context for use in tarot card readings and other forms of divination and magic that were never a part of the original Jewish teachings. Today, many well-known celebrities have popularized a new age pop-psychology distortion of kabbalah I have heard it derisively referred to as "crap-balah". It borrows the language of kabbalah and the forms of Jewish folk superstitions, but at its heart it has more in common with the writings of Deepak Chopra than with any authentic Jewish source. I do not mean to suggest that magic is not a part of Kabbalah. There are certainly many traditional Jewish stories that involve the use of hidden knowledge to affect the world in ways that could be described as magic. The Talmud and other sources ascribe supernatural activities to many great rabbis. Some rabbis pronounced a name of G-d and ascended into heaven to consult with the G-d and the angels on issues of great public concern. One scholar is said to have created an artificial man by reciting various names of G-d. Much later stories tell of a rabbi who created a man out of clay a golem and brought it to life by putting in its mouth a piece of paper with a name of G-d on it. However, this area of Kabbalah if indeed it is more than mere legend is not something that is practiced by the average Jew, or even the average rabbi. There are a number of stories that discourage the pursuit of such

knowledge and power as dangerous and irresponsible. If you see any books on the subject of "practical kabbalah," you can safely dismiss them as not authentic Jewish tradition because, as these stories demonstrate, this kind of knowledge was traditionally thought to be far too dangerous to be distributed blindly to the masses. It is important to note that all of these magical effects were achieved through the power of G-d, generally by calling upon the name of G-d. These practices are no more "evil" than the miracles of the prophets, or the miracles that Christians ascribe to Jesus. In fact, according to some of my mystically-inclined friends, Jesus performed his miracles using kabbalistic techniques learned from the Essenes, a Jewish sect of that time that was involved in mysticism. Ein Sof and the Ten Sefirot To give you an idea of the nature of Kabbalah, I will briefly discuss one of the better known, fundamental concepts of kabbalistic thought: This explanation is, at best, a gross oversimplification. I do not pretend to fully understand these ideas. According to Kabbalah, the true essence of G-d is so transcendent that it cannot be described, except with reference to what it is not. This true essence of G-d is known as Ein Sof, which literally means "without end," which encompasses the idea of His lack of boundaries in both time and space. In this truest form, the Ein Sof is so transcendent that It cannot have any direct interaction with the universe. The Ein Sof interacts with the universe through ten emanations from this essence, known as the Ten Sefirot. These Sefirot correspond to qualities of G-d. They consist of, in descending order, Keter the crown, Chokhmah wisdom, Binah intuition, understanding, Chesed mercy or Gedulah greatness, Gevurah strength, Tiferet glory, Netzach victory, Hod majesty, Yesod foundation and Malkut sovereignty. The middle five qualities are mentioned explicitly and in order at I Chronicles Yours, O L-rd, is the greatness gedulah, the strength gevurah, the glory tiferet, the power netzach, and the splendor hod. I have seen this passage translated in widely varying ways, but the Hebrew corresponds to the names of the Sefirot in order. The Ten Sefirot include both masculine and feminine qualities. Kabbalah pays a great deal of attention to the feminine aspects of G-d. The Sefirot are commonly represented as in the diagram at left. There is great significance to the position of these various attributes and their interconnectedness. The Sefirot are not separate deities, as some might think by taking this too literally. They are intimately a part of G-d, and yet they are in contact with the universe in a way that the Ein Sof is not. The Sefirot connect with everything in the universe, including humanity. The good and evil that we do resonates through the Sefirot and affects the entire universe, up to and including G-d Himself. Suggested Reading Readings in this area should be undertaken with extreme caution. There is entirely too much literature out there under the name "Kabbalah" that has little or nothing to do with the true Jewish teachings on this subject. Any book on the subject of practical Kabbalah should be disregarded immediately; no legitimate source would ever make such teachings available to a faceless mass audience. Books written by Christians should be viewed with extreme skepticism, because many Christian sources have reinterpreted Kabbalah to fit into Christian dogma. There is a nice online introductory Kabbalah course available from Aish. For an academic and scholarly information about Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, check out the works of Professor Gershom Scholem. He was a prolific writer on the subject, and his writings are widely available and well-respected by both Jews and non-Jews. For a more personal and experiential approach to Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, see the works of Aryeh Kaplan. I am informed that his books are reliably authoritative and uncompromisingly Orthodox. I have found his materials on meditation and prayer, especially Jewish Meditation, to be particularly useful in my own devotional practices. Of course, if you are serious about Kabbalah, you must get yourself a teacher that you can work with one-on-one, either online or in person. [Click Here](#) for more details.

## Chapter 2 : Judaism Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism

*"The Jewish Mystique" is a fairly honest and interesting look at "the Jewish question." The book was written by Dutch-American Ernest Van Den Haag, who unlike most limp-wristed scholars, has been tortured for his beliefs.*

The opinions, facts and any media content in them are presented solely by the authors, and neither The Times of Israel nor its partners assume any responsibility for them. Please contact us in case of abuse. In case of abuse, Report this post. Tomorrow night, the New York Mets will play in the World Series for the first time since and the fifth time in their history, which spans over half a century. As a lifelong baseball enthusiast who grew up in New York City and rooted for the Mets from Day 1, I suffered through their losing seasons and also delighted in their best moments, which included two World Series wins and a few more divisional and league championships. In response, I would say what best expressed the sentiments of so many Mets fans: Against overwhelming odds, the Mets took the baseball world by surprise in , their miracle season, when they rose to the top of their division and league and then defeated the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series; and years later when they staged one of the most miraculous comeback wins of all time in Game 6 of the World Series against the Boston Red Sox. As one who was raised in a traditional Jewish home, went to religious private schools and later in life chose the secular lifestyle, I understand the belief in divine intervention, especially when a miracle happens, but for the most part I appreciate human excellence. Both qualities, the human and the heavenly, have worked wonders for the Jewish people, as well as for those boys from Flushing, Queens. Just a few words about that other New York team, the Yankees, who also fielded a few Jewish players: Only an anti-Semite can say that there is something Jewish about rooting for the best team money can buy. After all, there are many Jewish Yankees fans and some of my best friends etc. Back to the Mets: My Jewish connection concept goes beyond the obvious correlation between Jews and underdogs, and relies more on the actual triumphs of a heavily outnumbered and much slandered nation. The Mets may have shocked the National League East on occasion, but the Jewish people have been astounding both Eastern and Western civilization for millennia. From King David to Queen Esther and down the line to Ben-Gurion, we Jews always knew how to play hardball on the big stage with the whole world watching. But the remarkable achievements of outstanding MOTs members of the tribe, for those who are not familiar with that fun acronym pale in comparison with the collective triumph of the human spirit which best illustrates the eternally resilient Jews. In a similar vein, the principle of a team equaling the sum of its parts can surely be said for the Mets. But human achievement notwithstanding, we MOTs have at times been known to have God on our side and the Mets too, pardon the pun, have that metaphysical quality, which may explain the power surge that recently turned second-baseman Daniel Murphy into a home-run hitter just in time for the playoffs. Regardless of ethnic affiliation, all Mets fans can join in the World Series parade which hopefully will take place on Broadway sometime next week. In the meantime, when Mets pitcher Matt Harvey takes the mound against the American League Champion Kansas City Royals tomorrow night, every Mets fan will have his or her heart in the right place. Nothing can be more heavenly, and human. About the Author Avi Shamir is a freelance writer, editor, translator and the author of "Saving the Game," a novel about baseball.

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Efron Princeton University Press, pp. Yet, during the same period, German Jews also devoted themselves to recovering the linguistic, artistic, and literary heritage of medieval Sephardic Jewry. Indeed, the Sephardic mystique may have been even more central to German Jewish identity than Grecophilia was to German identity. The history of this cultural obsession is the subject of *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic*, a new book by John M. Efron, one of the leading historians of modern German Jewry. Efron, however, has written the most sweeping, detailed, and discerning account of this phenomenon to date. The key to understanding the modern German Jewish love affair with medieval Sephardic culture is to see it as a result of repulsion as much as attraction. In the course of running away from this shadow of their own past, German Jews found another, more usable past in medieval Sephardic Jewry. German Jews also found the later, tragic history of Spanish Jewry absorbing, and they often felt a special kinship with the Marranos, whose dilemmas of identity they commiserated with and whose tenacious clinging to an inner sense of Jewishness they admired. Efron displays a keen sense of the ironies that characterized this new, romantic aesthetic in 19th-century Germany. I would add that it is also a beautiful book that reveals tremendous craftsmanship. Each chapter is a finely wrought marvel of crystalline prose, careful scholarship, and often exquisite analysis. No one can read this book without feeling their eyes opened wide to the remarkable range and complex motivations of 19th-century German Jewish Sephardism. Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is a larger argument here about the nature of Jewish modernity, one that Efron may hint at even if he holds back from boldly articulating it. From the William A. To simplify somewhat, the debate over the origins of modern Judaism has traditionally pitted scholars who underscore the decisive influence of new ideologies and ideas against those who stress migration and the transformation of Jewish behavior. The former regard the rise and spread of Jewish modernity largely as an intellectual revolution; the latter see it as a social revolution. Efron introduces the possibility of viewing Jewish modernity primarily as an aesthetic revolution. Becoming modern, in this view, was above all about cultivating a particular look, sound, and affect. There was, of course, a cognitive element to this, but it was less conceptual than emotional, and the changes in everyday Jewish practice were closely bound up with the emergence of a new set of affinities and aversions. The aesthetic revolution, in short, may be where the intellectual and the social axes of change converge. Efron limits his analysis to the German Jewish experience, but his emphasis on aesthetics could be applied more broadly. For even in places where Jewish modernization clearly did not depend on an embrace of liberal and secular values, but was chiefly a function of non-ideological acculturation, it was always marked by the appearance of new modes of feeling and self-fashioning. That is true whether we are talking about Germany or England or the Ottoman Empire. But as Efron himself acknowledges in his all-too-brief epilogue, in the early 20th century, German Jewish Sephardism was effectively supplanted by a new avant-garde Jewish aesthetic, one that idealized the very East European Judaism its precursor had repudiated. We now stand at a distant remove not only from medieval Sephardic culture, but from the modern German cult of the medieval Sephardim that, as John Efron shows in this extraordinary book, once had such deep and widespread resonance.

**Chapter 4 : MUST READ: The Jewish Mystique by Ernest Van Den Haag | Sinai**

*Academic study of Jewish mysticism, especially since Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (), distinguishes between different forms of mysticism across different eras of Jewish history.*

Admin1 Leave a Comment [My Catholic elder brother passed on to me this old book: For a family of mixed faiths: Catholic, Evangelical, agnostic, un-churched Christian, and in my caseâ€”unheard of Sinaite, it brings great comfort to be accepted and not unfairly judged for my new-found belief, i. Truly there is inherent good in man, but also the potential to do evil. Meanwhile, here are some tidbits to whet your appetite: Was Elizabeth Taylor or Marilyn Monroe? Are Jews a denominational group, a nation, or a race? What makes them Jewish? How do they or do they? What makes anti-Semites anti-Semitic? Are they smarter than otherpeople? Do they have the golden touch? Why do they seem to have influence disproportionate to their numbers? It is remarkable how little is really understood about a people who have had so much impact on the history and destiny of the world. A Guggenheim fellow in , he is a practicing psycho-analyst, the author fo three books, and many papers in learned journals. He would contribute columns to the publication for the next 45 years. Van den Haag like Paul Johnson and Thomas Cahill later writes from outside the Jewish experience with real appreciation and understanding. Having read the book many years ago I will simply give one small insight of his. According to Van den Haag the intelligence involved in dispropotionate Jewish contribution to scientific and cultural creation came in part because among the Jews the most intelligent the learned were encouraged to have large families, while in the Christian world the most intelligent were priests and encouraged to be celibate. A counter- argument could be made pointing out the relatively small size of the families of the non-Hasidic Jewish leadership. In any case this is one small example of a book rich with insight and certainly worth reading.

Chapter 5 : The Jewish mystique - Ernest Van den Haag - Google Books

*The Jewish mystique by Ernest Van den Haag, , Stein and Day edition, in English.*

Nevertheless, traditional business models are no longer sustainable and high-quality publications, like ours, are being forced to look for new ways to keep going. Unlike many other news organizations, we have not put up a paywall. We want to keep our journalism open and accessible and be able to keep providing you with news and analyses from the frontlines of Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish World. As one of our loyal readers, we ask you to be our partner. In more and more locales – from Cape Town to Casablanca, Moscow to Marseilles – Jews are wary of openly identifying themselves as Jews. Under the guise of anti-Zionism, or right out in the open as old-fashioned anti-Semitism, we are castigated as parasites and persecutors. Our popularity rating is just a tad above that of cab drivers and colonoscopies. Yet, at the very same time, we are witnessing a most curious phenomenon: It seems that for Sir Paul, happiness is a warm Jewess, since two-thirds of his wives have been members of the tribe. How the heck did Heather Mills ever get a ticket to ride? Edwin Arthur Schlossberg, not to mention Marc Mezvinsky, who awakens each day to a Chelsea morning with the former first daughter? And we would be royally remiss if we did not also make mention of Kate Middleton, now taking on airs with heir to the British throne Prince William. What is going on here? How is it that so many prominent, long-standing non-Jewish families are welcoming our people into their homes not to mention country clubs? And if it is, is it good for the Jews? As with any issue, there will be at least two sides to this debate. Some will claim that the trend indeed signifies a sincere acceptance of Jews as equal members of the human race, every bit as eligible as anyone else on any level of society. Others will argue that this is the exception that proves the rule and that the normal behavior of shunning the Jews is merely waived, on occasion, when that Jew is brilliant, wealthy or powerful. And, if it seems that we Jews are, indeed, more welcome than ever before, that immediately ignites the argument over whether this is a positive thing or not. Do we want to have full and equal access to the non-Jewish world, and them to ours? Or is it a dire and dangerous development that threatens even greater levels of assimilation, intermarriage and dilution of Jewish particularity? Should we be celebrating our acceptance or mourning it? In short, is it preferable for the Jewish people to be a part of the world, or apart from the world? We praise Esther in story and prayer, we dress our daughters like her, we even name our daughters after her. But hang on a second: And, if one adopts the talmudic position that Esther was married to Mordechai, the situation becomes even more untenable. How can we accept – nay, celebrate – the fact that one of our pure and pious girls married out of the faith? How do we reconcile this with our traditional rejection of interfaith relationships? And what does it say that Ahasuerus loved Esther above all the other women in his harem? She was neither wealthy nor – according to the Talmud – beautiful. The Rabbis say she had a green complexion, perhaps a result of her eating only vegetables in an attempt to keep kosher. The child they produced – Darius II – was instrumental in the rebuilding of our Temple and the advancement of Jewish destiny. Anyone who has had to grapple with the issue of particularism versus universalism, either on a societal or familial level, understands how complex it can be. There are no short answers, no one-size-fits-all solutions. We have to take it one crisis at a time, place our bets, and hope and pray to the Almighty that we made the right choice.

**Chapter 6 : The Jewish Mystique by Ernest Van den Haag**

*THE JEWISH MYSTIQUE. By. GET WEEKLY BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS: Email Address Subscribe Tweet. KIRKUS REVIEW. The author is a psychoanalyst and sociologist at New York.*

Ashkenazi Jews have had success in a variety of academic fields disproportionate to their small population size, including science, technology, politics, and law. People of Ashkenazi Jewish descent are also disproportionately represented among world chess champions 54 percent , [11] National Medal of Science recipients 37 percent , U. Nobel Prize winners 29 percent , [9] and Nobel laureates in medicine or physiology 42 percent. Supreme Court law clerks. According to the census of Poland, Jews comprised 9. Different studies have found different results, but most have found above-average verbal and mathematical intelligence in Ashkenazi Jews, along with below-average spatial intelligence. Their paper has four main premises: When Ashkenazi Jews married non-Jews, they usually left the Jewish community; few non-Jews married into the Jewish community. During the same period, laws barred Ashkenazi Jews from most jobs, including farming and crafts, and forced them into finance, management, and international trade. Wealthy Jews had several more children per family than poor Jews. So, genes for cognitive traits such as verbal and mathematical talent, which make a person successful in the few fields where Jews could work, were favored; genes for irrelevant traits, such as spatio-visual abilities, were supported by less selective pressure than in the general population. One cluster of these diseases affects sphingolipid storage, a secondary effect of which is increased growth of axons and dendrites. At least one of the diseases in this cluster, torsion dystonia , has been found to correlate with high IQ. Another cluster disrupts DNA repair, an extremely dangerous sort of mutation which is lethal in homozygotes. The authors speculate that these mutations give a cognitive benefit to heterozygotes by reducing inhibitions to neural growth, a benefit that would not outweigh its high costs except in an environment where it was strongly rewarded. Other scientists gave the paper a mixed reception, ranging from outright dismissal to acknowledgement that the hypothesis might be true and merits further research. So if [Ashkenazi Jews] increased a third of an IQ point per generation, that would almost certainly be enough to make this effect happen. The wealthy had more children than the poor, but it was difficult for people born into a poor social class to advance or enter a new occupation. Leading families held their positions for centuries. Without upward social mobility, genes for greater talent at calculation or languages would likely have had little effect on reproductive success. So, it is not clear that mathematical and verbal talent were the prime factors for success in the occupations to which Jews were limited at the time. Social connections, social acumen, willingness to take risks, and access to capital through both skill and nepotism could have played at least as great a role. The high frequency of this disease among Ashkenazi Jews today might simply be the result of their not marrying outside their group, not because the gene for Tayâ€™Sachs disease confers an advantage that more than makes up for the fact that the disease usually kills by age three. For example, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE , Jewish culture replaced its emphasis on ritual with an emphasis on study and scholarship. Talmudic scholarship became a leading key to social status. The Talmudic tradition may have made the Jews well suited for financial and managerial occupations at a time when these occupations provided new opportunities. This suggests that premise 3 of Cochran et al. Talmudic scholarship was so respected in European Ashkenazi Jewish ghetto society that outstanding though often poor scholars were highly sought after as husbands for the daughters of even the wealthiest merchants, who could afford to support the married couples. A father who made it possible for the groom to devote himself to Talmud study was performing a mitzvah. This attitude provided selection pressure in favor of intellectual aptitude, and enhanced social mobility. According to Eckstein and Botticini, between 600 and 1000 AD, nearly all the Jews in Mesopotamia and Persia left farming and moved to the big cities of the Abbasid Caliphate , where they specialized in jobs more lucrative than farming. Jews had a clear advantage in these professions as a result of centuries of literacy.

**Chapter 7 : The Miracle Mets and that Jewish Mystique | Avi Shamir | The Blogs**

## DOWNLOAD PDF THE JEWISH MYSTIQUE.

*Indeed, the Sephardic mystique may have been even more central to German Jewish identity than Grecophilia was to German identity. The history of this cultural obsession is the subject of German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic, a new book by John M. Efron, one of the leading historians of modern German Jewry.*

### Chapter 8 : In Plain Language: The Jewish mystique “ or mistake? - Magazine - Jerusalem Post

*The Jewish Mystique. This is an excellent film that every Jew, or any one contemplating conversion to Judaism, must see and meditate about. Shalom! (2.*

### Chapter 9 : Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism / Torah / Mechon Mamre

*In Plain Language: The Jewish mystique - or mistake? On the one hand, Jews worldwide are singled out as the primary cause for much of the world's ills; yet, at the same time, we are witnessing.*