

Syllabus for Philosophy 6  
"INTRODUCTION TO HASIDISM"

- I. SOURCES. Descriptions of historians dealing with the Hasidic movement and an evaluation of their objectivity and bias. Includes Zweifel, Graetz, Dubnow, Cohen, Kahana, Buber, Scholem.
- II. LITERATURE. Outline of Hasidic literature of first two generations of Hasidic thinkers and major writings of their opponents (Mitnagdim).
- III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Political, economic, and social conditions of East European Jewry in end of 17th and early 18th centuries. The Kabbalah. Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank. Proto-Hasidic writers. Christian sectarians and their influence.
- IV. MAJOR PERSONALITIES OF HASIDISM. The Besht -- History and Legend. Jacob Joseph of Polonne. Pinhas of Koretz. Dov Ber of Mezeritch. Third generation leaders.
- V. MAJOR RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL THEMES. Reading of Tzavaat Harivash. Antecedents of the themes. Corresponding emphasis in other Jewish movements and in non-Jewish religions.
- VI. PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF HASIDISM. Immanentism. Devekut. Antinomian tendencies. Kabbalah and Halakhah. Monism and Pluralism. Readings from Likkutei Amarim and Nefesh Hahayyim.