Early Modern Intellectual Jewish History JHI1833 Study Sheet

1. **15th century Sefard**

* Converses/murranoes – were they converts or not?
* Netanyahu – they were good Christians but were attacked for being Jewish, anti-Semitism
* Only crypto Jews were persecuted, public Jews were dealt with more peacefully

1. **Ashkenaz** – Jews moved East because of persecution in England and France

* Learned Gemara (Rama, Maharshal, etc)
* Pilpul – not written down, more “for fun” type, useless for later generations
* Focused on halachik writings
* Used creative forces on perushim for Torah/Rashi
* Kabbalah crept in – Shla”h provided popular kabbalah/mussar type learning
* Maharsha criticized Rama for having bad grammar and studying philosophy
* L’vush

1. **Maharal** – in Prague(1520-1609)

* Chomer vs. Tzurah (relates to Aristotle’s 4 components: maker, purpose, matter, form)
* Don’t have his perush on Gemara, wrote more on agadita and mussar type topics
* Works correspond to different times of year, titles based on “lcha hashem hagdula vhagvura v’hatiferes…”
* Used kabbalistic words for other meanings
* Importance of opposites, darshans numbers, language defines the essence of something
* History has no laws - Hashem and humans control world’s events
* Against pilpul, had special method of chinuch
* Against R Azaria min Hadumim’s philosophy that parts of Torah are just for adornment or just to be poetic and that chazal are sometimes frivolous
* Similar to Rav Kook – philosophical terms used, no real talmidim, nobody else like them in their generation

1. **Kabbalah** – based on Sefer Yetzira and Zohar

* R’ Moshe DeLeyone found it in 13th century with Rashbi’s inscription
* En Sof – keter – chochma/bina–chesed/gevura–tiferet – netzach/hod – yesod – malchut
* Creative Force gets diluted as it percolates down into world, sefiros are stepping stones into our world
* Can represent parts of the body, people in Judaism, metals, colors etc
* Ari – 16th century Tzfat said they were light forms. He said sh’virat hakelim caused nitzotzot to be lost. That is the tragedy of creation and our job is to bring them back with Mitzvot. The nitzotzot are in klipot.
* Nitzotzot are a form of sexual immorality, you must test yourself to redeem them
* Levels of world: Atzilut, B’riah, Yetzira, Asiya (our world).

1. **Shabtai Tzvi** – born in Semirna, Nathan of Gaza called him Mashiach and got him a following

* People thought 1667 was a special year, Gluckel says people were selling their belongings to move to Eretz Yisrael. Shabtai Tzvi went to sultan to tell him to give him control of EY and Sultan made him covert
* Converted to Islam along with the Donmeh
* They thought doing Avodah Zara (Islam) is the lowest you can go to then bring up the nitzotzot, to engage a klipah then fight it and bring redemption
* Most messianic people were people who wanted to return anyway but didn’t know how
* Secularists and communities who’d been in exile for 100 years from other Jews too
* Abraham Cordoza said to Isaac “At least we believe in Mashiach, unlike you whose just an intellectual” when criticized for not keeping Mitzvot
* Scholem believes Shabtai Tzvi caused many of the events to come in Jewish History, and denies that he resulted from Tach v’Tat

1. **Spinoza** – taught by Menashe ben Yisrael, in Amsterdam (with Moranoes and Sfardi Racists)

* Uriel A Costa – committed suicide, bothered by theology, couldn’t be a secular Jew
* Three perspectives on him
* Not such a pariah, ground lenses for money like normal people – not shameful
* Ethics + Political Theological Tractate
* Wolfson analyzed his philosophy in terms of reason and revelation
* Pantheism – nature and G-d are one, “G-d or nature”, no plurality of life
* No free choice, everything follows the program
* Determinism, very mathematical
* No creation, no teshuva, G-d doesn’t care about us
* Philosophy is better than prophecy
* Torah is to govern people, bring order to society
* Mitzvot keeps the Jewish nation alive, don’t need them once in EY
* Religion is useless except to govern
* Torah is empty of morals, the Gospels at least have morals in them
* Natura naturans and natura naturata
* Chacham Tzvi’s 18th teshuva on David D’Letto’s reading of Tehillim

1. **R’ Yaakov Emden** – son of Chacham Tzvi (1700’s-1770)

* Lived a bunch in ah”u, owned printing press, didn’t like being community Rav
* Involved in History, dikduk, art, drawing, new languages, but NOT philosophy
* Liberal position on premarital sex and abortion – not l’maaseh
* “Kol Knesya l’shem shamayim” – the church must be good
* “pro” Christian
* Ah”u leadership went to Eibshitz (wrote urim v’tumim and yad hadvash) who had family connections through his son
* Emden accused him of Sabbateanism because of amulets
* Get of Klev controversy
* Shneur Leimen’s story

1. **Frankists** – Jacob Frank was spiritual grandson of Shabtai Tzvi

* Anti-nomianism was a value. The more halacha you break the better
* Polish Jews were Frankists, Hungarians hated them
* Half a beard (Catholics and Russian Orthodox)
* Emden called them worse than Christians because Jesus said to keep halacha while they were anti
* Very sexually liberal

1. **Moses Mendelssohn** (1729-1786) Berlin, Germany

* In a time where people were wealthy to get manuscripts, learned yerushalmi
* Authored Kohelet Mussar magazine – enlightened poetic view of Torah
* Translated Torah to German – anti Yiddish
* Associated with upper class (Lesing)
* Decided he couldn’t dump Judaism for Christianity since Christianity is built on Judaism
* Hobbes – Government stops people from Killing each other, has no say in religion
* Locke – government is a partnership of the people, they can overthrow it
* Mendelssohn believed religion is part of the inner person and government is for the outer person. Held of Hobbes more
* Goyim not responsible for believing in Torah M’Sinai (like Rambam says)
* No dogma in religion or worshipping words – must experience
* Torah Misinai – Rambam – it’s emes so we must follow it. R’ Albo – it’s a fact so we must follow it. Mendelssohn sides with Albo
* Halacha is to keep monotheism alive, Halacha keeps us separate from goyim (Kashrus)
* Early burial answer to Emden
* Didn’t go into last 8 pesukim or go against Chazal ever – Frum!
* Translated Bible with Vieseli who had a more aesthetic focus
* Vieseli wrote poem on Yetziat Mitzrayim, had liberal views on Jewish Education – derech eretz kadma latorah

1. **Reform** – started is Westphalia after Napoleon

* Shorter davening, no mussaf, look of shul, organ, no t’chyas hamesim
* Myer – Reform was to stop people from converting completely
* Leaders were unsure if the Prussian government would want them to cut out more traditions or would not be able to worry about new sects
* 1844, 1846 Roundshvig conferences
* Holdheim –change Shabbos to Sunday and take out Milah
* Frankel – importance of Hebrew sermon to increase Talmud Torah
* Frankel father of Historical Judaism (pre Conservative), less halacha l’moshe misinai, g’zeiros in the Gemara show that public opinion is valued in Halacha

1. **Philosophy and Judaism**

* Kant (1724-1804)
* Metaphysics, causality, science is based on the mind and thinking
* Religion/morality only important if based on science not only if its comfortable
* Only act if its based on morality – aspect of l’shma, but not because you were commanded
* Hegel (1770-1830)
* Historizes absolute knowledge, all cultures contribute to man’s goal of spirituality
* All cultures bridge the gap between man and G-d so all are valuable
* Freedom Kant – when what you want equals what you do
* Freedom Hegel – when you find your place in society and have self realization
* Hirsch is Hegelian in a way – Judaism reshapes nature to make that freedom
* Kramchal (Rana”k) – religion is to reach the “absolute spirit”, G-d manifests Himself throughout Jewish History

1. **R’ Shimshon Raphael Hirsch**  - Hamburg 1808, learned under Chacham (Isaac) Bernay

* 1 year in college, learned with Yonatan Geiger
* Rav in Moravia for a bit, didn’t work out went to Frankfurt, smaller, Rothschilds
* Separated congregants from the reform geimende, called austrit
* Made a more attractive shul experience – choir, German speech
* Wanted a school with more Torah hours, Government stopped him
* Wanted a yeshiva after WWI, but never made one
* His school system produced yir’ei shamayaim, frum, workers
* 2 letter root can exist, related roots have related meanings
* Ta’amei Hamitzvos in Horeb (chukim, edos, mishpatim)
* 19 letters is unique because it speaks to real people
* Symbolism, everything must be understood, reasons for things must be related to deeper messages of Judaism – All intellectual stimuli for people to learn/practice
* Ta’amei Hamitzvos isn’t essential to learning, not in iyun. So to learn more you can only chaser
* Uses ideas of zohar in Horeb without quoting them
* Torah Im Derech Eretz (Yisrael – R Breuer)

1. **Chasidus** – Besht (1698 – 1760) didn’t write much, little information on him at all

* Besht exempt from taxes in Mejibudje
* R Yaakov Yosef of Sharudad – talmid of Besht, wrote a book on Chumash, portrayed besht as controversial
* R’ Dov Baer of Mechnitz – official successor, a maggid, talmid of Hafla’ah
* Scholem – chasidus is an alternative to Sabbateanism, its a spiritual messianism
* Piekarz – reverting to pre-Sabbatean ways
* Chasidim criticized for being to lax in Halacha (tefillah)
* Educated people, not excessively. Were shochetim and craftsmen in community
* Had “Tzadik” concept
* Switched to Nusach Ar”i in davening and had extra shechita standards
* Focused on emotion, lots of Kabbalah, said l’shem yichud, learned Aggadita
* Nefesh Hachayim attacks their idea that learning must feel good or that Tannaim came to learn with the Rebbe
* Heschel’s doctorate was rejected by Buber/Shocken because he’s from Chasidim
* Avoda B’Gashmiyus – Buber – d’veykus in everything, every day activities
* Scholem – use this world for spirituality, but ruchniyus is ikkar
* Yerida L’tzorech aliyah – avera l’shma
* Chasidishe Maaselach

1. **Mussar**

* R’ Chaim of Volozhin – talmid of the Gr”a, anti Chasidism
* Chasidim were too pantheistic (everything is holy)
* Founded Volozhin outside of the community (unusual), learned Sha”s, Torah L’shma
* World runs on Torah – had 24/7 mishmaros
* R’ Yisroel Salanter (1800’s) – got his way into the Yeshivos to teach mussar
* They built a yeshiva in Russia and the government wanted him to be Rosh Yeshiva
* Mussar can be seen as good (moral) or bad (too strict) by maskilim
* Externalities of Mussar - Mussar kloiz, sad niggun
* 30 years vacation/health thing then moved to do Hashgacha in Paris
* Mussar is about changing your inner problems, “Kochot Kehim”
* Opposite of Freudian Psychology and of Navardok Mussar