

Important Figures in Kabbalah

1. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai:

Shimon bar Yochai (Aramaic: רבי שמעון בר יוחאי, Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai), also known by his acronym Rashbi, was a 2nd-century tannaitic sage in ancient Judea, said to be active after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. He was one of the most eminent disciples of Rabbi Akiva, and attributed by many Orthodox Jews with the authorship of the Zohar, the chief work of Kabbalah. In addition, the important legal works called Sifre and Mekhilta are attributed to him (not to be confused with the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, of which much of the text is the same). In the Mishnah, in which he is the fourth-most mentioned sage, he is referred to as simply "Rabbi Shimon" (with one exception, Hagigah 1:7). In the baraita, midrash and gemara his name occurs either as R. Shimon or as R. Shimon ben Yochai. According to popular legend, he and his son, Eleazar b. Simeon, were noted kabbalists. Both figures are held in unique reverence by kabbalistic tradition. By tradition they were buried in the same tomb in Meron, Israel, which is visited by thousands year round.

2. Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman):

Moses ben Nachman (1194–1270), commonly known as Nachmanides, was a leading medieval Jewish scholar, Sephardic rabbi, philosopher, physician, kabbalist, and biblical commentator. He was raised, studied, and lived for most of his life in Girona, Catalonia. He is also considered to be an important figure in the re-establishment of the Jewish community in Jerusalem following its destruction by the Crusaders in 1099.

3. Rabbi Moshe de-Leon:

Moses de León (c. 1240 – 1305), known in Hebrew as Moshe ben Shem-Tov (משה בן שם-טוב) (די-ליאון), was a Spanish rabbi and Kabbalist who is considered the composer or redactor of the Zohar. It is a matter of controversy, if the Zohar is his own work, or if he took traditions going back to Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai and committed them to writing. His other works include Sefer ha-Rimon, written in Hebrew.

4. Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Maharal)

Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Hebrew: יהודה ליווא בן בצלאל; between 1512 and 1526 – 17 September 1609), also known as Rabbi Loew, the Maharal of Prague (Hebrew: מהר"ל מפראג), was an important Talmudic scholar, Jewish mystic, and philosopher who, for most of his life, served as a leading rabbi in the cities of Mikulov in Moravia and Prague in Bohemia. Within the world of Torah and Talmudic scholarship, Loew is known for his works on Jewish philosophy and Jewish mysticism and his work Gur Aryeh al HaTorah, a supercommentary on Rashi's Torah commentary. He is also the subject of a 19th-century legend that he created the Golem of Prague, an animate being fashioned from clay.

5. Rabbi Moses ben Jacob Cordovero:

Moses ben Jacob Cordovero (Hebrew: משה קורדובירו Moshe Kordovero ; 1522–1570) was a central figure in the historical development of Kabbalah, leader of a mystical school in 16th-century Safed, Ottoman Syria. He is known by the acronym the Ramak (Hebrew: רמ"ק). After the Medieval flourishing of Kabbalah, centered on the Zohar, attempts were made to give a complete intellectual system to its theology, such as by Meir ibn Gabbai. Influenced by the earlier success of Jewish philosophy in articulating a rational study of Jewish thought, Moshe Cordovero produced the first full integration of the previous differing schools in Kabbalistic interpretation. While he was a mystic inspired by the opaque imagery of the Zohar, Cordoverian Kabbalah utilised the conceptual framework of evolving cause and effect from the Infinite to the Finite in systemising Kabbalah, the method of philosophical style discourse he held most effective in describing a process that reflects sequential logic and coherence. His encyclopedic works became a central stage in the development of Kabbalah.

6. HaAri (Rabbi Isaac ben Solomon Luria Ashkenazi):

Isaac ben Solomon Luria Ashkenazi (1534 – July 25, 1572) (Hebrew: יצחק בן שלמה לוריא; *Yitzhak Ben Sh'lomo Lurya Ashkenazi*), commonly known in Jewish religious circles as "Ha'ARI" (meaning "The Lion"), "Ha'ARI Hakadosh" (the holy ARI) or "ARIZaL" (the ARI, of Blessed Memory (*Zikhrone Livrakha*)), was a leading [rabbi](#) and [Jewish mystic](#) in the community of [Safed](#) in the [Galilee](#) region of [Ottoman Syria](#), now Israel. He is considered the father of contemporary [Kabbalah](#), his teachings being referred to as [Lurianic Kabbalah](#). While his direct literary contribution to the Kabbalistic school of Safed was extremely minute (he wrote only a few poems), his spiritual fame led to their veneration and the acceptance of his authority. The works of his disciples compiled his oral teachings into writing. Every custom of Luria was scrutinized, and many were accepted, even against previous practice. Luria died at Safed on July 25, 1572, and is buried at the Old Jewish Cemetery, Safed.

7. Rabbi Chaim Vital:

Hayyim ben Joseph Vital (Hebrew: רבי חיים בן יוסף ויטאל; Safed, October 23, 1542 (Julian calendar) and October 11, 1542 (Gregorian Calendar) – Damascus, 23 April 1620) was a [rabbi](#) in Safed and the foremost disciple of Isaac Luria. He recorded much of his master's teachings. After Vital's death, his writings began to spread and led to a "powerful impact on various circles throughout the Jewish world."

8. Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto):

Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Hebrew: משה חיים לוצאטו) (16 – 1707 May 1746), also known by the Hebrew acronym RaMCHaL (or RaMHaL, רמח"ל), was a prominent Italian Jewish [rabbi](#), [kabbalist](#), and [philosopher](#).