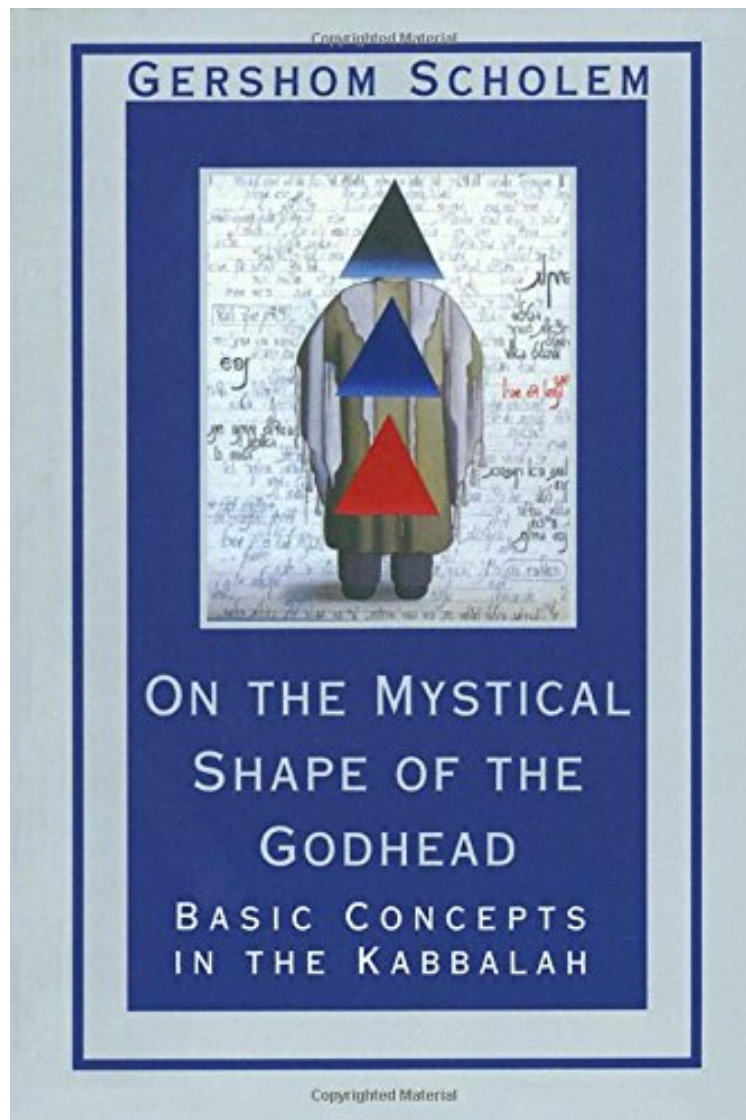


(Library ebook) On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah (Mysticism Kabbalah)

On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah (Mysticism Kabbalah)

Gershom Scholem

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"A major contribution to our understanding of the Kabbalah." --Arthur Green, Professor of Jewish Thought, Brandeis University
In the Zohar and other writings of the Kabbalah, Jewish mystics developed concepts and symbols to help them penetrate secrets of the cosmos that cannot be understood through reason or intellect. These ideas about God, human beings, and creation continue to fascinate and influence spiritual seekers of all persuasions today. In clear and easy-to-understand prose, Gershom Scholem, the pioneer of the modern study of Jewish mysticism explains the basic concepts of the Kabbalah: the mystical "form of the imageless God"; good and evil; the Tsaddik or righteous soul; the Shekhinah, the feminine aspect of God; gilgul, the transmigration of souls; and tselem, the concept of the astral body. For anyone seeking to taste the mysteries of the Kabbalah, this is an essential book.

.com On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts of the Kabbalah is Gershom Scholem's introduction to the essential terms of Jewish mysticism. His chapter on Shekhinah--the kabbalist symbol of the female element of the godhead--helps explain why Kabbalah has a growing following among women. His chapter on Gilgul, or reincarnation, is fascinating for its description of how a spiritual phenomenon is formed, following the process from revelation to writing to teaching. And his final chapter on Tselem, or the astral body, will make you think twice about laughing at Shirley MacLaine. The astral body, according to Kabbalah, is the spiritual nature of each human being--the image of God described in Genesis 1. Scholem quotes pages of medieval rabbis' fantastic discoveries of their astral bodies, such as the following: When I wished to find knowledge of the secrets of Creation, I came upon a dark vault within the depths of the earth, filled with blowing winds.... Then there appeared to me in my sleep a shape of most wondrous beauty [giving me instructions on how to conduct myself in order to attain knowledge of the highest things]. I then said to him: "Who are you?" And he answered: "I am your perfected nature." --Michael Joseph Gross
From Library Journal
Scholem, who died in 1982, has long been recognized as the leading scholar of Jewish mysticism. These six Eranos Society lectures, published in 1962, complement those included in his *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (1965) and treat some of the most basic concepts in the Kabbalah: the mystical shape of the godhead (shi'ur komah), good and evil (sitra ahra), the righteous one (tsaddik), the feminine element in divinity (shekhinah), the transmigration of souls (gilgul), and the concept of the astral body (tselem). As ever, Scholem's treatment is complex and stylistically brilliant as he systematically analyzes the history and intellectual background of these critical ideas. Highly recommended for academic libraries and where there is interest in the Kabbalah.- Marcia G. Fuchs, Guilford Free Lib., Ct.
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Language NotesText: English (translation)
Original Language: German