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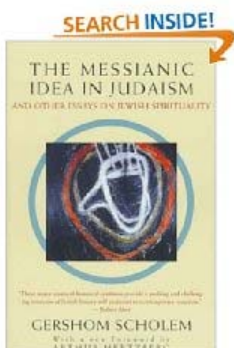
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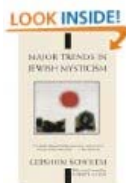
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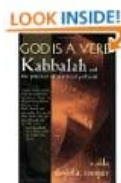
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By [Nicq MacDonald](#) (Sioux Falls, SD United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

Gershom Scholem, recognized as one of the foremost academic scholars of Jewish mysticism of the 20th century, presents here an excellent series of essays exploring the crises caused by fits of messianism in Judaism, especially the Sabbatian crisis.

The essays include:

Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism- details the concept of the messiah (mosiach) in the Hebrew exoteric traditions throughout history.

The Messianic Idea in Kabbalism- explores the origins of kabbalistic messianism in Isaac Luria and how this paved the way for Sabbatai Zevi.

The Crisis of Tradition in Jewish Mysticism- discusses the antinomian tendencies of messianic movements (esp. in the Sabbatians and post-Sabbatians, such as the Frankists and the Donme) and how Jewish law is abridged by proclamations of a new law, which is further advanced in the next essay,

Redemption through Sin- a more thorough look at antinomianism in Judaism, and how it stems from the idea of Spiritual Torah vs. Written Torah.

Further essays explore the Donme movement in greater detail, takes a look at a rare Sabbatian will from a Sabbatian who lived in New York in the 1800's, further essays on Hasidism and it's retort to Messianism, as well as the mystical aspects of Devekut (Hasidic "Cleaving to God"), and further essays in Jewish scholarship and an essay on the birth of the Star of David as a Jewish symbol.

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The author presents the case of how Sabbatianism and Hasidism influenced the messianic themes that are prevalent in today's Judiasm. Some of the more interesting readings cover the notion of Sabbatianism and its transformation to a sect that believes in a messiah that pointed the way to redemption through sin as a result of its heretical leadership.

Identifying some of the religious inadequacies of Sabbatianism and how they gave rise to Hasidism and the notion of a messianism that focuses on self and personal redemption, the author presents a plausible argument worthy of serious debate for years to come.

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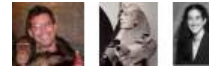
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