

## Chapter Six



# Mythic Judaism



Thus says YHWH, the God of Israel, to all whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build you houses, and dwell in them; plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take wives for yourselves, and father sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to men, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply you there, and do not be diminished. Seek the well-being of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray to YHWH on its behalf; for through its well-being will you know peace.

*Jeremiah 29:4-7*

The Jewish people are exiles from their ancestral lands, living side-by-side with gentiles and non-believers. While they may be the first "people of the book," worshiping the same God as both the Christians and the Muslims, their theology is treated with disdain, and their lives are filled with restriction and persecution. Often excluded from trade guilds, they find their means of support limited, which has given rise to a class of Jewish money-lenders, a role within society that does little to protect them from greedy nobles or clerics bearing grudges.

While it is true that many Jewish communities face persecution every day, including the requirement to wear marks or badges by which they may be identified, individuals may still rise within society. In more tolerant Muslim lands, Jews may be advisers, ambassadors, or even physicians and surgeons to the wealthy and powerful. And regardless of their location, their scholars and poets have a reach far beyond the confines of Jewish society.

It is a society that has spread across the known world. While Jews may not be numerous, there is hardly a city or town

that does not have a small community. Such communities have a rich cultural heritage that they treasure, with folklore and stories, literature, poetry, and magic that have been passed through the generations. The Jewish people are a resolute people, and they find ways to live and thrive despite the adversity, comforted that they are God's chosen.

## History of a People

Abraham became the father of the Jewish people when he entered into a covenant with God that he and his descendants would know no other God but him and in return would receive the land of Canaan, which eventually became Israel. Abraham's grandson Jacob had twelve sons, the eleventh being Joseph. After falling foul of a plot by his jealous brothers, Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. He used his Divine prophecies to gain favor with the Pharaoh, and in a turn of fate achieved great wealth and status, eventually forgiving his brothers and bringing them to Egypt.

But the descendants of Abraham did not fare well and soon found their growing numbers looked upon with suspicion by the Pharaoh. Moses was born against the backdrop of genocide, as the Pharaoh ordered all newborn Hebrew children be killed. Moses' mother hid him and the child was found and raised by an Egyptian princess. He fled his life of plenty when he killed an Egyptian guard in defending a Hebrew slave and spent forty years in the desert living as a shepherd. It was then that God appeared to Moses, speaking to him through a bush burning with Divine fire. God commanded Moses to return to Egypt and to free his people.

Supported by miraculous powers, Moses sought to convince Pharaoh to free the Hebrew slaves, but only after ten plagues culminating in the death of every Egyptian firstborn were God's people released. They wandered for forty years in the desert under Moses but then, at Sinai, Moses received the Ten Commandments and the *Torah* directly from God. The wanderings were at an end, and Canaan, now conquered by Joshua, became Israel at last.

*Story Hook:* The craftsman Bezalel was responsible for the construction of the Ark in which the stone tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and divine manna were stored. Bezalel was reputed to have such a profound understanding of the forces of creation, as represented by Hebrew letters, that he could build any device that God commanded. A magus discovers references to the works of Bezalel and realizes that they may provide insight into any number of mysterious Arts, not least the use of Hebrew characters to enhance enchanted devices, or even the ability to gain favor when working upon such enchantments within the Dominion. But is the magus alone in this knowledge? Or are other magi looking for those same secrets?

### THE FIRST TEMPLE

The kingdom of Israel was secure first under Saul, then David, and then finally Solomon, a king of great wisdom and magical power, who built the Temple in Jerusalem. But Israel was split into two, Israel to the north and Judah to the south, under the rule of Solomon's son Rehoboam. By 587 BC, both Israel and Judah, with its capital in Jerusalem, had

fallen. It was Nebuchadnezzar who took Jerusalem in 587 BC and it was he who destroyed the Temple and forced the Jews into exile in Babylon.

## THE SECOND TEMPLE

In 539 BC, in what is termed "The Restoration", the Jews were returned to Israel by Cyrus the Great of Persia after his conquest of Babylon. In this period the Temple was rebuilt, ushering in the age of the Second Temple, but the Jews were not sovereign in their own land and lived under foreign rulers, including the Romans. It was a rebellion against the Romans that eventually saw the end of the Temple. In 66 AD the Jews rose up against the occupying legions. Their success was short-lived and four years later, after a protracted siege, Jerusalem fell. The age of the Second Temple ended with its destruction. This act began the exile of the Jews and the Temple has never been rebuilt.

## The Thirteenth Century

With the fall of the Second Temple, the Jews are exiled from their homeland, dispersed across Mythic Europe and the East in what is termed the *diaspora*. This dispersal has given rise to two broad Jewish cultures: the **Ashkenazim** found within Christian lands, predominantly France and Germany, and the **Sephardim** of Muslim and Mediterranean lands. While these communities are united in a common faith, many cultural differences have arisen.

### ASHKENAZIM

Ashkenazim is the sweeping term for that minority of Jews living across the majority of Mythic Europe. They are typified by a reluctance to adopt the trappings of the Christian culture they live within, and Jew and Christian view each other with mutual suspicion and contempt. This engenders a degree of social isolation, with the Ashkenazim looking inward and developing their own culture rather than adopting that of their neighbors. This separation contributes to the ongoing persecution of the Ashkenazim, where restrictions on property and profession accompany condemnation by bishops and exploitation by the nobility.

While Jews elsewhere integrate with their neighbors and pursue secular academic learning, the Ashkenazim turn to the-

ological analysis. Over the years of separation from the Jews of the East, the Ashkenazim have developed their own Talmudic interpretations, building their own legal precedents without recourse to the formerly-important scholars of the East. Ashkenazi theology is typified by strengthening the position of women, a growing folklore based on the Divine, and a tendency towards asceticism.

The void left by the absence of academic pursuit has resulted in the development of a distinctly Jewish mysticism in the form of the Kabbalah. Built on divine principles and a search for the underlying mechanisms that govern the universe, the Kabbalah finds its strongest adherents in Provence, but the texts are spreading fast throughout Jewish society, especially into northern Iberia.

### SEPHARDIM

While the Ashkenazim remain largely closed to Christian culture, the Sephardim embrace the more tolerant Muslim society in which they live. Their poetry and academic writing tends to adopt Arabic style with works often transliterated, using Arabic characters in place of Hebrew. They have also adopted the secular learning so prevalent across Muslim lands, becoming notable philosophers, mathematicians, and doctors. Their willingness to embrace study in the vernacular languages has opened the doors to academic professions closed to the Ashkenazim, and many Sephardim philosophers enjoy fame and influence beyond Sephardic and even Muslim communities. Islamic tolerance also allows Sephardim to take positions in public life, becoming notable tutors, physicians, translators, and even ambassadors.

However, the Sephardim are experiencing another diaspora of their own as the Almohad push into Andalusia continues to displace Jewish communities, sending them north to Christian Iberia and Provence, and south to North Africa, Egypt, and Sicily.

### THE KARAITES

Separate from both the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the Karaites, meaning "followers of scripture," are a small sect who observe a form of Jewish theology predicated on the *Tanakh* alone. Founded in Persia in the late eighth century, Karaites reject the Rabbinical *Talmud* and oral additions to Jewish law. This rejection comes from a strict interpretation of

the Torah, which prohibits metaphorical interpretations, and relies upon the simplest and most direct interpretation of any law or ruling. This means that their interpretation of the *Torah* differs, from imposing different dietary laws to the refusal of all medical treatment. Despite this, the Karaites do have their own literary and interpretive tradition and their scholars are prolific writers. Nevertheless, the weight given to these works does not approach that given to the Talmud in Rabbinite communities.

Many Rabbinite scholars have devoted many books to disparaging the Karaite tradition. Maimonides concluded that Karaism is a heretical practice, while the Karaites view Rabbinite Judaism the same way. Relations are often antagonistic and in Constantinople the Jewish and Karaite quarters are separated by a gateless wall.

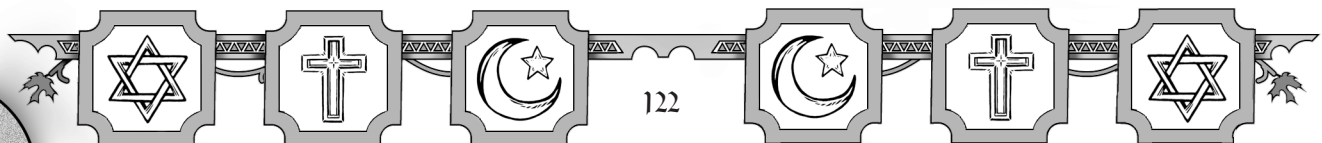
The Karaite community is larger in Muslim lands, including a particularly large presence in Jerusalem, where they are free to practice their religion without Rabbinite interference. It is less common to find Karaites in Christian lands as they inevitably fall foul of the rulings of their more numerous Rabbinite neighbors.

### THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND THE EAST

Though tolerated, Jews in the Byzantine Empire suffer a number of restrictions. They may not build new synagogues, nor may they read the scriptures in Hebrew. They are also prohibited from serving in any position of government. But beyond these restrictions, the authority of their courts is respected, such synagogues as exist enjoy legal protection, and they are free to follow any craft, trade, or profession.

The large Jewish community of Constantinople suffered greatly after the city's fall in 1204. Many were either killed or driven from the city, their properties burned or stolen. The population is much smaller in 1220 and, given the restrictions on rebuilding their synagogues, most must worship within their homes.

The city of Baghdad is home to the Exilarch, the notional head of all diaspora Jews. While the position continues to hold spiritual authority over Jewish communities across Europe and the East, its actual political influence is limited. In addition, this region is the home of Jewish legal study. While rabbis now only rarely submit cases to the great Eastern schools and scholars for consideration, students from a world away view studying here as having great prestige.





## PERSECUTION

As a social minority, Jews often face misunderstanding and persecution by their neighbors, but the extent of this persecution varies by both region and the political landscape. Muslim lands, including Iberia and the East, impose stringent taxes on outsiders, including Jews, and Jews in both Muslim and Christian lands are subject to sumptuary laws restricting what can and cannot be worn.

Legislation established by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 requires all Jews to wear a distinguishing mark of their faith. This is often a badge in the form of a wheel of either red or yellow depending on the country. In England this takes the form of a white band two fingers wide and four

long sewn onto the outer garments (although this changes in around 1270 to a badge in the shape of two yellow tablets). But, while successive Popes may have held openly anti-Jewish sentiments, they also recognize their responsibilities as spiritual leaders to protect the Jews from harm. For instance, Innocent III wrote to all the bishops of France clarifying the Lateran legislation and stating that Jews must not be forced to wear anything that might endanger them. The same council issued laws that forbid Jews from leaving their homes during Holy Week, but these are not intended to oppress Jews, but rather to accept that some tensions exist between Christians and Jews and to limit the opportunity for either side to cause trouble.

Physical attacks are far from

unknown. In 1096, the Bishop of Speyer brought a number of Jews into his castle to shelter them from a rabble, even punishing some of the offenders by having their right hands cut off. But the Jews in neighboring Worms found no such protector as Christian did not want to raise hand against Christian to protect a Jew. 1190 saw a spate of attacks and massacres across England. All but a lucky few of the Jews of Norwich were killed in their homes, while the Jews of York fled to the apparent safety of a local castle. The castle was besieged by a mob demanding that they convert and be baptized, and the surrounded Jews decided instead to take their own lives. Those who could not bring themselves to suicide left the next morning and were murdered by the baying crowd.

## Glossary of Hebrew Terminology

**aggadot** (n.pl.; **aggadah**, sing.) Jewish folk knowledge (stories, myths, legends, folk medicine, etc.) that have no specific religious value; despite this, many aggadot are found in the text of the *Talmud*.

**Ashkenazim** (n.pl.; **Ashkenazi**, adj.) Jews who settled in Christian lands, mostly France and Germany, following the diaspora.

**Ba'al Ov** Necromantic practitioners of summoning magic, a practice strictly outlawed by the Halakha.

**Ba'al Shem** Itinerant practitioners of Divine magic, specializing in folk healing and creation of seggilot.

**Beth Din** The Rabbinic court, comprised of educated men in the community who hear cases of violation of halakhic law, and pass down judgments based on precedents outlined in the scriptures; led by the Rosh Beth Din.

**beit ha-midrash** A school, usually attached to a synagogue, the primary focus of which is Hebrew literacy.

**Gematria** A school of Jewish mysticism characterized by the divination of insights and messages from the *Torah* through a numerology based on a numerical value for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**golem** A being of unliving clay, brought to life through direction of Divine forces by a kabbalist. They can be formed into the shape of any living creature, and will take that living form when filled with the Breath of Life.

**Halakha** (n.pl.; **Halakh**, sing.; **halakhic**, adj.) The Laws, as laid down in the *Torah*.

**Kabbalah** (n.sing.; **kabbalist**, per.n.sing.; **kabbalistic**, adj.) A variety of Jewish

mystical beliefs and practices with the goal of manifesting Divine principles on Earth.

**Karaite** (n.sing.) A small Jewish sect that bases its theology on the *Tanakh* alone, rejecting the Rabbinical *Talmud* and oral interpretations of the Law.

**kashrut** (n.pl.; **kosher**, adj.) The dietary requirements codified in the *Torah*; only food prepared in accordance with these laws is considered kosher.

**Merkavah** A school of Jewish mysticism dedicated to the study of and communion with angels, as represented by the knowledge of their True Names.

**miqveh** A Communal bathhouse, access to which allows practicing Jews to maintain halakhic standards of purity.

**Mitzvot** (n.pl.; **mitzvah**, sing.) Acts in accordance with the Halakha, "lawful deeds;" the *Torah* dictates 613 Mitzvot for practicing Jews.

**rabbi** lit., "teacher." The religious leader of a Rabbinical Jewish community, or of a synagogue's congregation if in a community large enough to require more than one; capitalized when used as a title (e.g., Rabbi Josef).

**Rabbinical Judaism** (**Rabbinite**, adj.) The majority Jewish sect, developed after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the Jewish diaspora. Its theology is grounded in the practice of interpretation and debate surrounding the *Tanakh* and the *Talmud*.

**Sefer** lit., "book." Most frequently used for the *Sefer Torah*, or the ceremonial scrolls of the *Torah* venerated by a Jewish community or synagogue.

**Sefirot** (n.pl.; **Sefirah**, sing.) lit., "emanations." Aspects of Divine power, assem-

bled into a structure of ten known as the Tree of Life that is central to kabbalistic beliefs and practices.

**seggilot** (n.pl.; **seggulah**, sing.) Amulets, fusing folk knowledge and Divine magic, that are worn for physical and/or spiritual benefits.

**Sephardim** (n.pl.; **Sephardic**, adj.) Jews who settled in Muslim and Mediterranean lands following the diaspora.

**Shabbat** The day of rest, in observance of the sixth day of creation, lasting from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. No work may be performed, according to the Halakha.

**Shema** A concise statement of Jewish belief found in *Deuteronomy* 6:4. It is used talismanically in the wearing of tefillin and the posting in a mezuzah at the entrance of a home or building.

**shofar** A musical instrument made from the horn of a kosher animal, usually a ram.

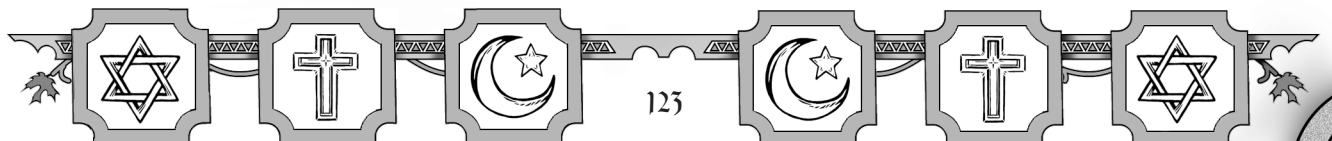
**synagogue** A gathering place for Rabbinical Jews to hear public readings of the *Torah*.

**Talmud** Book of interpretations of the Halakha as delivered in the *Torah*; also includes Jewish cultural wisdom.

**Tanakh** The Hebrew Bible, comprised of the *Torah*, the *Nevi'im* (*Prophets*), and the *Ketuvim* (*Writings*).

**Torah** The first five books of the *Tanakh*, believed to be God's word as transcribed by Moses atop Mount Sinai: *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*.

**yeshivah** (n.sing.; **yeshivot**, pl.) More-advanced schools for promising students, where highly learned rabbis offer instruction in language, philosophy, law, and science.



While disagreements over theology offend churchmen, and debts hang about the nobility, the low peoples of Mythic Europe fear the unknown. The blood libel is the unfounded accusation that the Jewish people practice human sacrifice, drinking the blood of their victims in unholy ceremonies. The first known accusation was in England in 1144 and involved a young boy, William of Norwich. In that case the Norwich Jews were saved by the king's sheriff as they were under his protection. But the accusations persist and are easily raised and exploited.

There is occasional pressure put upon Jews to convert, but they often find support from unlikely sources. Jews continue to be useful to the wealthy as sources of income and credit, and if a Jew were to convert then he would gain legal protection against those who might seize his property and annul debts owed to him. This treatment of Jews as financial resources is a prevalent theme in England and France. Philip II of France started his reign by raiding all the synagogues in his demesne and holding Jews to ransom until they collectively paid 15,000 marks. Unsatisfied, he expelled them from his kingdom in 1182 and seized their property, only to recall them in 1198, keen to take advantage of further financial opportunities. In England, the Jews were taxed hard to secure the ransom to free king Richard, but by 1210 they found themselves subject to arrest so that an account could be made of all monies loaned by them. These draconian measures are set to continue with regions petitioning the king to remove his Jews from their lands, a measure that ultimately culminates with an edict of expulsion in 1290 removing all Jews from England.

## Beliefs and Practices

Jews believe in the one true God and accept no other. God is the source of all things and he created the world, the heavens, and all the creatures that dwell within them. They believe that God has entered in a sacred covenant with the Jewish people, which elevates them above the gentiles and other non-believers. They view the loss of Israel and their subsequent exile as a punishment for sins committed centuries ago, and that with observance and repentance they will one day return to the land of Israel.

The philosopher Maimonides codified the Jewish faith's tenets into 13 articles:

- God exists and that he by himself is the creator of all things.
- God is unique and that he alone is our God.
- God is incorporeal and has no physical form.
- God is eternal and is the first and the last.
- God is the only one to whom it is proper to pray.
- All the words of the prophets are true.
- The prophecy of Moses was true and he was the father of the prophets.
- The whole of the *Torah* was given by God to Moses.
- The *Torah* will not be exchanged, nor will another *Torah* be given by God.
- God knows all the deeds of man and all their thoughts.
- God requites those who keep his commandments but punishes those who do not.
- There will come a messiah.
- There will be a resurrection of the dead whenever it pleases God.

While there is no concept of eternal damnation within Jewish theology, *Gehenna* is the Jewish understanding of Hell. Wicked or sinful souls dwell in *Gehenna* for a period but once cleansed of sins they await the resurrection on the Day of Judgment. On this day all souls will be awakened by a blast on the shofar and will live forever in contentment in the world to come.

## Observances

*Two angels, one good and one evil, accompany a person home each Friday night from the synagogue. When they arrive home, if they find a candle lit, the table covered, and beds arranged, the good angel says, 'May the next Shabbat be the same,' and the evil angel must respond, 'Amen!' Otherwise, if all is not in honor of the Shabbat, the evil angel says, 'May the next Shabbat be the same,' and it is the good angel who must respond, 'Amen!'*

The *Talmud*

On the eighth day after birth, following a naming ceremony, male children undergo the *brit milah*, or circumcision, where the foreskin of the penis is removed in a ritual conducted by the mohal. A Jewish boy becomes a man from the age of

13 when he is called to synagogue to perform a public reading from the *Torah* or interpretation on a passage from the *Talmud* in a ceremony known as the *bar mitzvah*.

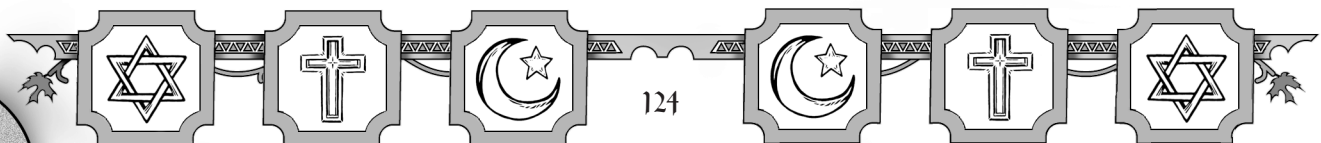
Any man over the age of 13 may lead the community in prayer, perform readings from the *Torah*, and even conduct marriage ceremonies. So while a rabbi has no obligation to undertake these duties, unlike Christian priests, the *semikhab* ceremony is a form of ordination that gives the rabbi spiritual authority over his community. The prospective rabbi is assessed by three peers at the conclusion of which he is invested with authority to pronounce upon halakhic law. From that moment the rabbi is able to exert personal and ceremonial influence and temper Dominion auras as described in Chapter Three. There is little hierarchy within the rabbis, although each city or town has a chief rabbi with authority over the others.

Public prayers and services are expected to be observed by a *minyan*, or quorum. This is typically 10 men of the community. These quorate groups gather in a synagogue, yeshivah, or private home at least three times each day to conduct prayers and blessings, particularly the shema prayer taken from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Starting at sundown on Friday and continuing through to sunset on Saturday, *Shabbat*, or the sabbath, is a holy day of rest commemorating the six days of creation. During this time Jews must refrain from any work within the public domain. An *eruv* is a boundary of wire or rope that confines an area. Anything on the inside of the boundary is considered "private," which allows for essential work during *Shabbat*. The *Shabbat* is reputed to be one of the six primordial things that predated creation.

*Rosh ha-Shanah* is the Jewish new year and occurs on the first day of Tishrei, the date when creation began, and is accompanied by the sounding of the shofar, or ceremonial horn. On this day, everyone living is judged. It is said that those who merit another year of life have their names recorded in the *Sefer ha-Chayyim*, or Book of Names. Those who go unrecorded are destined to die during the year. *Rosh ha-Shanah* is the first of the *Yamim Noraim*, or days of awe.

Ten days after *Rosh ha-Shanah*, at the end of the *Yamim Noraim*, the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, is celebrated. It is the most holy day in the Jewish calendar and sees the closing of the *Sefer ha-Chayyim* and the day on which fates are sealed. The day before *Yom Kippur*, some conduct the ritual of *kapparab* in which a chicken is waved around the head three times, during which the person's sins are transferred to





## Holy Influence

Those with spiritual authority over a people or area may exert Holy Influence, which includes the tempering of an aura. Rabbis have spiritual authority over the auras centered upon and the community served by their synagogue or yeshivah, while Chief Rabbis may extend their influence across their city. The English court recognizes the position of Presbyter Judaeorum, a chief rabbi with authority over all the Jews of England, a role held in 1220 by Josce of London. The Exilarch, in Baghdad, may extend his influence to any community or city that he visits, or to which he sends an authorized deputy.

the bird. The bird is then slaughtered and given to the poor. The kapparah is not greeted with Rabbinical support and is seen by many as a pagan ritual. Despite this it is still popular in some communities, especially with kabbalists.

The harvest festival of *Sukkot* is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur. Once the harvests have been gathered, prayers are said for the continued fertility of the earth and to bring rain. This festival represents the forty years that the people of Israel spent in the wilderness. To commemorate this, families build a *sukkah*, a temporary shelter much like a tent, in which the family eats or sleeps for the seven days of this holiday.

Coming at the end of *Sukkot*, *Shemini Atzeret* celebrates both the beginning and the end of the annual cycle of public *Torah* readings. With the main celebrations taking place in the synagogue, the *Torah* scrolls are removed from the ark and carried around the synagogue seven times accompanied by singing and dancing. This happens twice, once in the evening and once again the following morning. Once the *Torah* scrolls have completed their circuits, the last section of Deuteronomy and the first section of Genesis are read aloud, completing and restarting the readings.

The festival of *Hanukkah* is celebrated towards the end of the month of Kislev and lasts for eight days. It commemorates the miracle of a day's supply of oil that burned in the eternal flame for the eight days it took to rededicate the Temple, which had been defiled by the Syrians.

Falling on the 14th day of Adar, *Purim* is a time of great public celebration where gifts are exchanged, charity is given to the poor, and a special meal is prepared and eaten. The centerpiece of these celebra-

tions is the public reading of the *Book of Esther*, which recounts the rescue of the Jewish people from a murderous plot. As such, it is a celebration of cultural and historical importance rather than religious. The readings are noisy and boisterous affairs, with a lot of shouting, stamping, and even the banging of stones together, designed to erase the name of Israel's enemies written upon them.

*Pesach*, or passover, lasts for seven days beginning with the 15th day of *Nisan* and commemorates the escape of the Jewish people from Egypt. During this week no leavened bread is eaten, which recalls the haste with the Jews fled Egypt upon their release from slavery. The main celebratory meal, the *seder*, is accompanied by a reading of Exodus telling the story of Moses, the ten plagues of Egypt, and the flight of the Jews.

*Shavu'ot* falls seven weeks from the start of *Pesach* and celebrates the revelation on Mount Sinai. This holiday is characterized by homes and synagogues being decorated with plants and garlands of greenery.

*Tisha B'Av* commemorates the destruction of both the First and Second Temple, both events having occurred on the ninth day of the month of Av. It is a time of fasting, and the Book of Lamentations is read in the synagogue during evening services. Kinnot, or dirges in memory of the loss of the Temple, are read or chanted through the day. The observance is marked by considerable austerity. In addition to strict fasting, no leather shoes are to be worn, and washing is forbidden, as is the application of oils to the body, and even marital relations.

Shabbat, holy days, and fast days all begin with morning prayers and readings from the *Torah*, led by any adult male of the community. In theory this means any male age 13 or over, though many rabbis consider it disrespectful to allow someone so young to lead the congregation.

**Story Hook:** As night falls to herald the first day of Tishri, all fire within the covenant is extinguished, and every animal falls silent. A Divine scribe, powerful, massive, and brooding, stalks the halls, writing the names of those present in his great book. But when he reaches one particular maga, the angel stops and puts up his quill without recording her name. And then the angel leaves. And the fires resume and animals take up their calls once more. The maga has ten days to discover what the angel was

doing, how to make amends, and where to find the angel so that her name may be recorded.

## Holy Places

While the Jewish people today are spread across Europe and the East, their homeland is Israel, and it is considered a holy and sacred place. Philosophers such as Judah Halevi considered the land of Israel to be the only place where true Divine prophecy can be heard. These philosophers understand the world as consisting of concentric areas of Divinity

## The Hebrew Calendar

The Hebrew calendar is based upon the cycles of the moon, with numerous corrections to accommodate the solar year, operating within a 19-year cycle. The first month is *Nisan*, but the year is increased during *Tishri* at the festival of *Rosh ha-Shanah*, the Jewish new year. The year is judged from the calculated moment of creation, arrived at by adding the ages of key figures in the bible. The Julian 1st of April in 1220 equates to the 26th of *Nisan* in the Jewish year 4980. The Jewish week starts on Sunday and runs through to Saturday.

MONTH	LENGTH	JULIAN EQUIV. IN 1220
Nisan	30 days	March–April
Iyyar	29 days	April–May
Sivan	30 days	May–June
Tamuz	29 days	June–July
Av	30 days	July–Aug
Elul	29 days	Aug–Sept
Tishri	30 days	Sept–Oct
Cheshvan	29/30 days	Oct–Nov
Kislev	29/30 days	Nov–Dec
Tevet	29 days	Dec–Jan
Sh'vat	30 days	Jan–Feb
Adar	29/30 days	Feb–March
Adar II	29 days	March–April

The month of *Adar II* is added during the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years within the 19-year cycle. *Adar II* will next occur in 1221, 1224, 1226, then in 1229, 1232, 1235, and 1237. Those months of variable length are changed year to year both to ensure that *Nisan* starts at a consistent time and that Holy days are correctly placed.



increasing towards the center, which means that Jerusalem is yet more Divine than Israel, and the site of the Temple yet more Divine still. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Western Wall is all that remains of the Temple, and has a Divine aura of 10.

The synagogue is where the community gathers to meet and offer prayer, but a dedicated building is rare in smaller communities, and in these cases a private residence is used instead. By convention it is more important for the community to build a miqveh, or ritual bathhouse, and a beit ha-midrash, or house of study, but where a synagogue is built, it is often the tallest building within the community.

On the synagogue wall that faces Jerusalem is an ark. Usually a niche built within the wall and covered with elaborate wooden doors, it is used to house the *Sefer Torah* and other biblical books and scrolls. The ark is often draped with richly decorated embroidered curtains. In

Muslim countries and in parts of Christian Spain the ark is less important and the *Sefer Torah* is kept in a smaller case.

The scrolls themselves are wound around two richly decorated wooden rollers, with wealthy communities contributing gold and silver for this purpose. Some have small bells that hang from them, while others are capped by a crown. A hanging lamp is kept perpetually burning in front of the ark in reference to the Eternal Flame that once burned in the Temple.

The bimah, a large reading desk from which the scrolls are read on Shabbat and other holy days, is another essential part of the synagogue. This is often separate from the lectern where prayers are led. Seating can be anything from individual chairs, to rows of quickly erected benches, to elaborate pews. In Ashkenazi synagogues women sit in their own gallery separate from the men, a practice not observed in Sephardic communities.

## Holy Books and Artifacts

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your arm, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates.*

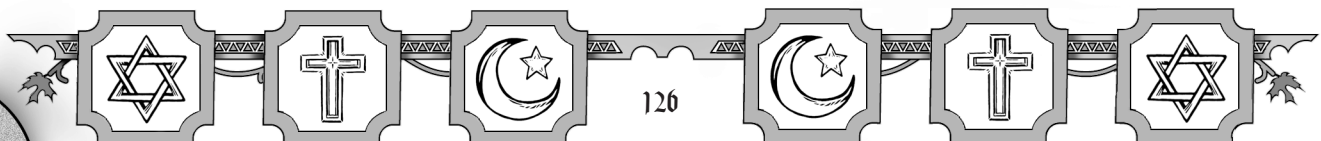
Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The *Torah* is the collected first five books of Hebrew scripture, containing Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and forms part of the *Tanakh*, along with Prophets and Writings. Given to Moses at Sinai, the *Torah* is the transcribed spoken word of God and the 613 Mitzvot that guide Jewish life are derived from it alone. The *Sefer Torah*, a specially prepared *Torah* in scroll form, is a venerated object housed within each synagogue. And while the text of the earthly *Torah* was given to Moses, the True *Torah* is one of the six primordial things that predate creation itself and resides in heaven as a thing of black fire written upon white fire.

The *Talmud* interprets the laws provided by the *Torah*, providing guidance on how each law should be applied and appropriate punishment for transgressions. It also contains cultural content, folklore, poetry, medical remedies etc. vital to defining and maintaining the Jewish identity.

Tefillin, also known as phylacteries, are two small leather boxes containing the transcribed Shema prayer (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the biblical verses Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and Exodus 13:1-10 and 11-16. They are worn strapped to the brow and the left arm during morning prayer as a sign of God's enduring covenant with Israel. They are also associated with protective amulets and it is common for folk remedies to take the form of phylacteries. Ordinarily, tefillin have no innate power, but those once owned by one of the Tzadikim Nistarim (see later) act as a relic with one Faith Point.

Mezuzot are like phylacteries that are bound to door posts, including those of the synagogue. There is a little more freedom in





the form that mezuzot take, from small simple boxes, to ornate scroll cases. But the contents are the same as the tefillin and they act as a reminder to all who enter the house that they are entering a sacred place, in memory of the Temple. Jews of the Karaite tradition use neither tefillin nor mezuzot.

The shofar is a musical instrument formed from the horn of any kosher animal, usually a ram. It gains its significance from having been sounded at the moment when God gave the Torah to the people at Mount Sinai. It is now

sounded both at the new year, Rosh ha-Shanah, and at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. When it is sounded on a holy day or as part of a Jewish exorcism rite, the shofar is treated as a relic with one Faith Point. While silent, or sounded on days other than holy days, the shofar has no power.

The menorah is a candelabrum with either six or eight branches that originate from a central stem. The six-branched menorah references the golden lamp as present in the Second Temple. The eight-

branched menorah, or *chanukkiyah*, is used during Hanukkah and references the eight days during which the oil miraculously fueled the eternal flame. The menorah is said to resemble the burning bush from which Moses gained audience with God, the seven lamps representing the seven days of creation, the arrangement of the lamps mirroring the six fiery wings of the serafim, and as a stylized tree, bearing the lower seven Sefirot.

The Star of David is a six-pointed star formed by the intersection of two

## A Jewish Library

Jewish culture prizes education and many members of the community are able to read and write Hebrew. The following texts are a mixture of religious, philosophical, and mystical works.

### THE TORAH

Summa Theology: Judaism (Level 6, Quality 8), Summa Judaic Lore (Level 4, Quality 8), Summa Rabbinic Law (Level 4, Quality 8)

**Author:** Dictated by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

**Availability:** Any synagogue or yeshivah.

**Description:** The *Torah* is the first section of the collected *Tanakh*, or Hebrew Bible. It contains Genesis, the account of creation; Exodus, the escape of the Jewish people; and Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which tell more of the Jews in the wilderness, and of the law.

**Special Rule:** The *Sefer Torah* is the complete work in its original scroll form. The *sefer*, created according to ritual and custom, is treated as a relic with one Faith Point.

### THE TALMUD

Summa Judaic Lore (Level 6, Quality 8), Summa Theology: Judaism (Level 6, Quality 8), Summa Rabbinic Law (Level 6, Quality 8), Tractatus Canaan Lore (Quality 5)

**Author:** Compiled from various sources from the 2nd through 6th centuries, but originating with the oral *Mishnah* given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

**Availability:** Any synagogue or yeshivah.

**Description:** This work consists of 63 "tractates" containing 613 Mitzvot and is the codification of Rabbinic Law, applying the Biblical commandments and

teachings to everyday life.

The *Talmud* also contains folklore and culturally important material: stories, medicinal remedies, myths, and legends. Collectively, these non-religious tracts are termed *aggadah*.

The *Talmud* is originally an Aramaic work but is most commonly translated into Hebrew.

### THE NEVI'IM

Tractatus Theology: Judaism (Quality 8), Tractatus Dream Interpretation (Quality 8)

**Author:** Compiled from various sources from the 6th through 2nd centuries BC.

**Availability:** Any synagogue or yeshivah.

**Description:** The *Nevi'im*, or *Prophets*, is divided into two sections covering the early prophets and the later prophets. The first section describes the history of the Jewish people from the time of Joshua to the Babylonian Exile. The second section is devoted to prophecies, some of which may have come to pass and others that might yet.

The *Nevi'im* is the second section of the collected *Tanakh*, or Hebrew Bible.

### THE KETUVIM

Tractatus Dream Interpretation (Quality 8), Tractatus Judaic Lore (Quality 8), Tractatus Rabbinic Law (Quality 8)

**Author:** Compiled from various sources by the 2nd century AD.

**Availability:** Any synagogue or yeshivah.

**Description:** The *Ketuvim*, or *Writings*, is a disparate work of wisdom, poetry, prophecies, and history and as such is treated as a collection of tractatus.

The *Ketuvim* is the final section of the collected *Tanakh*, or Hebrew Bible.

### THE MISHNEH TORAH

Summa Rabbinic Law (Level 4, Quality 9)

**Author:** Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon (Maimonides)

**Availability:** This work is spreading to synagogues and yeshivot across Mythic Europe, originating in Iberia.

**Description:** This is the foremost authority on Rabbinic Law, providing the most complete interpretation on the laws by which the Jewish people should govern all aspects of life. These laws are divided into the *mishpatim*, or judgments, and the *huqqim*, or statutes, which includes instructions and provisions for ritual purity.

### GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXED

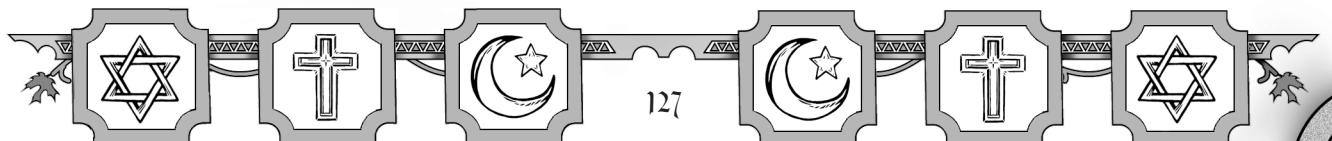
Summa Philosophiae (Level 4, Quality 9), Summa Theology: Judaism (Level 6, Quality 9)

**Author:** Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon (Maimonides)

**Availability:** The private libraries of many Rabbis and philosophers, particularly around the Mediterranean.

**Description:** This complex work presents a philosophical view of the Jewish faith, examining the mundane world through the tenets of faith. Maimonides purposefully obscured the text, inserting ambiguities and contradictions that distract the uneducated student. But these ambiguities find use when applied to the study of Gematria, and many truths are revealed to those who seek them.

**Special Rule:** Students with scores of 3 or more in Gematria may study this book as a Tractatus of Quality 8 on Gematria.



## Culture

The observances and trappings of faith are important from the moment one wakes to the moment one sleeps. This faith is a part of the Jewish heritage, binding together a people divided by vast dis-

equilateral triangles. Like the menorah, it has its origins in ancient Jewish lore and has additional kabbalistic resonance. It is said to resemble the shield that David took into battle, and as such is a direct symbol for God. Furthermore, the six points and the center equate to the

six days of creation followed by the day of rest. The star also represents the seven facets of space identified in the *Sefer Yetzirah*: up, down, east, west, north, and south, and finally the center. The star is most commonly used within kabbalistic circles.

## A Jewish Library (cont'd)

### SEFER YETZIRAH

Summa Kabbalah (Level 4, Quality 6)

**Author:** The Biblical Abraham

**Availability:** The private libraries of those who practice Kabbalah.

**Description:** This *Book of Creation* is a key text for those studying Kabbalah and is the principle text of the Ma'asei-Bereshit school of philosophy, which seeks knowledge of the foundations of all creation. It is the source for the ten Sefirot and the 22 pathways that connect them, and it shows how the world is created from the 22 characters of the Hebrew alphabet. It also draws parallels between the Sefirot and the human form, representing it as a divine microcosm, which in turn reveals the mystery of the golem.

There have been innumerable commentaries written on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, mostly in Hebrew but increasingly in Arabic as the practice of Kabbalah grows in Muslim-ruled Iberia.

**Special Rule:** Only once a kabbalist has studied the *Sefer Yetzirah* can he undertake to create a golem.

### SEFER HA-BAHIR

Tractatus Kabbalah (Quality 8), Tractatus Ceremony (Quality 5)

**Author:** Despite its antiquated style, this is the work of Provençal kabbalists practicing post-600.

**Availability:** The private libraries of those who practice Kabbalah.

**Description:** This *Book of Illumination* expands upon the *Sefer Yetzirah*, taking the abstract kabbalistic principles and codifying them into practical knowledge. It is essentially the first true kabbalistic work outside the *Sefer Yetzirah*.

### SEFER HA-RAZIM

Tractatus Craft Amulets (Quality 8), Tractatus Merkavah (Quality 8), Tractatus Ceremony (Quality 5), Tractatus Dominion Lore (Quality 12)

**Author:** Revealed to Noah by the

angel Raziel.

**Availability:** The private libraries of those who practice Merkavah.

**Description:** This *Book of Amulets* concerns angels, angelic powers, and the astral forces that they control. But there is also a list of incantations and enchantments of value to those who craft amulets and charms. The book exhorts the reader to perform all acts of magic in a state of the utmost ritual purity, and describes the correct preparation and treatment of ritual implements, such as knives, lamps, incense, etc, and this provides insight into the Ceremony Ability.

Complete copies of this book are rarely found, sections having been copied and obtained separately. The sections on Ceremony and Dominion Lore are often found translated from the original Hebrew.

**Special Rule:** Hermetic magi who read this book for its knowledge on Craft Amulets gain access to the shape and material bonuses normally open to practitioners of this Jewish mystical practice (see later). Studying from an incomplete volume imposes a penalty of -1 to the reader's Study Total.

### SEFER RAZIEL

Summa Gematria (Level 4, Quality 8), Summa Merkavah (Level 4, Quality 8), Summa Intervention (Level 4, Quality 8), Summa Transcendence (Level 4, Quality 8)

**Author:** Revealed in its original form to Adam by the angel Raziel.

**Availability:** The private libraries of those who practice Gematria and Merkavah.

**Description:** This potent book of sorcery is principally concerned with astral forces, originating from the zodiac and the enumerated names of God. The *Sefer Raziel* in its current form is actually a collection of the tractates revealed to Adam by the angel Raziel and has been compiled in Provençal over the last two hundred years. Those reading this work may notice that there are abundant refer-

ences to the practice of Craft Amulets, but it does not provide enough insight to work from. This suggests that the current work is incomplete.

### THE HECHALOT TEXTS

Tractatus Merkavah or Summoning (Quality 8)

**Author:** Various mystics from the age of the First Temple onwards.

**Availability:** Translations of these works can be found in mystical libraries across Europe and the East.

**Description:** The *Hechalot Texts* are a collection of scrolls and books that together detail the art of *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, the ancient mystical tradition from which both Merkavah and the Goetic art of Summoning derive. There is no definitive list of works that make up the *Hechalot Texts* and more may yet be discovered in forgotten and abandoned libraries across Mythic Europe and the East.

**Special Rule:** Studying the *Hechalot Texts* is a dangerous pursuit. Due to the frequent allusions and references to demons and demonic powers, any who study the *Hechalot Texts* alone gain a "Curious about the Infernal" Personality trait at +1.

### SWORD OF MOSES

Summa Infernal Lore (Level 5, Quality 8)

**Author:** Anonymous Jewish magicians.

**Availability:** The private libraries of Ba'al Shem, Kabbalists, and the Ba'al Ov.

**Description:** A book of theurgistic magic that purports to list the names of angels, demons, and other spirits. This is an unusual work in that it eschews the expected ritual purity for witchcraft-like practices.

**Special Rule:** Studying the *Sword of Moses* for a season can be treated as a source of insight for researching and integrating the extinct magical form of Canaanite Necromancy (*Ancient Magic*, page 30).



tances through a shared identity. But on a more local level, the sense of community keeps the Jewish people strong, sometimes against great adversity.

In most Muslim cities Jews live side-by-side with their Muslim neighbors and are free to live and worship as they wish. Where Jewish communities live in a separate quarter, it is most often through a desire to be surrounded by their own culture rather than through enforced segregation, and such quarters never have a physical boundary. These same freedoms extend to the kingdom of Sicily, which has always been a place where multiple cultures are accepted.

Unlike the Mediterranean, Jews living in the Christian lands of central and northern Europe are often subject to the fickle wishes of kings and landowners. They are less likely to integrate with their Christian neighbors, and while outright hostility is unusual, they suffer a greater degree of distrust and suspicion than their southern counterparts.

Communities in Muslim lands tend to be larger than those elsewhere. Benjamin of Tudela, a noted traveler who lived in the 12th century, undertook a journey from the Kingdom of Navarre to Jerusalem. He planned his route such that he could visit the towns and cities of Lombardy, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of Sicily, where he recorded the size of the Jewish communities that he found. The cities of Genoa and Pisa had communities no larger than a few families, while the cities of Rome, Capua, and Naples had Jewish populations smaller than five hundred individuals. Further south, he found fifteen hundred Jews living in the city of Palermo. He contrasts Palermo with the cities of Provence, which more closely resembled Genoa and Pisa in having very small Jewish communities.

Most large cities across Mythic Europe and the East have dedicated Jewish quarters. Where these quarters are walled, they are generally referred to as "ghettos" after the first such community in Venice. Walled or otherwise, these Jewish quarters are a microcosm of the wider city, providing everything needed to support the Jewish community. Butchers and bakers prepare foods in accordance with dietary laws, with bakers operating community ovens that whole neighborhoods use. Communal roasting houses, for the cooking of meat, are also not unknown. Traders and craftsmen operate shops, which are frequented by customers from outside the community as well as inside. Schools are maintained to educate children and adult alike.

There are a number of communal buildings, chief of which is the miqveh, or ritual bath-house, used for regular and ceremonial ablutions, including the cleaning of glass and metal utensils. Larger communities have a dedicated synagogue building, and some even maintain communal libraries. Hospitality is a prized virtue, and inns and hospices welcome travelers, usually charging according to the wealth of the traveler. Indeed, it is one of the duties of the shamash to find travelers and ensure that they have suitable food and lodging, either with an inn or otherwise with local families. Hospitals for the care of the sick are also not unknown, especially in the southern lands where the influence of Islamic medicine is strongest.

Entertainment can always be found in the Jewish quarter; music is treasured and dances are frequently held. Games of skill and chance are also common, with little stigma attached to moderate gambling.

#### EDUCATION AND THE YESHIVAH

From education springs the understanding of both heritage and law, and for this reason there is an expectation that every male child will be taught to read Hebrew, and will study the *Torah*. Formal education starts young and takes place

### Sefer ha-Masa'ot

Summa Mediterranean Lore  
(Level 4, Quality 8)

Benjamin of Tudela wrote the *Sefer ha-Masa'ot* (*The Book of Travels*) to chronicle his journeys from Navarre to Jerusalem. Anyone studying this book may gain the specialty "Jewish communities" in this Area Lore, which helps to locate Jewish communities across the Mediterranean and the Levant. Written in Hebrew, copies can be found in larger Jewish communities.

within classes of around ten students in the *beit ha-midrash*, a school that forms part of the synagogue. They are taught for six long days each week, with even parts of the Sabbath given over to examination of the week's learning. Lessons are chanted by the tutor and repeated by the class, the melody aiding memorization. By the age of 13, study moves on from the *Torah* to encompass the *Talmud*, with students often learning Aramaic, the language of the *Talmud*, at the same time.

The privileged few are sent to study the *Talmud* further at one of the yeshivot, or schools, under learned Rabbis. Typically, only the larger cities have their own yeshivah, which means that students

### Noted Philosophers

Isaac Ben Solomon Israeli (850 - 932) was a Tunisian physician in the employ of al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty. Influenced by the works of Plato, Isaac was a monist, believing that all of creation was simply emanations from a single unknowable truth. These beliefs contributed to his study of the fledgling Kabbalah, and he became an accomplished kabbalist.

Saadia Gaon (882 - 942) was born Saadia ben Joseph Al-Fayyumi in Fayyum in Egypt and rose to become Gaon of the Sura yeshivah. He was an outspoken opponent of the Karaite sect and many of his works specialize in pointing out its failings and shortcomings. He also undertook rational analysis of Islamic theology, and these works are still in circulation.

Judah Halevi (1075 - 1140) was a poet born in Toledo who spent much of his life on the move, staying ahead of the encroaching Christian reconquest of Iberia. Educated in vernacular Arabic, he wrote extensive criticisms of the theo-

logical and philosophical ideas of his contemporaries. Judah Halevi's final journey was in fulfillment of the commandment to live in the Holy Land. He reached the outskirts of Jerusalem in 1140, but was murdered, trampled to death, before setting foot in the city.

Born Moses ben Maimon, the physician and philosopher Maimonides (1138 - 1204) is perhaps the most influential writer of his age. His *Guide for the Perplexed*, originally written in Arabic, is an essential work for those wanting to learn of Jewish theology and philosophy. His principle work for Jewish consumption is the *Mishneh Torah*, an unparalleled authority on Jewish law and lore.

Samuel ben Judah ibn Tibbon (1150 - 1230) is known more for his translations of others' works, particularly Maimonides, than for any original philosophy. But while he has written little himself, he has a profound understanding of philosophy, theology, and Kabbalah. He can be found, until his death in 1230, in the city of Marseilles.

from smaller towns and more remote villages must leave home, and those who can not afford it, or those without a patron, come to the end of their education. The great yeshivot of Babylon are considered the pinnacle of Jewish scholarship. The leaders of these schools are afforded the title of *Geonim*, and students from across Europe and the East travel to the cities of Nehardea, Pumbedita, and Sura. The Karaite sect operates yeshivot in both Jerusalem and Damascus, though given the small size of this tradition, neither yeshivah is particularly large or influential.

As well as the Torah and the Talmud, students must also study the *responsa*, or written judgments on given questions of law presented to learned Rabbis. Given the number and size of books that must be studied, it is rare that any one student can afford to own copies for himself and this gives rise to the memorization of entire volumes by students. Such books as are available are often written in the vernacular language, though using Hebrew characters. This is more common in Muslim lands where many books are translated into Arabic for the consumption of those schooled only in the vernacular. This practice rarely happens in Christian lands, where Latin is almost never used.

Learning is given such importance in Jewish society that adults of all backgrounds strive to continue their education. This usually takes the form of communal study sessions held in the synagogue, where commentaries on the *Talmud*, or the *Talmud* itself, are explained.

Formal education is a predominantly male pursuit, but there are no proscriptions against the education of girls. In fact, so many Jewish families make arrangements for the education of their daughters that there is little distinction. While it is less common to see women undertake the rigorous further education afforded by the yeshivah, they are often capable of reading and writing the vernacular tongue, either for poetic or commercial pursuits.

## MARRIAGE

The Talmud speaks extensively about marriage, which is seen as more of a secular or civil act than a sacrament. The *ketuvah*, or marriage contract, specifies a mohar to be paid by the groom to the bride's parents, and a dowry to be brought with the bride into the marriage.

Marriages are usually arranged through a professional marriage arranger, or *shadchan*, and the bride and groom are often very young, barely more than children. Families task the *shadchan* with find-

ing suitable spouses for their children and helping to ensure the *ketuvah* is in order.

Engagement is followed by a long period, often a year, which concludes with betrothal and marriage. The groom is responsible for providing a feast for the community lasting at least three days, though most communities contribute in order to ease the burden.

## DEATH

May his great name be magnified and sanctified in the world that He has created according to His will. May he establish His kingdom during our lifetime and during the lifetime of Israel. Let us say, Amen.

May God's great name be blessed forever and ever. May his holy name, blessed be he, be blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, raised and lauded, elevated and honored, adored and acclaimed, above and beyond all blessings and songs and praises which can be uttered. Let us say, Amen.

May there be peace and life for all of us and for all Israel. Let us say, Amen.

Let He who makes peace in the heavens, grant peace to all of us and to all Israel. Let us say, Amen.

### *The Mourner's Kaddish*

Respect for the dead is a paramount concern in Jewish culture. Upon death, the body of the deceased is washed and prepared by the immediate family members, with prayers spoken in the home of the deceased, and burial follows quickly. The body is not left alone until burial. The funeral preparations are for the close family but the wider community has a duty to attend the actual burial. Prayers and orations during the burial are uncommon and the body is buried with its feet towards Jerusalem.

There are a number of traditions that govern funeral rites. In some areas the scattering of coins around the body in order to pay off evil spirits is common. In others, the spirits are scared away by the sound of breaking pots. And, by convention, children are forbidden from following the funeral procession or attending the funeral.

A period of mourning is observed for

seven days following the burial, during which time the mourners remain at home, refrain from work, and abstain from attending synagogue, saying prayers in the home instead. Other rules are also observed, such as not changing clothes, cutting one's hair, and even sitting only on the floor rather than on chairs throughout the mourning period.

Widows often retain rights to their husband's property but this is not guaranteed. Where succession is contested such cases are decided upon by a rabbi and the widow is expected to produce a witness to confirm the death of her husband.

*Story Hook:* A wealthy Jewish woman approaches the covenant for help in confirming the death of her husband. He was a merchant who left for the Holy Land a year ago. She has since received word that his ship sank with the loss of all aboard. But without a witness to the death she is unable to remarry. She believes that the magi can provide witness to her husband's state, through the use of their magic and the coercion of spirits. But when the magi cast their spells, they discover the man still alive and an unwilling consort to an underwater faerie. Do they rescue the merchant or take the woman's money and stand witness to his death anyway?

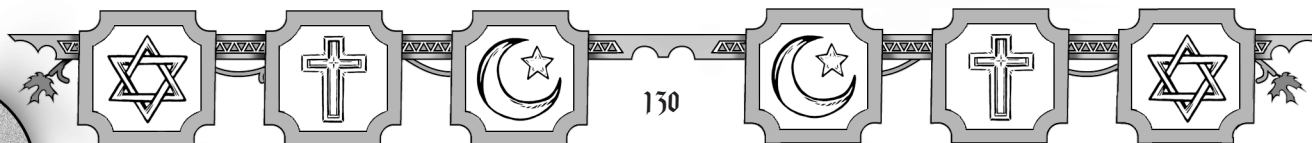
## Halakha

The law of the kingdom is the law.

### *The Talmud*

The Jewish people have been given a guide to good behavior through the 613 Mitzvot, or commandments, gained through Rabbinic study of the Torah. These mitzvot provide guidance on moral issues, such as not to kidnap and not to rob; cultural issues, such as marriage, learning, and what foods may be eaten; and religious matters, such as the mitzvah to know that there is a God.

Daily life is governed not only by the mitzvot but by the interpretations laid down in the Oral Torah, the *Talmud*, and increasingly in the various attempts to codify these interpretations in such works as the *Mishneh Torah* and the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*. Collectively, this body of Jewish





law is termed Halakha.

This ongoing interpretation of the law is important as not all of the mitzvot have equal standing. Some mitzvot apply only to those living in the land of Israel, or to specific times and places such as in the age of the Temple; rules on ritual purity and sacrificial practices serve little function outside of the Temple. This adjudication of the law is the primary concern of the Rabbis, and the Halakha is often termed Rabbinical Law.

One of the key principles in the *Talmud* is that the laws of the land are also laws that the Jewish population must observe. This is principally the pragmatic acceptance of the Jewish status as a minority, but the reliance on local laws, supplemented with the Halakha, is what binds the Jewish people to the land. The Halakha is adjudicated within the Beth Din, a Rabbinic court where cases are brought and decided. Jewish communities are normally given the right to maintain these courts and exercise authority over their own people.

#### CHEREM AND KARET

While fines and bans are the usual punishments for the breaking of the law, Halakha recognizes two forms of excommunication. Cherem is a civic ostracism that casts the individual or group out of Jewish society. The ostracism may be temporary or indeterminate, essentially lasting until amends can be made. The act of cherem is a public affair centered on the synagogue and is publicized with full ritual. The bans imposed are the niddui, under which the individual is expected to dress as though in mourning, must refrain from cutting his hair, and refrain from wearing shoes. The individual is shunned by his community, is not counted towards the minyan, and one who dies while under cherem is not afforded the formal funeral rites. The *Talmud* identifies 24 crimes that may be punished by cherem.

The nezifah is a temporary sanction, usually lasting no longer than a day, in which the punished individual is expected to confine himself to his house and refrain from any activity designed for business or pleasure. The nezifah is imposed as a means of making the individual consider their behavior.

Individuals under cherem face no further punishment in the afterlife. But those under the more serious karet essentially undergo a spiritual death. It is said that the souls of those who die under karet go on to become dybbukim, spirits cut off from heaven that then possess the living.

The *Mishnah* identifies 36 crimes which must be punished by karet. Characters punished through karet are treated as excommunicates as described in Chapter Four. Both cherem and karet can be lifted by open acts of teshuva, or repentance.

## Professions

Many Jewish communities are self-contained villages, living off the land like their gentile neighbors, and agriculture is an important part of Jewish life. As farmers these Jews are part of a wider agricultural community, exchanging help with their gentile neighbors, gathering harvests, and entering partnerships on the ownership of land and livestock. And as far away as Persia, Jews enjoy many charters giving them a monopoly on the ownership and operation of olive presses.

Viticulture is an important industry across Iberia, Italy, and France. While Jews are mostly prohibited from owning land there are local exceptions. In France, several Jewish families own large vineyards, producing and selling both red and white wine at home and abroad. But these lands are subject to the whims of the king and have been repeatedly seized in the past.

Despite Jewish craftsmen being excluded from Christian guilds, they form their own guilds and in practice they experience little discrimination, to the extent that it is common for Christian

## Dietary Laws

The many dietary laws specified within the mitzvot are collectively known as kashrut, and the word kosher refers to things, including food, that have been made in accordance with Jewish law and are therefore fit for use. The following principles apply to kosher food.

- Certain animals may not be eaten. This includes all parts and products of the forbidden animal including flesh, eggs, and milk.
- Those animals that may be eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with kashrut.
- All blood must be drained from the animal before it is eaten.
- Even if an animal is permitted, certain parts may not be.
- The meat of an animal may not be eaten with dairy products.
- Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food until purified.

children to be apprenticed with Jewish craftsmen and vice versa. The need for religious observance is even enshrined in the apprenticeship contracts, with agreements secured that Jewish apprentices must be provided with kosher food by

## Proscriptions Against Magic

There are many prescriptions against using magic or consulting with either magicians or spirits within the Jewish mitzvot. Some forbid membership of the Order, specific Houses, or other traditions by implication:

- Not to worship idols – Exodus 20:5
- Not to imitate idolaters in custom or clothing – Leviticus 20:23
- Not to tattoo the skin – Leviticus 19:28

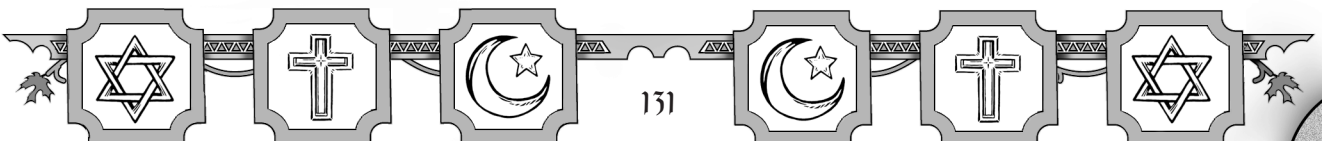
Others restrict Jews from swearing idolatrous oaths:

- Not to swear in the name of an idol – Exodus 23:13
- Not to make a covenant with idolaters – Deuteronomy 17:2

And others specify what kinds of magic Jews cannot perform:

- Not to perform acts of *kessem* (sorcery) – Deuteronomy 18:10
- Not to go into a trance to foresee events, etc. – Deuteronomy 18:10
- Not to engage in astrology – Leviticus 19:26
- Not to mutter incantations – Deuteronomy 18:11
- Not to attempt to contact the dead – Deuteronomy 18:11
- Not to consult the *ov* (ghosts) – Deuteronomy 18:11
- Not to consult the *yidoni* (wizards) – Deuteronomy 18:11

It is difficult for a Gifted Jew to remain true to both his faith and his magical arts. However, the Karaites practice a literal interpretation of scripture and, by restricting both their learning and practices, can integrate Hermetic magic with their religious obligations. See the Karaite Holy Societies in the Characters section later.



## The Radhanites

The Jewish Radhanite merchants from southern Iraq are known to be gifted with languages and to travel extensively across Mythic Europe and the East. They are the perfectly placed to trade spices, silks, and other exotic Eastern goods with the West in exchange for Western wool, tin, and timber.

But notoriously, some Radhanites also trade in slaves. Much of the Muslim world permits slavery and the Radhanites, with their far-reaching trade routes, are able to bring black slaves from the Sudan as well as fair-skinned slaves from the West. These slaves are usually given to the Radhanites by Christian raiders in trade for other goods

and the merchants rarely capture or abduct slaves themselves.

### STORY HOOK:

A covenant on the outskirts of Christendom becomes embroiled in a conflict between a Christian noble and the unconverted native population. Some of the grogs are captured by the noble and quickly traded with a Radhanite merchant, destined to be sold into slavery in the East. The magi must find their grogs and free them from the Radhanite. But if they harm the merchant they incur the wrath of his patron, a powerful Muslim sorcerer.

their hosts. And many market charters contain provision for restricting markets and fairs being held on Shabbat, mandating that they be held on days more agreeable to Jewish craftsmen and merchants. But there continue to be local variations on this, and Jews in France and Germany face more restrictions than elsewhere.

But as Jews find it difficult to own land outright or to fully engage with guilds, the buying, selling, and transport of goods has become an important and profitable profession. Silk continues to be a key commodity, as with other textiles and the dyes, particularly brazilwood from the far east, required to process the raw materials. Many Jews across the Mediterranean and the Byzantine Empire are engaged in the silk trade. Under Frederick II, Jews enjoy a monopoly on the production and dyeing of silk throughout Sicily. At the same time, in Muslim Spain, Jews have a monopoly on the production and import of crimson dyes used in processing textiles.

There are well-known Jewish merchant families in Barcelona and Majorca that own and operate large shipping fleets that navigate the known world. Smaller operations also sail out of the more prominent ports of Genoa and Venice. These maritime merchants take wine, furs, wool, tin, and other commodities to the East and return with exotic spices, timber, gemstones, and precious metals.

Jewish merchants in particular are comfortable with numerous languages as they have contacts throughout Europe and the East. And this network of contacts supports another key profession associated with the Jews: finance. Jewish merchants avoid much of the risk of carrying

large sums of money by carrying letters of credit, or bills of exchange, which can be presented to Jewish merchants, thereby guaranteeing payment in an agreed recognized currency. And where merchants work together, they can pool their capital and put it to work for them by providing loans at interest, the practice of usury.

While Jews must observe mitzvot prohibiting the lending of money to fellow Jews at interest, they are specifically allowed to lend money to gentiles. In most cases this is a profitable sideline, though a few merchants use it as their only source of income. And while Christians and Muslims are themselves forbidden from usury, they often partner with Jewish merchants, providing the capital while the Jewish merchant arranges and manages the loan and any interest gained. So widespread is the practice of Jewish usury that kings take considerable loans from them. While there is profit to be had in this, kings also have the power to cancel such loans, and even Pope Innocent III ordered the cancellation of all such debts in 1215 for all who took the cross ahead of the crusade. But increasingly, all loans are recorded, either through local notaries or in national registers, and some rulers offer protection. In 1214, Philip the Fair of France ordered the repayment of all loans to Jews before undertaking the crusade.

Jews in the East learn the rudiments of medicine, another important profession, at an early age; when Maimonides' merchant brother died at sea, Maimonides took up medicine to provide for his family. Under the liberal East, Jewish physicians are able to serve the highest powers in the land and gain fame and fortune. Contrast this with the West, where Christians do not in gen-

eral employ the services of Jews, and where secular learning among Jews is less common. Instead of physicians with true understanding of medicine, Jewish communities rely upon either Christian physicians or the folk remedies of the Ba'al Shem. As ever, Spain and Provence display a compromise as Christian kingdoms where secular learning is valued and where Jewish physicians serve commoner and king alike. But as perpetual outsiders, Jewish doctors are susceptible to suspicion of wrongdoing and it is not unknown for accusation of poisoning to be made in cases where the patient has died.

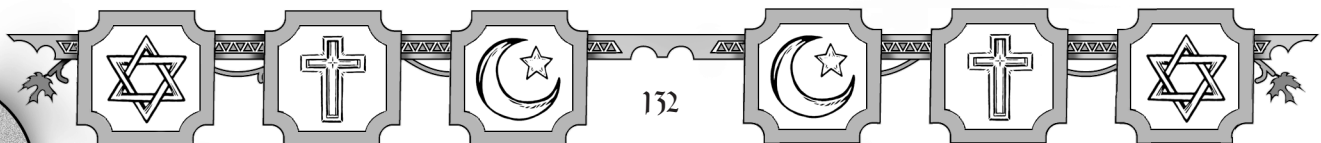
Because of the wide and varied education enjoyed by learned Jews, particularly with regard to languages, some Jews make their living as academics, tutors, poets, and translators. These figures are important in larger Jewish communities, and in the courts of the wealthy.

## Folklore

The Jewish people have a well-developed folklore beyond the confines of religious devotion. Many holy texts, particularly the *Talmud*, contain aggadot, a mixture of folklore, legends, and maxims with cultural rather than religious significance. One of the most popular concerns the mythical city of Chelm, which is a place reputedly run by fools, who in the face of trivial problems hit upon ever more foolish and outlandish solutions. Many jokes and stories make reference to the "Wise Men of Chelm" and it is an easy task to make fun of someone by claiming they come from Chelm.

The Lamed Vav Tzadikim Nistarim are the 36 hidden righteous ones; 36 good souls in each generation that are necessary to sustain the world. And out of these 36, one in each generation has the capacity to become a messiah. The Nistarim go about their lives usually unaware of their significance. But there comes a moment in the lives of each of the Nistarim in which they must choose to do the right thing. If any choose the wrong path, then great calamity will befall the world. Those suspected of being Nistarim in their lifetimes are afforded great reverence.

The Yeshivah shel Malah is one of the rewards that awaits the righteous and the worthy. It is a place where the True Torah is revealed in all its divine glory and where the dead can study it under the instruction of the angel Zagzagel. Legends persist that the Yeshivah shel Malah may be reached by the living through a hidden earthly gateway, per-





haps a reference to a Celestial regio.

Jewish folklore is filled with ghost stories. But these ghosts are usually confined to the cemetery, and it is a common theme that the conversations of the dead can be overheard there. Another form of ghost is the *ibbur*, a spirit, usually divine in nature, that co-inhabits a body so that its wisdom may be expressed through its host for a short time. But this is very close to demonic possession and it is considered unwise to seek out an *ibbur* for fear of finding something else. Should a person be inhabited by an *ibbur* or demon, all is not lost. Rabbinic and kabbalistic literature goes into great detail on the exorcizing of such spirits and the rules from Chapter Four of this book can be applied by rabbis, kabbalists, or the Ba'al Shem. In this case, recitation of the psalms replaces holy water and the cross as used in Christian exorcism rites.

The figure of Rav Hamnuna Sava appears in the *Talmud* as a sage or wise man. The character has changed through the centuries and is now more folklore than fact, transforming into a faerie. The faerie Rav Hamnuna Sava appears as a humble ass-driver claiming to know the secrets of the Oral *Torah*. He offers to share his secrets, which are of incalculable use to kabbalists, but first puts the prospective students through arduous and humiliating trials. Those who show humility and due deference are rewarded with insights that they must keep secret or lose forever.

The Evil Eye, a manifestation of ill-will and jealousy that causes harm to any who fall under its gaze, is a constant fear for ordinary Jewish people. The effects are most often minor and inconvenient but in extreme cases the Evil Eye can cause illness and death. In truth, the acts are perpetrated by countless demons that act upon stray thoughts. Some act upon glances, others listen for rash words, while others still hear



silent curses as they cross unguarded minds. But there are still some simple measures that can be taken. Door and window frames are often painted blue to ward against the Evil Eye, and amulets and phylacteries achieve the same effect. The demons behind the Evil Eye find these things inimical and they are usually enough to defend against them.

Any magical or non-magical charm expressly made by a Ba'al Shem is sufficient to ward against the Evil Eye.

There is also a breed of faeries that emulate the Evil Eye, and most observe the same folk charms that affect demons, represented through the Traditional Ward Flaw (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 52). In fact, magi of Jewish descent often find themselves affected by similar wards, represented by the Minor Flaw Vulnerable to Folk Tradition (see the insert nearby or *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 107).

**Story Hook:** A powerful faerie presence turns the Jewish quarter into the mythical city of Chelm, where everything is nonsense and reason is turned upside-down. The community awakes to find that the cobbled streets have been broken up so that the carts do not clatter upon the cobbles, the community oven has been broken up, its pieces spread throughout the city, so that

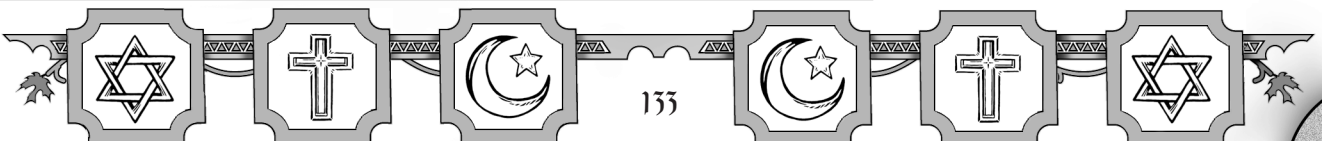
## New Flaw: Vulnerable to Folk Tradition

Minor, Hermetic

The magus's magic is susceptible to various folk-remedies for averting hostile spells. Any target who is aware that the magus has just used his magic may attempt a folk ritual, such as making a sign against evil, or spitting, and so forth. This grants the target a Magic Resistance equal to (5 x the target's Magic Lore), or 0 if the target does not have this Ability, against the magus's magic only. Furthermore, someone with Magic Lore may be able to devise a manner to break a lasting enchantment, such

as sprinkling with salt or lying on an iron bed. This typically requires an Intelligence + Magic Lore roll against an Ease Factor of (9 + the spell's magnitude) or greater.

In the case of Jewish magi, targets are protected by touching any charm made expressly for protection against magic by a Ba'al Shem or any character with the Craft Amulets Ability. Such charms provide resistance equal to (5 x the maker's Magic Lore). The charm itself does not need to be enchanted or magical in any way.





## Sample Celestial Regiones

Chapter Two of this book describes Celestial regiones, places where the raw power of the Divine touches upon Earth. There are two such places that appear in Jewish folklore; the Yeshivah shel Malah, and the City of Luz.

### YESHIVAH SHEL MALAH

The angel Zagzagel presides over the Yeshivah shel Malah, which takes the form of a boundless synagogue made of blinding white light and burning black fire. The souls of the learned and the pious can be found here basking in the knowledge emanating from the True Torah.

The living may seek the Yeshivah but every scholar must find it in his own way, either through studying from a hundred teachers, selflessly teaching all who ask, or even simply seeking the answer to an impossible question. Only when the scholar has proved himself worthy will the Yeshivah be revealed.

The Yeshivah shel Malah is a single layer, level 5 regio.

### THE CITY OF LUZ

The Divine City of Luz, with every surface painted blue, is the city of immortality and the Angel of Death is unable to enter its gates. Those within the city walls

age but never die. They suffer the encroaching years but never reach an end, until they leave. All within the city exist in a state of Divine grace, engaged in acts of adoration, prayer, and study.

The City of Luz can only be reached through an opening in an almond tree, found somewhere in the Holy Land. It is said that Solomon knew of its location through talking with birds that had overflowed the city. Divine visions of the tree may be summoned by the pious, visions that act as a pathway to the city. It takes a Purity (or Merkavah) + Intervention miraculous effect of base 35 to summon a pathway to the city gates, and this first requires a Holy Connection to the city or the tree.

Characters suffering one or more incapacitating wounds who are taken to the City of Luz make recovery rolls as normal (ArM5, page 179), but any rolls of 0 or less impose an Aging Point in any physical Characteristic.

The city walls exist within a level 3 regio, accessible through the almond tree. Those entering the city proper enter a level 7 regio, and it is here that they find themselves immune to death's grasp. Those within the city can leave at any time, but if the character has spent any longer than a year in the city doing so forces an immediate aging roll using the character's true age and a penalty of -1 for every five years of the character's stay.

everyone may share, and every Rabbi has been sent into a deep sleep so that they might not transgress the mitzvot that they constantly warn against. The community must find the faeries responsible and outwit them in a game of ludicrous logic, forcing them to move on and so return their home to normal.

## Characters

While some Virtues and Flaws are forbidden to Jewish characters, this section presents a new set of Virtues and Flaws that describe Jewish society and mysticism, along with new Abilities that build upon the Holy Methods and Powers presented in Chapter Three.

## Virtues

Given the restrictions imposed upon Jews, certain Social Status Virtues are forbidden for Jewish characters. Both Knight and Landed Noble imply a feudal position within society, which Jews cannot occupy. Neither can they qualify for Magister in Artibus or any other standard scholastic position, and must take Educated (Hebrew) instead to gain access to Academic Abilities. Naturally, they are forbidden from taking Monastic Vows or any other role within the Christian church, and the proscription against swearing Oaths of Fealty prevents them from taking positions in Christian trade and craft guilds. Lastly, given the frequent restrictions on carrying arms and wearing armor that Jews experience they may not take the Warrior Virtue.

### ASTROLOGICAL MAGIC

*Minor, Supernatural*

Schooled both in astrology and in kabbalistic mysticism, this Virtue allows

your character to add his Artes Liberales score to Kabbalah totals.

### BA'AL SHEM

*Free, Social*

Your character is a Ba'al Shem, a master of the Divine name, a folk healer and worker of wonders. He is a member of the Ba'al Shem Holy Tradition and treats Adjuration, Blessing, Craft Amulets, and Invocation as favored Abilities.

### CRAFT AMULETS

*Minor, Supernatural Ability*

Your character begins with Craft Amulets 1, a Supernatural Ability that represents his ability to make seggilot, small objects imbued with supernatural effects and harness the power of words and symbols (see Abilities).

### DREAM INTERPRETATION

*Major, Supernatural Ability*

Your character begins with Dream Interpretation 1, a Supernatural Ability that represents his ability to divine the truth behind prophetic dreams. The value of dream interpretation is well understood in Jewish society and, given its Biblical associations, it is an accepted form of divination. This Ability may be used in place of Meditation as a Holy Method when activating holy powers (see Abilities).

### EDUCATED (HEBREW)

*Minor, General*

Your character has been educated in a beit ha-midrash or yeshivah and may purchase Academic Abilities at character generation. Your character gains 50 extra experience points to be spent on some or all of the following: Hebrew, Aramaic, Theology: Judaism, and Judaic Lore. Characters from Iberia or the East may also spend some of these points on Arabic.

### GEMATRIA

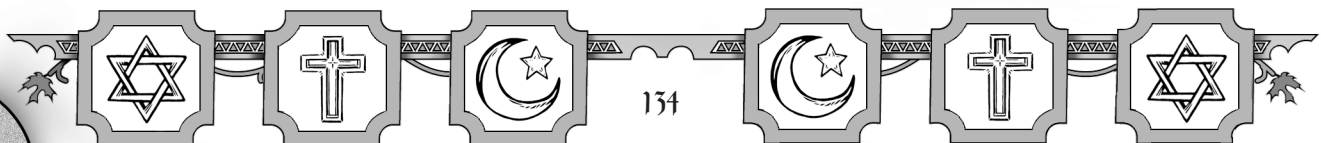
*Major, Supernatural Ability*

This Virtue confers the Supernatural Ability Gematria 1. It is only available to characters with the Education (Hebrew) Virtue. This Ability may be used in place of Meditation as a Holy Method when activating holy powers (see Abilities).

### KABBALAH

*Major, Supernatural Ability*

This Virtue confers the Supernatural Ability Kabbalah 1. It is only available to characters with the Education (Hebrew) Virtue. This Ability may be used in place of Invocation as a Holy Method when activating holy powers (see Abilities). It also gives you the unique ability to con-





struct a golem — a holy creature brought to life through Divine blessing.

#### KABBALIST

*Free, Social Status*

This is a special Mythic Companion Social Status Virtue and must be taken by all kabbalists. It is compatible with all other Social Status Virtues and Flaws.

#### MERKAVAH

*Major, Supernatural Ability*

This Virtue confers the Supernatural Ability Merkavah 1. It is only available to characters with the Education (Hebrew) Virtue. Merkavah is the knowledge of kabbalistic prayers, rituals, and invocations designed to purify the soul. This Ability may be used in place of Purity as a Holy Method when activating holy powers (see Abilities).

#### PHILOSOPHIC MAGIC

*Minor, Supernatural*

Schooled both in academic philosophy and in kabbalistic mysticism, this Virtue allows your character to add his

Philosophiae score to Kabbalah totals.

#### RABBI

*Minor, Social Status*

Your character is an ordained Rabbi, a teacher and wise man of the Jewish community. He is afforded the respect due from all within his community, who look to him for leadership and guidance. As a rabbi, your character is expected to teach students, to study and write upon the law, and to pass judgment upon cases brought before the the Jewish court.

The rabbi must take the Educated (Hebrew) Virtue to provide the required Academic Abilities. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

#### ROSH BETH DIN

*Major, Social Status*

The Rosh Beth Din, or Head of the Court, presides at the Beth Din rabbinic court. Your character must be (30 – Int) years old to take this Virtue and have scores of at least 5 in Hebrew, Rabbinic Law, and Theology: Judaism. Your character may purchase Academic Abilities at character generation and gains 50 extra experience points to be spent on the required Abilities.

The Rosh Beth Din gains the +2 good Reputation Rosh Beth Din, which applies across his country. This Virtue also includes the effects of the Social Contacts Virtue and you are able to find contacts within any Jewish community that supports a yeshivah. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

#### SHADCHAN

*Minor, Social Status*

The shadchan is a marriage arranger, trusted by prospective parents to find the best matrimonial match for their sons and daughters. The shadchan will ensure a match of backgrounds, wealth, education, and character. He is able to do this by forging relationships with all the families in the community, and because of this the shadchan should be both honest and a good judge of character. The role of shadchan is open to both men and women alike and this Virtue is compatible with any other Minor or Free Social Status Virtue.

The shadchan receives an extra 50 experience points to be spent on social Abilities and an Area Lore appropriate for their community.

#### SHAMASH

*Free, Social Status*

The shamash is the servant of the synagogue and responsible for its well-being. He must ensure that the synagogue is clean and in good repair that it is available for all

## New Flaws

#### MAJOR, HERMETIC

Karaite Magic

#### MINOR, SOCIAL STATUS

Cabai  
Outsider

#### MAJOR, STORY

Tzadik Nistar

#### MINOR, SUPERNATURAL

Evil Eye

the community. He is also responsible for waking the community early each morning so that they can attend prayers and for making announcements concerning services, births, marriages, and deaths.

As a shamash, the character must have the Educated (Hebrew) Virtue.

#### SOFER

*Free, Social Status*

The sofer is the scribe whose role it is to create a new *Sefer Torah*, or repair any fading or damage to an existing scroll, as required. The sofer must be educated and able to read and write Hebrew as the act of scribing the *Sefer Torah* requires knowledge and understanding of the text.

As a sofer, the character must have the Educated (Hebrew) Virtue.

## New Virtues

#### MINOR, GENERAL

Educated (Hebrew)

#### MAJOR, SOCIAL STATUS

Rosh Beth Din

#### MINOR, SOCIAL STATUS

Rabbi  
Shadchan

#### FREE, SOCIAL STATUS

Ba'al Shem  
Kabbalist  
Shamash  
Sofer

#### MAJOR, SUPERNATURAL

Dream Interpretation  
Gematria  
Kabbalah  
Merkavah

#### MINOR, SUPERNATURAL

Astrological Magic  
Craft Amulets  
Philosophic Magic

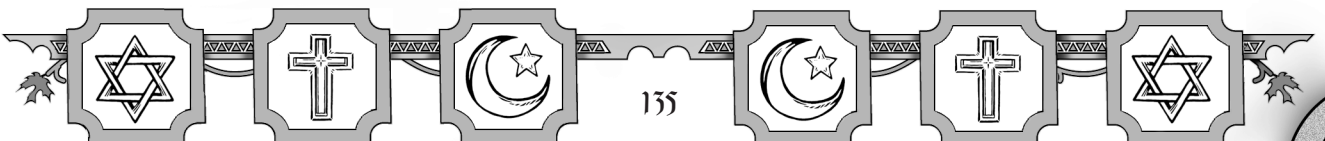
## Flaws

All Jewish characters must take a form of the Outsider Flaw, either the existing Major Flaw for magi and companions, or the new Minor version for grogs. These Outsider Flaws are compatible with other Jewish Social Status Virtues and Flaws.

#### THE EVIL EYE

*Minor, Supernatural*

You character bears the Evil Eye, the uncontrolled potential to bring harm to others around her. Characters making stress rolls in her presence are subject to an additional botch die. Characters may protect themselves through the use of an amulet or a ritual, decided upon by the troupe, which does not need to be magical or supernatural in nature. A magic resistance of 0 or more, including the effect of the Aegis of the Hearth, is also sufficient to guard against this effect.



## GABAI

*Minor, Social Status*

Appointed by the community council, the gabai is the local tax collector. It is his responsibility to ensure that Jewish taxes, payable to the community on such things as wine and meat, are collected from all adult males.

The gabai has a -2 negative Reputation of "Tax Collector" in your his community. This Flaw is compatible with any other Free Social Status Virtue.

## KARAITE MAGIC

*Major, Hermetic*

In order for your character's magic to conform to scripture, all of his magic, including spells, enchantments, and longevity rituals, must be designed with Holy Magic instead of Magic Theory. Because of the strong restrictions imposed upon his magic by his faith, he cannot seek or accept magical or mundane healing from a non-Karaite source, nor can he accept any other magical effect from a non-Karaite.

Karaites are also restricted from practicing divination, astrology, and the summoning or use of spirits, particularly ghosts. There is nothing within their

Holy Magic that prevents them from learning such spells, but casting them renders the caster unclean. Similarly, allowing non-Karaite magic to be cast upon them also renders the Karaite target ritually unclean and their Holy Magic is at risk of failing until they are able to ritually cleanse and purify themselves.

## OUTSIDER

*Minor, Social Status*

Your character belongs to a group that is readily identifiable and distrusted or disliked by most Europeans, such as the Saracens, Jews, or Moors. However, your character lives in a part of the world where people of their culture are more common, such as the Holy Land, or Iberia, or in an insulated or isolated community where his differences are tolerated and even accepted, such as a large city ghetto or a covenant, so this Flaw rarely affects him as badly as it would in other places. Your character has a bad Reputation of level 1 to 3 (depending upon how easy it is to identify him) among the dominant culture in their region, and people from outside of their sheltered community may shun him, persecute themhim or threaten his life and freedom when he

must interact with them. There is no way for your character to lose this Flaw.

This Flaw is usually only appropriate for grogs; companions and magi should take the Major Flaw instead.

## TZADIK NISTAR

*Major, Story*

Your character is one of the Tzadikim Nistarim, one of the 36 hidden righteous upon which the continuation of the world relies. She is destined to face a moment of moral decision, where she and the world through her will be tested. This moment could be small and personal, or it require a very public act. The result of failing in her test has immediate consequences defined by the storyguide. The Dominion may fall in her community or in the place of her moral failure; the Infernal may claim a new soul, or a whole region may face severe hardship until she puts right her failure. She may suspect that she has been chosen as one of the 36, but she does not know in advance what her personal test will be, though it may be discovered by consulting with prophets and learned men.

## Shape and Material Bonuses

Characters using the Craft Amulets Ability may use the following bonuses when enchanting amulets. Others may also be used with the troupe's agreement. Herbs and vegetables can only be used in the crafting of Minor Amulets, while minerals and gemstones can also be used in Major Amulets. The total bonus provided by shapes or materials is limited to the character's Craft Amulets Score.

**Agate:** +2 surefootedness (including riding)

**Amethyst:** +3 evil spirits

**Asparagus:** +2 heart or eyes

**Beryl:** +1 aid digestion

**Bitter Vetch:** +2 bowels

**Black Cumin:** +2 ease chest pain

**Carbuncle:** +3 longevity and aging

**Cucumbers:** +2 for laxative effects

**Dates:** +2 treatment of hemorrhoids and constipation

**Emerald:** +3 granting courage

**Lentils:** +2 prevent croup

**Garlic:** +2 improve vitality, +3 kill internal parasites

**Gold:** +1 divination, +2 medicine, +3 justice

**Jasper:** +3 temperance

**Milt:** +2 healthy teeth

**Onyx:** +1 charm

**Radishes:** +2 aid digestion

**Ruby:** +1 fertility

**Sapphire:** +1 medicine, +2 eyes

**Silver:** +1 purity, +3 protection against spirits

**Topaz:** +2 alleviate fever, +1 love potions

The crafting of amulets has been in practice for thousands of years, during which time combinations of shape, material, and ritual have been discovered that provide *additional* bonuses:

**Copper amulets** inscribed with the name of a person and buried at the four compass points surrounding the caster provide a bonus of +10 to discover the whereabouts of that person.

**Copper plates** worn inside the shoes provide a bonus of +10 to effects that ward against wild animals.

**Forming the amulet from a coin** provides an additional +1 bonus.

**Pottery bowls** inverted and buried beneath doors provide a bonus of +10 to effects that ward the room or building against non-Divine spirits.

A **seal of wax or metal** can be used to restrict an effect to or exclude the effect from the group of people it represents.

Restricting the effect provides a bonus of +5 to the Craft Amulets total. Common examples are House, city, covenant, or faith. A seal can be created bearing the name of an individual, which restricts the effect to just that individual.

**Terafim** are small pottery figurines commonly used in both divination and witchcraft. The use of a terafim to express an Understanding or Cursing effect provides a bonus of +5.

The **Star of David** provides a +5 bonus to protection.

Amulets specifying how they are worn or buried are active only when used according to the specified ritual.

Colors are important in Jewish mysticism and also contribute to shape and material bonuses.

**Black:** +1 loss, +2 mourning

**Blue:** +1 good fortune, +2 protection from evil

**Green:** +1 beauty

**Purple:** +1 love or kindness

**Red:** +1 the Infernal, +2 fear

**White:** +1 compassion, +2 purity, +3 holines



## Abilities

The following new abilities are appropriate for Jewish characters.

### CRAFT AMULETS

The Ba'al Shem tradition of Jewish folk magicians uses the Craft Amulets Ability in combination with their Holy Methods and Powers to aid and protect individuals and places.

All amulets are created with a Touch range and the new Worn duration, which is equivalent to Sun. The target may be Individual, Room, Structure, or Boundary. In the case of targets other than Individual, the amulet is considered Worn while it is in contact with or buried beneath the target. The Boundary target would normally imply a ritual but in the case of amulets, this instead adds a further 20 to the effect level. The Worn duration lasts until either the amulet is broken or is removed from the target.

Two types of amulet may be created, Minor and Major. Minor amulets are designed for a specific Individual target and take (12 – Craft Amulets to a minimum of 1) hours to create. The crafter's Craft Amulets Total must be at least double the target level of effect. They usually last a matter of days or weeks, determined by the quality of their construction.

Major amulets take a season or more to create. Once the level of effect has been determined, the craftsman must spend consecutive seasons working on the amulet. For each point by which the Craft Amulets Total exceeds the level of effect the crafter accumulates one point until the target level has been reached. The craftsman can work on only one Major Amulet in a season.

**CRAFT MINOR AMULET TOTAL:**  
Dexterity + Craft Amulets + Shape and Material Bonus + Dominion Aura Bonus

**CRAFT MAJOR AMULET TOTAL:**  
Dexterity + Craft Amulets + Holy Method + Holy Power + Shape and Material Bonus + Dominion Aura Bonus

If using the rules from *City & Guild*, amulets typically have 1 Damage Level but non-perishable components may be reused.

Amulets have a penetration of 0 but they can contain Holy or Arcane Connections to a given target, treating the base multiplier as the new penetration score, as well as sympathetic connections, which modify the base penetration as normal. The effects of both Minor and Major Amulets can also have penetration designed into the effect at a cost of one

level for two points of penetration. This is in addition to penetration gained through arcane and sympathetic connections, and is not modified by sympathetic connections.

**Specialties:** Specific Holy Methods or Powers, particular shapes or materials (Supernatural)

### DREAM INTERPRETATION

Jewish lore understands dreams, such as those experienced by the biblical David and Joseph, to be one of the chief vehicles through which God and the angels bestow visions and prophecies upon humanity.

The Dream Interpretation Ability has two uses. The first is a form of Meditation, as per the Holy Power, used in combination with Holy Methods. In this case the character must engage in ritual prayer for an hour before spending a full night in restful sleep. Upon waking he must spend (6 – Dream Interpretation to a minimum of 1) hours contemplating the imagery revealed to him in his dream. At the end of that time you roll for the miraculous effect as normal.

The second use is a form of direct divination. In this case he is interpreting his own dreams or the dreams of others to find answers to posed questions. The dreamer must be prepared, as per the normal use of the Dream Interpretation Ability, and upon waking he again spends (6 – Dream Interpretation, to a minimum of 1) hours contemplating the imagery. He may then make an Intelligence + Dream Interpretation roll. Characters with the Premonitions Ability gain a bonus equal to their Premonitions score.

The Ease Factor is the level of the equivalent Momentary non-ritual Intellego Hermetic spell. Holding an arcane connection to a target is treated as Touch range and the Boundary target does not require a ritual. The usual rules for penetration in *ArM5*, page 184 apply to this Ability.

Most who possess the Dream Interpretation Ability have specific rituals that they believe helps them to achieve insight. Some fast before sleeping, some wear ritual clothes while they sleep, while others sleep in graveyards in order to gain the assistance of ghosts.

**Specialties:** Any appropriate Holy Power, own dreams or the dreams of others, dreams had under specific circumstances (Supernatural)

*Exempli Gratia:* Elizabeth confides in Ba'al Shem Aron that her husband is keeping secrets from her and she is worried for him. Aron tells her to pray for an hour before sundown, sleep with her husband's prayer shawl under her pillow, and then bring it to

## New Abilities

### SUPERNATURAL

Craft Amulets  
Dream Interpretation  
Gematria  
Kabbalah  
Merkavah

him. The next day he listens as Elizabeth describe her dreams. With an Intelligence of 2, a Dream Interpretation of 5 including a specialty in "marriage," a roll of 6, and the Divine aura of 3, Aron manages a total of 16. The Ease Factor is as per the Intellego Mentem spell *Perception of the Conflicting Motives*, or 15. After an hour of consideration, Aron decides that Elizabeth's husband is worried he cannot afford their son's continued tuition, and Elizabeth resolves to counsel her husband.

### GEMATRIA

Gematria is a Jewish form of the Meditation Divine Method and can be used in the same way. The kabbalist must spend a number of hours equal to (12 – Gematria score), to a minimum of 1, studying a text. At the end of this time, he uses the lower of either his Gematria score or the book's Quality in place of his Meditation when activating holy powers.

Gematria also allows the kabbalist to potentially extend his natural lifespan through the art of Shinnui Shem, or the change of his True Name (see the Jewish Mysticism section later).

**Specialties:** Shinnui Shem, specific texts or Holy Power (Supernatural)

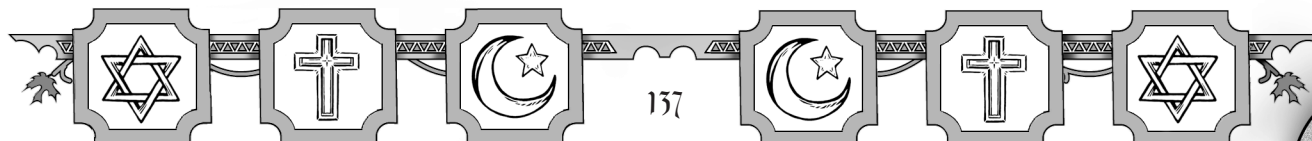
### JUDAIC LORE

Judaic Lore is the knowledge of Jewish cultural practice as opposed to strictly religious details. This includes poetry, folklore, songs, and so on. All Jewish characters are versed in Judaic Lore to some degree and experience points in this Ability at character creation can be part of their childhood abilities.

**Specialties:** folklore, music, poetry, songs

### KABBALAH

Kabbalah is the Jewish form of the Invocation Divine Method and can be used in the same way. In addition, it is the mystical understanding of the Divine forces of creation and provides the knowledge through which the Kabbalist forms



## The Circle of the Unique Cherub

The Circle of the Unique Cherub is a small school of Jewish mystics and philosophers, numbering no more than a dozen, based in Provence and the Rhine. Membership of the circle is by invitation and its existence is not widely known. With the *Sefer Yetzirah* as their foundation text, they seek to understand creation through mystical analogies, which leads some to concentrate on Dominion Lore, while others have become proficient with the mysteries of the Kabbalah. In particular, the Circle is well-practiced with the creation of golems, of which there are currently three.

and brings life to a golem (see the Jewish Mysticism section later).

**Specialties:** golems, specific Holy Power (Supernatural)

### MERKAVAH

Merkavah is the Jewish form of the Purity Divine Method and can be used in the same way. In addition it is the study of the orders and names of angels and demons and other creatures of both the Magic and Faerie Realms. Kabbalists use Merkavah to learn the True Names of these entities, which they may further use in their work (see the Jewish Mysticism section later).

**Specialties:** Specific realm or Holy Power (Supernatural)

### RABBINICAL LAW

This is the Jewish version of Civil & Canon Law. The major sources of Rabbinic Law are the *Talmud*, the Oral *Torah*, and the responsa of the Geonim.

**Specialties:** any one of the sources of Rabbinic Law, dietary laws, particular topics, precedents of a given area (Academic)

### THEOLOGY: JUDAISM

This is the Jewish equivalent of Christian Theology. The major sources for Jewish theology are the *Torah*, the *Nevi'im*, and the *Ketuvim*.

**Specialties:** the *Torah*, creation, history, prophecies (Academic)

## Traditions

The following divine traditions are found among the Jews.

### HOLY TRADITION: BA'AL SHEM

**Favored Abilities:** Adjuration, Blessing, Craft Amulets, and Invocation

There is little distinction between faith, mysticism, and magic within Jewish life, and the Ba'al Shem exemplify this. They are itinerant workers of Divine magic, folk healers who serve their communities with the use of practical cures and charms. Often craftsmen with little use for philosophy or ceremony, the Ba'al Shem make amulets, or seggilot, and deliver blessings for their clients in return for payment. They are masters of amulet crafting, and this is the chief method by which they work their magic in the community.

The name Ba'al Shem means "master of the Divine name," which references their invocation of astral powers, particularly the true names of the angels. They are seen as workers of wonders within their communities and, though often poor and relatively uneducated, are afforded respect at least by those they serve. However, their practices may appear perilously close to witchcraft to those who do not know them. This is a case not helped by the countless angelic names that they invoke, many unknown to those who do not practice the art of the Ba'al Shem, and the many and varied ingredients used in their amulets.

Their crafts are passed apprentice-like, usually from father to son, and so there is little organization within this tradition. Their favored Abilities are usually taught or practiced in the manner of crafts and rarely studied from books. The favored Abilities are common to all Ba'al Shem but Initiations are known that grant access to additional Holy Methods and Powers.

### HOLY SOCIETATES: KARAITES

**Favored Abilities:** Craft Amulets, Holy Magic, Merkavah, Transcendence

**Required Flaws:** Karaite Magic, Outsider (Major, Jew)

Given their strict interpretations of scripture, Gifted Karaites can become members of the Order so long as their magic is based wholly upon God's will, as represented by the Holy Magic Virtue and Ability (see Chapter Three). While Holy Magic imposes its own restrictions, Karaite magi work their magic under their own scriptural restrictions, conditions that have become ingrained in the Karaite Magic Flaw, which forbids divination, astrology, and the summoning or use of spirits, particularly ghosts.

A Karaite lineage can be found within House Ex Miscellanea where Holy Magic is the Major Non-Hermetic Virtue, Craft Amulets taken as the Minor Hermetic Virtue, and Karaite Magic as the Major Hermetic Flaw. But as the Karaite sect does not seek converts, ensuring instead that the Karaite way is propagated through their children, Hermetic Karaites can only take Gifted apprentices from within their own religion. This makes the lineage perilously small and vulnerable.

Karaite magi are most likely to be found in Jerusalem or in Muslim Iberia and are rare outside of these areas.

### MYTHIC COMPANION: KABBALIST

**Favored Abilities:** Ceremony, Gematria, Kabbalah, Merkavah

Kabbalists are the result of centuries of theological insight into the forces of

## Other Magical Traditions

Jewish culture has a strong philosophic tradition with a great many scholars through the ages. As a result, these scholars are often drawn to the life of a learned magician or to elemental magic (see *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition*) especially in Muslim-controlled Spain or the East. But these Jewish magicians are a relatively new phenomenon and still rare. Those not exposed to, or distrustful of, magic can make full use of the arts of Natural Philosophy (*Art & Academe*, Chapter 5).

### THE BA'AL OV

Another tradition that can be found within Jewish communities is the

Ba'al Ov, necromantic practitioners of summoning magic. The Ba'al Ov do not simply converse with spirits as those with Merkavah do, but bring them into their presence and command them to do their bidding.

The Ba'al Ov, also sometimes called Meonen or Sho'elim 'ov, use the Summoning, Commanding, and Binding Goetic Arts as presented in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 114–119. This particular tradition of summoners forces incorporeal spirits to manifest not through simple circles but through objects and even participants in the ritual. Corpses and skulls are commonly used, both to receive the temporarily summoned spirit and as permanent receptacles for the Binding power.



creation, insights that they draw upon to view and influence the world around them. The foundation of their studies is the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the Sefirot described within (see Jewish Mysticism later).

Jewish communities are frequently small, so it is not uncommon for a kabbalist to find himself isolated and working alone. However, the majority of kabbalists can be found in large cities within the larger Jewish communities, where they can work together, sharing resources, teaching each other, and crucially drawing upon the additional power of Ceremony. These kabbalistic communities are also able to Initiate their members into the various Holy Powers needed to complement their favored Holy Methods. See *The Mysteries: Revised Edition* for rules on Initiation.

**Required Virtues and Flaws:** The kabbalist must take the Free Kabbalist Mythic Companion Virtue to represent his calling. And all kabbalists must take Virtues for least one of their favored Holy Methods and two Holy Powers in addition to Educated (Hebrew). This leaves the kabbalist with 10 points of Virtues remaining. Note that to balance the character's Virtues and Flaws at this stage, the character must take at least 5 points of Flaws.

The character must also take the Outsider (Major, Jew) Flaw and a further Social Status Virtue to represent his position within the community.

**Minimum Ability Scores:** The kabbalist must start with the following minimum Ability scores:

- Artes Liberales 1
- Dominion Lore 1
- Hebrew 4
- Judaic Lore 1
- Theology: Judaism 3
- Rabbinical Law 1

## Grog Templates

Jewish grogs must take the Outsider Minor Flaw, which means that they must live in either a Jewish community, often a Jewish quarter of a city, or a covenant. A Jew living outside of such communities is too much a focus of attention to be a background character, which precludes him from being a grog.

### SHADCHAN

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +2, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 30 (30)

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Shadchan, Clear Thinker, Educated (Hebrew); Clumsy, Meddler (Minor), Outsider (Minor, Jew)

**Personality Traits:** Friendly +2, Direct +1, Respectful +1



## The Tree of Life

LEVEL	NAME	MEANING
10	Keter	Crown
9	Chochmah	Wisdom
8	Binah	Insight
7	Chessed	Love
6	Gevurah	Power
5	Tiferet	Beauty
4	Netzach	Endurance
3	Hod	Splendor
2	Yesod	Foundation
1	Malchut	Kingdom

**Reputations:** Jew 2 (Christians)

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init 0, Attack N/A, Defense 0, Damage N/A

**Fist:** Init 0, Attack 0, Defense 0, Damage 0

**Bludgeon:** Init -1, Attack +2, Defense 0, Damage +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Area Lore 4 (personalities), Artes Liberales 1 (grammar), Awareness 2 (alertness), Bargain 4 (ketuvot), Carouse 2 (games of chance), Charm 2 (first impressions), Concentration 2 (ceremonies), Etiquette 3 (marriage arrangements), Folk Ken 5 (prospective husbands), Local Language 5 (poetry), Guile 2 (hiding bad news), Hebrew 5 (poetry), Judaic Lore 4 (songs), Rabbinical Law 3 (marriage laws), Profession: Shadchan 4 (remarrying widows), Theology: Judaism 3 (marriage)

**Equipment:** Jewish clothing.

**Notes:** The shadchan lives and works in a Jewish community within a city, but must often travel to other communities in order to find matches. The ability scores above include the experience points awarded from the Educated and Shadchan Virtues.

**Story Hook:** A Jewish magus must find a wife for his apprentice before he reaches the age of 18 and so he turns to a wise old shadchan for help. The shadchan agrees to help and promises to return before the year is up with four prospective brides, each suitable for marriage with a learned magus of the Order, whereupon they shall live with the magus and his apprentice for a season. When the shadchan returns, the magus is indeed presented with four beautiful women, each with their own supernatural gifts and each from a different supernatural realm. The magus must choose between them, or at least root out the Infernal threat before his apprentice has chance to fall for her.

### SOFER

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per 0, Pre 0, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik 0

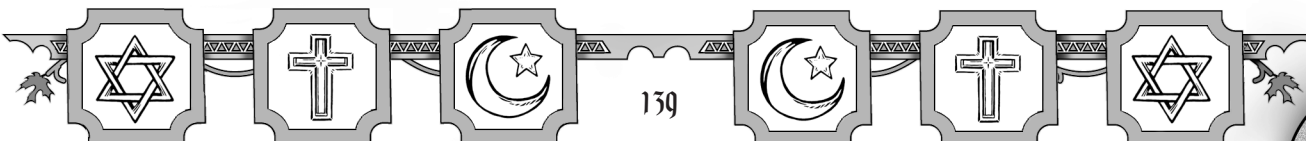
**Size:** 0

**Age:** 25 (25)

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Sofer, Educated (Hebrew), Gossip, Puissant Scribe, Gabai, The Evil Eye, Outsider (Minor, Jew),

**Personality Traits:** Inquisitive +2, Dedicated +1



**Reputations:** Jew 2 (Christians), Tax Collector 2 (York Jews), Gossip 1 (York Jews)

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +1, Damage N/A

*Fist:* Init +0, Attack +4, Defense +2, Damage +0

*Bludgeon:* Init -1, Attack +5, Defense +1, Damage +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Aramaic 3 (written), Area Lore 2 (collecting taxes), Art of Memory 3 (*Torah*), Artes Liberales 3 (grammar), Awareness 2 (in his workshop), Bookbinding 2 (preparing *Torah* scrolls), Brawl 1 (fist), Carouse 1 (games of chance), Charm 2 (apologizing), Concentration 3 (scribing), Local Language 5 (storytelling), Hebrew 4 (written), Illumination 3 (*Sefer Torah*), Judaic Lore 3 (poetry), Percamenarius 3 (*Sefer Torah*), Scribe 4 (*Sefer Torah*), Theology: Judaism 2 (scripture)

**Equipment:** Scribe's tools, tax ledgers and accounts

**Notes:** Unfortunately, this sofer's ability as a scribe is often overlooked in favor of his roles as community tax collector and local gossip. And because of this, most people think, correctly, that he must bear the evil eye. So if anything goes wrong, he's bound to get the blame. The Sofer's multiple Social Statuses are compatible.

**Reputations:** Jew 2 (Christians)

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +1, Damage N/A

*Fist:* Init +0, Attack +3, Defense +1, Damage +0

*Bludgeon:* Init -1, Attack +6, Defense +2, Damage +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Adjuration 3 (assisting Jews), Area Lore: Home County 2 (roads), Athletics 1 (running), Blessing 3 (houses), Brawl 1 (bludgeon), Carouse 2 (games of chance), Charm 2 (first impressions), Chirurgy 3 (setting bones), Craft Amulets 4 (Adjuration), Folk Ken 3 (townsfolk), Local Language 5 (storytelling), Hebrew 4 (talking with rabbis), Invocation 3 (Blessing), Judaic Lore 2 (folklore), Penetration 1 (Adjuration), Theology: Judaism 1 (folklore), Tinker 4 (pans)

**Equipment:** Tinker's tools, handcart, Jewish hat, weather-beaten traveling cloak with a Jewish symbol emblazoned upon it.

**Notes:** This Ba'al Shem travels from community to community around Bremen working his wonders for pay and the benefit of his people. He is frequently on the road and tries not to look too harshly on those gentiles who mock him as he passes. The faeries, on the other hand, are a trial that he just can't stand.

Damage +2

**Soak:** +1

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Aramaic 4 (scripture), Artes Liberales 2 (rhetoric), Ceremony 1 (Kabbalah), Civil & Canon Law 2 (as affects Jews), Dominion Lore 2 (angels), Finesse 1 (Wonders), Gematria 4 (Understanding), Hebrew 5 (*Torah* readings), Judaic Lore 2 (folklore), Kabbalah 4 +2 (Wonders), Leadership 2 (in court), Local Language 5 (storytelling), Penetration 2 (Wonders), Philosophiae 1 (natural philosophy), Rabbinical Law 4 (property), Teaching 3 (*Talmud*), Theology: Judaism 2 (Halakha), Understanding 4 (concerning Jews), Wonders 4 (golems)

**Equipment:** Hebrew books, rabbinical robes, Jewish hat, outer clothes with Jewish badge emblazoned upon them

**Notes:** As a rabbi, he must tend to the earthly concerns of his community, but as a kabbalist there are Divine truths that he strives to understand. These dual interests can sometimes conflict and the kabbalist must work hard to ensure that he does not become so absorbed by mystical ephemera that he ignores his obligations. The kabbalist has been created as a Mythic Companion.

## Companion Templates

Jewish companions must take the Outsider Major Flaw, to represent the prejudice they experience as they live, travel, and work outside of both Jewish communities and the covenant.

### BA'AL SHEM

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 26 (26)

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Ba'al Shem; Adjuration, Blessing, Invocation, Craft Amulets, Magical Air, Outsider (Major, Jew), Supernatural Nuisance (faeries of the road); Carefree

**Personality Traits:** Cheerful +3, Helpful +1, Honest +1

### KABBALIST

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per 0, Pre 0, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 32 (32)

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Kabbalist, Rabbi; Gematria, Kabbalah, Understanding, Wonders; Ceremony, Philosophic Magic, Clear Thinker, Good Teacher, Puissant Kabbalah, Social Contacts (Kabbalists), Educated (Hebrew); Outsider (Major, Jew), Driven (Major, Obtain kabbalistic secrets), Feud (Karaite kabbalists); Fragile Constitution

**Personality Traits:** Inquisitive +2, Humble +1, Persistent +1

**Reputations:** Jew 2 (Christians)

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +0, Damage N/A

*Fist:* Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage +0

*Bludgeon:* Init -1, Attack +2, Defense +0,

### RADHANITE MERCHANT

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Pre 0, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Age:** 40 (40)

**Warping Score:** 0 (0)

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Merchant; Wealthy; Educated (Hebrew), Protection, Puissant Merchant, Social Contacts, Well-Traveled; Enemies (Christian merchants), Outsider (Major, Jew); Greedy (Minor), Obese

**Personality Traits:** Greedy +2, Ruthless +1, Fair -1

**Reputations:** Jew 3 (Christians), Protected by Muqta' of Baghdad 3 (Merchants)

**Combat:**

*Dodge:* Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +0, Damage N/A

*Fist:* Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage +0

*Knife:* Init +0, Attack +1, Defense +0, Damage +2

**Soak:** 0

**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious



**Wound Penalties:** -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

**Abilities:** Arabic 5 (mercantile matters), Mediterranean Lore 4 (personalities), Artes Liberales 3 (arithmetic), Bargain 4 (silk), Carouse 3 (power drinking), Charm 4 (being witty), Common Law 2 (exchequer law), Etiquette 3 (merchant society), Folk Ken 4 (merchants), French 4 (mercantile matters), Guile 4 (lying about weights and measures), Hebrew 5 (prayers and blessings), Intrigue 3 (the muqta's enemies), Italian 4 (mercantile matters), Judaic Lore 2 (poetry), Latin 2 (academic usage), Leadership 3 (intimidation), Merchant 5 +2 (silk), Persian 5 (mercantile matters), Philosophiae 1 (moral philosophy), Slavic 1 (mercantile matters), Spanish 4 (mercantile matters), Theology: Judaism 2 (mitzvot)

**Equipment:** Letters of credit, pouches of money, bodyguards, outer clothes with a Jewish badge emblazoned upon them

**Notes:** The Radhanite merchant is a wealthy man in his own right, but serves one richer and more powerful still.

*Story Hook:* In searching for an apprentice, the magus discovers a Gifted child in the heart of the Jewish community. Does the community allow the child to be taken? What assurances can the magus make as to his religious well-being? If the magus takes him without consent, how does the community respond?

## Jewish Mysticism

Ten are the numbers of the ineffable sephirot, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. Learn this wisdom, and be wise to the understanding of it, investigate these numbers and draw knowledge from them, fix the design in its purity and pass from it to its Creator seated on his throne.

*Sefer Yetzirah*

Kabbalah is the Jewish occult tradition that arose in Iberia and southern France at the beginning of the twelfth century, although its roots are in both ear-

lier theurgistic practices and in the current expansion of Jewish philosophy and academia. Kabbalah is properly the study of the Sefirot, or emanations, discussed later, but the term has been expanded to cover all forms of Jewish mysticism.

The aim of Kabbalah is to bring worldly change by the study and practice of Divine principles as manifest on earth. While its study is academic, the power originates from the Divine and is intrinsically tied to Jewish theology and philosophy.

Kabbalistic tradition has three chief means of altering the world, each represented by a distinct occult practice. The first is by the speculative textual interpretation and manipulation of holy texts. The second is through practical philosophical inquiry into the nature of the world and its creative forces. The final element is direct communication with Divine entities and the experience of direct revelation.

## Gematria

From the Greek for "calculations," Gematria is a method of divination that reveals messages and meanings hidden within the *Torah*. Each character of the Hebrew alphabet has a numeric value, which means that words also have values determined by their constituent characters. By manipulating these values according to prescribed techniques it is possible to derive relationships between words, which in turn revelation their underlying occult meanings. The *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches that numbers are the fundamental matter that God used to construct the universe, which means that the relationships between words and passages in the Bible are neither accidental nor coincidental.

There are many ways of manipulating texts in order to gain numeric values from them and many ways of assigning values to specific characters and words. As practitioners of Gematria progress they learn ever more complex ways of interpreting the same passages. It is this that allows repeated study and interpretation of the *Torah*. The application of Gematria to other texts also provides insight, but the conclusions cannot be trusted as only the *Torah* is the direct unchanged word of God in written form. Using other books requires a stress die. Books on Arts or Accelerated Abilities cannot be used.

### SHINNUI SHEM

Kabbalists have found a way to forestall death and increase their natural lifes-

pan by the practice of Shinnui Shem. It is said that if a man changes his name then the angel of death cannot find him and so cannot carry him away. By using Gematria the kabbalist finds secret connections between his name and the circumstances of his birth and names or teachings within the *Tanakh* and so reveal his own true name. Over the course of a season he uses these connections to change his true name, again based on numerological interpretation of biblical texts or those on Dominion Lore. This has two effects. Firstly, any current arcane connections to the individual are severed. Secondly, the kabbalist gains a bonus to future Aging Rolls.

### BONUS TO AGING ROLL:

(Simple Die + Intelligence + Gematria + Understanding + Book Quality + Dominion Aura) / 5

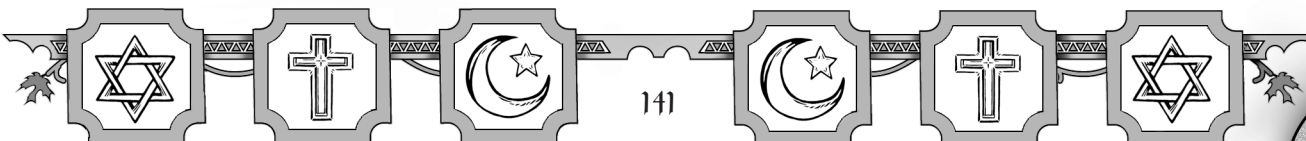
The protection against aging ends when the character next gains an Aging Point. A character may only be renamed once by Shinnui Shem, but the kabbalist may perform the rites of Shinnui Shem for others. The bonus to Aging Rolls resulting from Shinnui Shem is not cumulative with other supernatural bonuses, including those from Hermetic longevity rituals.

## Kabbalah

More properly termed kabbalah shimmush, or practical kabbalah, this is a pragmatic application of the forces of creation. It is this branch of mysticism that is relatively new, being born of recent philosophical and theological study. Kabbalah is a ritualistic practice, and by researching, learning, and performing divine rites the kabbalist influences creation, drawing it into alignment with his will.

The chief text of Kabbalah is the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which describes how God created the universe from numbers, writing, and speech. If these are the tools which must be used, then the ten Sefirot, or emanations, described by the same text provide instruction in how to wield those tools.

The Sefirot are most often represented in visual form, interconnected by 22 pathways aligned to the 22 characters of the Hebrew alphabet. This arrangement is called the *Etz Chayim*, The Tree of Life, with its roots towards heaven and the trunk and branches emanating towards the Earth. Students and practitioners of the Kabbalah chart their understanding through this depiction of the Sefirot, starting with Malchut and ending with Keter. As a character increases his Kabbalah



Ability score, he can be said to have achieved understanding of a new Sefirah, so a kabbalist with a score of 5 in Kabbalah has achieved the understanding of tiferet and those with a score of 10 or more achieve understanding of Keter. But the Sefirot described in the *Sefer Yetzirah* represent only the knowable aspects of creation, the counterparts to the *ein sof*, or the infinite and unknowable. Hubristic kabbalists may strive for the *ein sof* but they are more likely to be led into temptation.

## Golems

While Kabbalah is used by Jewish practitioners in place of the Invocation Holy Method, the pinnacle of kabbalistic achievement is the creation of the golem, unliving clay brought to life by Divine energies directed by the kabbalist. Golems can be formed into the shape of any living creature and when God breathes life into them they become natural examples of their kind. The most important golems are those formed into the shape of men, for these act as protectors of a community. Although that community is usually Jewish, the *Book of Jeremiah* tells the Jewish people to seek the well-being of any place in which they live, and the use of a golem to protect that place is entirely in keeping with that injunction.

### CREATING GOLEMS

The creation of a golem takes several seasons and requires the dedicated attention of one or more kabbalists. During the first season the body of the golem is formed from clay, including earth from beneath a synagogue, which is then inscribed with astrological and holy symbols.

The second and subsequent seasons are spent awakening the lifeless form through generating an Awaken Golem Total. For each point by which the total exceeds the Ease Factor, the kabbalist accumulates one point towards the golem's Might Score. The kabbalist may choose to extend the ritual for additional consecutive seasons, carrying any accumulated points forward. A Stress Die is rolled in the final season and added to the total. The golem's Might is capped at 5 times the lead kabbalist's Kabbalah score.

Given the difficulty of this task, kabbalists with the Ceremony Ability usually lead others in awakening the golem, gaining a Ceremony bonus equal to their Intelligence + Kabbalah scores.

AWAKEN GOLEM TOTAL:  
Intelligence + Kabbalah + Wonders  
+ Ceremony Bonus + Dominion Aura

AWAKEN GOLEM EASE FACTOR: 30

GOLEM'S DIVINE MIGHT: Accumulated  
Points + Stress Die

MIGHT CAP: Kabbalah x 5

## Standard Golem Traits

Golems do have a True Name, which is determined during their creation. It cannot be subsequently changed, through the application of Shinnui Shem, for instance, as it is derived by a similar process.

Although limited, Golems made in human form may be played as Companion characters and have the following attributes when first created.

### GOLEM CHARACTERISTICS

The kabbalist may assign Characteristic scores, including the bonus for the Improved Characteristics Virtue, freely when designing the golem.

### VIRTUES & FLAWS

All golems have the Unaging and Improved Characteristics Virtues. They also suffer from the Weak-Willed Flaw, representing their trusting nature. They may gain other Virtues or Flaws through play.

### ABILITIES

All golems start with the following Abilities: (Area) Lore 5, Awareness 1, Brawl 5, Charm 3, Concentration 1, Hebrew 5.

The troupe may assign specialties as desired.

### GOLEM PERSONALITY TRAITS

All golems have the following Personality Traits: Loyal to its Community +3, Trusting +3, Vengeful -3

Botch dice on the Awaken Golem roll are equal to the number of kabbalists taking part in the work.

At the culmination of the final season, an awakening ceremony is conducted, during which the golem is entreated to protect a given community. As a rule of thumb, any community marked out by a boundary can be specified. A temporary eruv is commonly put in place to define the boundary. A community can only be

protected by one living golem at a time. Attempting to create a second golem to protect a named community automatically causes each kabbalist involved to suffer a Minor Tragedy of Hubris and the rites to awaken the golem fail.

The awakened golem ceases to be a thing of clay and becomes living breathing flesh, affected by spells and powers that affect the body and mind. The golem has the capacity to learn but cannot itself study or practice; it must be actively taught by a teacher, which means that it is incapable of gaining exposure experience. Golems are revered members of the community and are supported by them, which affords them four full seasons each year in which to learn. Unless ordered into torpor, as described below, the golem must eat, drink, breathe, and sleep as any other man. A golem is also capable of taking a wife and fathering children, though whether the kabbalist, the community shadchan, or the prospective wife would deem this appropriate is questionable.

### EMPOWERING GOLEMS

The kabbalist may empower the golem by giving them Divine powers. This need not be done immediately and the required rituals can be performed during any season after the golem has been awakened.

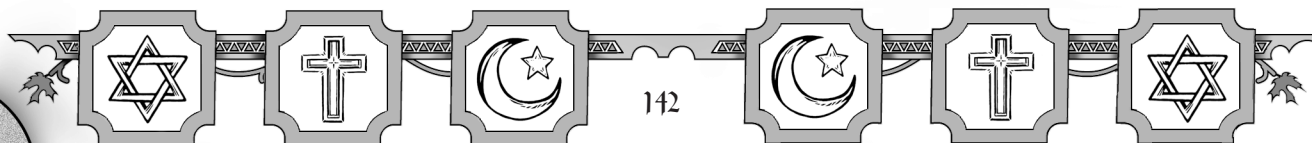
With access to the golem throughout, the kabbalist spends one or more seasons designing the powers they wish the golem to express. These effects are designed using the guidelines for Holy Methods and Powers, including those that the kabbalist cannot personally use. All powers treat the golem as the caster.

At the end of the season, the kabbalist generates an Empower Golem Total based on Kabbalah and Wonders. A Ceremony bonus is included where appropriate.

EMPOWER GOLEM TOTAL:  
Intelligence + Kabbalah + Wonders  
+ Ceremony Bonus + Dominion Aura

The Empower Golem Total must exceed the power's target level. Each season, for every point by which the total exceeds this level one point is accumulated. Once a number of points equal to the target level have been accumulated the golem acquires and may use the power. A golem may have a number of magnitudes of powers equal to its Divine Might Score.

Using a power costs a number of Divine Might points equal to the power's magnitude and has an initiative equal to the golem's Quickness. Penetration for





these powers is as described in ArM5, page 191, and the golem's Might Pool regenerates at the beginning of each new day, which in Jewish tradition is at sunset.

### ALTERING THE GOLEM'S POWERS

The powers bestowed upon a golem are not final and can be changed by the kabbalist. By removing an existing power, the kabbalist gains a bonus equal to that power's level to his Empower Golem Total. The alteration of powers can only be performed by a kabbalist who has already participated in either awakening or empowering the golem.

*Exempli Gratia:* Moshe ben Isaac decides to create a golem to protect his community from the corrupt tax collector oppressing his people. During the first season, Moshe creates the clay form of the golem in the shape of a man, from earth taken from beneath the synagogue. In the second season, he begins to build the golem's Might. He has Intelligence of +2, Kabbalah of 6 (including a specialty in golems), Wonders of 3, and he is working in a level 4 Dominion aura, for a total of 15. He leads three other kabbalists and gains a Ceremony Bonus of 20 for a total of 35. The cabal works for three seasons, building a an Accumulated Might of 15 and then attempts to awaken the golem. Moshe rolls an 8 on the stress die for a total of 23. The golem awakens with a Divine Might of 23 (less than 5 times Moshe's Kabbalah score) and becomes a living breathing human male. Moshe names him Isaac in honor of his own father. Isaac has Divine knowledge of the community but few other skills so Moshe takes him to those he can trust for tuition. In the meantime, Moshe turns his attention to empowering Isaac. He decides that the tax collector must be confronted by his greed and designs a power to do so. The power is based on the level 20 Meditation and Intervention guideline, at Eye range and of Moon duration for a final level of 40. It takes Moshe three seasons to develop the correct rituals. At the end of this time Isaac gains the power to instill the tax col-

lector with a Divinely-inspired anxiety over his own greed. Isaac can still contain a further 15 magnitudes of Divine powers.

### MADNESS

Golems are vulnerable creatures and, if the kabbalist is not careful, are subject to falling into madness. Each time any kabbalist involved in awakening the golem suffers a tragedy of hubris, the golem is commanded to do something that would transgress a mitzvah, or is taken outside its community, the storyguide should roll a stress die, comparing the result to the table below.

ROLL	EFFECT
Botch	Madness
0-4	-1 to Trusting Personality Trait
5-9	+1 to Vengeful Personality Trait
10-14	-1 to Loyal to Community Personality Trait
15+	Roll twice more

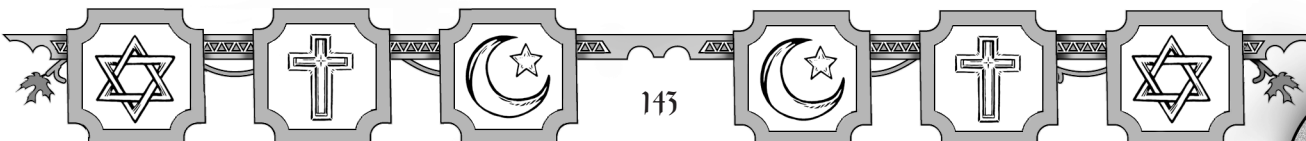
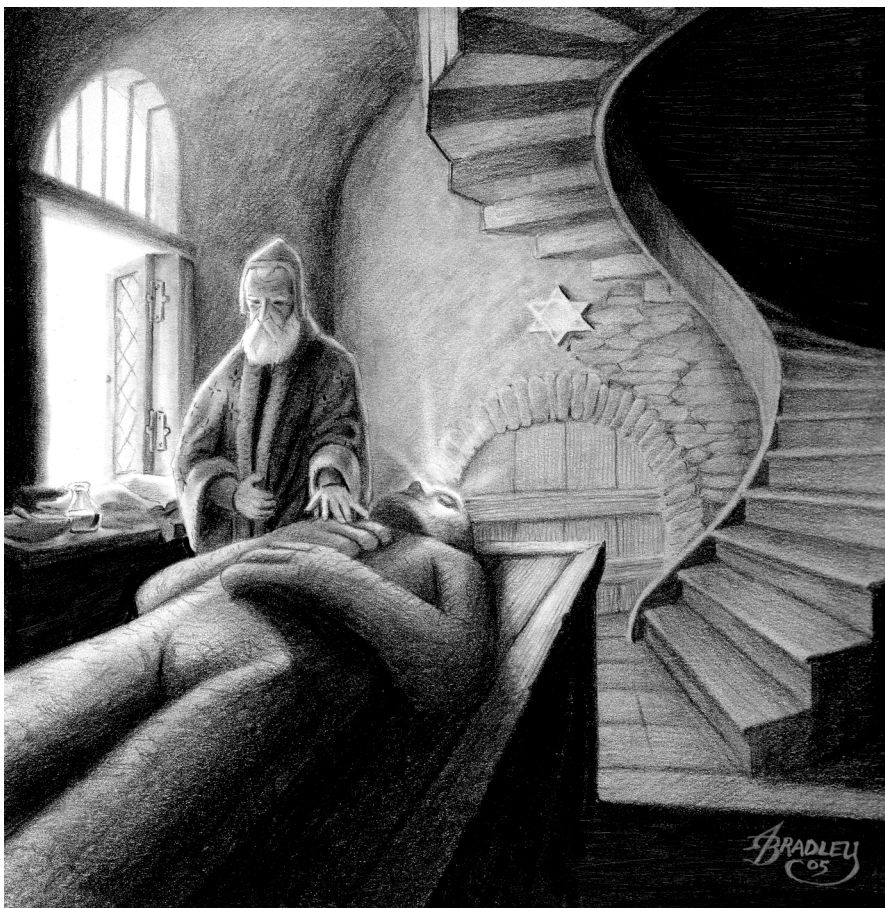
As the golem's Vengeful Personality Trait increases, it becomes more likely to use violence to settle even minor dis-

agreements and it starts to become a danger to those around it. As the Trusting Personality Trait decreases, the golem begins to question the guidance it receives and may not carry out instructions. And as its Loyalty decreases it loses interest in the well-being of the community, becoming more aloof. These changes to Personality Traits are permanent.

### DESTROYING A GOLEM

There are three ways of destroying a golem. The first is to destroy its body, as with a mortal man. The second is to reduce its Might Score to zero. The third is to cancel out the act of its creation. Upon creation, the golem has a single word drawn upon its forehead: *emet*, or "truth." If the first character of the word, *aleph*, is purposefully erased, "*emet*" becomes "*met*," or death. At that instant the golem returns to an unliving thing of clay. No incidental or accidental act can erase the *aleph*.

In addition, any golem with a positive Trusting Personality Trait can be commanded to sleep by a member of its protected community, which sends the golem into a torpor. While in this state, it



need not eat, drink, or even breathe to sustain itself and it does not age. It can be commanded to sleep until awoken, or until a certain event occurs.

## Merkavah and The Chariot Mysteries

Merkavah and the study of the chariot mysteries is an ancient mystical practice dating to the founding of the Jewish people. Taking Ezekiel's visions of the divine chariot and the enthronement visions of Isaiah as their inspiration, practitioners of Merkavah seek visions of and communion with the angels. While the Merkavah Ability can be used in place of the Purity Holy Method, it also represents the search for true understanding of the angels, represented by knowledge of their True Names.

### UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE NAMES OF ANGELS

Through acts of fasting, prayer, and ritual ablutions, the kabbalist is able to

bring visions that reveal the True Names of angels, demons, or even faeries and magical creatures. Before starting, the kabbalist must have some knowledge of the entity he is searching for, either previously been in its presence, learned of the entity from a text, or been told about it by another.

He then spends at least a season in preparation, expending a long term fatigue level each season through the rigors of fasting and repeated prayer. These fatigue levels cannot be regained until the ritual ends. At the end of each season the character generates a total:

#### MERKAVAH TOTAL:

**Stamina + Merkavah + Adjuration  
+ Ceremony Bonus + Dominion Aura**

#### EASE FACTOR: Target's Might Score

If the kabbalist has the Ceremony Ability, he may lead others in attempting to contact the target entity, in which case he gains a Ceremony bonus equal to their Stamina + Merkavah scores. For each point by which the Merkavah Total exceeds the Ease Factor the kabbalist accumulates one point. When these accumulated points exceed the target's Might

Score the kabbalist experiences intense visions concerning the target and its True Name is revealed. This True Name can then be used as a Holy Connection, allowing the kabbalist to affect it with Holy Methods and Powers, and provides a +5 bonus to his Penetration modifier when affecting the being. The seasons spent in ritual do not need to penetrate the target's resistance.

### THE DANGERS OF STUDY

The secrets revealed through the study of Merkavah are a source of temptation that draws the eager towards indiscipline and the search for faster and easier paths to power. At the end of any season in which a student either studies or uses the Merkavah alone the character must make a Disciplined Personality Stress Roll against Ease Factor 9. Failure draws the student towards obsession and the student must continue to study the same source, without benefit, the next season. A botch results in Infernal spirits becoming alerted to his search for knowledge, and the student gains the Plagued by Supernatural Entity Story Flaw.

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