Medieval Hebrew Philosphic Texts

We shall discuss readings from major medieval Hebrew philosophic works. We begin with Maimonides’ (1138-1204) *Book of Knowledge*, his systematic presentation of the foundations of religion, science, law, and ethics. We read Shemtob Falaquera's (c. 1225-1295) *Epistle of the Debate*, a lively philosophic dialogue between a philosopher and a fundamentalist. We next turn to the *Wars of the Lord* by Levi Gersonides (1288-1344), the most important Jewish Aristotelian after Maimonides; and then to the *Light of the Lord* by Hasdai Crescas (c. 1340-1410/11), the most important Jewish anti-Aristotelian. We conclude with the popular *Book of Principles* by Joseph Albo (d. after 1433). Discussions will be based on the original Hebrew texts, but readings are available also in English translation.

Requirements

Seminar paper (20-25pp.) on topic chosen by student with approval of instructor: approval by Mar. 26; due May 7.

Topics and Dates (subject to change)


Histories of Jewish Philosophy


Useful Anthologies of Medieval Philosophy


Note. Further references to the secondary literature will be given during the semester.

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