OLD NEW AGE: Jewish and Christian Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century

Christians took an interest in Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, as early as the thirteenth century, but typically with conversionary motives. Jews, they imagined, might be convinced of the truth of Christianity if their own tradition could be used to prove it. A second wave of Christian interest in the Kabbalah in the seventeenth century took a very different approach, however. In this period, Kabbalah became a kind of ecumenical project at this historical moment; although fleeting, its influence may be detected even today.

J.H. (Yossi) Chajes (Ph.D., Yale University) is Associate Professor in the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa and the director of its Center for the Study of Jewish Cultures. A former recipient of Fulbright, Rothchild, Wexner, and Hartman Fellowships, he is the author of Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism (2003) and has been a visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Israel Institute of Advanced Studies. Dr. Chajes was also a student and accompanist of the legendary Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach for many years, and has been invited by communities around the world to teach and to lead inspirational musical services.

Lunch reservations required by MONDAY, JANUARY 25.
Please email jewishstudies@rice.edu with your name and “CHAJES” in the subject line; please specify any dietary restrictions in the email.