Thursdays at West Central Synagogue

8.30 – 9.30 A Quick survey of Medieval Rabbis...to help us choose one or two to study in more detail in a future term.

September 19 Saadia Gaon. (882-942) Exilarch and leader of Babylonian Jewry

September 26 Solomon ben Judah ibn Gabirol (1020/22? - ?) Began to write poetry from the age of 16 and his ego brought him into frequent conflict with people of his day, attacked influential men virulently.

October 3 Bachya ibn Pekudah. (c1050 –c1156) Little known, I chose him because he wrote one of my favourite sayings, ‘days are scrolls, write on them what you wish to be remembered’.

October 10 no class (day after Yom Kippur!)


October 24 no class (Half term)

October 31 Judah HeChassid (c. 1150- 1217) Philosopher, poet, scholar and mystic, of the school of Hassidei Ashkanaz

November 7 Yehuda Halevi, (c. 1175–1241) 12th-century Spanish philosopher and poet devoted to Zion

November 14 Nahmanides, Moshe ben Nahman, (Ramban), (1194–1270) mystic. Talmudist Spanish rabbis of succeeding generations called him HaRav HaNe’eman, the trustworthy rabbi, or simply, the rabbi.

November 21 Abraham ben Shemuel Abulafia (1240-1290) founder of the school of "Prophetic Kabbalah".

November 28 Jacob ben Asher, (c. 1269–c.1343) German-Spanish Halakhist, he wrote Arba’ah Turim, one of the most important halachic books of all times

December 5 Gersonides, Levi ben Gershom (1288–1344) French Talmudist and philosopher. He wrote The Wars of the Lord, modelled after the Guide for the Perplexed but Gersonides strictly adhered to Aristotelian thought

December 12 Hasdai Crescas, (c. 1370–c.1411) Talmudist and philosopher. He influenced the controversial 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza.

December 19 Don Isaac Abravanel, (1437–1508) philosopher, Talmudist and Torah commentator. In addition he showed a complete mastery of financial matters and became treasurer of King Afonso V of Portugal.