



מכון ון ליר בירושלים

THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

معهد فان لير في القدس

Jewish Culture & Identity

The Phenomenology of Faith

Theological, A-Theological and Anti-Theological Approaches in Contemporary Judaism

Summer Workshop for Young Researchers on Jewish Culture and Identity
Tuesday – Wednesday, 31 August-1 September 2010

The new age and the beginnings of modernity facilitated a new theological dialogue between Jews and Christians. Under their influence, a Jewish theology and religious philosophy were shaped as a reaction to – and at times as a translation of – the Christian theology and the secular humanism that was developing in Europe. Since then, this dialogue has produced a long line of philosophers who have shaped what can be defined as the **Theological Stream** in Judaism.

In contradistinction to this, a-theological and anti-theological approaches took hold. For proponents of these approaches, abstract theological dialogue was considered irrelevant and misguided. In their view, faith is expressed in the practical observation of *mitzvot* or in implementing the categorical commandments of morality. This group can be defined as the **practical-moral stream** which was formed on the foundation of rabbinical Judaism and Jewish-Kantian philosophical interpretations.

Over the centuries of development of the Theological Stream and the practical, anti-theological stream, the discourse on faith and its essence was split between these two approaches. Concurrently, other streams and processes arose: **Hasidut**, whose contents were more likely to support the theological approach but did not arise out of a dialogue or common terminological usage; the **secularization process**, which surprisingly enters into a confrontation with the theological stream even more than the rabbinical stream; and **Judaism of the Islamic countries**, which maintains cultural uniqueness while grappling with the influence of the European streams and keeping open-minded towards them.

Academic Committee: **Prof. Menachem Fisch, Prof. Zeev Gries, Dr. Aviad Hacohen, Prof. Moshe Idel, Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, Prof. Haviva Pedaya, Dr. Avinoam Rosenak, Prof. Tamar Ross, Rabbi Prof. Naftali Rothenberg, Dafna Schreiber**

List of Participants

Prof. Gabriel Motzkin, Director, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Roni Bar Lev, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Hermeneutics, Bar-Ilan University

Dan Baras, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Philosophy, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Dr. Yotam Benziman, Department of Political Science, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

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Avner Dinur, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Jewish Thought, Ben Gurion University of the Negev; Lecturer in Sapir College

Miriam Feldmann Kaye, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Jewish Philosophy, University of Haifa; Project Director, Three Faiths Forum, Middle East

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Eli Gurfinkel, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Jewish Philosophy, Bar-Ilan University; Ashkelon Academic College

Dr. Aviad Hacohen, Dean, Shaarei Mishpat Law College; Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Prof. Zev Harvey, Department of Jewish Thought, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Dr. Hannah Hashkes, The Shalem Center, Jerusalem

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Shulamit Lehman, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Jewish Thought, The Hebrew University in Jerusalem

Lital Lieberman - Avital, Doctoral Candidate, Division of Folklore, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Prof. Paul Mendes-Flohr, Professor Emeritus of Modern Jewish Thought, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; the University of Chicago; The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

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Dr. Zvi Shimon, Department of Bible and Basic Studies, Bar-Ilan University; Ashkelon Academic College

Prof. Chaim I. Waxman, Sociology and Jewish Studies, Rutgers University

Summer Workshop Program

The Phenomenology of Faith: Theological, A-Theological and Anti-Theological Approaches in Contemporary Judaism

■ Tuesday, August 31st, 2010

09:30 – 10:00 Gathering & Registration

10:00 – 10:45 Opening Session:

Chair and opening remarks: **Naftali Rothenberg**

Opening lecture: **Moshe Idel**, The Phenomenology of Faith – Processes and Trends

11:00 – 13:00 Second Session: Jewish-Christian Theology

Chair: **Yochi Fischer**

Zohar Michaeli, Dialogical Approach towards Christianity – between Buber and Rosenzweig

Ronen Pinkas, Judaism and Christianity in the Thought of Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig

Yaniv Feller, Revelation and Anti-Theology according to Martin Buber

Respondent: **Paul Mendes-Flohr**

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 16:00 Third session: Questions in the Philosophy of Religion

Chair: **Yotam Benziman**

Dan Baras, The Problem of Disagreement in MetaEthics and Religion

Zvi Shimon, Humanity Centered Theology: Biblical Foundations for a Modern Theology

Grit Schorch, Leo Strauss' Agnosticism – Origins in Lessing and Mendelssohn

Respondent: **Zev Harvey**

16:30 – 18:30 Fourth Session: Hassidism and its Ramifications

Chair: **Dafna Schreiber**

Roni Bar Lev, The Faith of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov – Factual Life Experience

Asher Schechter, Can Theology be Created in an Environment of Non-Theology? Dr. Joseph Schachter and the Viennese Circle

Shulamit Lehman, Faith as Expressed in the book *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, by Rabbi Ephraim of Sudilkov (Grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov)

Respondent: **Haviva Pedaya**

■ Wednesday, September 1st, 2010

09:30 – 10:00 Gathering

10:00 – 12:00 Fifth Session: The Phenomenology of Faith in Contemporary Judaism

Chair: **Chaim I. Waxman**

Arye Olman, Credo Quia Absurdum - Chabad in Russia After 3rd Tammuz

Eli Gurfinkel, Halakhic Decision Making in Matters of Faith and Belief: Principled Approaches and Common Practices

Lital Lieberman-Avital, On the Affinity between "Evil Eye" and Faith Characteristics among Women of North African Origin in Israel

Respondent: **Aviad Hacoen**

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 – 13:45 Sixth Session: Faith in the Cinema

Yuval Rivlin, The Dialectic of Faith: Jewish Creativity in Hollywood of the 1940s

13:45 – 15:45 Seventh Session: Models of Post-Modern Theology

Chair: **Benjamin Brown**

Miriam Feldmann Kaye, Religion After Postmodernism: Jean-Luc Marion and Rav Shagar

Avner Dinur, Hans Jonas as a Model for Secular Theology

Hannah Hashkes, Towards a Jewish Post-Liberal Theology

Respondent: **Avinoam Rosenak**

16:00 – 17:30 Concluding Session: Synthesis and General Responses

Concluding Remarks: **Gabriel Motzkin**

Participants: **Zeev Gries**
Tamar Ross

Moderator: **Naftali Rothenberg**

The workshop is open by invitation only

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