




## Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows activities 2015-2016

<p><b>Adam Ratzon</b> Doctoral Candidate</p> 	<p><b>On Life and Death—</b> <b>Analysis of Personal Narrative and Discourse of Dying People in Light of Perceptions of Death and Dying in Jewish Thought/Philosophy</b></p> <p>This essay presents the personal stories and discourse of dying individuals, which I documented as part of my preliminary fieldwork. These will be analyzed along with the stories of the relatives who accompanied the dying during their final days. This combined reading effort will explore the narrative and poetic aspects, addressing the cultural background from which they stem, especially the possible effects on the fundamental concepts of death in Jewish culture and Jewish thought.</p> <p>The dissertation will examine the impression these concepts have on such stories, the changes they foster in contemporary culture, and the sources of comfort of dying people. Thus we will achieve a polyphonic description - both from the narrow familial circle and the wider cultural sphere - of the final period of a person's life. In addition to analyzing interviews I conducted as part of my fieldwork, I will also analyze segments of documentary works (interviews held by media figures and published in various media outlets, biographical or non-fiction writings of dying people or their families, diaries, and so on) that exhibit various cultural options for coping with death.</p>
<p><b>Nurit Inbar</b> Doctoral Candidate</p> 	<p><b>Perceptions and Cultural Conventions of Dreams and Visions in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Safed</b></p> <p>My research deals with perceptions and cultural conventions of dreams and visions in Sefad of the sixteenth century. That, Through reading the 'Book of Revelations' (Sefer Ahezionot), the dreams diary of Rabbi Chaim Vital.</p> <p>The purpose of this study is not offering an historical- linear description of the development of dream concepts, but to offer a new reading and restructuring the 'dreams stories' Rabbi Chaim Vital, and examine through it the mental and cosmological structures and perceptions in Safed of the sixteenth century. That in dialogue with the modern theories which offer a different psychological and cosmological structures.</p>
<p><b>Eran Sebag</b> Doctoral Candidate</p> 	<p><b>The Blues and The Jewish Piyut – Slave Culture : True Exile and Mystery</b></p> <p>The research proposal will examine the musical philosophy amongst black slaves and ex-slaves in the American South, who later was named - The Blues. This tradition will be examined, both melody and text ,orally and in writing, as a tradition that became a tool of struggle for the liberation of the life and the soul of the black slaves . As The Blues is not only a school of musical expression, but a conglomerate of thoughts and ideas that was built, step by step, on the shaky ground of slavery and segregation, in order to give comfort and power to continue living under unbearable conditions. The same tradition and similar historical context nourished the Jewish school of Piyut - therefore – we can understand the ideological connection</p>



	between American Jews (that arrived to the U.S as persecuted emigrants with the historical memory of being slaves) and the rise of Blues in the early decades of the 20th century in the United States of America.
<p><b>David Peretz</b> <b>Doctoral Candidate</b></p> 	<p><b>Between the imaginary and unapologetic - Israel Periphery manifestation in popular cultural</b></p> <p>Many studies have been conducted on the question of negligence funding and institutional discriminating policies towards Israel periphery over the years. The last decade saw the uprising of studies on the issue of media representations of the periphery in Israeli media. But the question of the representation of the periphery, in popular culture remained largely outside the study field.</p> <p>this research is focusing on Israeli popular culture as a whole and popular Song's in particular' as immensely influential agents of consciousness. Since the early days of Zionist settlement, the popular song was used as a major instrument in the creation of a new social consciousness. Poems like "the valley", and "Jerusalem of Gold" set the national ethos and gave utterances to popular sentiments of the Israeli collective center. In many ways, the popular Hebrew song, not only served as the soundtrack of the period, but had a major role in designing the "zeitgeist" of the young and evolving country. Popular songs were the manifestations of Israel national consciousness in relation to fundamental dilemmas of Israeli society, and among them, the complex relationship between the periphery and the center.</p> <p>Looking through a mass body of Hebrew songs, allows us to read about the various utterances attributed to the periphery by three types of artists that reflect the ever changing faces of place and time: Artists who see the external periphery; Artist Born in the periphery who left her for life in the big city; Artist Born in the periphery remaining in it and choose to write the periphery out.</p> <p>this research explores the poetic-poetic texts, which represents the dilemmas, notions, and the changes reflected in every generation of Hebrew songs. Through the poetic, historical, and sociological prisms, reflected in the work of three distinct groups and distinct from one and another. and through a comparative study examines the mirrored positions of each group.</p>
<p><b>Israel Belfer</b> <b>Postdoctoral Fellow</b></p> 	<p><b>Kvod Elohim - Apophatic Nature</b></p> <p>There are two parts to my research project: The point of departure for my investigation are complementary concepts in Jewish thought and Mysticism: Kedusha (Sanctity, Holiness) and Kavod (Glory, Honor). Dealing with the abstract, other-worldly ineffable (Kedusha), and the manifested presence (Kavod) as encoded in stereometric terms (internal/external), experience (presence/absence) and human condition (introversion/extroversion).</p> <p>The complementary spatial terms of the manifest and the inaccessible lead into the second part, a study of the borders of the knowable and unknowable – in the history of Ideas, classical science and mysticism. The metaphor of sight, its limitations and absence. This vanishing point of the</p>



	visual perspective has a distinct career in the history of ideas. In the mystical tradition an antecedent of this occurs, especially in the Zohar.
<p><b>Shlomo-Dov Rosen</b> <b>Postdoctoral Fellow</b> .</p> 	<p><b>Angels: Between Personality and Automata</b></p> <p>I have begun work on a monograph concerning perspectives upon angels, between personality and automata. This work is a development of ideas commenced in my dissertation, continued in the article mentioned above, and continued also in work done this year. I plan to develop this research into book length monographs in both Hebrew and English over the coming year. This will involve analysis of the relationship between conceptions of angels and scientific understanding in Early Modernity, and also a comparison of angels as automata with recent and projected developments in artificial intelligence.</p>