



Matanel Fellows at Alma
Report on Activities in the 2021 – 2022 and 2022 – 2023 Academic Years

Report prepared by Eyal Biton, COO (eyal@alma.org.il; 054-4477845)

In each of these two academic years, the Matanel Fellows at Alma had some 22 participants (lists of the participants are attached to this report). These people are drawn from the world of arts and letters in the widest sense of the term. It is not possible to estimate how many each program graduate impacts directly over any given time period, but there can be no doubt that their delving into Hebrew culture, thanks to the Matanel Fellows at Alma program, enriches them and strengthens their knowledge and understanding of Hebrew culture, and thereby impacts on their creative works, which in turn impact countless members of the wider Israeli public. The program's impact on its participants emerges unequivocally from the satisfaction surveys conducted at the end of the program, a summary of which forms part of this report.

2021-2022

Semester A consisted primarily of courses on:

- Beit Midrash: Talmud Tractate on Vows; Dr. Yaakov Z. Meir and Neria Shapira. Different ways in which a person establishes for himself, through her own speech, a new law or prohibition. A discussion of questions about language, the limits of the law, public law and personal space, as well as property, economic rights, material and non-material property.
- Listening lesson with Yuval Nadav: musical talk about interpretation, arrangement, personal expression and creation; songs as media and various forms of expression.
- Bees of Hebrew: discussions led by Dr. Jeremy Fogel on the most famous heretical texts in the western philosophical discourse.
- Speech as Act in the Zohar: Dr. Netta Sobol. Examination of various texts from the Zohar.

Semester B included courses on:

- Beit Midrash: Tractate Gitin of the Talmud – Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World), Gal Elnir and Dr. Asaf Tamari The basis of social responsibility, the authority of sages, the power of the court, relationships between the Torah, the law, and reality and life.
- The construction of a modern Jewish-secular culture, Dr. Matan Harmoni. Literature of the Enlightenment and the revival of Hebrew culture and the creation of modern Hebrew literature.

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- Barefoot reading of the Bible, Tuvia Gera. The first 11 chapters of Bereshit (Book of Genesis), read without the voices of interpreters.
- Journey into Yiddish culture, Mendy Kahan. 1,000 years of cultural activity in Ashkenaz.
- Poetics of the Sages, Dr. Ruth Calderon. Relying on the Bible, and in a courageous dialogue with it, the Sages created a new Jewish universe. The image of the believing person, the community, the religious act and even the image of God, received a new interpretation in their writings.

2022-2023

Semester A covered topics including:

- Beit Midrash: Talmud's Passover Tractate: Dr. Yaakov Z. Meir and Neria Shapira.
- Between Epicurus and Heretics - Baruch Spinoza, Shlomo Maimon and Sigmund Freud from an Epicurean point of view, Dr. Jeremy Fogel.
- Israeli Sociology, Ines Elias. A new perspective on the reality in which we live.
- Poetics of the Sages, Dr. Ruth Calderon. The way of writing of those who had the oral Torah, their ways of reading and midrashic interpretation.

Semester B included courses on:

- Beit Midrash: Tractate of Blessings. Gal Elnir and Momi Falloch. The texts and rituals that form the basis of the Jewish daily prayer routine, the worldview of man, his consciousness of space and time.
- The Enigma of Collective Individualism, Hebrew literature, Dr. Avi Grenfnickel. A. B. Yehoshua. Amos Oz. Yehoshua Kenaz. Yakov Shabtai – 4 writers born within 5 years of each other, who led a revolution in Hebrew literature.
- Barefoot reading of the Bible, Tuvia Gera. The stories of Abraham from Bereshit (Book of Genesis), read without the voices of interpreters.

Evaluation Findings: Summary of Quantitative Feedback

2021-2022

- Over 47% of the respondents reported that the program had met their expectations to a high degree.
- Some 62% of the respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program.

2022-2023

- Nearly 95% of the respondents reported that the program had met their expectations to a high degree.
- Nearly 59% of the respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program.

Qualitative findings relate to the individual courses.

Full evaluation reports, in Hebrew, are appended to this report.



Looking Forward

The program is due to continue in the 2023-2024 academic year, and we are deeply appreciative of the Matanel Foundation's ongoing support for our work in the field of Hebrew culture.