



The Matanel Forum for French-Jewish Philosophy

Status report

March 2024 | Adar 5784



Department of
Jewish Philosophy
Faculty of Jewish Studies
Bar-Ilan University



Dear Foundation Members,

In response to our previous communication, I am pleased to provide you with these further details about our research fellows post-doc students and our upcoming activities, which includes two conferences- one international- and an exhibition and special event at the world renown Bible Lands Museum.

Additionally, we are now in the process of planning a new interdisciplinary research forum, with the aim of incorporating the horrific events and the aftermath of October 7th into the creation of new schools of thought and future avenues for research.

I have included short bios and pictures of our research fellows; they have all agreed to have to be published on the Matanel Foundation's site and extend their deep gratitude to the Foundation for its continuing support.

As noted previously, we wish to extend the post-doctoral period for the two scholarship recipients, Dr. Adi Afal and Dr, Keren Shahar, to two years. Both exceptional students are doing in-depth and excellent research work and have each made an outstanding contribution to the philosophical level of the forum in general.

Thank you again for your warm words of support, and for enabling us to continue to engage in meaningful research at this difficult time.

Warm regards,

Prof. Hanoch Ben Pazi

Research Fellows

Rachel Verliebter

Topic: *The myth of the Doe of Dawn in light of Emmanuel Levinas Phenomenology*



Rachel Verliebter grew up in Strasbourg, France. She is a psychotherapist, translator and curator of Jewish symbolic art. In her writings she explores the nexus between psychoanalysis, Jewish philosophy, Kabbalah and art. She is currently completing her PhD in Jewish mysticism at Bar-Ilan University. Her upcoming exhibition “The Doe of Dawn” at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem engages with the mystery of the doe, a biblical myth about the Divine Feminine that gave rise to manifold meanings in the Kabbalah throughout the generations interweaving love, birth, nature, deliverance and longing for God.

Ghila Amati

Topic: *The philosophy of Henri Bergson and the theology of Rabbi Kook*



Ghila Amati is currently pursuing her doctorate in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford. Her dissertation delves into the interpretation of Rabbi Kook's thought, situating it within the philosophical framework of Henri Bergson's philosophy of life. Ghila has previously held positions as a research fellow in the Judaism and Human Rights Program at the Israel Democracy Institute and as a visiting research fellow at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has been the recipient of several prestigious grants and scholarships, including a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (MFJC) and the Rothschild Doctoral Fellowships for Academic Jewish Studies, which support academic Jewish studies. Ghila's scholarly work was published and is scheduled for publication in esteemed academic platforms such as the Harvard Theological Review, Religions, and Prooftexts.



Shiran Greenberg

Topic: *Eros and Poesis in the philosophy of Levinas and Ettinger*

Age of 43. Married and a father of two daughters (aged 11 and 7). I have been involved in the Workers and learning Youth Movement since 1991. Within this framework, I embarked on a gap-year including combat duty. Since then, I am part of an urban kibbutz in Rishon-Lezion. Over time, I have held a series of roles - Vice Chief Coordinator of HaNoar HaOved VeHaLomed ("The Working and learning Youth") youth movement, member of the Dror-Israel leadership, and the movement's liaison with teacher training and academia. Periodically, I guide youth and adults on journeys to Poland. Additionally, I serve as an educational series guide for the IDF's and Israel Police's Education Days, within the "Ha'meorer" training company. I hold a B.A in Education along with a teaching certificate in History. I also possess a M.A in Jewish Philosophy and am currently pursuing a doctorate in the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University about Eros and Poiesis in French Phenomenology, particularly in Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy. I am honored to be a scholarship recipient of Bar-Ilan University and serve as an academic and pedagogical advisor for the "Buber Center for Dialogical Education" at Beit Berl Academic College.



Ayala Gidron

Topic: *Moral obligation from a historical crisis (Hannah Ardent, Emmanuel Levins, Simon Weil)*

I am 38 years old and reside alternately in Givat-Haviva and Haifa. I am a member of Kibbutz 'Amitay' within the Hashomer Hatzair movement, and I also coordinate philosophy studies at 'Etgarey Hatid' high school in Harish. I am pursuing a doctorate in the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University, where my research delves into the philosophical underpinnings of the 'Radical Good' as a response to the 'Great Crisis', with a particular focus on the works of Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil. Outside of academia, I am passionate about classical and modern ballet and practice insight meditation.



Hodia Samet Har Shefi

Topic: *The language crisis following the Holocaust Among three Shoshani students: Emmanuel Levins, Shalom Rosenberg and Elie Wiesel*

Hodaya Samet Har Shefi, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Bar Ilan University. Under the mentorship of Professor Hanoch Ben Pazi, explores the potential for developing a language following rupture (following Emmanuel Levinas and Elie Wiesel). A student of Professor Shalom Rosenberg and researcher of the writings of Mr. Shushani. Beyond her academic pursuits, also a teacher and a mother to four daughters

Post-doc Fellows

Dr. Adi Efal-Lautenschlaeger



Adi Efal-Lautenschläger works in the fields of history of French philosophy (Early-modern to present), philosophy of history, philosophy of education and artistic theory. She teaches at Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv University and the Beit Berl Academic College. She holds two doctorates from the University of Tel Aviv (Art History) and the University of Strasbourg (Philosophy). She was a research fellow at the ENS Paris, at the Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, at the IFK in Vienna, and at the University of Cologne. Her monography *Ravaisson's method: Habitude, Figures and the Work of Edification* is in preparation for Edinburgh University Press. She published *Figural Philology: Panofsky and the Science of Things* (Bloomsbury 2016); *Habitus as Method: Revisiting a Scholastic Theory of Art* (Peeters 2017), and (as co-editor, 2 vols) *Hegel and Schelling in Early 19th Century France* (Springer 2023). Her first Hebrew monography, including a translation of Ravaisson's "De l'habitude:" *Habitude and Instruction [Takana ve Hora'a]: Between Aristotle, Descartes and Bergson*, is forthcoming (2024) with Resling Press Tel Aviv.

Research: *Hebrew Bergsonism: A Latent chapter in the historiography of Israeli philosophy*

During the year and the meeting of the Matanel Forum, I found that my project relates in essential manners to several other projects of members of the forum (Researchers dealing thinkers as Amado-Levy-Valensi, The School of Paris (including Lévinas), and Rabbi Kook's thought), and I see prospects to future collaborations around the thematics of the diffusion of Bergsonism into Jewish philosophy. The possibility to continue my work on Bergson in the Israeli context has now become also connected with the study of the Ecole de Paris. There are also possibilities in developing in mode general manner the question of Bergson's relation to religion, between habit and mysticism. During Winter 2024, A Hebrew written book of mine, *Habitude and Instruction (Takana ve Hora'a)*, is going to be published in Resling Press, in the "Panim" Series of Philosophy of Education in the University of Haifa. Some of the themes of the books, notably the affinities of French Spiritualism with current problems in Israeli mentality, is tangent to my Bar Ilan project. A small part of the book and its finalization were carried-out during the first year of my Matanel fellowship. At the introduction to the book I also clearly acknowledge the support of the Matanel fellowship to the finalization of the book.



Dr. Keren Shahar

Keren Shahar is a post-doctoral fellow at the forum of Matanel Bar Ilan, the Jewish Philosophy Department, Bar Ilan University since 2022. Her Ph.D dissertation, from Tel Aviv University (2022), is titled: "The Space of The Sensible: The Aesthetic and the Political in Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Rancière". Her research focuses mainly on political thought and aesthetics, currently her research is engaged in the concept of hope draw mainly from Modern Jewish-Messianism. Keren is also the editorial coordinator of "Iyyun: The Jerusalem Journal of Philosophy".

Research: *The Horizon of Being: Emmanuel Levinas and Ernst Bloch on Utopia and Time*

"Time is pure hope" - (Levinas, God, Time and Death)

As a fellow of the 'Matanel Bar-Ilan Forum for French Jewish Thought', I plan to go deeper in my research into the concept of hope. This year, I will focus on analyzing the concept of utopia as a horizon of being. In particular, I will analyze the relationship that this horizon implies between the present and the future, or the given and the desirable, in the philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Ernst Bloch.

In his book *God, Time and Death* Levinas devoted three lectures to the utopian philosophy of the German-Jewish Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885-1977). In one of these lectures Levinas asserts that, for Bloch, "Time, as the hope of Utopia, is no longer the time that is thought of on the basis of death. Here, the first ecstasis is Utopia, not death." (p. 99) That is, for Levinas, Bloch's philosophy is an invitation to think about time not on the basis of death but as pure hope. The future is what has not yet come, and thus the horizon of being is utopian future, and not destruction or nothingness. Bloch wrote his first book, "The Spirit of Utopia," during the First World War (1915-16) got it published by 1918 at the end of the war. His magnum opus, "The Principle of Hope," was written while he was in exile in the US during World War II. It was precisely when surrounded by the extreme suppression and destruction of human morals, and in the face of an apocalyptic German tradition, that Bloch developed a redemptive idea of utopia. For Bloch, utopia is a vision of a better world, but it is not just wishful thinking. Rather, it is connected to the generative power of hope. This hope, which he calls "educated hope" (*docta sep*), defines us as subjects capable of believing and creating our future.

In my research I will examine Levinas' interpretation of Bloch's utopian philosophy, and explore the meaning and role of time in their thinking. How can one think about time and the temporality of existence on any basis other than that of death? And what is the meaning of utopia when considered as an exception to the beyond of being? I will examine these questions through the prisms of Levinas' thoughts on ethics, and Bloch's thoughts on politics. As a fellow of the 'Matanel Bar-Ilan Forum for French Jewish Thought', I delve deeper in the examination of the generative power of hope and the formulation of a conception of hope that is grounded in Jewish Messianism and in Modern French thought, in particular Derrida and Levinas. Derrida and Levinas offer a structure of being that is open to radical otherness. This structure allows us to tie hope to possibilities that exist objectively in the ever-changing material world: one that consists not only of what exists, but also of the unexpected that might exist. However, to avoid the possibility that change will take of a form of 'deus ex machina,' and the future of a complete otherness over which we have no control, it necessary to bring to light a subjective, non-nostalgic aspect of hope. A hope that is related to self-design and creation, while emphasizing the importance of having a vision of a future: the latter of which is essential since it demands that we act in the present to improve reality.

The 'Matanel Bar-Ilan Forum' fellowship allows me to write two academic articles:

1. "Time is Out of Joint: Jacques Derrida and Jewish Messianism" which I presented at the London Conference of Critical Thought (June 23) and has excepted for presentation at "Derrida Today" conference in Athens (June 24)
2. "Ernst Bloch and Gilles Deleuze on the Meaning of Concrete Utopia" which I presented at Luft Gesheft, The Zvi Yavetz School of History Studies, Tel Aviv University.

These days I am working on final improvements before sending the articles to academic journals for publication.

The Matanel Forum offered a fruitful environment for research, and an encounter with different and diverse fields of knowledge. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to take part in it.

Upcoming Events, conferences and projects:

1. In conjunction with “the Doe of Dawn”, a new exhibition curated by Rachel Verleibter, a special evening at the Bible Lands Museum: "As a Doe that Longs for Streams of Water: The Desire for Infinity", with Prof. Hanoch Ben-Pazi and Rachel Verleibter – March 20, 2024
2. A conference in honor of Shmuel Trigano (and mention of Pardes magazine)- April 4, 2024
3. International Conference: Andre Neher: Thought, Research, and Educational Leadership- May 9
4. Interdisciplinary Research Forum on Israel's Future- This ongoing research project seeks to create in-depth thought and ideas about Israeli cooperation and the great challenges facing Israeli society after the horrific events of October 7th and the ensuing war.



A new exhibition at the Bible Lands Museum: “The Doe of Dawn”, curated by Matanel Forum research fellow Rachel Verleibter



Impacting tomorrow, **today.**

