



Universität Hamburg

DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

ספקנות

Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies
JEWISH SCEPTICISM

WORKSHOP AND LECTURE

FEMINISM AND SCEPTICISM

WORKSHOP

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2019
11:00 – 12:30

**SCEPTICISM IN ZOHARIC AND
HASIDIC LITERATURE**
LECTURER: DR. BITI ROI

The Zoharic literature of twelfth- to fourteenth-century Spain, which has been defined as the most influential kabbalistic movement in the Middle Ages, and its followers—the eighteenth-century Eastern European Hasidic movement—demonstrate an interesting window into the complicated relationship between scepticism and theological absolutism. In this workshop, the way in which scepticism defines affinity with God in the Jewish mystical tradition and the way non-philosophical texts deal with philosophical perceptions will be explored. The role of gender issues in the kabbalistic movement will be also articulated. Texts to be examined include works of rabbinic, Zoharic, medieval, and Hasidic literature as well as the well-known liturgical foreword “Elijah opened and said” and its similarities to “Al-Fātiḥah,” the famous Islamic prayer.

King David is one of the most colourful heroes of Jewish myth; warrior and poet, sinner and penitent, conqueror and musician, adulterer and Messiah. The many facets of his character are rooted in biblical scripture and continued to develop in the literature of the Midrash and the Kabbalah. Each generation has added new layers to David's portrait, sketching him in a new light. Indeed, David's personality reflects the characters and hopes of his interpreters throughout generations. Embodying the hero “with a thousand faces” and representing the messianic idea, David is not merely a private character, but a collective entity, wearing many different forms. In the Zohar, David's collective image is identified with the *Shekhinah*, the Assembly of Israel [Knesset Israel] and the Divine Spouse.

Why was this figure of the warrior—the ultimate male, conqueror of cities and kingdoms, the redeemer, who was presented as a masculine hero in both Christian and Jewish literature—“converted” by the Zohar to signify a feminine image? In her lecture, Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel will try to solve this riddle by using questions of scepticism, identity, and gender.

LECTURE

TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019, 18:00

**SCEPTICISM AND GENDER
KING DAVID IN THE IMAGE OF THE
SHEKHINAH**
LECTURER:
DR. RUTH KARA-IVANOV KANIEL

MAIMONIDES CENTRE
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