

## Workshop

# Gates to Modernity: New Perspectives on Hasidism and Haskalah

### Date

26–27 July 2022



Ha-Safqan (The Sceptic)

### Abstract

Haskalah and Hasidism present two vital ideological trends that shaped Jewish culture in modern Europe. Classical historiography defined these two movements as the initiators of the rift in traditional society, with Haskalah representing modernity and Hasidism promoting traditionalism. The cultural struggle between Haskalah and Hasidism was indeed dramatic and comprehensive, and it was expressed through polemics, sarcastic satire, political competition, and social tensions, which fashioned the character and self-perception of both groups.

Contemporary discourse on this cultural clash portrays more complex narratives and identifies both factions as intrinsic representatives of modernisation processes within European Jewry – also with regard to sceptical approaches, especially in the field of theosophy and its philosophical transformations. In our workshop, we will discuss whether lower forms of scepticism are superseded at some stage by mystical metaphysics or vice versa and which particular strategies are developed regarding doubt.

This workshop will present both trends and their intertwining as reflections of “multiple modernities” with all their socio-cultural and religious implications. The presentations will enquire into contesting paradigms of cultural, mystical, and religious scepticism that occasionally evolved from internal Jewish discourses into transcultural phenomena.

### Convenors

- Uriel Gellman (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan/Universität Hamburg)
- Elke Morlok (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg/Universität Hamburg)

### Participants

- Ruth von Bernuth (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
- Doru Constantin Doroftei (Universität Hamburg)
- Jonathan Garb (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- Louise Hecht (Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg)
- Rachel Manekin (University of Maryland, College Park)
- Gadi Sagiv (The Open University of Israel)
- Isaac Slater (Universität Hamburg)
- Marcin Wodziński (Uniwersytet Wrocławski)

### Venue

Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies (MCAS)

Jungiusstraße 11 (Entrance C)/Room C319

20355 Hamburg

Please contact MCAS for registration and further information.

[maimonides-centre@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:maimonides-centre@uni-hamburg.de)

# Programme

Tuesday 26 July 2022

**10:00–10:15** Welcome and Introduction

**10:15–11:35** Panel 1

*Chair: Uriel Gellman (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan/Universität Hamburg)*

**10:15–10:55** **The Hasidic Books in Joseph Perl's Library**

*Rachel Manekin (University of Maryland, College Park)*

**10:55–11:35** **A Storm in a Jug of Oil: Debating the Rabbinic Tradition at the End of the Nineteenth Century**

*Isaac Slater (Universität Hamburg)*

**11:35–11:50** Coffee Break

**11:50–13:10** Panel 2

*Chair: Marcin Wodziński (Uniwersytet Wrocławski)*

**11:50–12:30** **Representations of Modernity and Ritualisation**

*Uriel Gellman (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan/Universität Hamburg)*

**12:30–13:10** **The Making of a Hasidic Court Fool: Hershele in Popular Yiddish Literature**

*Ruth von Bernuth (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)*

**13:10–14:00** Lunch Break

**14:00–15:20** Panel 3

*Chair: Rachel Manekin (University of Maryland, College Park)*

**14:00–14:40** **Two Enlightenments: Jews, Poles, and Their Roads to Modernity**

*Marcin Wodziński (Uniwersytet Wrocławski)*

**14:40–15:20** **Men of Implacable Character vs. Hypocritical Idlers: Peter Beer's Assessment of Frankism and Hasidism**

*Louise Hecht (Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg)*

**18:00** Dinner (Restaurant "Cucina d'Elisa," Rothenbaumchaussee 101, 20148 Hamburg)

Wednesday 27 July 2022

10:30–11:50 Panel 4

*Chair: Elke Morlok (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg/Universität Hamburg)*

10:30–11:10

**Reconsidering Philosophical Scepticism and Hasidism**

*Gadi Sagiv (The Open University of Israel)*

11:10–11:50

**Enlightened Judaism: Haskalah, Hasidism, and Their Relation to Mysticism: Some Terminological Reflections**

*Doru Constantin Doroftei (Universität Hamburg)*

11:50–12:10

Coffee Break

12:10–12:50

**Old and New Forms of Kabbalah in Haskalah and Hasidism**

*Elke Morlok (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg/Universität Hamburg)*

12:50–13:20

**Final Discussion: Haskalah, Hasidism, and Scepticism as “Gates to Modernity”**

13:20–14:15

Lunch

14:30–16:30

**Guided Tour of the “Grindel,” Hamburg’s Jewish Quarter**

*Michael Studemund-Halévy (Universität Hamburg)*



Universität Hamburg

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ספקנות

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JEWISH SCEPTICISM