



Universität Hamburg

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ספקנות

Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies
JEWISH SCEPTICISM

Workshop

Gates to Modernity: New Perspectives on Hasidism and Haskalah

26–27 July 2022



Ha-Safqan (The Sceptic)

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 In our workshop, we will discuss whether lower forms of scepticism are superseded at some stage by mystical metaphysics or vice versa and which particular strategies are developed regarding doubt.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 (FAU 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)
- Jonatan Meir (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva)
- Gadi Sagiv (The Open University of Israel)
- Marcin Wodziński (Uniwersytet Wrocławski)

Venue

Maimonides Centre for
Advanced Studies

Please contact MCAS for
registration and further information.
maimonides-centre@uni-hamburg.de

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