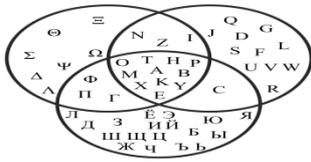


The Science of Israel

A Humanistic Synopsis



*Where is the real world/life inter-section between chochmat Israel and chochmat ha'umot? Does the knowledge of Jewish thought (machshevet Israel), the science of Judaism (moda Jehudot), imply an essentially distinct level of methodical inquiry into reality that the time-tested wisdom of the nations does not cover? Today, our modern technological world is basically operated on the Aristotelian axiom of eternal matter which confirms the naturalistic myths of all ancient cultures (Babylonian, Indian, Egyptian, Assyrian and Greek), except the Hebrew spiritual document of a creative upper force where the vibrational wave sequence reads: space-time/light-energy-matter-living matter (spiritual physics). The Septaguinta uses the word *epoisen* for creation which means to make/produce something out of something; this goes to show that a word for creation was missing in classical Greek; early Qur'anic Kalamists detected this cognitive disharmony, Maimonides clarified that time was created and Spinoza connected eternity to truth. Zephaniah (3.9) promises us purified lips (*sapha b'rurah*) to understand the eternal blueprint of the creative upper force, but what is the original code of this clear language or communicative clarification. Peoples are historically territorial products and always fought economically for territorial re-production (access to natural resources), religious belief systems are time-inconsistent anthropological constructions and only natural law is, in our temporal perception of reality, time-consistent. In our times, it will become a vital necessity of survivalist rationality and morality to create such a clear language, concerning the human condition and the hidden Aristotelian axiom of madness and modernity.*

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International Workshop

Call for Papers:

How Jews Know Epistemologies of Jewish Knowledge

FreieUniversität Berlin, **June 2-3, 2015**

Deadline for Submission: **March 1, 2015**

Organizers: EladLapidot (FreieUniversität Berlin), Ron Naiweld (EHES-CRHParis)

Confirmed speakers: Jonathan Boyarin (Cornell University), Mark Geller (FreieUniversitätBerlin), Sylvie-Anne Goldberg (EHES-CRH Paris), Lukas Mühlethaler (FreieUniversitätBerlin), Beate Ulrike La Sala (FreieUniversitätBerlin), Oded Schechter (Johns Hopkins University), Hillel Ben Sasson (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

In recent years various attempts in international scholarship begin to signal a new approach to Jewish, especially rabbinical intellectual tradition. Methods, disciplines and motivations vary. In its core, however, the new approach shifts from the chiefly historical-philological engagement that has characterized research since the 19th century, to a more conceptual-theoretical engagement. Building on sources developed by the historical-philological scholarship, it focuses on the unique knowledge that these sources articulate. It seeks not longer to learn only *of* Jewish texts (their development, SitzimLeben, historical context etc.) but to learn *from* them.

The aim of this workshop is to demarcate an intellectual space common for the individual projects. Its basic question concerns the relation between the forms of knowledge ('epistemologies') acknowledged and embodied by modern science and those inhabiting the Jewish sources – 'how Jews know'.

Since the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was founded in Berlin with the aim of making Judaism "an object of science" (Immanuel Wolf, 1822), science has never attempted to develop an understanding of the Jewish textual tradition as a form of systematic, self-conscience knowledge. The founders of the *WdJ* thus attempted to express Jewish knowledge in the categories of modern academic science. This attempt often ran counter to the traditional ways in which Jews exercised knowledge, which were branded as particularistic and so unfit for the universal rational community of which *WdJ* wished to be part.

What science knows about Jewish knowledge has therefore been always separated from scientific self-knowledge, i.e. science's understanding of itself, the theory of scientific knowledge. This principle also applies to the scholarship of Jewish texts. The development of the 'science of Judaism' to *Judaistik*, מדעי היהדות and Judaic or Jewish Studies has mostly followed trends in theory of science, hardly ever in any critical dialogue with Jewish tradition of knowledge itself.

The workshop invites its participants to the birthplace of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in order to reflect on new ways of understanding this expression – not only as a *genitivusobjectivus*, but as a *genitivussubjectivus*. If “all humans by nature desire to know” (Aristotle), do Jewish intellectual traditions provide any unique responses to the human quest for knowledge? Do these responses have a universal import? Can contemporary science, therefore, in re-working its own response, look at Judaism no longer just as an object for observation, but as a source for critical self-reflection?

Participants in the workshop are invited to explore all epistemological aspects of Judaism: its basic categories of knowledge, its *organon* – *torah, mishna, talmud, midrash* etc.; its paradigmatic knowing subjects – *rav, hacham, gaon* etc.; its knowledge institution – *yeshiva, bet-midrash, bet-din*; its mediums – oral vs. textual traditions and more. Contributions should relate these aspects to current topics and questions in theory and methodology of science in general and the humanities in particular: science in society and politics, structure of studies, material and institutional conditions of knowledge and so forth. Papers can also analyze the epistemological and historical conditions that have so far prevented science from considering Judaism as a form of knowledge: the categorical divides of secular/religious, universality/particularity, knowledge/faith, theoretical/practical, spiritual/material etc. Attention will be given also to comparison with other intellectual traditions – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism etc. – as well as with other neighboring areas of science.

Submission: We welcome proposals for a 20-minute presentation, followed by a discussion. Presentations should be focused on a reading of a textual source. Please send an abstract of 200 words and a short bio by March 1, 2015 to elapidot@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Travel expenses as well as accommodation for 2 nights (June 2-4) will be provided to all speakers.