**Interpretative Responses to the Emotions of the Biblical God:
The Case of Jealousy**

For many communities, the Bible is considered a text that contains divine guidance for a worthy human life. Therefore, the description of the biblical God as having an intense emotional affinity to human beings creates discomfort, for two principal reasons. One is the expectation that God will transcend human emotions and serve as a role model. This expectation stems from the perception that emotions, regardless of content, are a human trait that attests to moral weakness. The other reason for discomfort is the specific content of the emotions attributed to God: not only love, compassion, and concern, but also anger, jealousy, and vengeance.

Emotions always require interpretation, especially when mediated through text. In my lecture, I will explore the interpretative mechanisms that allow scholars, interpreters, and translators of the Bible in the modern era to deal with the issues associated with the negative emotions of God. As a test case, I will use the Hebrew word “*qin’ah*” – a term that appears many times in the Bible and is attributed to both humans and God –for which three different translation are common in English: envy, jealousy, and zealotry.

At the core of the biblical concept of jealousy lies ambivalence: possessiveness and anxiety over exclusivity, which lead to a loss of control, as opposed to devotion and loyalty to a particular idea and a willingness to sacrifice. In the lecture, I will demonstrate how this ambivalence enables interpreters to maneuver between different aspects of the concept and create a dichotomy between human jealousy and divine jealousy. This interpretive act expresses the tension between the desire to present God as transcending the inferior human emotions, and the need to see the personality of the biblical God as a source of inspiration for shaping human emotions.