**English Abstracts of the Hebrew Articles**

**Samson in Ashkelon: Memory and Myth in a Modern City**

Avraham (Avi) Sasson and Gad Sobol

Four chapters in the Bible were devoted to the story of Samson ben Manoah: a questionable nazir, a questionable judge, and a questionable national leader. He is not described as a national saviour, nor as a national hero, and he does not release the tribe of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines. He acted on his own for his own selfish needs. Once, after his marriage, he beat up and looted 30 Philistines (Judges 14:19). In paintings and sculptures his name is associated with the mythological Greek Heracles and the Roman Hercules. Every period, every culture and every artist has a Samson – a national hero, a lover, or a man of God. The Sages see him as an ideal judge, leader, saviour and redeemer.

Ashkelon adopted Samson as one of its ancient myths and turned him into a tourist brand identified with the city. The Ashkelon city fathers were looking for a historical biblical figure who would represent the new Israeli in the new city. By the early 1950’s Samson's name was linked to many activities and events in the city. This happened quite often, spontaneously and without any official sanction.

The biblical Samson is portrayed as a wild and passionate person, and he is immortalized in Ashkelon in a wide variety of ways: in mosaics, in sculptures, and in the names of streets and sites, institutions and businesses. As in the story of the Jews in the Diaspora and the rebirth of Zionism in Israel, there is an echo here of one of the goals of Zionism, to shape a collective awareness of a new Jewish identity, using mythological motifs from the past.  Here Samson is the strong and assertive new Jew.

**Keywords:** Ashkelon, Judge, Landscape memory, Myth, Prophet, Samson

**Absalom's Story and the Story of David's Census in Islamic Tradition**

Arye Zoref

This article deals with the manner in which Absalom story and the story of David's census were received in Islamic Tradition. Unlike most of the biblical stories concerning David, that were ignored by Islamic writers, these two stories were mentioned in Islamic tradition, albeit rarely. The article examines the literary function of these stories in Islamic tradition and their links to Jewish tradition, and explores the reasons why these stories were mentioned by Islamic writers, and their contribution for the shaping of King David's image in Islam.

**Keywords:** David, Absalom, census, Islam, literary function

**The Commandments of the Torah and Natural Law in the Writings of Gersonides**

Shalom Sadik

The aim of this article is to analyze the opinion of Gersonides on Natural Law. In the first part of the article, we will see that, according to Gersonides, all the commandments have rational reasons. Some of these reasons cannot be understood by anybody but Moses because of his higher intellect. By the end of the article, we will see that Gersonides thinks that the commandments of the Torah are eternal. With the exception to commandments in which the Torah portrays (through stories) certain commandments that are not ideal and will be changed in the future.

**Keywords:** natural law, Gersonides, commentaries of the Torah, change of the commandments, Medieval philosophy

**The Ideal Head of Academy According to Iberian Sages in the Late Middle Ages**

Yoel Marciano

This article seeks to characterize the profile of the ideal Rosh Yeshiva among the Jewish exiles from Spain and their descendants in early modern times. The article focuses on a source that describes how Rabbi Isaac Canpanton taught his disciples. The testimony on this sage, who was the most important sage in the middle of the fifteenth century Spain, is one of the most beautiful testimonies we have of the relationship between a rabbi and his disciple. The analysis of the testimony, along with other sources presented in the article, point to the main characteristics of the relationship, and the connection between them and the method of studying the Gemara, known as *The Sephardic Speculation*, and the physical conditions in which they studied in yeshivot.

**Keywords:** sages of Spain, Sephardic Jewish diaspora, Sephardic Speculation, Jewish education, Talmud study

**From Service to Tzar to Service to God: Identification of Cantonist Songs in the Hassidic Repertoire**

Chava Vannikov (Shmulevich-Aizenshtein)

According to the Hasidic oral tradition, some of its multi-language songs based on the Slavic languages originated in the Cantonist milieu. Taking into account disruptions in the Hasidic tradition, scarcity of existing research, and paucity of written testimonies, we propose to examine the whole complex of linguistic, thematic, poetic and musical parameters in order to identify Cantonist songs in the Hasidic repertoire. The research allows us to determine the corpus of Cantonist songs and to outline the main features of the typical Cantonist song. The paper explores Hasidic doctrinal concepts and ideological motives, explaining their interest in these songs despite the foreignness of their language and the social-cultural distance from the Cantonists: the "uplifting of holy sparks" in language and melody, and also the Cantonists’ image as martyrs in the eyes of Hasidic leaders.

**Keywords:** Cantonists, Cantonist songs, Hasidic songs, Hasidic philosophy, multi-language songs

**Zealotry Has Many Faces: The Views and Modes of Operation of Four Hungarian Rabbis**

Menachem Keren-Kratz

Following the end of World War I in which Palestine was conquered by the British who ended the 400-year-old Ottoman rule, and after the Balfour Declaration which promised to establish there a national home for the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, including the Mizrahi religious-Zionist movement, gained substantial momentum. Agudat Israel, which was established in 1912 but began its actual activity only after the war, also launched a series of innovative initiatives. Its flagship Yeshiva introduced daily classes of general studies; it promoted the Daf Ha-Yomi program, a daily study of a Talmud page, an unprecedented form of learning; established the Beit Yaakov school network for ultra-Orthodox girls; founded her own newspapers; established youth and workers’ movements; and promoted ultra-Orthodox settlement in Palestine. These trends provoked opposition from various rabbis, some of whom opposed modernity and secular Zionism, and the stricter ones strongly opposed religious Zionism as well. Most non-Zionist rabbis, despite not always endorsing all the measures taken by Agudat Israel, accepted its authority.

The toughest opposition to the processes that took place in the modern and secular Zionist society and among the religious-Zionists, was led by the Hungarian rabbis. They even claimed that the new measures led by Agudat Israel – the ultra-Orthodox consensus movement – were too far-reaching and against the tradition and the *halakhah*. The four most prominent of them were Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Ehrnreich of Shimloy, Rabbi Shaul Brach of Kosice, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapira (the Munkatch Rebbe), and Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (the Satmar Rebbe). Although it seemed that the common threats from outside, namely secularism, socialism, modernity, Zionism and Agudat Israel, would cause the four rabbis to unite and join forces with each other, the ideological and political rivalry and disagreements between them thwarted such cooperation. Each of them developed his own principles and strategies, and when he felt that any of the other rabbis acted in a different manner, he too became a target for his attacks.

**Keywords:** Jewish Orthodoxy, Jewish fundamentalism, Hungarian Jewry, religious anti-Zionism

**"Who Knows if It would be Remembered, if not the Five Slain": Commemoration and Memory in Ma'ale HaHamisha**

Israel Rosenson and Yossi Spanier

Ma'ale HaHamisha was founded at 1938 as a result of the murder of five founding members who were employed as laborers by Keren Kayemet LeIsrael. The murder strongly influenced the Yishuve, and lead to decision to establish the kibbutz Ma'ale HaHamisha. In this article we deal with five mechanisms known for perpetuating memory and memorialization. The basic pattern of perpetuation involves naming: the established Kibbutz was named after the number of fallen members. The choice of name was not a formal step and it was not accepted by the British authorities. Nonetheless, the Kibbutz members insisted on using it. Another important means of remembering is through creative relevant texts. Songs were written and musically composed, and booklets telling about the murdered persons were published. The writers highlighted the idea that the right way to avenge the murders is strengthening both the settlement and the agricultural initiatives in the vicinity of the Kibbutz. Indeed, the project of afforestation has continued over the years, and the adjacent forest has been named *The forest of the Hamisha* (the five). The date of the murders was decreed by the Kibbutz as a memorial day. In the early years of the kibbutz, the kibbutz journal *BeMa'ale HaHar*, expressed memories of the *Hamisha* with various kinds of writing. Over the years, monuments and other memorial sites were erected, but in the course of time, they were dedicated to other slain members of the community. Tzilla Cohen was murdered at 1945, and *Beit Tzilla*, the culture center of the Kibbutz, was named in her memory. A monument for the victims of Gordonya youth movement in Ghetto Warsaw, which included candidates to join Ma'ale HaHamisha, was inaugurated at 1961. Those sites and others have been interwoven into a nexus of relationships to the *Hamisha*. In Ma'ale HaHamisha we can speak about unification of memory of all victims in relationship to the *Hamisha*. Examining the history of the Kibbutz, this memory may be considered as an important socialization agent for the local community.

**Keywords:**

**The Pietà of Auschwitz: The Artwork of Rachel Nemesh, Second Generation Holocaust Survivor**

Shahar Marnin-Distelfeld

This article deals with the artwork of Rachel Nemesh, Second Generation Holocaust Survivor who was born in Israel in 1951. Her assemblage was exhibited at her solo show "One Flesh" (curator: Michal Shachnai-Yaacobi) in the Israeli art gallery at the Memorial center of Kiryat Tivon in 2020. The works focus on the relationship of the artist with her elderly mother, a survivor of Auschwitz, and on the mother herself. Four themes are being presented and discussed: representations of the mother, Katia Nemesh, as a monumental figure depicted in a symbolic manner; versions of the Pieta – works describing the mother and daughter in different compositions resembling Christian iconography, exploring their tangled bond; body-parts – works showing randomly detached body organs; and scenes of domestic space – the artist's mother in her home, stressing her loneliness. The study will be framed by two main fields: art centering on the Holocaust and feminist ideas focusing on mother-daughter relationships. Theoretical and visual examination will be enhanced by interviews with the artist aiming at profoundly decoding her artwork, claimed to resonate a feminine artistic language. An attempt to formulate an original interpretation of Holocaust Second-Generation's art, combined with a feminist point of view, will be made here.

**Keywords:** Holocaust art, Second-Generation art, feminist art, mother-daughter relationship

**Psychological, Sociological and Faith Components, through the Prism of Two Literary Works Set during and after the Evacuation from Gush Katif**

Moshe Cohen-Zada

The evacuation of Gush Katif in the summer of 2005 was a traumatic event for the settlers and had significant negative influences on the physical, psychological, spiritual, and social aspects of the individuals. A person who experiences a traumatic event is likely to harbor difficult feelings and thoughts in the long term, that could cause psychosomatic processes resulting in illness and difficulty in functioning. Creative writing has important psychological advantages: it aids in revealing these thoughts and feelings and prevents their negative impact, and helps in reorganizing the thoughts and feelings. Understanding the way in which the writer felt and experienced the difficult events enables him to free himself from the restrictive narratives of the self and develop new possibilities for self-understanding.

The autobiographic novel is the main genre in the creative writing toolbox. Unlike biographical literature, in an autobiography the extra-textual verification of facts is a secondary concern. In an autobiographic novel there is a distinct, ongoing process of self-awareness development, until the work is part of the life-long identity molding process. The dramatic event of the evacuation from Gush Katif is a rousing subject for varied creative writing. Three researchers have discussed works written for children and teenagers. This research seeks to expand the perspective by examining two works written for adults: "Returning to 2005," and "Emergency Routine," both of which have autobiographical characteristics, and adds a further layer to the analysis of the literature produced following the evacuation. The research examines the psychological, social and faith-ideological aspects reflected in these works. These aspects are examined through the prism of the research by Billig, Dekel and Tuval-Mashiach and Baruch Kahane, who discussed the impact of the evacuation on the settlers. The analysis of the two works in this study touches on preliminary questions regarding the crafting of these works: faithfulness to the precise historical facts, the blending of the truth and the crafting, the identity molding process and the possible influences of the socio-political background of the authors.

**Keywords:** creative writing, autobiographical novel, evacuation of Gush Katif, identity molding, "Returning to 2005", "Emergency Routine"