

Joint Workshop for the Project of Young Scholars

Through the Academic Cooperation between

The Center for Interdisciplinary Study of the Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR),
Doshisha University, Japan

And

Leo Baeck College, London

To be held at Leo Baeck College, London
28th February 2013 (Thursday)

Theme: Land and People in Jewish Writings and their Interpretations

11:30-13:00

Session A: Chair, Ada Taggar-Cohen (Doshisha University)

Mr. Kotaro Hiraoka

(Ph.D candidate, Faculty of Theology, Doshisha University)

*“Martin Bubers’ understanding of The Maharal of Prague:
People and Land in Early Modern Jewish Thought“*

Ms. Aiko Kanda

(Ph.D candidate, Faculty of Theology, Doshisha University)

“Erets and Adam in Maimonides: according to the Guide of the Perplexed II:30”

Discussion

Break

14:00-15:30

Session B: Chair, Rabbi Dr. Charles Middleburgh (Leo Baeck College)

Prof. Ada Taggar-Cohen

(Prof. of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Theology, Doshisha University)

“Is there in the Hebrew Bible an unconditional Covenant?-

*A glance at the scriptures with Ancient Near Eastern Texts stating the promise of land
and subservience to God”*

Rabbi Prof. Jonathan Magonet

(Emeritus Prof. and the Former Principal of Leo Baeck College)

“People and Land in Leviticus 25 – Synopsis”

Sponsored by Doshisha University, CISMOR, Kyoto

Hosted by Leo Baeck College, London

Martin Bubers' understanding of The Maharal of Prague
– People and Land in Early Modern Jewish Thought –

Kotaro Hiraoka

How can we understand the ethnicity of the Jewish people? Is it true that Judaism is to be understood as religious communities without ethnicity, spreading among nation-states, as we see it for example in Islam or Christianity? Actually, the concept of the people, ("עם") as an ethnic group, exists among Zionists and non-Zionist Jews alike. This sense of feeling as the people ("העם"), continued without that people dominance and possession of the Land ("הארץ"). In modern times, the Zionists wanted to create their own nation-state but there were those who opposed this idea. Can we then speak of two different concepts of "עם" among Jews? Since, when we speak to Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora they seem to speak of one and the same "עם"? My treatment of the question is to study how Jewish thinkers thought about the people. In my presentation, I will try to clarify how Buber understood the thoughts of the Maharal of Prague (Judah Loew ben Bezalel) regarding the "people and the land".

Erets and Adam in Maimonides: according to the Guide of the Perplexed II:30

Aiko Kanda

In *the Guide* II:30, Maimonides gives his own exegesis on *ma'aseh bere'shit* in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. He interprets *'arets* as either soil of the earth among four elements (i.e., air, fire, water and earth) or the earth of the heavenly spheres in relation to *ha-shamayim*. *'Adam* is the name of the first man, the name which derived from *adamah* (earth), and this term also designates the species of man (*the Guide* I:14). He connects the creation story of *'adam* with Satan, and maintains that descendants of Israel are free from impurity based on a Talmudic story. In this short presentation, I will examine Maimonides's understanding of *'arets* and *'adam* in *the Guide* II:30, and its relevant chapters in *the Guide*.

Is there in the Hebrew Bible an unconditional Covenant?

A glance at the scriptures with Ancient Near Eastern Texts stating the promise of land and subservience to God

Ada Taggar-Cohen

In 1970 M. Weinfeld published an article titled "The Covenant of Grant in Old Testament and Ancient Near East" (*JAOS* 90), in which he suggested that the covenant between God and Abraham and between God and David were not of the conditional covenant type, but rather a covenant of "grant". His study was based on Akkadian and Hittite texts. According to Weinfeld, these relations were one-sided act of grace from the divine towards his chosen leaders. Weinfeld's interpretation was generally accepted by biblical scholars, and was contested only once by Gary N. Knoppers (*JAOS* 16, 1996). However, the examination of Hittite texts of covenantal relations suggests that we cannot really speak of "a covenant of grant" in the full sense; obligations were always attached to the covenant, and the relations between the parties were always conditional.

“People and Land in Leviticus 25 – Synopsis”

Jonathan Magonet

Chapter 25 of Leviticus deals with the concept of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. It provides a context for two key theological statements defining the relationship between God and the land of Israel, and God and the Israelite nation. Various elements within the chapter underpin these two parallel relationships: as Creator, God owns the land, so that Israelites cannot hold it in perpetuity but are to be considered as lease holders for a set period; as the one who redeemed Israel from Egyptian slavery, God by analogy ‘owns’ Israel as ‘*avadim*’, ‘servants/slaves’, so that no Israelite can ‘own’ a fellow Israelite in perpetuity. A further parallel is to be found in the documenting of two exceptions to these rules – Israelites may own in perpetuity houses found within walled cities; Israelites may own foreign-born slaves and pass them on to subsequent generations.