

## Call for Applications

### **The Research Forum for the Study of Progressive Judaism and Jewish Renewal in Israel 2020/21**

*Headed by Dr. Adi Sherzer-Druckman and Dr. Elazar Ben-Lulu, mentored by Prof. Ofer Shiff*

Jewish Renewal and Liberal/Progressive Judaism have presented Israeli society with an ongoing challenge and evoked an increasingly profound public discourse. However, only little scholarly attention has been given to the roots, theological perceptions, reception, influence, changes, and structure of progressive Jewish movements in Israel. Therefore, a proper scientific exploration of these issues, starting with the pre-state *Yishuv* period to present-day Israel, is much needed.

The Azrieli Center for Israel Studies (MALI) at the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in partnership with the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, offer young scholars (postdocs and advanced research students) research grants upon participation in a forum devoted to the study of Jewish Renewal in Israel.

The forum will hold monthly meetings starting November 2020. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss key issues in the research of progressive movements and various trends related to Jewish Renewal in Israel, map the field, construct new databases, promote individual research, and foster new connections among scholars in the field. The forum will apply a holistic, interdisciplinary approach based on the concept of “Outlooks” (*Mabatim*), which analyzes Israeli viewpoints on the Jewish world in order to better understand Israeli society.

Throughout the year, the forum will host researchers from across a wide variety of disciplines from Israel and abroad. Participants are expected to share their contributions with the forum by presenting a personal academic paper and the (anthropological or archival) fieldwork upon which it is based.

#### **The forum will address the following topics, among others:**

- The emergence of an “Israeli Judaism”; Jewish renewal in Israel and liberal approaches to Jewish education, identity, and practice.
- The worldview and stances of Zionist and Israeli leaders in relation to the Jewish world in general and progressive Judaism in particular.
- The historic roots of non-Orthodox movements in Israel.
- A sociological-anthropological look at liberal/progressive communities and the Jewish renewal phenomenon in Israel.
- Jewish renewal in Israel from political and legal perspectives, and relations between religion and state in Israel.
- The religious component in Israel’s relationship with the Jewish world.
- Conversion in the Jewish world: tensions and adaptations.
- Liberal/progressive liturgy and theology: challenges and changes.
- Gender, sexuality, and the place of the body in liberal/progressive Jewish rituals.

### Eligibility:

- Eligible candidates are postdoctoral researchers (with no permanent academic position) and advanced research students from all universities in Israel and abroad, whose research is relevant to the topic of the forum.
- Ongoing meetings will take place in a hybrid format and in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions.
- Meetings will be held **in Hebrew**, but participants will be able to present and respond in English as well.
- Meetings will take place between November 2020 and October 2021.

### Annual Grants for Forum Participants:

- 2000 NIS for active participation in all meetings over the year.
- 1500 NIS for a published research product (subject to approval by the forum's advisory council).
- 1500 NIS for writing a study/chapter for the forum's final report/volume.

### Applications

The committee will receive applications on a rolling basis between **1 September 2020** and **11 October 2020**. Please send the following materials to Dr. Elazar Ben-Lulu, at [Elazar.benlulu@gmail.com](mailto:Elazar.benlulu@gmail.com):

- Up-to-date CV and list of publications.
- A research proposal addressing the project the participant wishes to promote in the forum meetings (up to 1,000 words).
- Name, academic affiliation and email of two potential referees (no recommendation letters required). In the case of a PhD candidate, one of the referees must be the dissertation supervisor.

Please merge all documents into one DOC/PDF file.

### The Forum's Advisory Board:

Prof. Ofer Shiff (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev); Dr. Aviad Moreno (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev); Rabbi Gilad Kariv (The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism); Rabbi Talia Avnon-Benveniste (Hebrew Union College).