

**Call for Papers**  
**Back to Redemption: Rosenzweig's *Star* 1919-2019**  
**17-20 February 2019**  
**Internationale Rosenzweig Gesellschaft**

Franz Rosenzweig finished composing *The Star of Redemption* on February 16, 1919. On the hundredth anniversary of the book's completion, we invite historians, theologians, philosophers and political theorists to Jerusalem, in order to reassess the orienting concept of *The Star: redemption*. We invite scholars to turn back to Rosenzweig's view of redemption in three overlapping respects: in *interpretive* studies of the contours of Rosenzweig's concept of redemption itself; in studies of the *historical context* in which *The Star* was written and of the relation of Rosenzweig's thought to the historical moment of its formulation; and in studies of the legacy of the *discourse of redemption* – religious, political, cultural – to which Rosenzweig contributed, a discourse that continues to impact our contemporary world in untold ways.

*Interpretive: Back to the Concept of Redemption*

Under this rubric, we invite scholars to present papers on the meaning of redemption as Rosenzweig presents this concept in the third part of *The Star*, in all its spiritual, philosophical, political, and social dimensions. Interpretive themes and questions might include the following:

- 1) How worldly and how other-worldly is the redemptive goal towards which the *Star* is directed? To what extent is redemption a *human* activity, and to what extent does redemption designate an event whose subject (or whose object) is *divine*?
- 2) Rosenzweig utilizes a number of suggestive terms to indicate that the proper human *comportment* to redemption (e.g., hope, anticipation) entails a relation to the future. How should we understand the *temporality* of redemption, on the one hand, and the complex experiences of time Rosenzweig assigns to the members of those communities who act to bring redemption about? Is there an experience of redemption (say, of mystical vision) that transcends such temporal categories?
- 3) The third part of *The Star* problematizes any straightforwardly *political* fulfillment of redemptive aspirations (“*in tyrannos*”) at that same time that it gestures towards a “messianic politics,” on the one hand, and a Christian redemptive politics on the other. And Rosenzweig at once appears to translate redemptive activity from the eschatological to the liturgical domain. How should we assess the complex relations between social, political, and liturgical activism as Rosenzweig depicts them in *The Star*? How does the liturgical expression of redemption in the third part of *The Star* shape the possibility of dialogue between different redemptive communities?

### Historical: Back to 1919

Under this rubric, we invite scholars to explore *The Star*'s relation to its historical moment. Historical themes and questions might include the following: 1) For Germans, and for German-Jews among them, the end of the First World War marked both a moment of great crisis as well as a moment in which revolutionary politics offered redemptive hopes. To what extent should the *Star*'s vision of redemption be understood as a response to historical crisis? If it is properly conceived as such a response, what is the exact crisis to which redemption is an appropriate response? A properly German crisis? The crisis of a specific European generation? A despair over history and politics altogether? 2) Rosenzweig at times insisted that he had experienced too much before the war (foremost in 1913) for it to have impacted his thought greatly; and on the very day before he began writing *The Star* he complained that his generation – the older generation of First World War soldiers – had fallen out of sync with the historical moment. What is the proper historical context in which *The Star* should be read? Is *The Star* in fact a wartime book? What other books should be read as its historical peers and how could such a comparative reading enhance our understanding of *The Star* itself? 3) Dramatic developments in the scholarly understanding of the First World War have accompanied the recent commemoration of its 100-year anniversary. In what ways should recent changes in our understanding of the First World War impact how we read *The Star*?

### Back to the Discourse of Redemption

Under this rubric, we invite scholars to consider Rosenzweig's contribution to and his distance from myriad aspects of the discourse of redemption that continue to impact both contemporary thinking and contemporary events. Themes and questions surrounding redemptive discourse might include the following: 1) As a designator for the end of our this-worldly existence, redemption may be said both to be shared by, and to be contested by different religious communities. *The Star*'s account of the complementary roles of Jews and Christians in the economy of redemption led to Rosenzweig's thought being taken up, in the wake of the Second World War and the Holocaust, as offering grounds for the possibility of interreligious dialogue. But *The Star* at once excludes other religious, cultural, and ethnic communities from the domain of redemptive activity. What are the possibilities and the problematics involved – in Jerusalem, 2019 – in enlisting Rosenzweig's thought and exploring its relevance for contemporary religious dialogue, and for dialogue between Jews and Muslims, in particular? In what ways, to the contrary, might the notion of redemption block or limit the possibilities of such dialogue? 2) Rosenzweig's attitude towards Zionism at times expressed a disappointment

in the *worldly* character of that movement's vision of Jewish life. Yet in the hundred years since Rosenzweig completed *The Star*, the discourse of redemption has become a powerful factor in the self-understanding of many Zionists, and, of course, in the day-to-day politics of the Middle East. How would Rosenzweig view the political and religious landscape of present-day Jerusalem? Can his vision of liturgical community be transferred over into the political sphere? Is one to agree with Gershom Scholem that Rosenzweig's conceptualization of redemption is an attempt to flee an apocalyptic messianism? If so, in what manner can it vie with competing images of messianism within contemporary theological-political Zionist discourse? Might *The Star* come to teach us, in the end, that redemption is most clearly and/or most safely articulated in exile?

Phrased most broadly, what lessons might we learn from Rosenzweig's thinking about redemption to confront the challenges of contemporary thought and life?

The International Rosenzweig Gesellschaft invites interested scholars to explore the theme of redemption in Rosenzweig's thought at its international conference to be held in Jerusalem, 17-20 February 2019. We invite prospective participants to submit 1) a title and an abstract (c10 lines) for their 20-30 minute presentation, indicating under which rubric (interpretive, historical, discursive) their presentation should be considered; and 2) a short (no more than half a page) professional biography. Applications must be submitted by 1 July 2018. Preference will be given to early-career scholars, but we welcome scholars from all stages to participate. The Conference languages will be German, English, French, and Hebrew.

Funds are being raised to cover hotel and meal costs, and to help subvent travel costs, especially for early career scholars.

Interested scholars are asked to send applications as attachments to the following email address: [rosenzweigstar@gmail.com](mailto:rosenzweigstar@gmail.com). For questions and clarifications, please contact Ms. Mor Hagbi, at (972) 2 5881909.

Application Due Date: 1 July 2018.