



## Call for Applicants – Research Workshop

### Kabbalah in Context: Portraits of Localized Knowledge

#### The Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East

#### The Matanel Chair of Kabbalah Studies

January 28-29, 2025

Yad Ben Zvi, Jerusalem

Knowledge is not produced in a vacuum. Individuals create it in a certain time and place, either alone or in collaboration, but always in a given context. Kabbalistic knowledge does not differ. The trend of contextualizing kabbalistic knowledge and recognizing the various and complex aspects of its formation has been steadily growing in recent years. In order to expand and enhance this research trend, we will be organizing a workshop that will specifically address the methodological challenges associated with portraying local intellectual knowledge: What does it entail to depict the knowledge or intellectual activity of a community, confraternity, or individual within a specific location or geographically diverse network, whether it is a short period or long durée? What is methodologically required? What are the challenges? How are the scope and boundaries determined? What research tools are available? And, what research exists concerning these topics? We would like to place particular emphasis on the relationship between various forms of knowledge, such as kabbalistic, philosophical, halakhic, liturgical, homiletic, and scientific, to facilitate comparative analyses. The reason for this emphasis also stems from the acknowledgment that Jewish intellectuals and their readership frequently blurred these categories. Among the topics that will be discussed at the workshop are:

- Jewish Sages in Society – The Local Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Environments of Agents of Knowledge
- Jewish Sages as Scholars – Manuscript Cultures, Aggregation of Sources, and Use of Local Knowledge
- Intellectual Networks – Representing Intellectual Activity of Individuals and Group





- Localizing Esoteric Knowledge – Opportunities and Challenges in the Encounter of Intellectual History and Kabbalah Scholarship
- The Library – Its Limits, Characteristics, and Boundaries
- Current Research Tools – New Approaches to Mapping Knowledge

We invite scholars to submit proposals (English or Hebrew) to present at the workshop. Proposals (max. 250 words) and CVs are to be sent by **December 15, 2024**, to the workshop's coordinator, Eugene Matanky, [Gene@ybz.org.il](mailto:Gene@ybz.org.il).

Presenters will be requested to pre-circulate a draft (2,500–5,000 words) of their presentation to workshop participants by **January 12, 2025**, in order to facilitate a richer discussion.

