

## Editorial

# Introduction

<https://doi.org/10.1515/naha-2020-0003>

On February 17–20, 2019, The Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History hosted a conference of the International Rosenzweig Gesellschaft, “Back to Redemption: Rosenzweig’s *Star* 1919–2019.” Marking the 100th anniversary of Rosenzweig’s completion of *The Star of Redemption*, the conference hosted nearly one hundred scholars from all over the world, who came together in Jerusalem to reflect on Rosenzweig’s *opus magnum*, on its central concept of redemption, and on some of the implications of Rosenzweig’s thought for our times. In the two 2020 issues of *Naharaim*, we are happy to present a selection of the distinctive ideas and research presented at that conference.

On February 16, 1919, Rosenzweig indeed composed the last words of *The Star*. But in that moment in which Rosenzweig expected to experience a sense of closure befitting such a remarkable achievement, he wrote to Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy in disappointment: “It is already 12 [midnight]. I’ve read all of *Hamlet*, and two letters from you arrived for dessert. And I finished writing ‘Gate’ [Tor]. I always thought completing the \* [i. e., *Star*] would be worthy of a telegram to you [*an euch*: Margrit and Eugen]. But as things turned out, I had no desire at all to send one. It wasn’t good enough. I did then improve it in all kinds of ways, and tomorrow morning will do so further. But the redemptive mood of closure is missing [*Aber die richtige erlöste Fertigstimmung ist nicht da*].”<sup>1</sup>

The following day, Rosenzweig appears to have turned a corner and shares a more positive impression of the book’s ending: “*Es ist ja doch einfach schön* – It is indeed simply beautiful. I just read it through again.”<sup>2</sup> And yet perplexity over his mixed feelings regarding finishing *The Star* continues to trouble him. On 18 February, he offers an explanation for his own ambivalent relation to the ending of his book. In another letter to Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy, he once again expresses puzzlement: “Contrary to my expectation, this completion does not leave any impression on me.” But he then immediately suggests a musical image

---

<sup>1</sup> Franz Rosenzweig to Margrit Rosenstock-Huessy, February 16, 1919, in “Gritli” *Letters 1919*, p. 37, at <http://www.erhfund.org/the-gritli-letters-gritli-briefe/>.

<sup>2</sup> Rosenzweig to M. Rosenstock-Huessy, 17, February 1919, p. 38.