



**CREATIVITY**  
יזירתיות

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# The creative journey – a word before you start ...

In the early 21st century, creativity is one of the forces that unite us. Its ambassadors – in film, literature, art and music – bring together different lives around the world. Intellectual capital underpins multinational businesses and post-industrialised economies. Control of the media and the arts is one of the first targets for any dictator. We are prepared to take to the streets in support of the right to freedom of expression. Media studies courses have become the degree of choice. And every one of us can become an international author, broadcaster, artist from the comfort of our living room via the worldwide web.

But beyond the buzzword that is contemporary creativity lies something deeper. Our ability to create and to recreate is a powerful connector between the human and the divine, and makes us who we are. The unique individual response each of us has to the situations, the questions and the materials we encounter – call it creativity, imagination, or what you will – is responsible for the footprints we leave on the world around us.

In the arts as in the sciences, we find Jewish contributors overrepresented in relation to our numbers. Yet the Jewish artistic tradition is negligible, a fact not entirely explained by our wanderings through much of our history. Key texts are silent or make only glancing references to intellectual and artistic creativity, yet within the little that is said an intriguing debate opens up, one which we hope that you will explore through these pages.

This investigation starts **'In the beginning'** – with **Section One**, Genesis – God's own creativity. Prepared by **Steve Miller** and **Maureen Kendler** it examines the primary act of creation and seeks to understand its centrality to Judaism as a whole and to humanity's place within the creative world.

In **Section Two** – **'From the sublime to the mundane'** we go on to consider the place of creativity in our daily lives. In a series of texts brought together by **Michael Gluckman** and **Simon Hochauer** we consider the tensions between individual expression and religious constraint in relation to attitudes, time, appearance, and a range of other areas.

In **Section Three** – **'Painting pictures'** we explore the Jewish relationship to the arts. In a compilation brought together by **Jonathan Wolfson** we look at painting, sculpture, performance and architecture, considering the discussion between Jewish scholars over time.

To conclude **Section Four** – takes on **'The powers of imagination'**. **Leonora Samuel** and **Arthur Weiss** who assembled the texts urge us to consider its sources and its place over time and across different facets of our lives.

The creativity and commitment of many people has helped to bring us to this point, and we would like to thank them both on our own behalf, and for all those who reading this will go on to enjoy the chavruta experience which it precedes. The teams who gathered together the individual sections

have worked steadily over the months, learning on behalf of all of us as they have tested their own creative credentials to bring us a stimulating assortment of sources. Julian Gilbey has worked with us to challenge us further, helping to refine the work done in the light of his many years of experience of Limmud Chavruta. Rina Wolfson and Uri Berkowitz, who have given much time to proof reading, designing and preparing this book for publication have shown much forbearance and patience in guiding us through – as well as contributing their own creative thoughts and skills. Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz proofread the book and gave advice. Emma Rozenberg and Kevin Sefton have encouraged us, and generally ensured that real deadlines stand.

At the heart of the Limmud experience is a personal voyage of discovery. Whatever your tastes and wherever you start from, Limmud seeks to inspire you to travel in new directions and to stimulate further exploration. Chavruta is central to this. In keeping with the best traditions of Limmud and Chavruta, you will not find answers or definitive perspectives here. But we hope that you will find challenges and new ideas. There is a danger that creativity has become so fashionable it is becoming cheapened by overuse. Nonetheless, we can see it as another title for the divine spark within us that makes us who we are and reminds us what we aspire to.

**Danielle Nagler and  
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