This interfaith and interdisciplinary conference gathers together philosophers, theologians, and literary scholars. Its purpose is to study how the newly expanded Levinas corpus can help us be better readers of the Bible and literature in general.

Emmanuel Levinas as Biblical Exegete and Writer? While his reputation as philosopher and Talmudic scholar continues to soar, other interests remain unexplored. The philosopher himself puts forth these two different and quite new directions in Levinassian studies. The previously unpublished *Carnets de Captivité* (2 volumes to date, Paris: Grasset, 2009) documents his early and ongoing desire to be a writer in addition to a philosopher, especially a novelist and literary critic. He hints at a second new direction in the preface to his major treatise *Totalité et Infini*, where his interest in language takes an unexpected turn:

*It is of the very essence of language, which consists in continually undoing its phrase by...exegesis, in unsaying the said, in attempting to restate without ceremony what has already been ill understood, in the inevitable ceremonial in which the said delights....*

In short, he sees exegesis as natural to language itself, as necessary to any act of writing and understanding as to the Talmud or philosophy or, indeed, the Bible.

Jean-Luc Marion highlighted the timeliness and importance of this literary question in the following way:

One day—one would hope soon—we shall have to proceed to a stylistic study of Levinas’ literary corpus, living proof that one can think in French at least in that French, made of breaks in syntax, ellipses, metaphors, elisions, allusions, implicit quotations, indeed neologisms or changes of meaning from their usual sense, etc.: in short, a French foreign to French and thus all the more intimately faithful to its genius, a writer’s French, not a professor’s or a philosopher’s.

One intriguing aspect of the philosopher’s literary endeavor—as expressed abundantly in the *Carnets* but seldom in his published works—is his fascination with metaphorical expression. Just as Descartes famously posited than one cannot do math without believing in God, Levinas puts forth the theory that God is to be seen as the “metaphor of metaphors.” Our purpose is to unpack some of the implications of this and similar Levinassian theories, in particular as they relate to his practice of literary criticism and, potentially, biblical exegesis.