

**The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel**  
invites you to the Opening Lecture in the 2019-2020 research lecture series  
**“New Technologies and Divine Prerogatives”**

## **WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK TO A HUMAN?**

**Fr. Peter Ashton OFM**

**Thursday, 24 October 2019 at 8:00 P.M.**

**At THE STUDIUM THEOLOGICUM SALESIANUM, Rh Shmuel Hanagid 26**

Artificial Intelligence meets the Bible — do Jews and Christians have anything to contribute to the current debates by world leaders and legislators about the so-called “fourth industrial revolution”? The Fraternity Lecture series 2019-20 will explore that question with Jewish and Christian scholars in the field. Fr. Peter Ashton, President of the Ecumenical Fraternity, will introduce some implications of Artificial Intelligence and kindly provided the following outline. Fr. Peter writes:

After a short film clip showing Matt Damon in the film *Elysium* it will be my pleasure to open this year’s lecture series on possible contributions from Judaism and Christianity to the debate about the new technology, that is being called by governments — and even by the Vatican — “the fourth industrial revolution.”

I am going to use the question: “Would you like to talk to a human?” looked at from different angles this evening, in order to stimulate questions for debate. As a particular case, I will discuss healthcare in the UK.

Here is my talk outline for this evening:

1. We have already begun to have conversations with computers — a brief note on the Turing Test.
2. How important is conversation? With humans, with animals (?), with angels (?), with G-d.
3. The presence of another human being even when there is no verbal communication, from conception, growing up through the different stages of life until we get close to the time when we must say goodbye to this world.
4. Whether or not we can ourselves become more human, or even, G-d forbid, if we are ever tempted to follow a wrong path towards becoming less human. Would it be a sensible question requiring a sensible answer if the human available for us to talk to had himself programmed the computer that we did not want to talk to?
5. Finally — finally for this evening, that is — are these computers, these artificial intelligences, really going to be our tools, simply our tools for us to use, so that they are to be considered morally neutral, neutral until we choose to use them either for good or for evil?

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel thanks the Studium Theologicum Salesianum for kindly offering its lecture facilities.

Please join us for light refreshments from 7:30 P.M.

**The next lectures in the series will be 21/11/; 19/12; 23/01/20; 20/02; 26/03; 30/04; Retreat:  
28/05.**