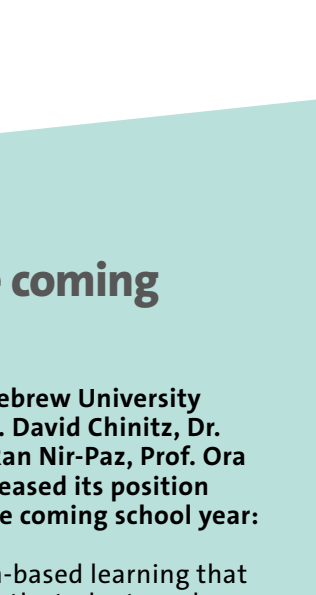




## The Latest from HUJI

Dear Faculty,  
Best wishes for a great weekend ahead with friends and family!



## Position Paper from Public Health Experts Ahead of the Upcoming Academic Year

### Recommendations in advance of the coming school year:

The Multi-disciplinary Team for Children and Corona of the Hebrew University and Hadassah (Dr. Alex Gileles- Hillel, Dr. Hagit Hochner, Prof. David Chinitz, Dr. Kattia Yizmenski, Prof. Amnon Lahad, Prof. Orly Manor, Prof. Ran Nir-Paz, Prof. Ora Pattiel, Mr. Ari. Paltiel, Prof. Ronit Calderon-Margalit), has released its position paper with a series of recommendations to enact ahead of the coming school year:

- 1.Create a working plan that would allow continual classroom-based learning that will reduce as much as possible the need for quarantine for both students and staff, while taking into account the vaccination levels among staff, parents and children of the relevant ages.
- 2.Careful analysis of authority and budgeting for the local councils and schools to be able to best adjust to educating students amidst an ongoing pandemic, including increased funding for struggling municipalities.
- 3.Encourage learning and extracurricular and athletic activities outside of the traditional classroom environment wherever possible.
- 4.Encourage developing a program that will directly address the educational, mental and social costs that have been incurred by Israel's children as a result of the challenges imposed by lockdowns and isolation.

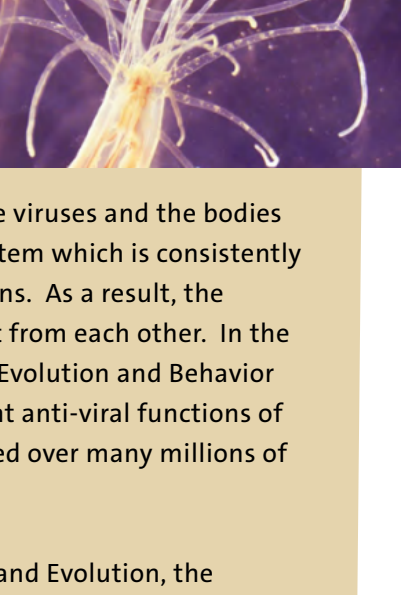
In their paper, the team of experts stressed that despite the fact that children are relatively immune to the medical dangers of the pandemic, they were likely the most negatively affected by the policy-decisions made to address its spread, and it is likely they will pay a heavy educational, emotional and even medical price over the long-term. "We have a social obligation as well as a moral and public healthcare obligation to prevent future damage and to care for the rehabilitation for the damages and shortfalls that have already been experienced by these children," they wrote.

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## Significant Advancement in the Effort to Find a Drug to Treat COVID-19

### Substances that already have regulatory approvals have been identified to treat humans in ways that would inhibit the virus' ability to grow

The ability of viruses to wreak havoc on humanity is well known – particularly today as we continue to fight the Corona pandemic. Particularly in the developing world, we have been witness to numerous harmful viruses like the West Nile Virus, Zika and others taking a very heavy medical, economic, political and social toll. But beyond fighting these viruses through measures like social isolation and mask-wearing there are three other avenues used to combat their spread- vaccinations, injecting antibodies taken from recovered patients and drug delivery. While considerable attention and praise has been paid to the vaccination effort, the reality of mutating viruses means that success can change quickly and their effect reduced dramatically.



On the other hand, discovering a drug that can effectively combat a virus is a very complex process and the many ongoing studies will be critical for addressing this and other future viruses. Two new studies being performed by Prof. Shy Arkin from the Biochemistry Department at Hebrew University that were published in the scientific periodicals Pharmaceuticals and Viruses focused in the discovery of a drugs that rely on a particularly weak trait of the viruses – the ion channel.

In both of the articles published in these leading magazines, Prof. Arkin focused on two channels inherent in the COVID-19 virus, the protein E and protein 3a. In the first study, the research team analyzed a wide array of drugs which are approved for human use in order to identify those which inhibit these proteins and found two such agents: Glyclazide which is used for treating diabetes and Memantine used in the treatment of Alzheimer's. In the second study, published just last month, an even broader review of chemical agents was performed with analysis of the 2,839 chemicals chronicled in the MedChemExpress. There they found ten relevant inhibitors and those additional discoveries increase the chances of finding a drug to address Corona. As all the agents discovered have already been approved for human use, there is hope that the regulatory obstacles will be lessened when it comes to applying them for clinical use.

"Thirty percent of the drugs in use today were approved in this manner, including of course those drugs used to address COVID-19 to those that they have tried to determine their efficacy against the virus like Remdesivir," Prof Arkin explains and adds, "One can presume that the other agents discovered could inhibit the activities of the Corona virus, as was shown in recent studies performed in the BSL-3 Lab at Hebrew University."

The study is known to be extremely important for discovering solutions to the various mutations of the virus.

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## What can animals that lived 600 million years ago teach us about the human immune system?

### Prof. Yehu Moran has discovered that the levels of complexity of the human immune system may not necessarily have developed over the course of evolution

Viruses are parasites. They live within us and we provide them refuge and allow them to multiply in our cells and they burn up our resources and can even kill us. Essentially, they have no ability to flourish outside our bodies or outside the bodies of other organisms.



This has produced a sort of evolutionary race between the viruses and the bodies which house them and this race produces an immune system which is consistently and very quickly adjusting to provide its anti-viral functions. As a result, the immune systems of different organisms are very different from each other. In the lab of Prof. Yehu Moran from the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at Hebrew University, the researchers studied the different anti-viral functions of different organisms including those known to have evolved over many millions of years.

In their study published in the journal Molecular Biology and Evolution, the research team found that the anti-viral nature of the sea anemone if more complex and includes aspects that are known to be found in worms but also traits typically seen in vertebrates, which according to working assumptions only developed far later in the evolutionary process.

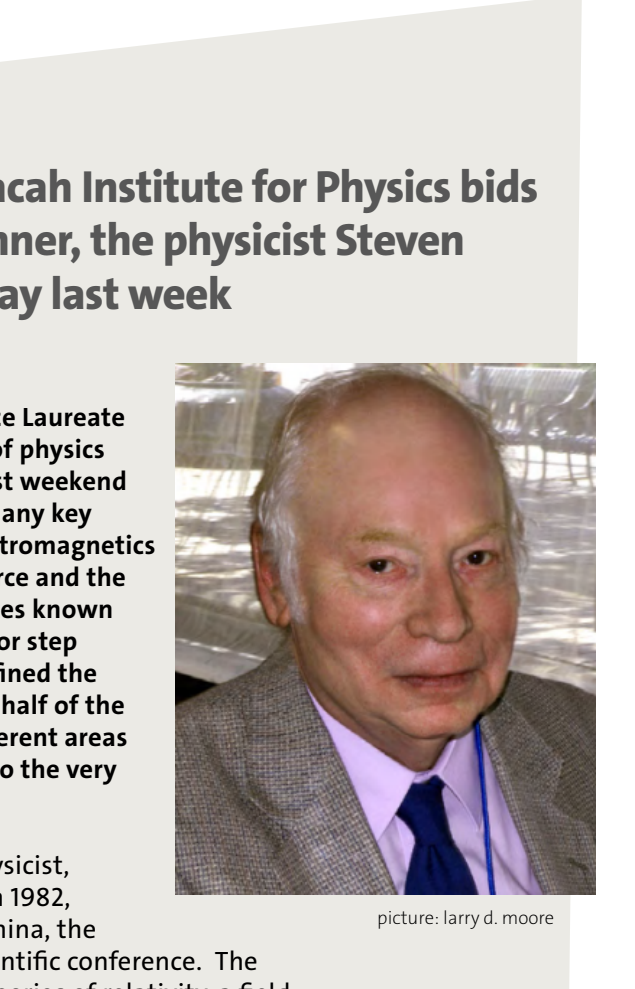
The researchers were able to determine that already 600 million years ago, organisms were operating with a very complex immune system. Over the millennia of evolution, the researchers found that certain complexities of these immune systems were actually lost over time which is in contrast to theories that evolution typically enhances complexity and that sometimes evolving systems use a strategy of abandoning certain aspects of nature in order to provide enhanced defenses or utilizing other elements.

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## Study Finds Fewer Women Murdered in Israel This Year

### Dr. Shalva Weil from School of Education Conducted Research on "Israel's Perspective on Female Murder"

In recent days, a report has been released outlining the country's battle on murder of women and presented a slightly more reassuring picture of this crisis than over the year prior. The report was based on a comprehensive review of local and national news reports, web analysis and other tools. The report showed that in the first half of 2021 the country saw eight murders of women as opposed to 14 in the same period in the year prior. This is a decrease of 43 percent in the rate of femicide. In March of 2020, the month where the Corona pandemic burst into our lives, five women were murdered whereas this March there were no women murders recorded.



The report also showed that there is an average of 1.3 acts of femicide each month since the beginning of 2021 as opposed to 2.3 in 2020. In the first half of 2021, the average age of murder victims was 50.1 as opposed to 39.6 in the year prior- which reveals a considerable increase in the age of murder victims.

In 2021, the youngest victim was 27 and the oldest 76. About 38 percent of the acts were defined as female geronticide, which is the murder of older women. Two incidents were matricide- a woman killed by her children. There was one instance where both a spouse and a child were suspected of a murder but then released so that case was not included in the report. Some 38 percent of the murders were performed by a spouse, whereas in the first half of 2020 that number was 57 percent.

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## Gifts in honor of Rosh Hashanah

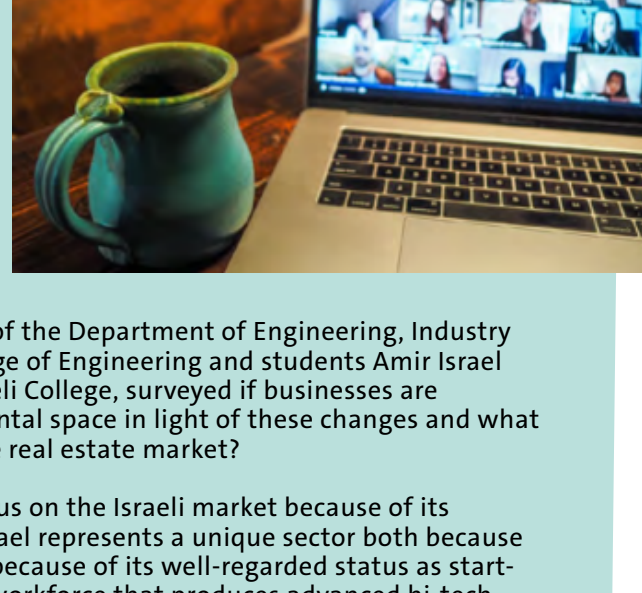
### The University is happy to announce that as part of improving the employment conditions of the cleaning companies employees and in recognition of their dedicated service, the University has decided to distribute gifts in honor of Rosh Hashanah



## Climate Change in Israel

### Unbelievable Weather Changes: Longer Summers and More Intense Winters

New Research led by Dr. Efrat Sheffer from the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment analyzed changes in Israel's rainy seasons over the past 45 years. "Climate change has not forgotten about Israel. The findings show a trend that will challenge the civil infrastructure and also change the ecological systems in this region in the years ahead."



The growing impact of climate change around the globe is no longer an issue of scientific debate but more a question of when and how it will affect different areas of the globe. In some of the more pessimistic projections, warming will reach the point where it will prevent human life in many currently inhabited areas, destroy agriculture and plant life and wreck irreversibly havoc on weather patterns. In recent years, climate change has become increasingly noticeable with rising temperatures and Israel has certainly not been immune to this trend. However, when it comes to understanding how these changes are impacting on annual rainfall across Israel, researchers had been largely unable to quantify trends linked to these global factors.

A recently released study in the journal Climatic Change, led by Dr. Efrat Sheffer from the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment at Hebrew University has revealed the first comprehensive data establishing this link and what it will mean for the future. The research was conducted together with Dr. Ron Drori from the Hebrew University, Dr. Baruch Ziv from the Open University and Prof. Hadas Saaroni and Ms. Adi Atkin from Tel Aviv University.

"One of our objectives was to understand if we have been experiencing changes in the rain patterns that would influence how local plant life would react to regional climatic change in the years ahead," explains Dr. Sheffer. "For example, woodland and forest vegetation in Israel are adapted to survive along an extended season without rain, but it is unclear if they will be able to survive if the dry season becomes much longer, or if the precipitation levels in the winter decrease."

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## Bidding Farewell to a Nobel Winner who always stood up in defense of Israel

### Prof. Tsvi Piran from the Racah Institute for Physics bids farewell to Nobel Prize winner, the physicist Steven Weinberg, who passed away last week

Steven Weinberg, who was the Nobel Prize Laureate for Physics in 1979 and one of the giants of physics and a close friend for many years, died last weekend in Texas. Weinberg was responsible for many key discoveries related to the strength of electromagnetic and radioactivity. The electromagnetic force and the weak interaction are two of the basic forces known to nature and combining them was a major step forward for physics. Weinberg's ideas defined the field of theoretical physics for the second half of the 20th century and he had a role in any different areas from understanding the tiniest particles to the very construction of our universe.



picture: larry d. moore

Beyond just his accomplishments as a physicist, Weinberg was a proud Jew and Zionist. In 1982, following sweeping cultural changes in China, the Chinese began planning for their first scientific conference. The conference was dedicated to Einstein's theories of relativity, a field Weinberg had contributed a great deal of thought. All the "Friends of China" were invited to participate in the conference. Because Israel had no official diplomatic relations with China at the time, Israel wasn't considered a "friend" of China and was therefore not invited to participate in the conference. In response, Weinberg actively worked to oppose the ban on Israeli scientists. As a result of his tenacious work, in the end Israeli researchers were able to join the conference – and I was proud to be among them.

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## Prof. Momi Dahan in a special interview to discuss the "Arrangements Bill"

### Prof. Momi Dahan: "A large Arrangements Bill (Chok Haahesderim) is not the right option for a functioning state"

"The Arrangements Bill reflects our current political state", Prof. Momi Dahan from the Federmann School of Public Policy said in a recent interview to the website "Davar". "A law like this is not the proper course for decision-making in a functioning state." Dahan, a researcher and lecturer in the Public Policy Department at Hebrew University, has suggested to reduce the bill to its minimal possible scope and places the responsibility for this on the elected officials serving in the Knesset.



"The bill is a product of a Knesset that is not serving its legislative function. A number of economic plans have accumulated that they're now trying to put into action," Dahan says. "From a vantage-point of looking towards the future, one of the most troublesome aspects that is driving those who support a large Arrangements Bill is the fear that the Knesset will once again stop functioning- so for that reason it's essential that we pass as many bills and reforms as soon as possible."

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## Research Shows Dramatic Decrease in Commercial Real Estate Values

### Reduced demand and changing work habits leads to plunge in commercial real estate values

Since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, various financial sectors have been forced to significantly adapt their work structures, where home-based workplaces have become increasingly common. Over time it has become increasingly accepted that this transition is not negatively impacting on productivity and even translates to considerable economic savings.



New research that was published in the Journal of Facilities Management and authored by Dr. Michael Naor, a Fellow at the School of Business Management at Hebrew University and Dr. Gavriel David Pinto, Director of the Department of Engineering, Industry and Management at the Azrieli College of Engineering and students Amir Israeli Chakikan and Akiva Jacobs from Azrieli College, surveyed if businesses are continuing to take out commercial rental space in light of these changes and what is the overall impact of Corona on the real estate market.

The researchers say they chose to focus on the Israeli market because of its uniqueness, as Dr. Naor explains: "Israel represents a unique sector both because of its higher population density and because of its well-regarded status as start-up nation with a proven technology workforce that produces advanced hi-tech developments." Their study analyzed key words related to Corona via Google, market research papers and interviews with real estate figures.

The study showed a clear downward trend in real estate values in the commercial sector based on per square meter pricing in 2020 which was linked to decreasing demand and cancelled deals as well as the growing interest by companies to adopt the "hybrid" model combining traditional office-based work with home-based employment. The trend continued even after the loosening of social distancing restrictions.

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## "The Multi-Cultural Kindergarten"

### The Multi-Cultural Kindergarten at Hebrew University is intended for children of diverse ages and backgrounds

The Kindergarten is part of the Hebrew University community and welcomes children from University families, from East and West Jerusalem as well as study-abroad students.

Even with the continued challenges, this year we have once again continued to provide many activities for the various departments and student populations throughout the University... Experiencing nature and traveling through botanical gardens, listening to concerts and appreciating a common love for literature... Engaging in dialogue with students in the hallways and the university green spaces, as well as touring art exhibitions and participate in demonstrations...

We wish everyone a truly enjoyable semester vacation and look forward to welcoming you back for the next year!

You're always welcome to come and visit!

Interested parents are invited to find out more as only a few spaces remain. To visit the kindergarten or for more information, please contact Or – Tel: 055-666-8351.



אנחנו הימים של ילדים קטנים

[CLICK HERE for a great video clip](#)