The School of Psychology invites you to a Special Seminar with

Ayala Arad
The Eitan Berglas School of Economics
Tel Aviv University

on:

Greediness, Generosity and Magical Thinking

Tuesday, March 29, 2011, 10:30, Faculty room,
IDC Herzliya Campus

I investigate experimentally a new form of magical thinking whereby subjects appear to believe that generous or less-greedy behavior on their part may increase the likelihood of their desired outcome, even though its objective probability is known and is independent of their actions. This behavior may be explained by an underlying belief, originated in the intuitive system, that good behavior is magically rewarded and bad behavior is punished by some higher power. Actions driven by superstitious beliefs (such as wearing a lucky charm) usually do not bear a significant material cost. In contrast, here subjects acted as if they believe that “sacrificing” a non-negligible amount of money will magically increase the likelihood of the desirable outcome. These findings are more striking given that the situation in the experiments was endowed with objective probability.