The Near East in general and the ‘Levantine Corridor’ in particular provide archaeological evidence for the unique transition from hunter-gatherer to agricultural village societies. The Natufian culture (15,000–11,500 cal BP) is recognized as the harbinger of food-producing cultures in the southern Levant. This culture is characterized by remarkable changes in subsistence, settlement, technology, social structure, and ritual practice. These changes were central to the transformation from Epipalaeolithic hunter-gatherer to Neolithic agricultural communities.

Current talk will focus on the dynamics during the time of the cultural ‘cross-roads’ between the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic ways of life, to zoom onto the very end of the Natufian culture. To follow the activities and changing sets of beliefs of the Terminal Palaeolithic population that paved the way to an entirely new way of life, different from those of any society of hunter-gatherers.

New evidence from two very Late Natufian sites in Israel will be presented — the burial cave of Hilazon Tachtit, and the residential village of Nahal Ein Gev II in close proximity to the Sea of Galilee.