

Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies

Inaugural Conference of the Muslim-Jewish Relations Initiative



MUSLIM-JEWISH ENCOUNTERS: SHI'A ISLAM AND JUDAISM

April 10 – 12, 2019

Muslim-Jewish Relations Initiative

The Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies at Florida International University aspires to serve as a forum for interfaith conversations that connect Islam to other global communities. In line with this aspiration, the Jaffer Center is proud to launch the Muslim-Jewish Relations Initiative. Planned as an ongoing series of conferences, lectures and symposia, this interdisciplinary initiative will provide a space for scholarly and community discussions on the many ways Jews and Muslims have interacted and shared environments and traditions from the seventh century to today. These discussions include themes such as theology, philosophy, law, mysticism and gender, as well as Jewish political and social life under Islamic rule from al-Andalus to Central Asia.

The Jaffer Center is pleased to inaugurate the first conference under its Muslim-Jewish Relations Initiative, "Muslim-Jewish Encounters: Shi'a Islam and Judaism." This international conference brings together prominent scholars to share their research on the religious and sociopolitical encounters between Judaism and Islam (and more specifically Shi'a Islam) across history.

The conference will examine the interactions between multiple denominations of Shi'a Islam and Judaism across the geographic breadth of the Middle East. How have theological concepts changed their form and content during the processes of inter-religious encounter? What were the political, social and economic dimensions that allow us to contextualize such interactions between Shi'a Muslim and Jewish communities? How has this encounter led to the development of polemics, practical theologies and contrasting political stances? With the arrival of modernity, how have novel religious and political discourses along with drastically altered power dynamics affected the Shi'a Muslim-Jewish relationship? Viewing these theological and sociopolitical affinities in a comparative perspective will advance the intellectual basis for a contemporary dialogue addressing Muslim-Jewish relations in a uniquely interdisciplinary fashion.

Creating a Just, Peaceful and
Prosperous World

Program Agenda

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019

THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF FLORIDA-FIU | 301 WASHINGTON AVENUE, MIAMI BEACH

3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. — ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

4:00 P.M. - 4:15 P.M. — OPENING REMARKS

Mohiaddin Mesbahi, Founding Director, Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies

Mohamed K. Ghumrawi, Program Coordinator, Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies

4:15 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. — PANEL 1: CONCEIVING THE SUBFIELD OF SHIA ISLAMIC-JEWISH STUDIES

Chair: Erik Larson, Florida International University

David Moshfegh, IE University, Madrid/Segovia

Ignaz Goldziher's Philo-Sunnism and the Idea of Aryan Islam:

How Monotheistic Motivations Recast Readings of Shia Islam in Islamwissenschaft

Aaron Hughes, University of Rochester

Constructions of Shia Islam and Judaism in Mainstream Academic Islamic Studies

Ehud Krinis, University of Michigan

Medieval Shi'a-Jewish Studies: State of the Subfield

6:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. — BREAK

6:30 P.M. - 7:45 P.M. — INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER BY TUDOR PARFITT, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR,
FIU DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Keynote Address by Orit Bashkin, University of Chicago

When Jews Marched for Hossein: Shia-Jewish Relations in Hashemite Iraq (1921-1958)

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY | MODESTO A. MAIDIQUE CAMPUS

11200 SW 8TH STREET, MIAMI | GRAHAM CENTER, ROOM 150

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. — PANEL 2: THE MEDIEVAL SHI'A ISLAMIC THEOLOGICAL ENCOUNTER WITH JUDAISM

Chair: Iqbal Akhtar, Florida International University

Patrick Franke, University of Bamberg

"These are the Twelve, the Number of the Tribes"

The Twelve Tribes of Israel as Pre-figurations of the Imams in Shia Islam

15-minute formal response: Ehud Krinis, University of Michigan

The Idea of Imamate and Judah Halevi's Concept of the Chosen People of Israel

Samuel Schidem, House of One for Study and Prayer, Berlin

Jethro's Pre-Mosaic, Proto-Judaism: The Druze Exegetical Reception of the Biblical Jethro Narrative

Carlos Grenier, Florida International University

Solomon and his Temple: Realizing Sacred History in Early Modern Islamic Empires

Program Agenda

12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M. — BREAK

2:15 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. — PANEL 3: MEDIEVAL JUDAISM IN THE SHI'A-ISLAMIC CONTEXT

Chair: Oren Stier, Florida International University

David Hollenberg, University of Oregon

Prayer and Politics in Fatimid Egypt: The Cairo Geniza Fragments of the Birkat ha-minim (Curse of the Sectarious)

Daniel Frank, Ohio State University

Early Karaite Judaism and its Shi'a Islamic Context

3:30 P.M. - 3:45 P.M. — BREAK

3:45 P.M. - 5 P.M. — PANEL 4: THE SHIA ISLAMIC-JEWISH ENCOUNTER IN IRAN

Chair: Naisy Sarduy, Florida International University

Vera Moreen, Independent Scholar

Shi'i-Jewish Relations in the Safavid and Qajar Eras: The Role of the 'Ulama

Janet Afary, University of California, Santa Barbara

The Fedayeen Islam and the Impact of Israel's Founding on the Rise of Iranian Islamist Discourse in the 1940's

5:00 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M. — BREAK

5:30 P.M. - 6:45 P.M. — INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER BY IQBAL AKHTAR, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
FIU DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Keynote Address by Oliver Leaman, University of Kentucky

Is Rabbinic Judaism "Shia" or "Sunni"?

FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2019

THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF FLORIDA-FIU | 301 WASHINGTON AVENUE, MIAMI BEACH

10 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. — PANEL 5: THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN IRAN & ISRAEL: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY

Chair: Eric Lob, Florida International University

Mohammad Homayounvash, University of Miami and Florida International University

Iran's Role in Israel's "Periphery Doctrine": A Historical Perspective

Marsha Cohen, University of Miami

The Face in the Mirror: Parity, Parody and Projection in Israeli Depictions of the Islamic Republic of Iran

11:15 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. — BREAK

11:30 A.M. - 12:45 P.M. - PANEL 6: THE SHIA ISLAMIC-JEWISH ENCOUNTER IN YEMEN & LESSONS FOR POLITICAL THEOLOGY

Chair: Alexander Nachman, Oxford University

Tudor Parfitt, Florida International University

Shia-Jewish Relations in the Yemen: Why did the Jews leave?

Ezra Tzfadya, Otto-Friedrich University-Bamberg/University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

The Shia Islamic-Jewish Encounter: Impulses for Contemporary Islamic and Jewish Political Theology

12:45 P.M. - 1 P.M. — CONCLUDING REMARKS AND END OF PROGRAM

Guest Speakers

Janet Afary holds the Mellichamp Chair in Global Religion and Modernity at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she is a professor of religious studies. She is a historian of modern Iran and has a Ph.D. in history and Near East studies from the University of Michigan, where her dissertation received the Distinguished Rackham Dissertation Award. Previously, she taught at the Department of History and the Program in Women's Studies at Purdue University, where she was appointed a University Faculty Scholar. Her books include *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (Cambridge University Press, 2009, winner of the British Society for Middle East Studies Annual Book Prize).

Iqbal Akhtar is an assistant professor with a dual appointment in the departments of Religious Studies and Politics and International Relations in the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University. He completed his doctorate at the University of Edinburgh's New College School of Divinity. He is the author of *The Khoja of Tanzania* (Brill, 2016). His current work explores the origin of the Khōjā peoples in the Subcontinent through extant oral traditions known as the *kahanī* in Sindhi, Gujarati and Hindustani. He teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses as well as independent studies. He is the director of Western Indian Ocean Studies.

Orit Bashkin is a historian at the University of Chicago who works on the intellectual, social and cultural history of the modern Middle East. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University (2004), writing a thesis on Iraqi intellectual history, and her B.A. (1995) and M.A. (1999) from Tel Aviv University. She has been working as a professor of modern Middle Eastern history in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Her publications deal with Iraqi history, the history of Iraqi Jews, the Arab cultural revival movement (the *nahda*) in the late 19th century and the connections between modern Arab history and Arabic literature. Her current research project explores the lives of Iraqi Jews in Israel.

Marsha Cohen is a scholar, writer and lecturer at the University of Miami. She taught international relations courses at Florida International University for more than a decade. She specializes in the role of religion in politics and cultural and social history in world affairs.

Daniel Frank is Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the Ohio State University, where he teaches Hebrew Bible and ancient and medieval Jewish History. He also directs the Hebrew language program. His primary field of research is the history, literature and religious philosophy of the Karaites, an ancient Jewish denomination which does not accept the authority of the Talmud. His other areas of expertise include medieval Jewish history, literature and culture, especially Judeo-Arabic literature and biblical exegesis. Previously, he spent twelve years in England as a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and Wolfson College, Oxford; he also lectured for the Faculty of Oriental Studies. He is the author of numerous publications.

Patrick Franke is a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Bamberg. Among his research focuses are the history of Islamic thought in the early modern period, Shi'a currents (Alawites, Twelver-Shiis) and the history of Islamic sexual ethics. He was especially influential with his monograph on Khidr (*Begegnung mit Khidr - Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam*, Beirut-Stuttgart 2000). His other publications include "Are the parents of the Prophet in Hell? Tracing the history of a debate in Sunni Islam" in *Bamberger Orientstudien* 1 (2014) and "Before scientia sexualis in Islamic culture: 'ilm al-bāh between erotology, medicine and pornography" in *Social Identities* 18/2 (2012). Since 2013, he is engaged in building up the *Bamberger Islam-Enzyklopädie*, a novel online reference work on the history of Islam integrated in German Wikipedia.

Guest Speakers

Mohamed K. Ghumrawi is a current Ph.D. candidate in international relations and the program coordinator for the Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies at Florida International University. He is also an adjunct professor for the Department of Politics and International Relations. His research interests include dynamics surrounding the Palestinian-Israeli question, politics of the Middle East, conflict resolution, state formation, foreign policy and security studies. He has been featured on multiple media outlets to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including NPR, MSNBC Live with Jose Diaz-Balart, Al Jazeera America and NBC. He has published multiple articles on Islamophobia, as well as two articles on Muslim-Jewish relations, including *Muslim and Jews in 7th Century Jerusalem* (2016) and *Muslim-Sephardi Relations* (2014).

Carlos Grenier is a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Florida International University. He earned his doctorate in history from the University of Chicago in 2017, with a dissertation examining fifteenth-century Ottoman popular pious texts and the lives of their authors. His research concerns the vernacularization of Islamic knowledge in the early Ottoman Empire and the relationships between religious thought and political life in the late medieval and early modern Islamic world. He is the author of several articles, including "The Yazıcıoğlu Brothers and the Textual Genealogies of Ottoman Islam," (*Turcica* 49, 2018) and "Reassessing the Authorship of the *Dürr-i Meknün*" (*Archivum Ottomanicum* 35, 2018). His in-progress monograph, *The Spiritual Vernacular of the Early Ottoman Frontier*, is expected to be published by Edinburgh University Press.

David Hollenberg is an associate professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Oregon. His research interests include medieval Ismailism, modern Yemeni Zaydi scholasticism and manuscript culture. His recent publications include *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Brill, 2015; editor with co-editors Sabine Schmidtke and Christopher Rauch) and *Beyond the Qur'an; Ismaili Ta'wil and the Secrets of the Prophets* (University of South Carolina Press, 2016).

Mohammad Homayounvash received his Ph.D. in international relations from Florida International University. He is a lecturer of international relations at FIU and the University of Miami, where he teaches courses on international law, Russian foreign policy, and Islam in America. He is the director of Islam in the Modern World initiative at Miami Dade College. He has previously taught at Louisiana State University. His interdisciplinary research interests lie at the intersection of international relations and non-traditional/critical security studies involving issue-areas of religion, identity and strategic culture. He is the author of *Iran and the Nuclear Question: History and Evolutionary Trajectory*, published by Routledge in 2016.

Aaron W. Hughes is the Philip S. Bernstein Chair of Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion and Classics at the University of Rochester. He received his Ph.D. in religious studies from Indiana University in Bloomington in 2000. He has taught at Miami University of Ohio, McMaster University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of Calgary and the University at Buffalo. He is the author of numerous articles and books.

Ehud Krinis is currently a research fellow in the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. His studies include *God's Chosen People: Judah Halevi's Kuzari and the Shī'ī Imām Doctrine* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2014); "Galut and Ghayba: The Exile of Israel and the Occultation of the Shī'ī Imām - Comparative Aspects" (*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 40, 2013); "Cyclical Time in the Ismā'īlī Circle of *Ikhwān al-ṣafā'*" and in Early Jewish Kabbalists Circles" (*Studia Islamica* 111, 2016) and "Directions in Jewish-Shī'ī Studies" (*Shii Studies Review* 3, 2019).

Erik Larson is a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Florida International University. He is interested in the interaction between religion, language and culture in antiquity. During his doctorate studies at New York University, his interest focused on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1991, he joined an international effort to edit the Dead Sea Scrolls, the products of which have now appeared in the official publication series

Guest Speakers

Discoveries in the Judean Desert published by Oxford University Press. In addition, he has written a study on the Book of Enoch, one of the most important of the early Jewish apocalyptic works that will shortly appear from E.J. Brill. He teaches classes on numerous topics including the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament, Early Christian history, Islam and World Religions.

Oliver Leaman teaches philosophy at the University of Kentucky. His most recent book is *The Qur'an: a Philosophical Guide*, published by Bloomsbury in 2016, and his next book, also to be published by Bloomsbury in 2019, is *Islam and Morality*. He writes and teaches on Islamic, Jewish and Asian thought. He is the editor of two book series published by Routledge, one in Jewish studies and the other in Islamic philosophy.

Eric Lob is an assistant professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at FIU. His research focuses on the intersection of development and politics in the Middle East. It specifically explores how state and non-state actors in the region instrumentalize development as a soft power mechanism to further their political interests both domestically and internationally. He is currently working on a book project entitled *Construction Jihad: Rural Development and Regime Consolidation in Revolutionary Iran (1979-2013)*. The project is based on his 2013 dissertation at Princeton University, which won the Foundation for Iranian Studies annual award for best dissertation. Previously, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at Brandeis University's Crown Center for Middle East Studies.

Mohiaddin Mesbahi is the Founding Director of the Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies at Florida International University and Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations. His research focuses on Islam and politics, national security and strategic studies, Soviet/Russian foreign policy and international relations of Central Asia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Miami in 1987.

Vera B. Moreen is an authority on the medieval history and culture of Iranian Jews based on Judeo-Persian manuscripts. She received her B.A. from Princeton University and Ph.D. from Harvard University and has taught at several colleges and universities, including Swarthmore College and Franklin & Marshall College. She is the recipient of research grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Judaic Studies, the American Council of Learned Societies, IREX and the American Philosophical Society. She is the author of numerous articles and several books, the latest of which is *The Bible as a Judeo-Persian Epic: An Illustrated Manuscript of 'Imrānī's Faḥ-Nāma* (Jerusalem, 2016). She is a section editor of the *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden, 2010).

David Moshfegh is a professor of history and humanities at IE University in Madrid, teaching humanities courses to graduate business students as well as history and political theory in the international relations program. He earned his Ph.D. in history from UC Berkeley, where he worked on European intellectual history. He has undertaken significant research on the trajectory of religious minorities in Islamic history and has co-authored the sections on Jewish communities in the Islamic context for the third edition of Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*. He was a visiting fellow at the Townsend Center for the Humanities at UC Berkeley from 2012-2014 and a visiting fellow at the Center for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at Cambridge University in 2017.

Alexander Nachman is a Ph.D. candidate in Oriental Studies with a concentration in modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Oxford. His research examines how ethics and politics interact in theories of sovereignty in Islamic political thought.

Guest Speakers

Tudor Parfitt is Distinguished Professor and President Navon Professor of Sephardi and Mizrahi studies at Florida International University. He is also director of the Global Jewish Studies Program. He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and corresponding fellow of the Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, Belgium. He was professor –now emeritus – of Modern Jewish Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. His latest books are *In The Shadow Of Moses: New Jewish Movements In Africa And The Diaspora*, ed. D. Lis, W. Miles and T. Parfitt (Africa World Press, 2016); *Black Zion*, ed. Ed. Bruder and T. Parfitt (Cambridge Scholars' Press, 2012) and *Black Jews in Africa and the Americas* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Naisy Sarduy is an instructor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at FIU. She specializes on the international relations of the Middle East, with a particular focus on Iran, Islamic political movements and their relations with the West. She received her Ph.D. in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford. She holds a master's degree in International Studies from the University of Miami and a bachelors' degree in French and international relations from FIU. She is currently working on a manuscript based on her research at Oxford, entitled *Iran's America: Iran's Post-Revolutionary Narrative of the United States*. She was assistant editor for *American Muslim Quarterly* and has published on the Muslim community of the United States.

Samuel Schidem is educational associate and coordinator of international partnerships at the *House of One Foundation*, an initiative for interreligious dialogue based in Berlin. As an academic assistant at the *Foundation Topography of Terror*, he develops educational programs surrounding the topic of migration. He is responsible for the center's strategic, educational and organizational efforts. He was part of a group of experts that consulted the state ministry of immigration on integration programs. Since 2015, he has lectured on topics related to community building, religious radicalization, nationalism, Islamophobia and antisemitism for both governmental organizations and NGO's. He is the founder and team member of *Hurreya*, a platform for freedom of speech in the Arab and Islamic world based in Berlin. His academic studies have focused on various topics, including Jewish-Muslim contemporary and historical interactions.

Oren Stier teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at Florida International University. He also directs the Jewish Studies Certificate and is the director of the FIU Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program. His main area of interest is Holocaust studies, and more generally Jewish cultural studies, with a special emphasis on the contemporary period and all aspects of present-day Jewish life and thought. His ongoing current research concerns Holocaust memory and representation. He has published two books on this topic - *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003) and *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (Rutgers University Press, 2015). His current course topics include the Holocaust, Holocaust memorials, Elie Wiesel, Holocaust cinema, Jewish Mysticism, and Judaism, among many others.

Ezra Tzfadya is a lecturer and research associate in Jewish Studies at the University of Bamberg's Oriental Studies institute and a fellow at the Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses research unit at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. He is a doctoral candidate in Islamic Studies in Erlangen under the supervision of Professor Georges Tamer with a dissertation titled, "A Theocratic Idea in Judaism and Shiite Islam: Sovereign Guardianship, Autonomy and the Law." He has lectured widely in recent years on topics related to the creation of a Jewish-Shia Islamic philosophic dialogue at institutions such as Cambridge, the University of Chicago and the Sapienza University of Rome. He is a recipient of a German Academic Exchange Doctoral Fellowship and a Fulbright for research in Islamic Studies at the Free University of Berlin. He holds an M.A. from Princeton University in Religion, and a B.A. in Arabic and German Language and Literature from Dartmouth College.

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The Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies at FIU would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Ezra Tzfadya and his role in organizing this conference.

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Launched in 2008, the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University educates the leaders and changemakers of tomorrow through innovative teaching and research that advances global understanding, contributes to policy solutions and promotes international dialogue. Our students learn how to think about the world in different ways, generating policy-relevant dialogue and research on critical global issues, including:

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