



Call for Papers International Workshop

Rethinking Islam at the Turn of the 21st Century: Liberal Trends, Agents of Change and Reassessments of Islamic Traditions

5-7 June, 2017

Since the inception of Islam, Muslims have been debating a wide range of legal, theological and moral issues that have shaped their societies and lives. Throughout Islamic history different schools of thought and jurisprudence, ranging from extremely violent movements to those described by some scholars as 'liberal', have put forth countless interpretations and varied understandings of the Muslim scriptures. The 21st century is no different. In recent decades, we have witnessed a plethora of movements that offer a wide range of contrasting interpretations of Islamic values and their implementation in Muslim societies. One example of such a debate is the disagreement over the status of women, in which liberals argue for complete freedom and equality, while a spectrum of fundamentalist thinkers and movements promote different forms of strictures and limitations on women in the public sphere.

The current workshop will explore the ideas and forces that aspire to bring about change in Muslim societies, with special emphasis on liberal trends. It will suggest that the notion of 'liberal Islam', as identified by a small group of western scholars and described by Charles Curzman in his anthology, *Liberal Islam: A sourcebook*, as being: "a paradigm shift in the academic study of Islam", requires further methodological, theoretical and empirical investigation.

Although 'liberal Islam' will receive a great deal of attention in this workshop, we would like to place it alongside other ideological and social forces that do not fit the label 'liberal', yet offer new interpretations of Islam--such as Islamist activists who articulate nuanced visions on the status of minorities and women in Muslim societies.

This workshop is open to scholars from various disciplines and interests in Islamic studies. We look forward to having a multifaceted discussion, including, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Religious liberty.
- Progressive Islamic movements and organizations.
- Liberal Islamic thinkers.
- Islamic reformation.
- Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam.
- Rethinking the Qur'an and Islamic traditions.
- Islam, civil liberties and human rights.
- Islam and democracy.
- Islamic feminism and women's rights.
- Islam and modernity.
- Islam and the 'Arab Spring'.
- Perception and legitimacy of change and innovation
- Rethinking fundamental concepts, such as 'public interest'

This three-day workshop will be held from 5-7 June, 2017 at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Those interested in participating are asked to submit an abstract of their lecture/ paper in English by October 1, 2016. Each proposal should present the main statements and contribution to the subject-matter of the workshop in 300 words or less. Notification of acceptance for participation in the workshop will be given by 15 October, 2016. Participants whose papers have been accepted will be expected to submit an advanced copy of their working paper for distribution to the other participants no later than 30 April 2017. Participants from abroad will be offered round-trip airfare and lodging.

Proposals should be addressed by E-mail to:

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