



The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies

Opening Remarks by the Director of the Center

The Arab Spring of 2011, which eventually took on an Islamic coloration, as in Egypt and Tunisia, evokes the need for a better understanding of the contemporary Islamic resurgence and its relationship to past legacies. The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University serves as an important academic venue for providing such an understanding.

In studying Islamic politics, the Center adopts an interdisciplinary approach which focuses as well on the cultural, intellectual and social facets of Islam. This interdisciplinary approach is reflected in the wide range of conferences and workshops held since the establishment of the Center in 2004. In this context, the Center collaborates with other academic bodies in the humanities and social sciences, thereby broadening and enriching the topics discussed.

The current bulletin covers an

intensive roster of academic events during the year 2011-2012. It also marks the publication of important academic works through the aegis of the Center, namely *Conversion, Sufism, Revival and Reform in Islam* (edited by Aharon Layish); and *The Muslim Brothers: A Religious Vision in a Changing Reality* (edited by Meir Hatina and Uri. M. Kupferschmidt). The themes discussed in both works reflect the broad scope of the Levtzion Center, covering diverse geographical regions and historical periods. The Center also continued to support promising advanced students, a goal viewed as equal in importance to conferences and research seminars.

This dynamic activity was carried out by the Center despite the severe cut in its annual budget by the Hebrew University authorities and the pressing need for external funding. Facing this challenge, we constantly explore innovative ways to resolve

financial problems, and have adopted various measures whose outcomes seem promising.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Academic Committee for their contributions to the Center: Professors Rachel Milstein (chair), Amikam Elad and Elie Podeh, and Drs. Brouria Bitton-Ashkeloni and Nurit Stadler. Special thanks are due to Ms. Jenia Yudkevich, coordinator of the Center since 2008, for her effective administration, and wish her well in her new position. We welcome her successor, Mr. Sasha Schneidmann, a skilled and promising advanced student.

With best wishes for a fruitful new academic year,

Prof. Meir Hatina
Director of the Center

The Center's Mission

The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies was established at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2004. It aims to encourage and initiate research relating to Islam as a religion and a civilization from its advent in the seventh century C.E. until today, in the Arab world, elsewhere in the Middle East, in Asia and Africa, and in the West. To fulfill this goal, the Center organizes research groups, conferences, seminars and lectures; supports

individual and collaborative research; grants scholarships; and encourages dialogue between scholars of Islamic studies and related fields. Islam is approached not only as a religion, but, more broadly, as a culture and a civilization. As such, the Center deals with a range of subjects that include religious thought and practice, material and intellectual culture, politics, society, economics, and interfaith relations.

To this end, the Center supports interdisciplinary research in religious studies, history, the social sciences, law and other fields. Innovative research projects within specific disciplines are also encouraged and supported. The Center directs some of its activities to the general public with the aim of bringing about greater understanding of the Islamic faith and civilization. The Center's publications seek to reach a wide audience of scholars as well as the public at large.

The Annual Nehemia Levtzion Lectures

Background

The Nehemia Levtzion Lectures bring noted scholars to the Center to discuss main themes in the field of Islamic studies. The lectures are held in collaboration with leading academic institutions in Israel and are later published by the Levtzion Center. The first Levtzion lecture was held in 2005 in cooperation with the Ben-Zvi Institute and the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University. Prof. Michael Brett of SOAS (London) lectured on "The Islamization of Egypt and North Africa". The second Levtzion lecture was held in 2006 in cooperation with Tel Aviv University. Prof. Andre Wink, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, lectured on "Perspectives on the Indo-Islamic World". These two lectures were published by the Center and may be ordered from the Center's offices. The contents of these lectures are also available on the Center's website. The third Levtzion lecture was held in 2007. Prof. Baber Johansen of Harvard University lectured on "The Transformation from Islam as Cosmic Order to Islam as Legal Order". The fourth Levtzion lecture was held in 2008. Prof. Dale F. Eickelman of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, lectured on "Whatever became of the Islamic Reformation". The fifth Levtzion lecture was held in 2009. Prof. Haggai Erlich of Tel Aviv University lectured on "Muslims, Christians and Ethiopia: First Meeting, Last Meeting". The sixth Levtzion lecture was held in 2011. Prof. Christoph Schumann of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, lectured on "Identity and Normativity of Muslims in Transnational Spaces: Between the Middle East, Europe and America".

The Seventh Annual Nehemia Levtzion Lecture, June 12, 2012, the Hebrew University

The seventh annual lecture, delivered by Prof. David Cook of Rice University, Houston, Texas, took place on June 12, 2012, titled: "The Mahdi's Arrival and the Messianic Future State According to Sunni and Shi'ite Apocalyptic Scenarios". The lecture was part of an event which included the announcement by the Center of its annual recipients

of scholarships and research grants (see below).
overdramatic, social commentary. They can also be useful, occasionally, as historical sources.

Contemporary Sunni apocalyptic materials suffer from a lack of relevance, as many of the events predicted do not correspond with the realities of today's Sunni Muslim audience. Thus, contemporary apocalyptic writers have increasingly turned to the Bible, as well as to anti-Semitic conspiracy literature, in order to flesh out their narratives. Like evangelical



Prof. David Cook's Lecture

of scholarships and research grants (see below).

In his lecture Prof. Cook pointed out that the study of contemporary Muslim apocalyptic literature both in its Sunni and Shi'ite variants is still in its infancy. Only in the last few decades has serious scholarly work, especially of a comparative nature similar to themes in Judaism and Christianity, been undertaken.

Contemporary Muslim apocalyptic literature is based on the classical traditions ascribed to Muhammad and his closest companions, and predicting a series of cataclysmic or violent events due to take place before the end of the world and the final judgment. These events are designed to shock and to stir the audience to repent, and can be a profound, if somewhat

Christians, Sunni apocalyptic writers have tended to view the apocalyptic predictions as if they were newspaper reports, micro-predicting the future down to the last detail, an approach that opens them up to ridicule when their predictions do not come to pass.

Shi'ite apocalyptic writers were even more divorced from contemporary reality than their Sunni counterparts. While the quantity of their books about the Hidden Imam was enormous, virtually none of these materials were related in any way to the contemporary world. The reader was left to make the necessary connections. However, the Mahdaviyyat movement, which was established in 2005 and led by Ayatullah Misbahi-Yazdi, had as its goal an increased awareness of the

Mahdi, thereby hastening his future revelation. To accomplish this goal, the Mahdaviyyat heightened the awareness of the shrine at Jamkaran (outside the holy city of Qumm), where, according to tradition, the Mahdi was located at the bottom of a well. Additionally, books and booklets published under the auspices of the Mahdaviyyat began to include materials that were related to the present, in order to make the appearance of the Mahdi seem imminent.

Coupled with these initiatives was a transformation in the nature of the Mahdi from being a "Hidden" Imam to being present at key events in the Shi'ite community: fighting against Israel on the side of Hizbullah in 2006, participating in the civil war in Iraq between Sunnis and Shi'ites, and generally making himself visible as a hero.

Mainstream Islam is not the only beneficiary of apocalyptic materials. Radical Islam, especially those factions associated with al-Qa'ida and its ideological affiliates, has also made use of this material, as in its classical form it describes fighting that leads to a messianic state. However, there is a basic difficulty in the use of the apocalyptic material: is it descriptive or prescriptive? If it is descriptive, then there is little incentive for the Muslim to personally participate in jihad; if it is prescriptive, and scenarios contained in it are changeable, then they cannot be entirely accurate. Also, the messianic figure of the Mahdi is one that is frequently used by charlatans (mainly of a Sufi character), and has the potential of being highly divisive. This is especially true if a particular person declares himself to be the Mahdi

(Mullah 'Umar, the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, adopted messianic and caliphal titles in 1996, which were ignored in the Muslim world). For these reasons, radical Muslims have been cautious in the use of apocalyptic materials.

In conclusion, Prof. Cook argued, the Muslim world has seen a downturn in the prevalence of apocalyptic writing. The excitement of the 1990s and early 2000s among Sunnis has largely faded, while the Mahdaviyyat has lost influence in Iran among the Shi'ites. However, from an intellectual and religious point of view, the transformation of Muslim apocalyptic materials from the traditional citation style to the contemporary commentary and newspaper style of exegesis relating to current events will likely persist and influence future trends in apocalyptic movements.



Workshops and Conferences

1. Wills in the Ottoman and Mediterranean Regions

The Levtzion Center and Misgav Yerushalayi, the Center for Research and Study of the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage at the Hebrew University, conducted a collaborative research workshop on the topic of wills in the Ottoman and Mediterranean regions. The workshop was held on March 12, 2012, at the Rabin World Center of Jewish Studies, The Hebrew University.

The workshop reflected a contemporary trend in analyzing personal documents such as letters and diaries, to which wills belong as well. Wills, often written or dictated by someone facing death, in the presence of approved witnesses who could vouch for his soundness of mind, are a valuable source of historic research. While some basic work has been done to collect Jewish wills – primarily Ashkenazic, no record exists of Hebrew wills from the Muslim world, and the situation in the Islamic context is also unclear, so that research in this area is welcome.

The workshop focused on Jewish and Muslim wills in the Ottoman realm and its periphery from the early seventeenth century until the modernized reforms (*Tanzimat*) in the mid-nineteenth century. Three main aspects were considered: cultural context of the dying wishes of the subjects; the family, its format, number of living children and heirs, status of sons vis-à-vis daughters, concern for the rights of the widow, etc.; and material and economic status, namely, the state of the assets of the departed – loans, business investments, merchandise, clothing, jewelry and household goods. The workshop thus outlined a new research field

with input from experts in various areas, constituting a basis for the formation of an international study group.

The first session was devoted to wills written on deathbeds in the context of the dying subject's impulse to perpetuate his/her memory and leave an inheritance that was not

cities as Aleppo and Damascus. Dr. Avi Rubin of Ben-Gurion University focused on the impact of the late-nineteenth-century Ottoman legal reform on the status of inheritance and the power struggles that evolved between the shar'i and civil courts over the authority to deal with them. Mr. Yuval Haruvi of



Dr. Yaron Ben Naeh's Lecture

necessarily material but rather ethical – a kind of guide to worthy behavior. The first three lectures dealt with the Jewish aspect. Dr. Miriam Frenkel of the Hebrew University discussed women's wills as revealed in the Cairo Geniza. Dr. Yaron Ben-Naeh of the Hebrew University explored the content and meaning of Jewish wills in the Ottoman Empire. Dr. Dov Hachohen of Bar-Ilan University and the Yad Ben Zvi Institute discussed several Ladino wills. The final lecture shifted the focus to Islam with a discussion by Prof. Ron Shaham of the Hebrew University about deathbed wills in Muslim legal discourse.

The second session was devoted to religious endowments and inheritances. Prof. Haim Gerber of the Hebrew University discussed the issue of *waqfs* established by Ottoman officials and notables for the welfare of the community in such

Tel Aviv University examined the specific case of Nissim Shamama (d. 1873), a Jewish notable from Tunisia, whose will ordering the distribution of his property to his family and to the needy ignited legal and religious disputes.

The third session was devoted to a comparison of will formats from the East and the West. Prof. David Malkiel of Bar-Ilan University analyzed notarized wills of Jews in the Spanish diaspora during 1650-1750. Dr. Avriel Bar-Levav of the Open University dealt with burial aspects as reflected in wills left by prominent Jewish rabbis in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, also of the Open University, discussed Jewish wills in Yemen as a valuable prism for exploring the status and rights of women in the family and the social domain.

2. Sacrifice and Death in Modern Islam: History, Ethos and Politics

This international conference, organized collaboratively with the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, the Israel Science Foundation, and the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, was held on June 11-13, 2012, at the Hebrew University, Givat Ram, Jerusalem.

The three-day conference aimed at filling a gap in the research literature on the themes of sacrifice and death in modern Islam. Scholars who do address these themes have focused mainly on "suicide" attacks, a new phenomenon of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The conference offered a comparative thematic discussion, represented as well in

the composition of the participants from Israel and abroad, highlighting the affinity between history, ethos and politics. Among the issues discussed were martyrdom and social networks; martyrdom and gender relations; violence and ethics; and historical memory and commemoration.

The conference explored three dimensions: a historical framework linking the classical and middle periods to the modern era, thereby enabling the tracing of patterns of continuity and change; an integrative discussion of cross-sectional themes, ideological trends and geographic spaces extending as far outward as

Chechnya, Pakistan and Indonesia; and a comparative perspective of Shi'a and Sunna. In intertwining these three dimensions – historic, integrative and comparative – the conference made a distinctive contribution to an understanding of Islamic martyrdom.

Six sessions were held: Early Concepts of Martyrdom; From Communal Altruism to Military Martyrdom – Sunni Perspectives; From Survival to Self-sacrifice – Shi'ite Perspectives; Martyrdom in Ethno-national Conflicts; Martyrdom as a Social Phenomenon; Commemorating the Martyrs. The proceedings will be published in a volume.

3. Islam in Southeast Asia: Identities and Politics

This conference, organized by the Levtzion Center, the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Department of Asian Studies, was held on April 23, 2012, at the Mt. Scopus campus. The conference offered a comparative analysis of Islam in the Southeast Asian nations of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Mr. Joshua Gedacht of the University of Wisconsin-Madison examined the relationship between colonial violence and Islamic reform in Southeast Asia, arguing that religious reform flourished in hubs of colonial economic growth and commerce, but foundered in regions with protracted wars of colonial conquest. Dr. Ran Shauli of Bar-Ilan University and the Truman Institute explored competing Muslim and Chinese identities in the Malay world, explaining how

the particular circumstances of the region served to make these two identities mutually exclusive. Dr. Giora Eliraz of the Hebrew University discussed Indonesian Islam in the

context of broader connections with the Middle East, positing that a comparative approach is necessary to fully illuminate religious developments in both regions.



Mr. Joshua Gedacht's Lecture

4. The Arab Spring and Islamic Politics: Dilemmas and Challenges

A conference on the Arab Spring and Islamic politics was held at the Hebrew University on June 18, 2012, under the auspices of the Levtzion Center and the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace.

The conference, which marked the publication of the volume, *the Muslim Brothers: A Religious Vision in a Changing Reality* (eds. Meir Hatina and Uri. M. Kupferschmidt), aimed at a preliminary assessment of the Arab Spring and its implications for the ideology and politics of Islamic movements in the Middle East. The events of 2011, and the collapse of the regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, opened a window of opportunity for these movements to upgrade politically, but also sharpened existing dilemmas and added new ones, most prominently the issue of democracy. Moreover, the Arab Spring erupted not on a religious basis or at the initiative of Islamic circles: it was an authentic protest from the bottom up against a background of poverty, unemployment and demands for personal freedoms. Resolving these issues poses a test of the legitimacy Islamists such as the Muslim Brothers in Egypt or al-Nahda in Tunisia, which underwent a sudden

shift from opposition movements to ruling elites.

The conference speakers provided a panoramic picture of the Arab Spring and of Islamic politics in the Middle East both thematically and geographically. Dr. Uriah Furman of the Hebrew University held that the Arab Spring was in fact an Islamist Spring, and as such it confirmed the optimistic conviction of the Islamists, which had evolved in the last few decades, regarding the ultimate victory of the Islamic vision. According to Furman, this victorious conviction, alongside an adaptive approach, also explains the successes of the Muslim Brothers. Notably, he pointed out, the openness of the movement to democratic values and institutions was pragmatic and aimed at the goal of establishing an elevated society with the Shari'a as its legal base. By contrast, Prof. Emmanuel Sivan of the Hebrew University emphasized the commitment of the Muslim Brothers to democracy, but pointed to various problems in their political conduct, mainly their craving for state power.

Prof. Moshe Ma'oz of the Hebrew University and the Truman Institute, viewed the popular riots in Syria

as enabling the Muslim Brothers to display a presence in the public sphere, defying the regime on such loaded issues as justice, equal rights and democracy. However, the movement's support of democracy, Prof. Ma'oz claimed, was not a rhetorical tactic, but an ideological conviction that was enhanced following confrontations with the regime from the 1970s onward. While the historical record of the Syrian Brothers is well documented, the record of their colleagues in Iraq remains largely obscure. Prof. Amatzia Barham of the University of Haifa, highlighting several historical and political aspects of the Iraqi movement, sketched a profile of the Brothers that was moderate and pragmatic. For example, the Brothers did not support political revolution against Saddam Husayn's regime so as to avoid creating anarchy and allowing the Shi'ites to take over the state. With the toppling of Saddam by the U.S. in 2003, the movement sought to integrate in the new political order, thereby exposing itself to polemical attacks by Islamist rivals, including al-Qa'ida.

Al-Qa'ida itself, however, faced a new predicament in the wake of the Arab Spring, an issue dealt with by Prof. Meir Hatina of the Hebrew University. In Hatina's view, the emergence of the masses as a significant defiant force, and the victory of the evolutionary strategy of communal activism, mainly by the Muslim Brothers, forced al-Qa'ida to invest more in involvement in Arab civil society in order to gain popular support. This, of course, did not lessen its emphasis on the necessity to promote jihad in conflict regions such as Palestine, Syria, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan, as well as in the West.

The conference concluded with



Dr. Uriah Furman's Lecture (r.)

a lecture by Dr. Eldad Pardo of the Truman Institute addressing the Iranian reaction to the Arab Spring. While the reaction reflected satisfaction that the

Iranian revolution of 1979 served as a source of inspiration and a model for Arab revolutions against political suppression, it also revealed apprehension regarding

the negative impacts of the events in the Iranian street and negative effects on Tehran's strategic interests in the Middle East.

5. Islam in Israel: A Reappraisal

A conference on Islam in Israel was held at Ben-Gurion University on May 25-26, 2012, under the auspices of the Chaim Herzog Center and the Levtzion Center.

Islam is the religion of the majority of the Arab citizens in Israel. According to the latest reports of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, there are 1.2 million Muslim Israeli citizens, constituting approximately 80 percent of the Arab population. Over the past four decades, Islam has become an increasingly important factor in the political and socio-cultural identity of the Arab minority in Israel. The number of Muslims in Israel who define their identity first and foremost in relation to their religious affiliation has steadily grown.

The conference, which assembled distinguished experts as well as younger scholars from various disciplines, addressed a wide array of topics, including an evolving Islamic legal theology in Israel, Islamic religious authority, popular Islam, Islam and gender, and Islamic political movements.

The discussions focused on several research questions: What is the theological and legal nature of Islam in Israel? What body is the primary religious authority for Muslims in Israel? To what extent has Islam shaped the identity of the Arab minority in Israel? The conference also provided

comparative perspectives drawn from the Jewish Haredi community in Israel and from Muslim immigrant communities in Europe.

Some of the presentations were based on fieldwork and personal interviews, highlighting marginalized voices in religious discourse, such as those of women or of Bedouin notables – thus providing a social dimension and a "bottom up" perspective of the topics under discussion. Other presentations focused on the nuances in the interrelations between various religious actors: 'ulama', Sufis and Islamists, showing that these interrelations are marked by dissonance but also by rapprochement and shared agendas.

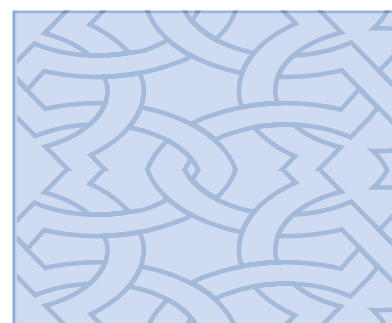
Five sessions were held:

- Historical and Research Framework (Dr. Muhammad al-Atawneh of Ben-Gurion University and Prof. Meir Hatina of the Hebrew University)
- Jurisprudence and Religious Authority (Dr. Ido Shahar of the University of Haifa; Qadi Iyad Zahalka of the Hebrew University; and Prof. Ron Shaham of the Hebrew University and Attorney Hanan Mandel of the Ono Academic College)
- Popular Islam (Prof. Daphna Ephrat of the Open University; Prof. Arif Abu-Rabi of Ben-Gurion

University; Mr. Emir Galilee and Prof. Ruth Kark of the Hebrew University and Gideon Kressel of Ben-Gurion University; and Dr. Khalid Sindawi of the Max Stern College of Jezreel Valley).

- Women, Ideology and Politics (Dr. Inbal Tal of the University of Haifa; Ms. Salwa 'Alinat of Ben-Gurion University; and Ms. Tajread Keadan of the Hebrew University).
- Dilemmas and Challenges (Qadi Ahmad Natur, President of the Shar'ia Appeals Court; Prof. Yitzhak Reiter of the Ashkelon Academic College; and Prof. Amikam Nachmani of Bar-Ilan University).

In approaching a wide range of themes from the perspectives of various disciplines, the conference made a distinctive contribution to a better understanding of the Islamic phenomenon in Israel. The conference proceedings are scheduled for publication.



Book Panel Discussions

1. On January 30, 2012, the Levtzion Center and the Truman Institute held an evening devoted to a discussion of a recent book written by Prof. Elie Podeh, *The Politics of National Celebrations in the Arab Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

The book explores the role of celebrations and public holidays in the Arab world from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the present. Tracing the history of the modern Arab nation-states through successive generations, the book shows how Arab rulers have used the national calendar as a means of establishing their legitimacy and, more broadly, a sense of national identity. The book deals with six major Arab case studies: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia. These particular states were chosen with the aim of representing the various types of regimes in the Arab world: republican; monarchic; authoritarian; dictatorship; democratic; religious; secular, etc. The book thus offers not only an analysis of particular states but also a broad panorama of how Arab states celebrate their national and religious holidays.

The event was moderated by Dr. Anat Helman of the Dept. of History of the Jewish People at the Hebrew University. Panel members were Prof. Uri M. Kupferschmidt and Dr. Ido Zerkovitz of the University of Haifa, Dr. Eyal Ginio of the Hebrew University, and Prof. Avner Ben-Amos of Tel Aviv University. Prof. Elie Podeh presented concluding remarks.

Prof. Uri Kupferschmidt pointed to the profuse mix of secular and religious holidays in the modern Egyptian calendar. Dr. Ido Zerkovitz discussed the importance of symbols and ceremonies in Palestinian national identity.

Holidays commemorating the *nakba* (catastrophe), martyrs, prisoners and others were aimed at stimulating a combative agenda for the Palestinian people. Dr. Eyal Ginio focused on the celebration of national holidays under the Young Turks (1908-1918), reflecting a similarly revolutionary motivation, while also incorporating religious symbols to mobilize the masses during the First World War. Prof. Avner Ben-Amos introduced a comparative perspective in discussing celebrations and public holidays in Israel, showing that the Zionist-Israeli project of establishing new national secular holidays did not discard its Jewish

Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

The book makes an important contribution to the extant literature on the circumstances underlying the coalescence of the canonic document called the Pact of 'Umar in early Islam, outlining the status of non-Muslims. The findings discussed in the book reveal a dynamic picture of a legal and social construction which gradually developed over time, influenced by ancient as well as contemporary cultures and demonstrating active interaction between conquerors and conquered and between Muslims and non-



Prof. Elie Podeh's Lecture

base but rather created an Israeli-Jewish synthesis.

In his concluding remarks Prof. Elie Podeh of the Hebrew University highlighted the scholarly importance of exploring national calendars, which reflect the state's collective historical memory in a nutshell, telling the story of the state and its people in symbolic forms.

2. On March 27, 2012, the Levtzion Center dedicated an evening to a discussion of a recent book by Dr.

Muslims. Rather than a secluded Muslim world, the book provides a complex and diffused picture with points of friction but also of mutual contact and influence – a reality of interwoven worlds.

The event was moderated by Prof. Amikam Elad, head of the Institute of Asian and African Studies at the Hebrew University. Panel members were Prof. Michael Laker, Dr. Uriel Simonsohn and Dr. Miriam Frenkel, all from the Hebrew University. Prof. Laker discussed the intriguing

question of whether Muhammad ibn Ishaq (d. 767), author of a major biography of the Prophet Muhammad, was of Jewish origin, and provided some evidence from Islamic sources supporting such an assertion. Dr. Simonsohn highlighted the social phenomenon of mixed households, whether due to the Islamization of a *dhimmi* partner or because of a mixed marriage. The discussion exposed the limitations of enforcing the Pact of 'Umar by creating a separation between Muslims and non-Muslims, engendering legal dilemmas for the Muslim religious jurists. Dr. Miriam Frenkel discussed Jewish responses to the *dhimma* laws, pointing to the widespread practice of caution and a lowered profile among the Jews in order to insure Jewish communal security, accepting the rules of Muslim society and preserving a suitable level of coexistence with it.

In her concluding remarks Dr. Milka Levy-Rubin of the Hebrew

University pointed to the evolutionary nature of the Pact of 'Umar as a legal document that incorporated other ancient and distinctive legal traditions such as the Persian-Sassanid, Greek and Byzantine, and was also influenced by the social and political norms of the conquered populations.

3. On May 14, 2012, the Levtzion Center together with the Yad Ben Zvi Institute dedicated an evening to a discussion of the recent book by Prof. Aharon Layish, *Legal Documents from the Judean Desert: The Impact of the Shari'a on Bedouin Customary Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

The volume presents annotated English translations of 74 legal awards handed down by tribal arbitrators and other legal documents obtained from the Bedouin of the Judean Desert. The documents address such legal issues as criminal offenses including sexual offenses, family disputes, inheritance, private transactions

regarding land and water rights, tribal boundaries, contracts and other obligations. The documents, some of which date back to the nineteenth century, provide vital information about the process of Islamization of the tribal customary law.

Discussions dealt with various aspects of the interaction between tribal custom and Islamic law, and the status of customary law in the state legal system. In the first panel, moderated by Prof. Amnon Cohen of the Hebrew University, Prof. Ella Landau-Tasseron of the Hebrew University discussed the institution of *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) in securing Islamic commitments and rights in early Islam. Prof. Frank Stewart of the Hebrew University focused on the unique marriage customs in Sinai. Prof. Emanuel Marx of Tel Aviv University discussed the functions of pilgrimage to holy graves in tribal society in southern Sinai.

In the second panel, moderated by Dr. Nurit Tsafrir of Tel Aviv University, Judge Ron Shapiro examined the tribal institution of *sulha* (reconciliation) as an auxiliary instrument for the enforcement of state law in civil courts. Muhammad al-Atawneh of Ben-Gurion University, shifting the focus from Israel to Saudi Arabia, discussed the encounter between Islamic law and customs in Saudi tribal society in modern times. Prof. Aharon Layish of the Hebrew University discussed the role of tribal arbitrators' documents as a source of legal history.



Dr. Milka Levy-Rubin's Lecture

Guest Lectures

On November 30, 2011, **Dr. Yazid Said** of McGill University, Montreal, lectured on "The Foundation of al-Ghazali's Politics". In exploring the relationship between law and politics in al-Ghazali's texts, Dr. Said highlighted his view of the appropriate Islamic political order, a topic which has not gained much attention in the research literature.

On April 17, 2012, **Dr. Joseph David** of Oxford University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem lectured on "Anti-Islamism and the Judeo-Christian Myth: The Breakdown of the Unity of 'The People of the Book' in Franz Rosenzweig's Theology". Dr. David analyzed the theological map outlined by Franz Rosenzweig (d. 1929), one of the most prominent figures in the field of modern Jewish thought, showing Judaism and Christianity as having a symbiotic

relationship, in contrast to Islam, which is described as proto-idolatrous. Dr. David discussed the source of Rosenzweig's rejection of the inclusive ethos of the three "Abrahamic religions" and the theological foundations of his hostile attitude toward the Islamic faith.

On May 30, 2012, **Dr. Orit Ouaknine-Yekutieli** of the Hebrew University lectured on: "Transcendental Craft: Knowledge Transmission, Craftsmanship and Sufism in Fes, Morocco". The lecture focused on practices and attitudes shared by craftsmen and followers of the Sufi tradition, such as patterns of knowledge transmission, master and disciple relationships, and organizational methods, in the context of Moroccan modernity. In Morocco, both crafts and Sufism are sometimes presented as a potential

cure for the crises of modernity and as the antithesis of its materialistic aspects. **Prof. Daphna Ephrat** of the Open University, who served as discussant, highlighted the need to promote the research on links between Sufi orders and craft guilds, noting the example of Morocco, where both these life styles are widespread.

On June 3, 2012, **Prof. Kenneth Cuno** of the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) lectured on: "From Pluralism to Hanafism and Back: How Legal Modernization Set Back Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century Egypt". Prof. Cuno discussed the transition from Islamic legal pluralism to Hanafism, focusing on the issue of non-support and desertion of married women who were now able to obtain a divorce on these grounds.

Other Activities

During the year 2011-2012, the Levtzion Center, together with the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies and the Magid Institute for Continuing and Adult Education at the Hebrew University, collaborated in presenting a series of lectures to the public on the topic: "Protest and Revolution in the Modern Middle East". The series offered a historical and comparative perspective of the prominent revolutions that shaped the image of the Middle East from the early twentieth century until the present Arab Spring.

Additionally, two research projects led by prominent scholars with whom the Levtzion Center is linked are:

1. "The Formation of Muslim Society in Palestine-Eretz Israel (600-1500)", a research project sponsored by the Israel Science Foundation. This research group, consisting of colleagues in Jerusalem and elsewhere, aims to provide a more detailed picture of the society that developed in Palestine under a succession of Muslim states.

2. "New Frontiers in Islamic Studies", a cooperative program linking the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Freie Universität Berlin, and supported by the Einstein Foundation of Berlin. The program consists of a series of summer schools for advanced students in Islamic, Middle Eastern and Arabic studies from Israel and Germany,

alternating annually between the Hebrew University and the Freie Universität Berlin. The conveners are Prof. Reuven Amitai and Prof. Sabine Schmidtke. The first summer school, held at the Hebrew University on September 18-23, 2011, addressed the topic: "The Political, Social and Intellectual History of the Mamluk and Mongol Empires: A Comparative Perspective". The second summer school, held at the Freie Universität Berlin on September 9-14, 2012, addressed the topic: "The Geniza: An Unexploited Source for the Intellectual History of the Medieval World of Islam".

Scholarships for Advanced Students in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

Each year the Center grants awards for excellence to M.A. students. The following students won scholarships for the year 2011-2012 based on their theses:

Ms. Qiao Yang, Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, "Like the Stars in the Sky: Astronomers in Mongol Eurasia".

Mr. Ofir Haim, Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, "The Jews of Khurasan in Light of the Documents of the Afghani Geniza (10th-11th centuries)".

Mr. Gilad Wiess, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, "The Aatam: al-Madina's Fortifications prior to the Hijra".



The Center's Staff

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Prof. Amikam Elad, Head,
Institute of Asian and African
Studies

Prof. Elie Podeh, Department
of Islamic and Middle Eastern
Studies

Dr. Brouria Bitton-Ashkeloni,
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