

WAYS OF READING

A CONFERENCE

The British Library, 9–11 July 2007

Conference Centre

British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB

What are the different ways that people read and interpret their sacred texts today and what are the controversies and conflicts in how the Scriptures are used in contemporary society? Join leading scholars and academics to share knowledge and ideas about sacred text in contemporary contexts. Hosted by multi-faith research organisation The Lokahi Foundation, the conference explores how religion is intertwined with politics, social strife or cohesion, international relations, ethics and law.

Ways Of Reading is part of the events programme for 'SACRED' a major exhibition of Jewish, Christian and Islamic holy books at the British Library 27 April to 23 September 2007.

Tickets £20 per day (£15 concessions) or £35 for all three days (£25 concessions). Evening Lectures £6 (£4 concessions).

Tickets for all three days may be booked on **T** +44 (0)1937 546546 or in person at the Information Desk. Day tickets and tickets for the evening lectures may additionally be booked online at boxoffice.bl.uk

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Monday 9 July 2007

18.30 – 20.00

Public Lecture

Prof Tariq Ramadan (The Lokahi Foundation)

Reading the Text, Facing the Future

Tuesday 10 July 2007

09.30 – 13.00

Ways of Reading: New Horizons

Prof Tariq Ramadan (The Lokahi Foundation)

Reading the Qur'an in the horizon of today

Prof Oliver Davies (King's College London)

Living the Text

Dr Diana Lipton (King's College London)

Hebrew Bible attitudes towards other religions: surprising evidence from Isaiah 40–55

14.30 – 17.30

Reading the Scriptures in

Social and Political Dimensions

Prof Christopher Rowland (University of Oxford)

'To defend the Bible in this year 1798 would cost a man his life': William Blake, the radicals and the politics of the Bible

Prof R.S. Sugirtharajah

(University of Birmingham)

Victorian lives of two Masters: Gautama and the Galilean

Dr Deborah Sawyer (Lancaster University)

God, Adam and Eve. Creating gender in Genesis

Prof Yahya Michot (University of Oxford)

The Grand Inquisitor and the Qur'ân: Avicenna, Ibn Taymiyya and The Brothers Karamazo.

Dr Ela Nutu (University of Sheffield)

Illuminating Texts: The Bible and Artistic Tradition Judith through the eyes of women painters and their male contemporaries

6.30pm – 8pm

Public Lecture

Dr Avivah Gottlieb-Zornberg

Law and Narrative in the Book of Ruth.

Wednesday 11 July 2007

09.30 – 13.00

Texts, Law and Moral Challenge

Prof Mona Siddiqui (University of Glasgow)

Logic and Meaning in Classical Law

Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer

(Chief Rabbi's Cabinet) Sacred Text and the Challenge of Interpretation

Dr Ziba Mir-Hossaini (SOAS) Classical Islamic Jurisprudence, Modern Ethics and Gender Justice

Prof Bernard Jackson (University of Manchester) The Chained Woman in the Jewish law of divorce

Prof Robert Gleave (University of Exeter)

The legality and illegality of abortion in the Shari'a

14.00 – 17.00

Faith communities reading the Scriptures

Dr Usama Hasan (Middlesex University)

The Sacred in the Secular: Qur'an – Commentary for the Modern World

Dr Raphael Zarum

(London School of Jewish Studies)

"You can't say that!" – The limits of interpretation within a faith community

Prof David Ford (University of Cambridge)

Deep Differences, Oceans of Meaning and a New Collegiality: The Experience of Jews, Christians and Muslims Reading their Scriptures together

Dr Ben Quash (University of Cambridge)

Scriptural Cities and How to be a good Citizen of Them

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer is the rabbi of Northwood United Synagogue and serves on the Chief Rabbi's cabinet with responsibility for Jewish – Muslim relations. He is a regular columnist for the Jewish Chronicle and an occasional broadcaster on the BBC. Rabbi Brawer is an honorary research fellow and lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies. He holds a PhD in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from University College London.

Professor Oliver Davies holds the Chair of Christian Doctrine at King's College London where he is currently engaged with colleagues in developing new undergraduate courses for teaching the 'Challenge of Modernity for Christianity, Judaism and Islam' and in establishing new MA courses for the training of Christian ministers and Jewish rabbis. He has written extensively on creation and compassion (*Theology of Compassion*, 2001; *The Creativity of God*, 2004) and has strong interests in the area of textuality and theology, as well as in religious values and practices.

Professor David F. Ford studied Classics at Trinity College Dublin, and later Theology in Cambridge, Yale, and Tübingen. He is currently Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of numerous books, including *Christian Wisdom. Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge, 2007), *The Shape of Living* (London, 2002), *Theology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000) and *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge, 1999), and is a member of the editorial board of a number of major journals. He is the Director of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, and an Academic Member of the Council of 100 Leaders for West-Islamic World Dialogue in the World Economic Forum.

Professor Robert Gleave is Professor of Arabic Studies, University of Exeter specialises in Islamic legal theory, and in particular the theories of interpretation of classical Muslim jurists. His publications include *Inevitable doubt: Two Theories of Shii Jurisprudence* (Brill, 2000) and he edited *Islamic Law: Theory and Practice* (Tauris, 2000).

Dr Avivah Gottlieb-Zornberg is the author of *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (for which she won the National Jewish Book Award) and *The Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus*; and of a number of articles. She holds a PhD in English Literature from Cambridge University. For the past twenty years, she has taught Torah in Jerusalem at MaTaN, Pardes and the Jerusalem College for Adults. Dr. Zornberg also holds a Visiting Lectureship at the London School of Jewish Studies. She travels widely, lecturing in Jewish and academic settings in the U.S., UK, Australia. She is currently working on a volume of essays on the unconscious as a dynamic component in midrashic and hassidic exegesis. Dr. Avivah Zornberg was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Hebrew Letters from The Jewish Theological Seminary in May, 2005.

Dr. Usama Hasan completed memorising the Qur'an at the age of 11 and has been continuing to study it ever since. He is currently a lecturer at Middlesex University and at the Royal Observatory Planetarium in Greenwich. Dr. Hasan is also an imam at Al-Tawhid Mosque in London. He teaches Qur'an and other Islamic sciences at the mosque and also on Islam Channel (Sky 813). He is married with four children.

Professor Bernard Jackson is Alliance Professor of Modern Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester, Co-Director of the Centre for Jewish Studies and Director of Agunah Research Unit – also at the University of Manchester. His major research interests include early Jewish law, comparative legal histories of the Biblical, Second Commonwealth and Tannaitic periods and the Jewish Law of divorce. His publications include *Theft in Early Jewish Law*, *Law, Fact and Narrative Coherence* and *Essays on Halakah in the New Testament*.

Dr Diana Lipton read English Literature at Oxford University, specializing in medieval literature. After time devoted to investment banking and later full-time motherhood, she moved to Cambridge, where she studied for a Diploma in the Divinity School (1992) and completed a PhD under the supervision of Robert Gordon, the Regius Professor of Hebrew (1993 – 1996). Her revised dissertation was published by Sheffield Academic Press (1999). She spent almost ten years as a Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge, during which time she was also an Affiliated Lecturer in the Cambridge Divinity School and a part-time lecturer in Bible at Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education, London. She joined King's in January 2007 as Lecturer in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies.

Professor Yahya Michot was director of the Centre for Arabic Philosophy from 1981 until 1997, at the University of Louvain (Belgium). He gave courses in Arabic, History of Arabic Philosophy, Commentary on Arabic philosophical texts, History of Muslim peoples and Institutions of Islam. His main field research was the history of Muslim thought, mainly Avicenna, his predecessors and his impact on Sunni thought. This led to a growing interest for the theologian Ibn Taymiyya, the time of the Mamluks and Ilkhans and modern Islamic movements.

Since October 1998, Prof Yahya Michot is KFAS fellow in Islamic Studies at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and Islamic Centre Lecturer in the Faculty of Theology, Oxford University. He gives introductory courses to Islamic theology and Arabic. He is a member of various international scientific societies, and founder and director of the collection *Sagesses musulmanes*. From April 1995 to June 1998, he was President of the Conseil Supérieur des Musulmans de Belgique.

Dr Ziba Mir-Hosseini is a legal anthropologist, specializing in Islamic law, gender, and development and a Senior Research Associate at the London Middle Eastern Institute, SOAS, University of London. She obtained her BA in Sociology from Tehran University (1974) and her PhD in Social Anthropology from University of Cambridge (1980) and has held numerous research fellowships and visiting professorships, most recently: Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2004–5); since 2002 she has been Hauser Global Law Visiting Professor at the School of Law, New York University. Her publications include the monographs *Marriage on Trial: A Study of Islamic Family Law in Iran and Morocco* (I. B. Tauris, 1993, 2002), *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (Princeton University Press, 1999; I. B. Tauris, 2000), and (with Richard Tapper) *Islam and Democracy in Iran: Eshkevari and the Quest for Reform* (I. B. Tauris, 2006). She has also directed (with Kim Longinotto) two award-winning feature-length documentary films on contemporary issues in *Iran: Divorce Iranian Style* (1998) and *Runaway* (2001).

Dr Ela Nutu is Research Associate in the Centre for the Study of the Bible in the Modern World at the University of Sheffield, and she also teaches in the Department of Biblical Studies. Her research interests focus on postmodern approaches to biblical interpretation (poststructuralist, psychoanalytical, cultural) and, more recently, on the Bible in art, music and literature. She is the author of *Incarnate Word, Inscribed Flesh: John's Prologue and the Postmodern* (2007) and a number of articles on the Bible, literary theory and film, and co-editor, with Professor Cheryl Exum, of *Between the Text and the Canvas: The Bible and Art in Dialogue*, to come out later this year. Dr Nutu is currently working on a monograph on biblical women in art, entitled *Cuts: Violent Women in the Bible and Art*.

Dr Ben Quash is currently Dean and Fellow of Peterhouse in the University of Cambridge, and Academic Convenor of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. He has been developing the work of Scriptural Reasoning in London in conjunction with a range of partners including the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. He also has a strong interest in theology and the arts, and takes up a post in September as Professor of Christianity and the Arts at King's College London. He is the author of *'Theology and the Drama of History'* (Cambridge University Press 2005)

Professor Tariq Ramadan holds MA in Philosophy and French literature and PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Geneva. In Cairo, Egypt he received one-on-one intensive training in classic Islamic scholarship from Al-Azhar University scholars. Tariq Ramadan has resigned from the post of Professor of Islamic Studies at Notre Dame University (Classic Department) and Luce Professor at the Kroc Institute (Religion Conflict and Peacebuilding). Tariq Ramadan is Professor of Islamic Studies. He is currently Senior Research Fellow St Antony's College (Oxford), Doshisha University (Kyoto, Japan) and at the Lokahi Foundation (London). He is a Visiting Professor (in charge of the chair: Identity and Citizenship) at Erasmus University (Holland). Through his writings and lectures he has contributed substantially to the debate on the issues of Muslims in the West and Islamic revival in the Muslim world. He is active both at the academic and grassroots levels lecturing extensively throughout the world on social justice and dialogue between civilizations. Professor Tariq Ramadan is currently President of the European think tank: European Muslim Network (EMN) in Brussels.

Professor Christopher Rowland is Dean Ireland Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, University of Oxford. He is interested in the political context and reading of biblical texts, especially by radicals in the history of Christianity. He has written on modern liberation theology, the history of apocalypticism and on the history of the interpretation of the Book of Revelation. He is completing a book on William Blake and the Bible in the context of English radicalism which will form the heart of today's lecture.

Dr Deborah Sawyer is Reader in Religion and Gender in the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University, where she teaches courses on Christian origins, biblical interpretation and gender and religion. Her publications include *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (1996), *Is There a Future for Feminist Theology?* (co-edited, 1999), *God, Gender and the Bible* (2002). She has recently contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, second edition (2005), and the *Blackwell Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (2006).

Professor Mona Siddiqui is Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding at the University of Glasgow and Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam. Her fields of research are Classical Islamic law and theology, gender and contemporary ethics. She lectures internationally on inter-religious issues and religion and society, including a public address at the United Nations in May 2007.

Professor Siddiqui is a regular contributor to the media and writes regularly for the Herald and Scotsman newspapers. She is the only Muslim woman in the UK to appear regularly on the prolific 'Thought for the Day' slot for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Scotland. She is currently the Chair of the Scottish Religious Advisory Council for the BBC. In 2005, Professor Siddiqui was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Society of Arts.

Professor R S Sugirtharajah is Professor of Biblical Hermeneutics, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham. His publications include: *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge University Press 2005), *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An alternative way of reading the Bible and doing theology* (2003), *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 2002), *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial encounter* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (Sheffield Academic Press and Orbis Books, 1999), *Voices from the Margin* (1992), *Catholic Book Award winner and Asian Faces of Jesus* (1993 so far seven imprints). His writings have been translated into Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Indonesian.

Dr Raphael Zarum is the Chief Executive and a Senior Lecturer at the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS). He is a graduate of the Jerusalem Fellows programme at the Mandel Leadership Institute in Israel and received a distinction in his MA in Adult Education at the Institute of Education in London.

Raphael is the creator of the Torah L'Am crash course and is the author of the *Torat Hadracha* and *Jampacked Bible* educational study guides. He led the faculty of the Florence Melton Adult Mini School UK while directing the Text and Values project at UJIA Makor. Raphael also has a PhD in theoretical physics. He is a sought-after Jewish educator in the UK and teaches at international Jewish conferences in Israel, the USA and Europe. He was recently ranked 48th in the Jewish Chronicle Power100 list of the most influential people in UK Jewry.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information please visit The Lokahi Foundation website www.lokahi.org.uk

For full details on the British Library, including the Sacred exhibition and the public events programme please visit www.bl.uk or call visitor services on T +44 (0)20 7412 7332

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