



Political Theology in the Contemporary Middle East

University of Haifa | November 5–6, 2025



Wednesday, November 5

09:00–12:00 | Optional Morning Program

Activity: Tour of Haifa and meeting with local religious leadership

16:00–16:45 | Opening Session

Speaker: Maayan Raveh (University of Haifa)

Political Theology Today: Reflections from the Middle East

17:00–18:30 | Panel 1: Political Theology in a Time of Crisis

Chair: Avital Erez (Open University)

Jocelyne Cesari (University of Birmingham / Georgetown University)

From Divine Sovereignty to National Legitimacy: Theological Shifts in Political Islam and Nation-Building in the Middle East

Michael Driessen (John Cabot University)

Political Theology as Peacebuilding: Some Reflections on Interreligious Thinking about Rights and Peace in the Middle East

Roie Ravitzky (Herbert C. Kelman Institute)

Authorship and Ascription, Inclusion and Subsumption – Must We Reject Paternalist Tolerance?

19:30–21:00 | Shared Dinner for All Participants



Thursday, November 6

09:00–10:30 | Panel 2: Islam and Political Theology

Chair: Uriel Simonsohn (University of Haifa)

Yitzhak Reiter (Reichman University)

Contemporary Islamic Theology of Peace

Itzhak Weismann (University of Haifa)

Forbidding Rebellion: Variations of Salafi Quietism

Yusri Khaizran (Shalem College)

Hezbollah – an Islamist Movement in a Pluralistic Society

Salwa Alenat (Open University)

Sheikh Raed Salah and the Politics of Faith: Theological Perspectives in Contemporary Israel

10:30–10:45 | Coffee Break

10:45–12:15 | Panel 3: Christianity, Memory, and Political Responsibility

Chair: Yonathan Moss (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Barbara U. Meyer (Tel Aviv University)

The Politics of Christological Memory: Jesus after October 7

Munyurangabo Benda (Queen's Foundation)

Faith-Based Diplomacy: A Window of Opportunity for the Development of an African Political Theology

Maayan Raveh (University of Haifa)

Faith and History in Palestinian Christian Theology

Michael Azar (University of Scranton)

Political Theology in the Middle East: An Orthodox Christian Perspective

12:15–13:30 | Lunch Break

13:30–15:00 | Panel 4: Jewish Political Theologies and Religious Identity in Crisis

Chair: David Barak-Gorodetsky (University of Haifa)

Christoph Schmitt (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Towards a Critical Political Theology: The Perspective of Jewish Reform Theology

Netta Schramm (Ben Gurion University, Ben Zvi Institute)

Exile as a Theological Paradigm in Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Haredi Thought

Miriam Feldmann Kaye (Bar-Ilan University)

How Can Religion Be Part of the Solution? The Call Beyond Abrahamism and a Proposed Contemporary Interfaith Ethic

Shai Tagner (University of Haifa)

When Liberal Assumptions Fail: Faith-Based Paths to Dialogue

15:00–15:15 | Coffee Break

15:15–16:45 | Panel 5: Theological Imagination Between Conflict, Dialogue, and the State

Chair: Dennis Sharvit (Open University)

Meir Hatina (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

The Aesthetics of Sayyid Qutb's Puritan Theology

Odeya Schuz (Bar-Ilan University)

Religion and Politics in the Abraham Accords with Morocco

Elad Ben David (INSS–ISGAP)

Islamic Practical Theology in Post-October 7 America: The Case of Yasir Qadhi

Iqbal Akhtar (Florida International University)

Quietism and Nonviolence in Islamic Political Thought: Exploring Alternative Pathways to Peace in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

17:00–18:00 | Closing Roundtable:

The Role of Academia in Political Theology and Interreligious Dialogues (Open to the Public):

Chair: Ran Kuttner (University of Haifa)

Uriel Simonsohn (University of Haifa)

Dennis Sharvit (Open University)

Yonathan Moss (Hebrew University)

Miriam Feldmann Kaye (Bar Ilan University)

18:00–19:00 | Award Ceremony (Open to the Public)

Event: Public Recognition and Presentation of the Haifa Laboratory Prize for Interreligious Dialogue to H.B. Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

His Eminence Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa (Patriarch of Jerusalem)

Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana (Apostolic Nuncio to Israel)

Prof. Mouna Maroun (Rector, University of Haifa)

Prof. Uriel Simonsohn (Head of the Haifa Laboratory for Religious Studies)

Interludes:

Musical interludes will be performed by the Nyruz Music & Arts Ensemble.