

Trauma and Coping with Trauma in World Religions

Call for Outstanding Doctoral Candidates for the 2024-25 Academic Year

Trauma is defined as an event that is perceived as physically or psychologically threatening to a person or society, and which is accompanied by the experience of loss of control and helplessness. Religions provide a variety of tools and means for coping with personal and collective traumas, while empirical studies demonstrate that religious faith aids in recovering from traumatic events, both on the personal and on the collective level.

On the other hand, traumatic experiences may change religious views, the responsibilities of religious leaders, the resilience and functioning of religious communities, and even one's religious affiliation. Religious traditions and communities are shaped by traumatic events related to defeat in battle, conquest and exile, natural disasters, and forced religious conversion. Such events (e.g. the destruction of the Temple, the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, the Spanish colonization of the Inca, the Shoah, 9/11, the Yom Kippur War) had an impact on the explanation of sacred texts, theology, religious law, liturgy, rituals, religious creativity of all kinds, and the relation to the Other. On occasion, traumas gave birth or strengthened mystical currents and messianic movements or precipitated religious schisms.

In the academic year 2024-2025, the Center for Religious Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (CSoC) will focus on the coping with trauma among the world religions. We invite proposals from scholars researching any of the world religions or engaging in comparative religious studies in any of the following disciplines: anthropology, art, literature, conflict resolution religious studies, cultural studies, history, psychology, and sociology.

Proposals may deal with any of the following topics:

- Religious faith or practice and individual coping with personal or collective traumatic experience
- Clergy and religious leaders as agents of coping with trauma
- Religious communities and religious individuals facing trauma
- Religious conversion as a response to trauma
- Disasters and traumas in exegesis, theological literature, liturgy or religious rituals
- Religious law for situations of catastrophe and trauma
- Forgetting and re-membering trauma in religious contexts
- Revenge and reconciliation in religious faiths

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The supplemental scholarship will consist of 13,860 shekels (candidates must already be receiving a scholarship from within BGU). We offer a shared workspace in the Center's offices, an affiliation with a vibrant group of scholars, and intellectual and social support from peers and senior researchers.

Fellows will be required to conduct their research on the Marcus campus in Be'er Sheva at least once a week, attend weekly seminars and reading groups (Tuesdays 12:00-14:00), participate in CSoC's book launches, annual conference and excursion, and writing workshop. They will be expected to present their work to other members, and to fulfill an active role in planning the Center's various activities for the year, even before the start of the academic year.

Conditions for applying: Doctoral studies in the faculty of humanities and social sciences at BGU, from the first year (provided that the research proposal is approved) until the end of the fourth year.

To apply, please send an email in Hebrew or English to CSoC's administrative manager, Ms. Raya Even David rayaed@bgu.ac.il:

- A personal application letter (up to 300 words), explaining why the candidate is requesting to participate in the research group and what his or her contribution may be.
- Updated CV and a full list of publications
- Grade Sheet
- Two recommendations, one of them from your PhD supervisor.

For more information on CSoC, see our [website](#), [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) pages.

Application deadline: 25 March 2024.

Applicants chosen will receive a response during April 2024.

Questions and inquiries can be directed to Prof. Talmon-Heller: talmond@bgu.ac.il

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