



BERKELEY INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH LAW AND ISRAEL STUDIES

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THE 2015-2016 ROBBINS COLLECTION LECTURE IN JEWISH LAW AND THOUGHT

JEWISH SCHOLARS AND THE STUDY OF ISLAM: REFLECTIONS ON MODERN JEWISH IDENTITY

TUESDAY

APRIL

12



Prof. Susannah Heschel

Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies,
Dartmouth College

TIME Reception: 5:15 pm; Lecture: 6 pm

PLACE Bancroft Hotel, 2680 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

RSVP Here or email us at berkeley_institute@law.berkeley.edu

Susannah Heschel will discuss how the culture of imperialism in nineteenth-century Europe affected the writing of Jewish history. She will examine the topics and methods of Jewish historians and theologians with particular attention to their description of Judaism's role within Western civilization. Narratives of Islamic origins and specialized studies comparing the Qur'an with rabbinic texts parallel Jewish historiography on Christianity, and both contain implicit political connotations. The growth of German imperialism and colonialism brought about shifts in the study of religion, and the role of Jews in those projects. Prof. Heschel concludes that Jews created a unique European orientalism that reflects not only their fascination with Islam, but also gives us a nuanced window into Jewish ambivalence toward their projects of assimilation, emancipation, and the creation of a modern Jewish identity.

Susannah Heschel is the Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College and the author of numerous books and articles, including *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, and *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*. She is the editor of *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, and *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays of Abraham Joshua Heschel*. Prof. Heschel is the recipient of four honorary doctorates, and she has held grants from the Carnegie Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and a fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. She is currently on a Guggenheim fellowship and is writing a book on the history of Jewish scholarship on Islam, from which her paper today is drawn.

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