



Press Release

Theologians initiate discussion on "The Feminine within Islam"

Joint Research Project to establish worldwide network for female scholars

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The Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Tübingen and Georgetown University in Qatar have announced a joint research project on "women in Islam". The project "Exploring the Feminine within Islam" aims to establish an international network of female researchers and encourage ongoing theological discussion. This topic will also be introduced as an inherent part of the theological curriculum. The project will be supported in 2019 by the "Hochschuldialog mit der Islamischen Welt" program of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Federal Foreign Office.

Although progress is being made in academic discourse on "Islam and Gender", especially in sociology and anthropology, a theological debate on "the feminine within Islam" is still in its infancy. "In view of our troubled international world, it is more important than ever that Muslim women remain not only a subject of ongoing discussions on women in Islam," says project manager Lejla Demiri, Professor of Islamic Doctrine at the University of Tübingen. "Rather, as theologians they should engage in, and contribute to, important conversations on gender and religion."

With this project, the Center for Islamic Theology (ZITH) and Georgetown University in Qatar want to bring together female scholars from many countries to explore "the feminine within Islam" in research and teaching. The project includes plans to invite female researchers from Muslim majority countries to Tübingen for a round table conference. Approximately 30 female scholars of Islamic theology and related subjects will engage in intra-religious dialog in a network coordinated from Tübingen and Qatar. As the project develops, it is intended that these researchers network with other theologians.

The project is supported and co-developed by the Researcher Alumni Network of the University of Tübingen and is part of the university-wide internationalization strategy. Researchers, students and alumni will be invited to grow the network in participating countries, including Morocco, Lebanon and Iran.

The aim is to encourage academic exchange and the mutual advancement of female researchers for teaching activities, initially between Tübingen and Qatar. In the long term, the project will establish mentoring structures at different career levels to promote junior researchers and include them in the discourse as equal partners. "In the long run, we want to give a voice to women who are serious about improving their world(s) through their work, activism and service to humanity," says Sohaira Siddiqui, a professor of theology at Georgetown University in Qatar. "We hope that our project will benefit not only the participants in the discourse, but also the societies in which we live."

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Further information:

>Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Tübingen:

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/zentrum-fuer-islamische-theologie/zentrum/>

>Georgetown University in Qatar: <https://www.qatar.georgetown.edu/>

>Tübingen Research Alumni Network TRACe: www.uni-tuebingen.de/trace

>DAAD program "Hochschuldialog mit der islamischen Welt"

[": https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/programme-regional/arabischer-raum/de/12825-hochschuldialog-mit-der-islamischen-welt-informationen-zum-programm/](https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/programme-regional/arabischer-raum/de/12825-hochschuldialog-mit-der-islamischen-welt-informationen-zum-programm/)