

Presented by Kehillat Israel Reconstructionist Congregation of Pacific Palisades

# Understanding Islam

Wednesdays 7:00–9:00pm

Feb. 2 & 16  
Mar. 16 & 23, 2011



**Join Us** for an unprecedented opportunity to study with and learn from world-class scholars and experts on Islam. Deepen your understanding of Islam, its historical relationship with Judaism, and what each should know about the other. Participants will take on complex and sometimes difficult issues head-on, honestly and with integrity, and without attempting to be “politically correct” from the perspective of either Islam or Judaism.

## the series of lectures will include:

### Session 1 History and Context

Dr. Reuven Firestone will speak on the history of Islam, the monotheism “family tree,” and historical Muslim-Jewish relations.

### Session 2 Basic Islam

Dr. Amir Hussain will discuss the Qur’an, the Shari’a, Islamic thought, and the Five Pillars of Islam.

### Session 3 Women and Islam

Dr. Mehnaz Afridi will explore the role of women, prayer, women’s spirituality, and Sufism.

### Session 4 The Contemporary Scene

Dr. Reuven Firestone will talk about political issues and Jewish-Islamic relationships, the concept of Jihad, and where we are today and what we can do about it.

## presenters:

**Rabbi Dr. Reuven Firestone** is Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, L.A., Senior Fellow of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California, and founder and co-director of the Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement in Los Angeles. Author of seven books and over eighty scholarly articles on Islam, its relationship with Judaism and Christianity, and phenomenology of religion, Rabbi Firestone has lived in Israel and Egypt and lectured worldwide. He received his Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from NYU.

**Dr. Amir Hussain** is Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where he teaches courses on world religions. His specialty is the study of Islam, focusing on contemporary Muslim societies in North America. For 2011 to 2015, Dr. Hussain has been appointed as the editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (AAR), the premier scholarly journal for the study of religion, and also serves as co-chair of the AAR’s Contemporary Islam group. He is the editor for the third edition of *World Religions: Western Traditions*, a textbook published by Oxford University Press in 2010.

**Dr. Mehnaz M. Afridi** is a Professor of Religious Studies. She has a deep interest in Judaism and the modern Jewish diaspora, and secular Islamic identity. She taught in Rome and participated in a seminar sponsored by the National Endowment of Humanities on “Jews, and Italian Culture” in Venice, Italy. Her current book project is: *Shoah through Muslim Eyes*. Dr. Afridi is an activist for woman’s rights and interfaith dialogue, and is currently teaching Islam and Judaism, Cultural Diversity, Genocide Studies and Humanities at Antioch University.

## fees & registration:

Congregants—FREE

Non-congregants—\$45/series or \$15/session

Please RSVP online at [www.kehillatrael.org](http://www.kehillatrael.org).

For more information contact Eleanor at 424.214.7461  
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KEHILLAT ISRAEL RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATION OF PACIFIC PALISADES

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(underground parking only -- enter parking lot on Muskingum)