

New Leadership for the JCI



In 2015 Dr. George Yaakov Kohler assumed the directorship of the Joseph Carlebach Institute for Research into Religious Jewish Thought in Germany. Dr. Kohler, a native of Leipzig, Germany, completed his

Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Frankfurt, with a BA in Public Relations and Business Communication from Berlin College of Arts, an MA and a PhD in Jewish Thought from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He was a lecturer of Jewish Thought at his alma mater, and a guest lecturer at the Papal Lateran University in Rome, until joining the BIU Faculty of Jewish Studies in 2012, where he is currently a senior lecturer at the Department of Jewish Philosophy.

Dr. Kohler was awarded the Rotenstreich Fellowship, the Grunewald Prize of Leo Baeck Institute, and the Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives Fellowship. The author of a number of books, his research interests include theology, philosophy of religion, 17th century and early modern philosophy, 19th-century German philosophy, Jewish-Christian relations, early modern intellectual history, and modern Jewish thought.

"It is my vision to develop the Carlebach Institute into a modern research institution that explores the largely untrodden field of Jewish theology, and the academic approach to Judaism as a religion, in the spirit of Rabbi Joseph Carlebach."

Dr. George Yaakov Kohler



The Legacy of Rabbi Joseph Carlebach

Founded almost a quarter century ago, the Joseph Carlebach Institute for Research into Religious Jewish Thought in Germany was established at Bar-Ilan University in

memory of Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph Carlebach, one of the leaders of German and European Jewry before and during the Holocaust. Rabbi Carlebach, who was a noted Torah scholar, mathematician, educator, natural scientist, philosopher, orator, and art expert, fully embodied in his life and his works, the philosophy of Torah and science.

The JCI has won international acclaim for its interdisciplinary research projects, publications, and community activities in the field of Jewish education and community life. The JCI maintains close cooperative relationship with the University of Hamburg, especially with its Joseph Carlebach Workgroup, as well as with its Institute for the History of the German Jews.



Prof. (Emeritus) Miriam Gillis-Carlebach

The Institute's founder and immediate past Director is Prof. (Emeritus) Miriam Gillis-Carlebach from the Bar-Ilan University School of Education.

The daughter of the late Rabbi Carlebach, she established the JCI in commemoration of and to preserve the invaluable teachings of her father, who perished in the Holocaust along with his wife and three of his daughters. Prof. Gillis-Carlebach is still an active and highly respected member of the team, inspiring the work of the Institute with her passion, knowledge and persona.

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The Joseph Carlebach Institute

for Research into Religious Jewish Thought in Germany



Bar-Ilan University

Our Vision

The Joseph Carlebach Institute for Research into Religious Jewish Thought in Germany (JCI) explores the rich heritage of modern German Jewish philosophy from the perspective of Religion – an aspect that has been largely overlooked over the years. The Institute studies complex religious controversies which have been the subject of great debate and discussion over the past decades – assimilation and acculturation within German Jewry, the complex role of German rabbis during the Holocaust, and more. The Carlebach Institute envisions broadening its scope to encompass a subject that has escaped systematic investigation: the scientific study of Judaism as a religion. The JCI brings this vision to fruition by hosting, accompanying and supporting students and scholars from around the world in their quest to study these multifaceted and challenging subjects.



Our Activities

Research, Publications and Conferences

- Hosting researchers from Israel and abroad in their work on subjects related to the agenda of the JCI and its archive
- Organizing conferences and seminars on German Jewish thought in cooperation with other universities and institutes
- Maintaining our own series of publications (“Ora”) devoted to translating important works on German Jewish thought into Hebrew
- Re-publishing the works of Joseph Carlebach in their original German form and in Hebrew translation
- Expanding, categorizing and digitizing the extensive Carlebach family archive which has been built up over the years
- Continuously expanding the large German language library at the JCI

Education and Training

- Organizing special programs in Israel for German students interested in the subjects explored by the JCI
- Supporting academic exchange on subjects related to German Jewish thought by holding seminars, workshops and lectures
- Building partnerships and joint research projects with other international institutions of Jewish studies

Research: New Directions

Since its establishment in 1992, the JCI has embraced a research agenda which focused primarily on the life and works of Rabbi Dr. Joseph Carlebach (1883-1942), an eminent scholar of Judaism and chief rabbi of Hamburg.

Having already made significant contributions in these areas, the JCI is ready and poised to take on new research challenges, and plans to broaden its research agenda to include such areas as:

- The scientific study of the Jewish religion: methodology of a modern theology for Judaism
- The different roles rabbis played during the Holocaust: theological and ethical questions
- Life and works of the wider Carlebach family in Germany, Israel and the US: research in the Institute’s large Carlebach archive

Rabbi Joseph Carlebach