

10 December 2018  
2 Tevet 5779  
Jerusalem

**"There Was None Like Moses"**  
**Exhibition and International Maimonides Conference at the National Library of Israel**  
**December 11-13, 2018**

**Former Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak to open conference, which will include leading scholars and intellectuals from Israel and abroad: Prof. Moshe Halbertal, Prof. Leora Batnitzky, Dr. Meir Buzaglo, Dr. Micah Goodman, Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, Prof. Sari Nusseibeh, and others**

Probably no other thinker has contributed more to the Jewish world than Maimonides. The contribution and influence of the 12th century leader and intellectual is evident to this day in the fields of science, medicine, nutrition, ethics, philosophy and, of course, religion and Jewish law.

Now (December 11-13, 2018), a significant and singular initiative, envisioned and sponsored by the Maimonides Fund, will bring together two of Israel's leading cultural institutions – the Israel Museum and the National Library of Israel – for a first-of-its-kind collaboration. Two exhibitions – one at each institution – will open simultaneously, showcasing some of the world's rarest and most important Maimonidean texts. In addition, the National Library will hold an international conference on Maimonidean philosophy, with leading scholars and thinkers from Israel and abroad participating. The exhibitions and conference will all take place under the title "There Was None Like Moses".

The conference will include discussions on relevant and current issues in Israeli society – areas that Maimonides himself dealt with and wrote about. This conference will be opened by former President of the Supreme Court of Israel **Aharon Barak**, who will discuss Maimonides' legal doctrine and the inherent tension between civil law and Jewish law. **Prof. Moshe Halbertal** of the Hebrew University will respond.

Other topics to be discussed will include the relationship between religion and state (with **Dr. Meir Buzaglo** and **Dr. Micah Goodman**); philosophy and ethics in the Muslim world (with **Prof. Sari Nusseibeh** and **Prof. Sarah Stroumsa**); the revealed and the hidden in *The Guide for the Perplexed* (with **Prof. Shalom Rosenberg** and **Prof. Zeev Harvey**) and more.

The exhibitions at the National Library and the Israel Museum will display a number of original and illustrated manuscripts together for the first time, including items written in France, Germany, Yemen, Spain, Egypt and more. Among the items that will be displayed in the National Library are the first edition of Maimonides' commentary on the Mishna, a Spanish adaptation of Sefer HaMitzvot for Jews forcibly converted to Christianity who fled to Amsterdam, a rare amulet with an image of Maimonides, a variety of historical children's books on Maimonides, and more.

A new National Library website will also go live, which is devoted to the fascinating life story and journeys of Maimonides and his family - from Spain to Morocco, Egypt and Israel, also relating to how he was received in various places and Jewish communities.

The mission of this special initiative, sponsored by the **Maimonides Fund** and including both exhibitions and the conference, is to re-introduce Maimonides to the public and deepen the knowledge about him and his relevance to history, science and Jewish practice to this day. The **Maimonides Fund** is a philanthropic foundation that funds projects in North America and Israel.

According to **David Blumberg**, chairman of the National Library of Israel Board of Directors, contemporary discussions around Maimonides – one of the most important personalities and leaders in Judaism and in general – is relevant today not only in the fields of science and medicine, but also in his approach to Jewish law, philosophy and ethics. "Maimonides continues to influence Jewish and Israeli public life and thought, perhaps because everyone can find his or her own reflection in him: Jewish scholars

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find in him a man of Jewish law, secular intellectuals view him as a critical philosopher, and adherents to the Chabad movement believe in his political messianism. In effect, Maimonides continues to be relevant in almost every area of Jewish discourse because of his tremendous achievements in philosophy and theology, in medicine and science, in Talmud and Jewish law, and even in politics," says Blumberg.

**"There Was None Like Moses" - Entrance to the exhibition at the National Library of Israel and participation in the Maimonides conference is free of charge.**

**Please visit the National Library of Israel website for more information: [www.nli.org.il](http://www.nli.org.il).**

## **The National Library of Israel and the Jewish People Worldwide**

Founded in Jerusalem in 1892, the National Library of Israel (NLI) serves as the collective memory of the Jewish people worldwide and Israelis of all backgrounds and faiths. While continuing to serve as Israel's pre-eminent research library, NLI has recently embarked upon an ambitious journey of renewal to encourage diverse audiences in Israel and around the globe to engage with its treasures in new and meaningful ways. This is taking place through a range of innovative educational, cultural and digital initiatives, as well as through the construction of a new landmark complex designed by Herzog and de Meuron. The new NLI campus, currently under construction adjacent to the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) in Jerusalem, is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

## **Unparalleled Cultural and Historic Treasures**

The National Library has four core collections: Israel, Judaica, Islam and Middle East, and the Humanities. Its collections tell the historical, cultural and intellectual story of the Jewish people, the State of Israel, and the Land of Israel and its region throughout the ages. Highlights include significant handwritten works by luminaries such as Maimonides and Sir Isaac Newton, exquisite Islamic manuscripts dating back to the ninth century and personal archives of leading cultural and intellectual figures including Martin Buber, Natan Sharansky and Naomi Shemer. The National Library holds the largest collection of Jewish and Israeli music, as well as world-class collections of manuscripts, ancient maps, rare books, photographs, communal and personal archival materials, and more.

## **The New International Landmark, a Beacon of Pride**



In 2021, the new National Library of Israel building, designed by renowned Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron, will open its doors. Adjacent to the Knesset in Jerusalem's National District, the building and its surrounding gardens and plazas will reflect the central values of democratizing knowledge and opening the National Library's world-class collections and resources to as broad and diverse an audience as possible. Within its 45,000 square meters (480,000 sq. ft.) of space, it will provide venues for exhibitions, as well as cultural and educational programming in a secure, sustainable and state-of-the-art environment. Partners in the building renewal project are led by the Government of Israel, the Rothschild Family through the auspices of Yad Hanadiv, and the David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman Family of New York.