

International Conference

Exiting Violence: the role of religion. From Texts to theories

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Religious revivalism and the limits of interpretation

Assaf Sharon, Tel Aviv University

With the gods once again afoot in the public square, some liberals are advocating renewed engagement with religion as the antidote to religious revivalism. The way to counter revivalist movements and their militant, intolerant, illiberal, and often violent manifestations, it is argued, is by devising liberal and egalitarian interpretations of religious texts and traditions. Examining the case of Jewish nationalism, I will argue that this is a misconception of both the impetus and the aims of religious revivalism. Rather than provide a recipe for confronting it, the interpretationist approach risks inadvertently bolstering religious nationalism.