



## Call for Papers

### Illness, Health, and Healing among Jewish Communities in the Lands of Islam

November 4-5, 2026

The Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East  
Jerusalem



Avicenna [Ibn Sīnā], Canon, Book III, Hebrew manuscript, fourteenth century. London, The British Library, MS 11668, fol. 3v. Credit: From the collections of The British Library; accessed via Ktiv, National Library of Israel

The annual conference of the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East will be dedicated to the theme of *Illness, Health, and Healing among Jewish Communities in the Lands of Islam*. The conference seeks to explore these issues from the late seventh century to the present day, focusing on Jewish communities from Afghanistan in the east to Morocco in the west, including the Land of Israel, Iran, the Ottoman Empire and its successor states, as well as Jewish immigrant communities originating in the lands of Islam outside Israel.

The conference aims to discuss the sick body, healers and patients, institutions and communities, written and popular medical traditions, healing practices, medicines and objects, the transmission of knowledge between Jewish communities and local Muslim and Christian communities, and the reciprocal relations between Jews and their surrounding environments.





We invite scholars to submit papers and panels on the following topics, as well as on other relevant subjects:

- Folk medicine and institutional medicine: women and men engaged in medicine, pharmacy, midwifery, traditional/folk and religious healing
- Sites of healing and recovery: the home, the clinic, the market stall, the bathhouse, the hospital, and more
- Diseases of body and mind, disability, chronic illness, and health throughout the life cycle: fertility, birth, old age
- Transfers of medical knowledge and practices between Jewish communities and their social and cultural surroundings, and between geographical regions
- Health and interreligious encounters
- Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian medicine, sources from the Cairo Geniza and beyond
- Saints, graves, amulets, charms, prayer, ritual, and healing
- Halakhah, medical ethics, and charity
- Material culture and medical technology: practices, rituals, and texts; medicines, amulets, medicinal herbs, instruments, and medical tools; medicinal substances, their use and trade
- Epidemics, climate, environment, and their relation to medicine and illness
- Migration, , absorption, and medicine in Israel
- The body as a site of identity: issues of gender, ethnicity, and class
- Between medicine and folk/traditional medicine in the lands of Islam and in the State of Israel

We are pleased to invite scholars to submit proposals for the conference. Proposals may be submitted in Hebrew or English, either as individual papers or as thematic panels of three to four papers, via this [link](#) by **June 14, 2026**.

Sincerely,

**The Organizing Committee**

Prof. Reuven Amitai, Director of the Ben-Zvi Institute

Dr. Netta Schramm, Deputy Director of the Ben-Zvi Institute

Dr. Yamit Rachman-Schrire, Projects Coordinator

**Steering Committee**

Prof. Naama Cohen-Hanegbi, Tel Aviv University

Prof. Zohar Amar, Bar-Ilan University

Dr. Leigh Chipman, Independent Scholar

Prof. Miri Shefer Mossensohn, Tel Aviv University

