


IN MEMORIAM

Professor Daniel Tsadik: Obituary

David Yeroushalmi¹ and Lior Sternfeld² 

¹Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel and ²The Pennsylvania State University College of the Liberal Arts, University Park, University Park, United States

Corresponding author: Lior Sternfeld; Email: lbs18@psu.edu

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The untimely and abrupt death of Professor Daniel Tsadik at age 54 on November 17, 2023, shocked and deeply saddened his loved ones and his many colleagues, friends, and students. His death was caused by complications resulting from a pulmonary ailment that had been diagnosed just two months earlier. He was laid to rest in Sanhedria Cemetery in Jerusalem on November 18.

An internationally acknowledged and respected scholar, teacher, and lecturer, Professor Tsadik's academic activities and research over a period of nearly three decades encompassed a broad spectrum of areas and topics that, although wide-ranging, were nonetheless closely related and complementary. His extensive body of research and his dedicated teaching career, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, as well as his long list of academic activities and publications, were centered around four themes: the history of Jews in Islamic lands and in Iran in particular; the history of modern Iran; Shi'i Islam and its law and tradition; and Iran's religious minorities.

A former tenured associate professor of Sephardic and Iranian Studies at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University (2014–2020), Daniel Tsadik was born in Jerusalem in the winter of 1969. His parents, both of whom were born and raised in the Jewish community of Isfahan (in the quarter of Golbahar), had immigrated to Israel and settled in Jerusalem shortly before Daniel's birth. Following his primary and secondary education in schools affiliated with the Jewish national religious educational system, he began his undergraduate studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1992. Double majoring in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies and the Department of Jewish Thought, he completed his bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, in 1994. Following two years of master's degree studies in an individually designed program in Islamic and Iranian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, from 1996 to 2002 he pursued his MA and PhD studies in the Department of History at Yale University. His doctoral dissertation, entitled "Foreign Intervention, Majority and Minority: The Status of the Jews during the Latter Part of Nineteenth Century Iran," was conducted under the supervision and guidance of Professors Abbas Amanat and Paula Hyman and completed in 2002. In this detailed and insightful dissertation, Tsadik drew on a large corpus of previously unknown or little-examined primary and archival sources, throwing light on the history and, by and large, the marginalized and vulnerable condition of Iranian Jews during the second half of the nineteenth century and earlier. This dissertation was later revised and published by Stanford University Press under the title *Between Foreigners and Shi'is: Nineteenth-Century Iran and its Jewish Minority*. The book constituted a major paradigm shift in the study of modern Iranian Jewish history. *Between Foreigners and Shi'is* placed Iranian

Jews in the broader context of the Iranian sociopolitical order and culture and paved the way for further research and writing on Iranian Jews during the premodern and early modern periods.

Following the completion of his PhD dissertation at Yale, between 2002 and 2007, Tsadik was engaged in research and academic projects as a postdoctoral scholar at Tel Aviv University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Institute for Advanced Studies (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin, and at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. In light of his qualifications and proven academic and teaching record he was appointed and served as assistant professor of Sephardic and Iranian studies at Yeshiva University (2008–2011). In June 2014, he was promoted to the rank of tenured associate professor of Sephardic and Iranian studies at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University. He served in that position until May 2020, when, after a long and difficult period of doubts and dilemma, he decided to give up his position at Yeshiva University and return to Israel with his family. Upon his relocation to Jerusalem, Professor Tsadik continued his research and teaching activities in a number of educational and academic institutions. Chief among the latter was the Achva Academic College located in southern Israel, where he taught and supervised a large group of undergraduate and graduate students until shortly before his death.

In the course of his work at Yeshiva University, Professor Tsadik was engaged in a pioneering and large-scale study of the religious and sacred works and writings of Iranian Jewish rabbis and learned individuals in premodern Iran. The results of this long and painstaking project, which involved the collection and careful analysis of hundreds of dispersed Hebrew, Judeo-Persian, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts and printed sources, were published in the Hebrew language in 2019 in a work entitled *The Jews of Iran and Rabbinic Literature: New Perspectives*, published by Harav Kook Institute in Jerusalem. This innovative book fills a major gap in our previous knowledge and understanding of the nature and depth of rabbinic scholarship and creativity among Iranian Jews.

Hand in hand with the publication of this comprehensive work of more than 570 pages, Professor Tsadik coedited and published with Aaron Koller, his Yeshiva University colleague, a volume of fifteen articles by scholars in the fields of Iranian studies and Jewish history. Entitled *Iran, Israel and the Jews: Symbiosis and Conflict from the Achaemenids to the Islamic Republic* (Wipf and Stock, 2019). The book explores the centuries-old history and manifestations of contacts and relationships between the Jewish and Iranian peoples. Tsadik also published over twenty peer-reviewed articles related to diverse aspects of the history, society, community, and religious lives of Iranian Jews in the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. In addition to this body of characteristically meticulous and systematic articles, his contributions included several survey articles, chapters in edited volumes, book reviews, and encyclopedia entries. His prolific publication record earned him the recognition of several scholarly and public establishments in Europe, North America, and Israel. Among the noteworthy awards and prizes he received were those from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the Iranian Jewish Cultural Organization of California. Notably, he was awarded the Israel Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literary Works for his contribution to the study of the rabbinic literature of Iranian Jews in 2019.

Daniel Tsadik's character and gentle, genuinely modest, and generous nature left a community of friends, colleagues, and community members grieved and mourning. He is survived by his mother, Homayoun, his sisters, and his loving wife and companion, Moria, and four young children, the oldest of whom is only 12. He will be dearly missed. May his soul be bound with the bundle of life. תנצב"ה