

**PROGRAMME OF  
TEYLERS THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
IN HAARLEM  
FOR THE YEAR 2019**

THE DIRECTORS OF TEYLERS STICHTING (TEYLER'S FOUNDATION) AND THE MEMBERS OF TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP (TEYLER'S THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY) invite submissions for their essay competition. Deadline: May 1, 2022

**Subject: The reception by Muslims in the Netherlands of ideals that were inspired by the Enlightenment.**

*Further information*

The focus on Muslims in the Netherlands has mainly been concentrated on Salafist expressions of Islam, although only a small minority of Dutch Muslims adhere to Salafism. This has resulted in a one-sided picture of Islam in the Netherlands, in which the views and visions of the Muslim majority have been ignored. This is all the more unfortunate given the fact that an increasing number of Muslims in the Netherlands belong to the social middle class. There are increasingly more highly educated Muslims and Muslims who are well-known Dutch citizens. Dutch Muslims work as Lord Mayor, alderman/alderwoman, politician, businessman or businesswoman, scientist, author, stand-up comedian, pop artist, pastoral worker, top football player, and what have you. However, very little to no attention at all has been paid to the question of what practical interpretation they give to Islam as a system of meaning and what meaning and role they assign to Islam in their daily lives in the Netherlands.

It is true that Marjo Buitelaar in her book *Van huis uit Marokkaans. Verweven loyaliteiten van hoogopgeleide migrantendochters* [Moroccan by Birth. Interlinking Loyalties of Migrants' Daughters] (2009) has studied "what they have done with their parents' cultural and religious heritage" and that Forum, the former institute for multicultural development commissioned research into the development of young Muslims in the field of identity, lifestyle, religious beliefs, and participation in Dutch society, published in three explorations, entitled *Van Allah tot Prada* [From Allah to Prada] (2006), *Van vasten tot feesten* [From Fasting to Feasting] (2007), and *Geloof en geluk* [Faith and Happiness] (2008). However, these initiatives have only partly provided insight into the religious beliefs of Muslims in the Netherlands. Even publications by Muslim authors themselves, for instance, Abdulwahid van Bommel, who wrote *Wankele waarden* [Fragile Values] (2003) and the three-volume *Islam en de rechten van vrouwen* [Islam and the Rights of Women] (2005), and Mohamed Ajouaou's *De moslim die ik ben*

[The Muslim I Am] 2006) and *Wie is moslim?* [Who is Muslim?] (2014) do not entirely fill this gap.

This essay contest is aimed to increase the knowledge of and insight into these religious beliefs – as a follow-up to last year’s essay contest, ‘Enlightenments – Religion 2018 – 2028’ (see: <http://www.teylersstichting.nl/PrijsvraagTGG2018.pdf>) – by requesting an essay on the reception by Dutch Muslims of ideals that emerged from the Enlightenment. It is generally accepted that, since the failure of the ‘Mu‘tazilite experiment’ in the 8th century and the ‘Salafist turn’ of Islamic Modernism at the beginning of the 20th century, the majority of Muslims have professed the primacy of faith over reason. As a result, Muslims were considered not to be open to Enlightenment ideals, since these ideals are based on the primacy of reason. Can this argument be maintained if reason and faith are not primarily set against each other? Might a more nuanced picture be obtained of the religious beliefs of the majority of Muslims if research were to zoom in on the question of how Muslims think about and deal with a number of Enlightenment ideals without contrasting them with faith? Interesting ideals would include equality and freedom of religion, (religious) tolerance and (social) justice, human rights in general, the separation of church and state, and the emancipation of the individual. What do Muslims in the Netherlands think about these ideals? What, in their opinion, would accepting such ideals mean for their perception and practice of Islam? Is there a difference in the opinions of men and women in this context?

The directors of Teyler’s Foundation and the members of Teyler’s Theological Society hope for an essay that, by exploring the answers to the above questions, can provide a picture of the perception and practice of Islam by the Muslim majority in the Netherlands, a picture that is more nuanced than the one that has been painted so far owing to the one-sided focus on Salafism. The essay may be written from an anthropological or sociological perspective, but may also be based on historical research, for instance, on sermons and *fatwas*, or may use a combination of research methods.

Last but not least: the essay should be written in a style and format that makes it accessible to a wider interested audience, such as visitors to the Teylers Museum and mature (‘lifelong learning’) students.

*Entries should consist of either one extended study, in the form of a text prepared for publication, or of several publications, most of which should have appeared in the three years prior to May 1, 2022. In the latter case, entrants should also submit a hitherto unpublished text, written especially for the competition, in which the earlier publications are placed in a broader academic context.*

## *General Information*

Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (Haarlem, 1702-1778) was a Dutch merchant. In his will, he stipulated the founding of an important museum together with Teylers Stichting (Teyler's Foundation). Part of this Foundation are two learned societies, each of which presents a yearly essay competition. Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap (Teyler's Theological Society) is one of these learned societies. It organizes essay competitions in the field of theology, philosophy of religion and religious studies.

## *Procedure*

- In order to qualify for the competition, candidates should submit four copies of their entry to the Directors of Teylers Stichting, Spaarne 16, 2011 CH Haarlem, The Netherlands, before May 1, 2022. Entries received after that date will not be taken into consideration.
- The essays must be in English, French, German or Dutch. Because of the stipulations of Pieter Teyler's will, the essays may not mention the author's name but should be identified only by a motto. The entry should be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the author's name and address, with the motto on the outside.
- To avoid a long wait before hearing the result of the evaluation, in case an award has not been made, authors are requested to send together with the sealed envelope an open envelope containing the name and full address of a person with whom the Directors of Teylers Stichting may enter into correspondence confidentially.

## *Evaluation*

- The evaluation will be carried out by the members of Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap (Professor M. Barnard, Professor H.L. Beck, Professor E. Jorink, Professor A.B. Merz, Professor M. Popović, Professor E.G.E. van der Wall, vacancy).
- The evaluation will be communicated within seven months from the final date of submission in the form of a recommendation to the Directors of Teylers Stichting, who will decide within one month whether or not to give an award.
- This decision is final.
- All candidates will be notified by the Directors as soon as a decision has been made.

## *Award*

- The award consists of a gold medal struck from the seal of the Godgeleerd Genootschap.
- In addition, a foundation that does not wish to be publicly identified will grant the sum of € 4500 to the author or authors of the winning entries to use as they see fit.
- The medal will be awarded to the winner(s) at a special ceremony in the Teylers Museum in Haarlem.
- Professional journals and the press as well as other interested persons and institutions will be informed of the award ceremony well in advance.

### *Publication*

The authors themselves will arrange for publication of their work, mentioning that it has received an award from Teylers Stichting. If desired, Teylers Stichting and its theological society may consider lending assistance.

Editors of websites, scientific journals as well as other bodies wishing to draw the attention of their readers to the essay competition, are urged to advise interested candidates to consult the program for full details.

*The programme of Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap is available free of charge on request from the Directors of Teylers Stichting, Spaarne 16, 2011 CH Haarlem, The Netherlands, or can be consulted at [www.teylersmuseum.nl/en](http://www.teylersmuseum.nl/en) en [www.teylersstichting.nl](http://www.teylersstichting.nl)*