

## **Episode 20: Andreas Nachama, Sally Azar, Ufuk Topkara: Jerusalem in Judaism, Christianity and Islam**

**Guests:** Rabbi Prof. Dr. Andreas Nachama (FU Berlin) / Pastor Sally Azar (Jerusalem) / Prof. Dr. Ufuk Topkara (HU Berlin)

**Hosts:** Alexandria & Mert

**Rabbi Prof. Dr. Andreas Nachama** is a renowned historian, author, and rabbi and the former director of the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin, former chairman of the Jewish Community of Berlin and former Board member of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The son of a Holocaust survivor was the head of the General Rabbinical Conference in Germany from 2019-2023 and President and since 2016 he has served as the Jewish Chair of Germany's Coordination Council for Christian-Jewish Societies (GCJZ). He is the Co-founder of the House of One, the first shared house of prayer and learning for Jews, Christians and Muslims in the World. He was awarded the Moses Mendelssohn Medal in 2019.

**Pastor Sally Azar** is a Palestinian Christian who was born in Jerusalem. She is the first female Palestinian pastor in the Holy Land, serving the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. She leads the English- and Arabic-speaking congregation at the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem and is engaged in interreligious dialogue. She is a member of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation and the Board of the ACT Alliance.

**Prof. Dr. Ufuk Topkara** is a Junior Professor of Comparative Theology at the Berlin Institute for Islamic Theology, Humboldt University. He studied History and Philosophy at the Humboldt University Berlin and in Harvard. He is a postdoctoral researcher in the Humility & Conviction in Public Life Program at the University of Connecticut and Fellow at the Virginia Center for the Study of Religion, University of Virginia. He was a former visiting scholar at UCLA and at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

**In this episode:** In this episode, we take an in-depth look at Jerusalem, a city of profound religious, historical, and political significance for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Our guests discuss the city's sacred origins, its depiction in religious texts, and how its meaning has evolved through centuries of conquest, diaspora, and pilgrimage. The conversation also explores Jerusalem's contemporary role in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, including eschatological visions and opportunities for interfaith dialogue. Through personal reflections, the guests share how Jerusalem shapes faith, identity, and approaches to conflict resolution. Listeners will gain a nuanced understanding of the city from multiple religious perspectives and discover how it can be a place of connection, dialogue, and hope rather than division.

**Links:**

Rabbi Prof. Dr. Andreas Nachama: <https://nachama.de/rabbiner-andreas-nachama> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

House of One: <https://house-of-one.org/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Pastor Sally Azar: <https://chrismon.de/artikel/56949/was-macht-palaestinensern-hoffnung-pfarrer-in-sally-azar-weiss-es> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Prof. Dr. Ufuk Topkara: [https://www.islamische-theologie.hu-berlin.de/de/ueber-uns/copy\\_of\\_mitarbeitende-des-bit/1693201](https://www.islamische-theologie.hu-berlin.de/de/ueber-uns/copy_of_mitarbeitende-des-bit/1693201) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Dedication:**

*We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed and injured in Gaza and their grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.*

*To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeris Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.*

**Disclaimer:**

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.

**Legal & Historical Anchor Episodes:**

This podcast may include controversial legal terms of specific technical significance. Their legal applicability requires a thorough expert contextualization; for this, we refer to our legal chapter. All relevant terms of international law, its institutions, current controversies, and the state of jurisprudence are explained in the anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß LL.M. (Cambridge) (Episode 36). He is co-author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court, and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia vs. Myanmar genocide case.

Historical matters are discussed from multiple perspectives in this podcast. Please check the cross-references in the shownotes of the respective episodes for details. All historically contested issues are addressed in the history anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer (Episode 21), author of the comprehensive work *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton 2008), a standard reference in the field. For her scholarly achievements as a historian, she was awarded the *Preis des Historischen Kollegs* in 2025, the highest distinction in her discipline in Germany.