

BOSTON COLLEGE  
Center for Christian-Jewish Learning  
2019 Corcoran Chair Conference

# MERCIFUL GOD, PUNITIVE GOD

*Interdisciplinary Reflection on Scriptural Warrants  
in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*

April 7-8, 2019

*Presenters:*

Pamela Berger, Boston College  
Omri Boehm, The New School  
Natana J. DeLong-Bas, Boston College  
Reuven Firestone, Hebrew Union College  
M. Cathleen Kaveny, Boston College  
Bruce B. Lawrence, Duke University  
Katherine McAuliffe, Boston College  
Yehuda Mirsky, Brandeis University  
Jack Miles, Boston College  
Patrick J. Ryan, S.J., Fordham University  
Eve Spangler, Boston College



Michelangelo, Creation of the Sun and Moon, Sistine Chapel

Black is an essential color in any painter's palette, but in contemporary religious thought, it sometimes seems that black has become a banished color.

God's love is cherished, but God's anger is elided in tacit embarrassment. The antinomy *mercy/justice* is readily acknowledged, but the latter half of the parallel pair *pardon/punishment* is avoided. Is the moment at hand for a reconsideration of the place of anger and punishment in past or present language and thought about God?

Classic and current moral theories of war and peace in all three of the great monotheisms—*bellum justum*, *milkhemet mitzvah*, *jihad*—are all rooted in core apprehensions of the identity of God as merciful or just, pardoning or punishing, indulgent or vindictive, warlike or peacemaking. Clearly, there are timeless scriptural warrants on either side of these antinomies, but there have also been, over the centuries, recurrent and timely elaborations of those warrants. In this conference, speakers from several disciplines will reflect on those elaborations, addressing a question rewarding even when it is disturbing.

Sunday, April 7, 4:00 - 6:30 pm  
Monday, April 8, 9:00 am - 4:15 pm  
Murray Room, Yawkey Center, Chestnut Hill Campus

This conference is free and open to the public. Please email [cjlearning@bc.edu](mailto:cjlearning@bc.edu) to register.  
Please visit [www.bc.edu/cjlearning](http://www.bc.edu/cjlearning) for conference details.