

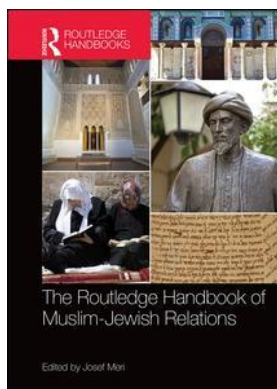
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4

Theology

The articulation of orthodoxy

Aaron W. Hughes

The present chapter presents a chronological, though by no means evolutionary, sketch of Jewish-Muslim theology. It is primarily interested in the places where the two theological traditions intersect, whether through influence or how the one thinks about the other. In the medieval period, Jews developed theological principles that they learned from Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*), especially those associated with the Muʿtazila school. In this period, Jews adopted Arabic, and Jewish theologians articulated Judaism using Arabic theological categories. While Jewish and Muslim theologians certainly differed in terms of what they chose to emphasize, they engaged in a common project of articulating the principles, aims, and general structure of their respective religions. More recent times have witnessed theologians from each tradition try to think about how to accommodate those from the other, something that has been exacerbated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Theology represents the systematic articulation of religious truths using human reason. Theologians attempt to define and make sense of these truths with the help of well-defined external criteria, such as those supplied by logic and metaphysics. Many of the issues with which theology is concerned – the nature of God, the relationship between God and humans, providence, the existence of evil, and the problem of freewill vis-à-vis determinism, to name but a few – certainly emerge from scripture but often in an inchoate or unsystematized manner. Theology is, then, an ongoing process to clarify belief and practice, taking different forms and exploring different issues dependent upon a variety of social, historical, and geographical contexts. Theologians consider themselves to be involved in the continued attempt over time to understand the religious community and its relationship to God, to the cosmos, and to other religions. Since theology is a well-defined and often highly technical tradition, those who practice it must be trained in institutions devoted specifically to this skill. This is especially the case in both Judaism and Islam, two religious traditions in which the law and its interpretation play a large role.

Historically, theology entered Islam as it encountered the various traditions associated with Greek rationalism in places such as Baghdad, from where it subsequently made inroads into Judaism. Since Judaism and Islam are both scriptural religions, both developed well-defined ways of deriving theological principles from these sources based upon traditional

exegetical techniques. Theology in both traditions has at least three functions: to articulate and clarify the tenets of faith for the believer; to defend the religious tradition from both internal and external polemics; and to develop a theory of the “self” by creating a discourse of the “other.” Given the proximity of Jews and Muslims over the course of the historical record, this has necessarily meant that each religion has both thought with and about the other with the aim of developing a clearer idea of itself.

The lines between theology and philosophy or, indeed, between theology and law, despite the fact that the latter term of each of these dyads appear as separate chapters in this *Handbook*, are very fine. Where theology ends and law or philosophy begins is difficult to ascertain precisely because all three of these terms are, in many ways, artificial, seeking to separate neatly in the present that which was not necessarily so separated in the past. Take, for example, the contemporary issue of stem cell research. Each tradition must ascertain whether and how the religious law can respond to it. In order to do this, however, legal experts must formulate the theological framework that facilitates such a response. Theological speculation, in other words, necessarily involves reflection on the law, *shari’a* in Islam and *halakaha* in Judaism. In like manner, the line separating theology and philosophy is equally problematic. If philosophy is seen as a “secular” activity and theology a systematic and rational reflection on religious truths, then with very few exceptions can we speak of an Islamic or Jewish philosophy that is not concerned with the articulation of religious dogma.¹

In general surveys of Islamic and Jewish intellectual history, theology is often reduced to *Kalām*, what is usually translated as “dogmatic theology.” This type of speculation initially entered Islam through a school known as the Mu‘tazila in the early eighth century and it flourished in places such as Basra and Baghdad. This school argued that the basic truths of religion, including God’s existence and justice, could be ascertained by rational proofs without the aid of scriptural revelation. Only after such truths have been established can the veracity of scripture be proved by reason, which then becomes the most important feature of the interpretation of the Qur’an. On account of its bold claims regarding the unaided human intellect, so the master narrative goes, another school, the Ash‘arites, subsequently challenged the Mu‘tazilite’s general framework in the early eleventh century (more on both below). It seems to have been various versions of Ash‘arite theological speculation that subsequently became enshrined in various creedal statements and that were responsible for the articulation of theological orthodoxy within Sunni Islam. It was the Mu‘tazilites, however, who seem to have made exclusive inroads into Jewish thought beginning in the tenth century when the likes of Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ (d. ca. 937) and Sa‘adya Gaon (d. 942), both writing in Arabic, started to apply this school’s methods to understand Judaism.

However, it is important to realize that this early medieval *Kalām*, whether of the Muslim or Jewish variety, represents but one historical iteration of theology in each tradition. Jews, for example, had speculated on theological matters since as early as the biblical period,² and many of the classic rabbinic commentaries produced in late antiquity, even before the rise of Islam, are what we would today call works of theology, even though the rabbis themselves did not use this term.³ While perhaps neither as systematic nor as rational as that produced by those associated with *Kalām*, it is worthwhile to invoke the great Jewish scholar of Islam, Ignaz Goldziher, who reminded us years ago that theology, even broadly defined, is a necessary development subsequent to the emergence of a scripture that adherents define as sacred.⁴ In like manner, any discussion of theology in modern Judaism and Islam must try to understand the complexity of modernity and how this complexity has challenged traditional authority. While it may be easy to speak of theology in the medieval period and who possessed the authority to engage in it, in the messy present it is by no means clear.

What follows will focus primarily on the former but will also try to convey, albeit briefly, something of the latter.

The present chapter, then, seeks to account for some of the depth and breadth of this theological speculation in these two traditions by offering a chronological survey of the uses to which theology has been put in the two religions. It does so, however, only at the point at which Judaism and Islam intersect, cross-pollinate, or use the other to think about the self. It does not, for example, discuss items such as post-Holocaust theology because, although an important part of Jewish theologizing, it rarely engages Islam, nor does it look at the role of theology in the ongoing debates about modernism in Islam because, again, these discussions are rarely in conversation with Judaism.

The rise of *Kalām*

The birth of theological speculation is, generally speaking, associated with controversy and the need to justify a belief or a practice, one that will eventually become normative or orthodox. In Second-Temple Judaism, for example, this had to do with the debates between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the role of free will, the afterlife, religious authority, and the nature of biblical interpretation. Similarly, in early Islam, theological speculation arose on account of the need to define correct belief in the light of a series of political controversies regarding, for example, the debate over the status of the “grave sinner” (*murtakib al-kabīra*) that broke out between two rival groups, the Khārijites and the Murjīites. This was a particularly acute issue because three of the first four successors to the Prophet Muhammad were assassinated. Did the assassins, for example, remain Muslims? Or, did their acts somehow separate them from the community, both in this life and the next one? The Khārijites held the grave sinner to be an infidel (*kāfir*) and, thus, beyond the pale of the community in both this life and beyond; the Murjīites, by contrast, argued that such an individual remains a Muslim and that it is up to God to decide his fate. Other debates involved predestination (*qadar*) between the Qadarites and the Jabrites, not to mention the problem of how to interpret anthropomorphic and other problematic language in the Qur’an.

Although it is important not to reduce theological speculation in early Islam to outside influence,⁵ it cannot be gainsaid that the translation movement of Greek sources into Arabic played a major role in its subsequent articulation. Within this context, the most important impetus for the rise of rationalist theology was contact with Greek sources, especially those associated with logic, and the concomitant need to try to reconcile the terminology and categories of rationalism with those of monotheism. This attempt at reconciliation is known as *Kalām*, and its practitioners are known as *mutakallimūn* (sing. *mutakallim*). The *mutakallim* (literally, a “speaker”) is, in the words of Goldziher, “one who made a dogma or controversial theological problem into a topic for dialectical discussion and argument, offering speculative proofs for the position he urged.”⁶

Most works of *Kalām*, whether Muslim or Jewish, share the same style and structure. They usually take the form of theological *summae* to define correct belief and practice. They begin from universal principles (e.g., creation of the world, epistemology) and move to more specific concerns (e.g., prophecy, the afterlife). The texts are usually polemical, providing the believer with responses to criticism of his or her religion (e.g., “if an unbeliever should say ‘x,’ one should respond to him with the claim that...”).

Among the earliest practitioners of *Kalām* were, as we have already seen, the Mu‘tazilites, also referred to as *ahl al-‘adl wa’l-tawhīd* (the people of [divine] justice and unity). In addition to stressing God’s unity and justice – by which they meant that He could not

do something that would contravene justice – they emphasized the importance of reason (*‘aql*) in religious speculation. One of the most important synthetic works describing the doctrine of the Mu‘tazilites may be found in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s (d. 1025) *Al-mughnī* (“Summa”), which emphasizes the importance of four sources for ascertaining truth: the Qur’an, agreed-upon ḥadīths (sayings of Muḥammad), rational argument, and *ijmā’* (i.e., consensus). And, to reinforce the point that theologians are simultaneously involved in the establishment of religious doctrine and criticism of the doctrines of other religions and/or sectarian movements, ‘Abd al-Jabbār also wrote *Tathbīt dalā’il al-nubuwwa* (“Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophecy”), which is, among other things, a critique of Christian origins, doctrine, and history.⁷

The Mu‘tazilites developed a comprehensive theological framework that revolved around a number of key features: God’s unity, God’s justice, the intermediate state of the grave sinner (i.e., as neither an infidel nor a pious Muslim), reward and punishment in the afterlife, and the ethical notion that one must avoid sin and practice virtue.⁸ While early *Kalām* emphasized tradition (*naql*) and reason (*‘aql*) to understand scripture, the Mu‘tazila were frequently accused by their critics of elevating the latter at the expense of the former. During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Mu‘tazilites enjoyed tremendous success, using their rationalist principles to develop an important and influential body of scientific and exegetical literature. Their two main epicenters were Basra and Baghdad, both of which had fairly large Jewish communities that would, as we shall see presently, absorb the general theological framework of the Mu‘tazilites.

The Mu‘tazila would come under criticism from at least two constituencies. The first was the philosophers, who regarded *mutakallimūn* as little more than apologists for their religion. The great Islamic philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870–950) has the following to say about *Kalām* in his *The Enumeration of the Sciences*:

And still others, convinced of the validity of their own religion beyond any doubt, hold the opinion that they should defend it before others, show it to be fair and free it of suspicion, and ward off their adversaries from it, by using any chance thing. They would not even disdain to use falsehoods, sophistry, confounding, and contentiousness...⁹

Writing much later, the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (d. 1204) argued that the *mutakallimūn* “are of the opinion that what may be imagined is an admissible notion for the intellect.”¹⁰ Maimonides is here critical of those practitioners of *Kalām* who emphasize occasionalism, namely, an arrangement of the universe that is either haphazard or arbitrary in order to protect divine omnipotence and omniscience. Occasionalism was diametrically opposed to the Aristotelian universe upon which the philosophers’ natural science was predicated. According to the *mutakallimūn*, Maimonides further writes, “it should come about that the sphere of the earth should turn into a heaven endowed with a circular motion and that the heaven should turn into the sphere of the earth.”¹¹ This conforms to Maimonides’s general assessment that

all the first *mutakallimūn* from among the Greeks who had adopted Christianity and from among the Muslims did not confirm in their premises to the appearance of that which exists, but considered how being ought to be in order that it should furnish a proof for the correctness of a particular opinion, or at least should not refute it.¹²

The philosophers, as this passage of Maimonides shows, were critical of what they considered to be the *mutakallimūn*'s dogmatic use of reason and of knowing their conclusions in advance of their premises. The Mu'tazilites, however, also came under attack by other schools of *Kalām*, which sought to rewrite the relationship between religion and reason. This seems to have been precipitated by the *miḥna* ("inquisition") developed by the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (d. 833), which consisted of a theological test wherein religious scholars had to swear allegiance to the Mu'tazilite doctrine that the Qur'an was created in time. Were it not created in time, they argued, the Qur'an would be coeval with God, thereby compromising God's singularity. Those theologians who refused to assent to this principle were jailed, leading Goldziher to remark, years ago, that we should avoid thinking of the Mu'tazila as the "free-thinkers" of early Islam.¹³ While al-Ma'mūn may have decided to instate this policy to create some form of centralized theological and, thus, political authority, a quasi- "church," if you will, it ultimately failed because it was incongruous with what was slowly coalescing into the majoritarian theological position, namely, that the Qur'an was eternal. One of the most important individuals who refused to swear to the doctrine of a created Qur'an was Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), someone who would become one of the most esteemed doctrinal authorities in the Sunni tradition. For Ibn Ḥanbal, Muslims had all that they needed in a literal reading of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* and that there was no need for a Greek- (i.e., pagan-) inflected rationalism to ascertain good from bad. In the longer creedal statement reported in his name, he claims,

The Qur'an is the Speech of God by which He speaks. It is not created. If anyone supposes the Qur'an to be created, he is a Jahmite, an unbeliever. If anyone supposes that the Qur'an is the Speech of God, but suspends judgment and does not say it is uncreated, this is worse than the view of the previous [person]. If anyone supposes that our utterance of [the Qur'an] or our reciting [or reading] of it is created, while the Qur'an is the Speech of God, he is a Jahmite. He who does not declare all these people unbelievers is in a similar [position] to them.¹⁴

Another branch of *Kalām*, the Ash'arites, responded to what would in hindsight amount to the temporary ascendancy of the Mu'tazila. They claimed, in general terms, that human reason was incapable of establishing truth claims with absolute certainty or confidence because God transcended the narrow parameters of human reason. The founder of the school, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 936) had begun his theological career belonging to the Mu'tazilite school but gradually criticized it for the belief that the Qur'an was created, that humans have freedom of choice, and the denial that God lacks attributes such as sight and speech, attributes that the Mu'tazilites had sought to explain away through allegorical exegesis. Instead, al-Ash'arī followed ibn Ḥanbal and argued that if the Qur'an ascribes attributes to God, we must accept them "without asking how" (*bi-lā kayf*). In al-Ash'arī's creedal statement, for example, we read, "God has a face, without asking how, as it says 'the face of your Lord endures, full of majesty and honor.'"¹⁵ Or, again, believers "affirm hearing and sight of God, and do not deny that as do the Mu'tazilites."¹⁶

It would, however, be a mistake to conceive of al-Ash'arī or the school that subsequently bore his name simply as anti-rationalist. In this regard, they developed a highly technical and atomistic occasionalist framework, wherein God constantly engages in the act of creation, meaning that God could, should He so desire, create at any moment a world different from the one we know. Such a position, needless to say, protects the absolute omnipotence of God, whereas the Mu'tazilites – at least according to this position – sought to harness God's

power by subsuming it under human rationalism. The Ash‘arites also developed a technical description of human will that tried to combine human freedom (so people are responsible for their actions) with determinism (to maintain God’s omniscience and omnipotence). According to al-Ash‘arī, the faithful “hold that a [person] has no acting-power to do anything before he [actually] does it, and that he is not able to escape God’s knowledge or do a thing that God knows he will not do.”¹⁷

The theological premises of the Ash‘arites, especially when coupled with those of ibn Ḥanbal, quickly became regnant and, to this day, they remain the dominant theological position in Sunni Islam. Although it does not exactly map onto the Mu‘tazilite-Ash‘arite split, a telling juxtaposition of the stakes between these two schools may be found in the early tenth-century debate between Abū Bishr Mattā and Abū Sa‘īd al-Sīrāfī. The former, a rationalist, and the latter, a critic of rationalism, debated over the merits of logic in ascertaining truth. Their debate, preserved by Yāqūt in his *Mu‘jam al-udabā’* (“Dictionary of the Religious Scholars”), on the authority of Abū Ḥayyān, revolves around the role of logic:¹⁸

Mattā: I understand by logic an instrument whereby sound speech is known from unsound, and wrong sense from right: like a balance, for thereby I know overweight from underweight, and what rises from what sinks.

Al-Sīrāfī: ... If logic be the invention of a Greek made in the Greek language and according to Greek conventions, and according to the descriptions and symbols that Greeks understood, whence does it follow that the Turks, Indians, and Arabs should attend to it, and make it umpire to decide for them or against them, and judge between them, so that they must accept what it attests and repudiate what it disapproves?

Mattā: This follows because logic is the discussion of accidents apprehended by reason, and ideas comprehended thereby, and the investigation of thoughts that occur, and notions that enter the mind; now in matter apprehended by the intellect all men are alike, as for example four and four are eight with all nations and so on.

Al-Sīrāfī: ... If the accidents that are apprehended by the intellect and the notions that are comprehended can only be attained by language, which embraces nouns, verbs, and particles, is not knowledge of language indispensable?

Mattā: Yes.

Al-Sīrāfī: Consequently you are inviting us, not to study logic, but to learn the Greek language. Now you do not know Greek yourself; how, then, can you ask us to study a language of which you are not a master?...Your statement would only be correct and your claim conceded, if Greece had been known to possess out of all nations absolute infallibility, an unfallen nature, and a structure unlike that of other men, so that if they wished to err they would have been unable to do so, had they desired to make a false statement they could not, and if the *Shechinah* had descended upon them and God had taken them specially under His charge and error washed its hands of them....¹⁹

I have quoted this passage at length because it gets to the heart of the tensions found among those who want to employ reason in the service of understanding religious dogma. For those who do, reason affords humans the wherewithal to adjudicate between truth and

falsity. Yet, for those critical of such an endeavor, reason is little more than a Greek, and thus foreign, invention that has no business in ascertaining the message of God, who exists above and beyond the human intellect and its limited ability to categorize.

Jewish Kalām

The development of rational theology in Judaism took place in Arabic and under Islam. Prior to this, with the exception of Philo of Alexandria, there was little or no systematic engagement with theology. Since Philo had very little impact on subsequent Jewish thought – his biggest influence seems to have been among the early Church fathers – and since Jews in late antiquity used other models and genres to articulate their theological concerns, the development of rational theology is intimately connected to the Jewish immersion in Arabophone culture. As Jews adopted Arabic and as they began to think in Arabo-Islamic categories, it was only natural that they would begin to try to connect the themes of rationalist theology to Judaism. If they did not, Judaism would appear to be intellectually obsolete. The result was the rise of what we may call Jewish *Kalām*.

Jewish *Kalām*, according to Maimonides, is primarily of the Mu‘tazila variety. He writes, again in *Guide* I.71,

As for the Kalām regarding the notion of the unity of God and regarding what depends on this notion, which you will find in the writings of some Geonim and in those of the Karaites, it should be noted that the subject matter of the argument was taken over by them from the mutakallimūn of Islam and that this is very scanty indeed if compared to what Islam has compiled on the subject. Also it has happened that Islam first began to take this road owing to a certain sect, namely, the Mu‘tazilites, from whom our coreligionists took over certain things walking upon the road the Mu‘tazilites had taken. After a certain time another sect arose in Islam, namely, the Ash‘arites, among whom other opinions arose. You will not find any of these latter opinions among our coreligionists.²⁰

Jewish *Kalām*, like that of the school of the Mu‘tazilites, begins with the premise that both the unaided human intellect and sense perception form the basic sources of knowledge. Human reason, in other words, is what enables the individual to make sense of the universe, to know, for example, that it is created *ex nihilo* by an omnipotent and omniscient Creator who is fundamentally or essentially different from His creation. Human reason is also the primary means and method with which to engage in the interpretation of the Bible.

The works of Jewish *mutakallimūn* follow the basic structure, techniques, and topics of those found among their Muslim colleagues. These include, in part as we have seen above, speculation about God, divine attributes, creation, revelation, prophecy, and the importance of revelation. On many of these topics, the nature of the arguments is identical to those found in Muslim *Kalām*, and the only thing that would seem to differ is the scripture used to supply the proof-texts in support of the position. Jewish *Kalām* also shares an interest in engaging in polemics, either with other religions or with opposing positions within one’s own religion.²¹ It is worth noting, however, that certain topics – such as the created or eternal nature of scripture, the status of the grave sinner, or that of atomism – seemed to have been of no or marginal interest among Jewish *mutakallimūn*.

Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ (d. ca. 937) is generally regarded as one of the earliest rationalists in Judaism. His place in the so-called “canon” of medieval Jewish rationalism, however, is complicated by, among other things, his purported conversion to Christianity (and

subsequent reversion to Judaism).²² Unlike other Jewish *mutakallimūn*, al-Muqammiṣ composed his major theological work – *Ishrūn Maqāla*, or *The Twenty Chapters* – in Arabic as opposed to Judeo-Arabic (i.e., Arabic written in Hebrew characters). Even the biblical proof-texts are translated into Arabic and written in Arabic characters. In its basic structure and style of argumentation, the work is certainly one of *Kalām*, more specifically of the Mu‘tazilite variety, although Stroumsa, in her critical edition of the work, argues that it is more informed by Aristotelian philosophy and most closely resembles Christian *Kalām*, what Maimonides later labeled as *mutakallimū al-naṣārā*.²³

The work itself is based on many of the typical themes that other *mutakallimūn* were interested in, such as the sources of knowledge, the world, God, revelation, and the refutation of other religions. In Chapter 7 of the work, for example, al-Muqammiṣ, in typical fashion, argues that the created nature of the world necessarily implies the existence of a Creator:

If someone asks, “How do we know that it is impossible for a thing to create itself?” We reply that had it created its own self, only two possibilities could have obtained at the time of its creation: either it created itself when it existed, or it created itself when it did not exist. If it created itself when it was already existing, it means that it existed before it created itself...²⁴

Al-Muqammiṣ continues by arguing that the world could neither have generated itself nor have been created from preexistent matter (*hayūlā*). Since createdness is an attribute of matter (*jawhar*), and not of the Creator, he argues that this is proof that God, who possesses eternity as an essential attribute, created the world from nothing (*lā min shay’*). Perhaps on account of his conversion to Christianity and subsequent reversion to Judaism, he is particularly critical of his former religion, arguing that the claim that God is “one substance, but three hypostases” (*jawhar wāḥid thalātha aqānīm*) goes against the dictates of reason. As we have just seen, al-Muqammiṣ argues that to posit God as a substance (*jawhar*) is incompatible with His unity because substance implies the existence of created attributes, which God by definition cannot possess.

If Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ represents the first generation of Jewish *mutakallimūn*, Sa‘adya Ga’on (d. 942) represents the maturation witnessed in its second generation.²⁵ Sa‘adya was one of the rabbinic leaders (*ge’onim*; sing. *ga’on*) associated with the academies of Sura and Pumbedita (both in Babylonia; modern-day Iraq). He also seems to have spent considerable time in Baghdad, which, as we have seen, was a hotbed of Mu‘tazilite speculation in the tenth century. Saadia was among the first important rabbinic figures to write extensively in Arabic, and he is often considered to be one of the founders of Judeo-Arabic literature, composing works on linguistics, Jewish law (*halakha*), and theology, in addition to writing a Hebrew-Arabic dictionary known as the *Agron*. As a good *mutakallim*, he was also involved in religious polemics, seeking to articulate and defend rabbinic belief from the threat of the Karaites, a sectarian movement that denied the validity and authority of the Oral Torah. Sa‘adya, however, effectively absorbed many of the rationalist theological arguments of the Karaites to argue against them.²⁶

In terms of *Kalām*, Sa‘adya’s most important work is his *Kitāb al-amānāt wa’l-ītiqādāt*, “The Book of Articles of Faith and Doctrines of Dogma,” translated into Hebrew by Judah Ibn Tibbon in the twelfth century as *Shefer Emunot ve-De’ot*. This work represents the first systematic attempt to integrate Jewish texts with various components of Greek philosophy. It is a work that helped to shape much subsequent rabbinic thought that remains today at

the heart of traditional Judaism. It proved to be much more theologically compatible with traditional Judaism than Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism, which many perceived to be based on “foreign” wisdom. In the Introduction to the work, Saadia writes,

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom the truth is known with absolute certainty; who confirms to men the certainty of the truths which their souls experience – finding as they do through their souls their sense perceptions to be trustworthy; and knowing as they do through their souls their rational knowledge to be correct, thereby causing their errors to vanish, their doubts to be removed, their proofs to be clarified, and their arguments to be well grounded. Glory unto Him who is exalted above all attributes and praise.²⁷

Here Saadia informs the reader, in typical Mu‘tazilite fashion, that sound sense perception and sound reason are able to establish truth for humans. He subsequently argues that the goal of his book is to explain why individuals in the search for truth go astray and how such errors “can be removed so that the object of their investigations may be fully attained.”²⁸ The majority of these errors, according to Saadia, stem from the fact that many individuals fail to grasp the phenomenon of sense perception. They either have an inadequate idea of the object in question or they are perfunctory in their observations. He gives us the following analogy:

Take the case of a person who is looking for someone called Reuben ben Jacob. He may be in doubt whether he has found him for one of two reasons: either because his knowledge of Reuben is inadequate, since he never met him before and therefore does not know him, or else because seeing some other person he may wrongly assume him to be Reuben, taking the least line of resistance and neglecting to make proper inquiries. He has no claim to be forgiven since he takes things too easily and conducts his search carelessly. The result will be that his doubts will never be cleared up.²⁹

Saadia informs us that the same applies to rational knowledge. Only now errors occur when the individual in question is either unfamiliar with the methods of demonstration, meaning that the individual may be unable to differentiate between a valid and an invalid proof or that the individual may understand proper argumentation but still refuse to complete the work of rational investigation on account of haste.

All of this sounds remarkably similar to works of Mu‘tazilite *mutakallimūn*. How, then, does Saadia differ from them? For one thing, he uses biblical proof-texts where a Muslim *mutakallim* would use Qur’anic ones. For example, he cites Psalm 119:18 – “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law” – as proof that the biblical text supports the type of rationalizing theology of the sort that Saadia is engaged in. Or, again, he invokes Isaiah 48:17 – “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you for your profit, who leads you by the way that you should go” – as further proof that it is incumbent upon the Jew to engage in rational speculation, despite the fact that the Bible probably had something else in mind.

More important, however, Saadia argues that Jews possess one feature that no other people do: an additional source of knowledge unique to them, what he calls “reliable tradition” (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*). Whereas all people share the three basic sources of knowledge – sense perception, reason, and inferential knowledge (e.g., where there is smoke, there is fire) –

only Jews possess a fourth. This final source of knowledge not only differentiates Jews from non-Jews, it differentiates rabbinic Judaism from its Karaite despisers. He writes,

We, the congregation of the believers in the unity of God, accept the truth of all the three sources of knowledge, and we add a fourth source, which we derive from the three preceding ones, and which has become a root of knowledge for us, namely the root of the reliable tradition [*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*]. For it is based on the knowledge of sense perception and the knowledge of reason.³⁰

In a subsequent chapter of the treatise, Saadia divides the commandments in Judaism into “laws of reason” and “laws of revelation.” The former are ascertainable by reason (e.g., “Thou shalt not kill”), whereas the latter consist of “matters regarding which reason passes no judgment” (e.g., how ordinary days differ from festival ones). Saadia also argues that although reason can ascertain why murder or theft are wrong, humans need revelation to set the terms of punishment and so on.

It is important to note that nowhere does Saadia self-identify as a *mutakallim*. If anything, he seems to have regarded himself as a *ḥaylasūf*, or philosopher. Despite this, however, the structure and types of argumentation found in *Kitāb al-amānāt wal-ʿitiqādāt*, including the criticism of him by later Jewish philosophers, such as Maimonides witnessed above, would seem to place this firmly in the camp of *Kalām*.

Before turning our attention to subsequent developments in Muslim and Jewish theology, it is worth underscoring that contact with Muslim rationalism, both theology and philosophy, forever altered the way in which Judaism was both approached and defined. Saadia’s division of the commandments into rational and revelatory, to give but one example, occurred under the influence of Muslim theology and was subsequently picked up by philosophers such as Maimonides, who also lived under the orbit of Islam, and also by later Jewish thinkers, such as Moses Mendelssohn (d. 1786), who did not.

Subsequent developments

Much of the early centuries of rational theology in Islam and Judaism involved individuals, like those we have already encountered, articulating what they considered to be their respective tradition’s theological principles. Within this context, it is often difficult to differentiate Jewish *mutakallimūn*, such as al-Muqammiṣ and Saadia, from their Muslim contemporaries. Indeed, all that seems to separate the one set from the other is the adjective in front of the activity they all engaged in – *Kalām*. Since the very terms “Muslim *Kalām*” and “Jewish *Kalām*” are modern terms, it is difficult to know how “Jewish” someone like Saadia regarded his thinking to be. A good example of this may be found in the theological writings of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), a Muslim polymath from Al-Andalus, who makes references to the writings of al-Muqammiṣ and Saadia in order to criticize them.³¹ The criticism is not so important for my purposes here as is the fact that he seems to have been familiar with their writings, thereby offering us a clear insight into the fact that Jewish and Muslim *mutakallimūn* do not neatly and simply bifurcate into, as so many of our textbooks tell us, religious adjectives.

This lack of a clear line between Muslim and Jewish thought in the Middle Ages may also be witnessed in, for lack of a better term, Sufi-inspired works of Jewish theology, such as *Kitāb al-Hidāya ilā Farāʾiḍ al-Qulūb* (“The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart”) by Baḥyā Ibn Paqūda (fl. second part of the eleventh century). Although arranged and divided into the basic structure of treatises associated with *Kalām*, Baḥyā’s interest is less

with ascertaining rationalist principles, though he does claim that reason is God-given, than with cultivating the inner experience of the believer.³² While he defines reason in ways that are virtually identical to that of the Mu‘tazilites, he defines the ultimate goal of the believer in ascetic and mystical terms – the reunion of the soul with its Creator.

Subsequent centuries, however, saw an increased differentiation between Jewish and Islamic theology, especially as the language of theological speculation in Judaism switched from Arabic to Hebrew. Perhaps this switch is most notable in the thought of Maimonides, whom we have already encountered several times earlier. Although still writing his philosophical works in Judeo-Arabic, he composed his massive *Mishneh Torah*, a compendium of law and theology, in Hebrew, presumably so that Jews who did not read Arabic would be able to understand it.

In the space that remains in this section, however, I want to focus on two individuals who show us to just what extent the border between Jewish and Muslim theology was porous even after Maimonides. These two individuals – Ibn Kammūna (d. 1284) and David b. Joshua, the great grandson of Maimonides, who lived in Cairo in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries – continue to show the filiations between Muslim and Jewish theology into the later Middle Ages.

Ibn Kammūna was, by all accounts, a Jew, though some have argued that he had converted to Islam.³³ Although a Jew, he was given to making pious remarks about Muhammad, in addition to writing a detailed commentary on Suhrawardī’s *al-Talwīḥāt* (“Intimations”), and writing glosses to his younger contemporary Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *al-Ma‘ālim* (“Waymarks”), an important work of Islamic theology. Ibn Kammūna’s commentary on Suhrawardī’s texts, in addition to his correspondences with Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, played a major role in both the exposition and diffusion of Suhrawardī’s *Ishrāqī*, or “Eastern,” philosophy in later Muslim thought. Indeed, so important is Ibn Kammūna to the understanding of Muslim theology of this period that several contemporary Iranian scholars have concentrated their efforts on Ibn Kammūna’s philosophical writings and have edited several of his works in, specifically, his commentary on Suhrawardī’s *Talwīḥāt*.³⁴ Individuals such as Ibn Kammūna nicely, if problematically for some, blur the boundary between Jewish theology and Muslim theology in this period. How, for example, do we classify him? Is he a “Jewish” theologian or a “Muslim” one? Such religious adjectives, I would suggest, are our terms, and may be unhelpful or even anachronistic.

Ibn Kammūna is also known as the author of *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth lil-mīlāl al-thalāth* (“Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths”), a work, written in Arabic, that examines Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from what he calls an objective point of view.³⁵ In his introduction to the work, he writes that “I have not been swayed by mere personal inclination, nor have I ventured to show preference for one faith over the other, but have pursued the investigation of each faith to its fullest extent.”³⁶ In his chapter on Islam, he again summarizes the theological teachings of Islam with little or no polemical intent. He writes, for example, that

The Muslims agree that Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdallāh Ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib is the Messenger of God and Seal of the Prophets; that he was sent to all mankind, that he abrogated all the previous religions, and that his religion will remain in force to the day of resurrection; that he called upon men to believe in God and His angels, messengers, and scriptures, and to believe that God is one, has no companion, none like or similar to Him, no mate or child, and that God is preexistent, living, all-knowing, almighty, willing, hearing, seeing, speaking; and that He sent the Torah through Moses, the Gospel

through Jesus; that Muḥammad, on behalf of God, announced that He commanded the performance of prayer, payment of Zakāt, fasting during Ramaḍān, pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Mecca...³⁷

The second example is David b. Joshua, the great grandson of Maimonides, who lived in Cairo during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. If and when Maimonides' descendants are discussed, it is usually his son Abraham, a well-known halakhist and someone who was very much influenced by the mystical trends of Sufism. However, in the realm of theology and the intersection of Judaism and Islam, it is Maimonides' great grandson who deserves attention. As the *nagīd* of the Jewish community there, he wrote, as many of Maimonides' descendants did, Sufi-inspired interpretations of Judaism. Most notable is his *al-Murshid ilā-l-tafarrud wa-l-murfid ilā-l-tagarrud* ("The Guide to Loneliness and the Path to Detachment").³⁸ There are also indications in the Cairo Geniza that he wrote commentaries on the writings of al-Ḥallāj and Ibn 'Arabī. David b. Judah also commissioned many manuscripts, including a Muslim commentary on his great grandfather's *Mishneh Torah*.

Modern trends

If medieval *Kalām* was simultaneously interested in ascertaining theological doctrine and refuting other religions, much modern Islamic and Jewish theology, while certainly still interested in maintaining orthodoxy, is specifically interested in how the two religions relate to one another. This can take the form of inter-faith dialogue that is done in a theological register (that is, in trying to figure out the best conditions in which the two religions can interact with one another), or it can take the form of demonizing the other. A precipitous moment for both of these agendas was 1948, the year of the formation of the State of Israel and the increased tensions between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East.

It should go without saying that neither Islam nor Judaism is monoliths. Rather, we should imagine each as a canopy under which cohabit, often uncomfortably, numerous competing theological voices on any given number of topics. In the contemporary period, these voices are perhaps easier to untangle from one another, at least in Judaism, than they are in the pre-modern period because today they tend to coincide with particular denominations. Reform Judaism, for example, is often the most inclusive when it comes to dealing with theological issues concerning non-Jews (e.g., conversion, intermarriage) and religious diversity, though it is often surprisingly illiberal when it comes to support for Israel, whereas Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox often tend to be among the most exclusive on such issues. In Islam, likewise, it is important not to generalize and assume that all Muslims think alike when it comes to theology or other matters. As in Judaism, there are more liberal and less liberal interpretations of the tradition, although they are not drawn along denomination lines, and these traditions of interpretation necessarily influence the description of and interaction with Jews and other non-Muslims. One of the epicenters of Islamic learning, at least in the Sunni world, is found at Cairo's al-Azhar University, founded in 970, and today composed of a membership that represents the theological schools of the Ash'arites, in addition to the closely aligned theology of al-Māturīdī (d. 944), and the four schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence. In what follows, I try to provide a brief selection of some of the more extreme theological positions from both traditions in order to show the wide range of opinion when it comes to understanding how both Judaism and Islam construct theological discourses of the other.

Judaism

According to rabbinic teachings, there exist seven laws that are binding on all the sons of Noah (i.e., all humanity). These are the prohibitions against (1) idolatry, (2) murder, (3) theft, (4) sexual immorality, (5) blasphemy, (6) eating the flesh of a living animal, and (7) the positive injunction to establish courts of law.³⁹ Taken together, these are referred to as the so-called “Noahide laws.” Whereas Jews have 613 commandments that they must follow, non-Jews have only these seven.

Some modern theologians argue that the Noahide laws show the inclusive nature of Judaism because they reflect the ideal that non-Jews are no different from Jews. This means that both possess the intrinsic capacity to be religious and moral beings.⁴⁰ Other Jewish thinkers believe that the Noahide laws are equivalent to natural law. David Novak, for example, contends that these laws are accessible to the intellects of all peoples and are not contingent upon revelation.⁴¹ This latter tradition, as Robert Eisen notes, avoids the issue of asking how a non-Jew can come to know these laws without having access to the Jewish revelatory tradition.⁴²

Even the Noahide laws, as Eisen does well to note, impose on non-Jews “a Jewish form of religion and morality.”⁴³ While those who stress that non-Jews who follow the Noahide laws become “righteous gentiles,” there are numerous sources that argue the opposite: that non-Jews are so incapable of following divine guidance that they receive no reward for their observance.⁴⁴ And just to make sure that borders are maintained between Jew and non-Jew, we read other pronouncements in which it is forbidden with the punishment of death for a non-Jew to perform commandments reserved solely for Jews (e.g., the observance of the Sabbath). On this reading, “the Noahide code,” according to Eisen, “represents as much a barrier between Jews and non-Jews as it does a basis for commonality.”⁴⁵

Theological speculation about the Other in the modern period, with the Other par excellence being Arabs, can be witnessed in the convoluted theology of Abraham Isaac Kook (d. 1935), often known as Rav Kook. He was the chief Ashkenazic rabbi of Palestine and was heavily influenced by kabbalistic thought that, among other things, emphasized the individual Jew’s active involvement in the redemptive process, the quasi-mystical properties of the land of Israel, and the spiritual superiority of the Jewish people. He argued that secular Zionists were actually doing religious work, though they did not realize it, because they were preparing the land of Israel for its ultimate redemption.⁴⁶ Many of Rav Kook’s teachings were radicalized and popularized by his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (1891–1982), especially in the years after the Six-Day War in 1967. The younger Kook actively encouraged his religious followers to establish settlements throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, many of which were granted official recognition by subsequent Israeli governments, both right and left.⁴⁷

This aggressive settlement coincided, perhaps not surprisingly, with a hostile attitude toward Palestinians, Arabs, and even potentially all non-Jews. For Zvi Yehuda Kook, non-Jews impede the return of the Messiah because they pollute the land. The secular State of Israel, including its army, was now valorized as holy because both were seen to be carrying out the redemptive task spoken about in the ancient Jewish sources. If non-Jews, including innocents, were killed in these “holy wars,” this was acceptable because messianic fulfillment was morally superior to the death of non-Jews. In so doing, Kook and his followers could rely theologically on Jewish mystical texts that held that non-Jews were not even fully human because they ascended from the side of evil (Aramaic *šitra aħra*). This led to a dualistic worldview wherein, according to Eisen, there is “a clear division between Israel as the

manifestation of goodness in the world, and the rest of the nations as the embodiment of all that was evil.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most extreme version of this may be found in a recent theological tractate published in 2009 by Yitzhac Shapira and Yosef Elitzur, two rabbis associated with a seminary entitled Yeshiva Od Yosef Chai located in the West Bank. Their controversial – and certainly non-normative – *Torat haMelech* (Torah of the King) seeks, among other things, to provide guidance on how Israeli soldiers should conduct themselves in times of war.⁴⁹ Basing their arguments on a highly particularist reading of the traditional canons of Jewish law and theology, they state that under certain circumstances “non-involved” gentiles, including innocent women and children, may be preemptively killed. The reason that such force is allowed is because these innocents may, at some indeterminate point in the future, take up arms against Jews. Because of this future threat, they reason, it is permissible to kill them in the present. Although Arabs are nowhere mentioned by name in the book, it is not difficult to see that such a work both legitimates and justifies the murder of innocent Palestinians (including children) for the sake of some self-perceived religious struggle between Jew and non-Jew.⁵⁰

Just to make sure that we do not emphasize the inclusive reading at the expense of the exclusive one, it is worth noting that the authors of *Torat haMelech* believe that individuals who violate the Noahide commandments ought to be murdered. Within this context and to show that this is not just a theoretical debate that plays out in medieval sources, it is worth pointing out that many settlers in the ultra-right religious Zionist movement adamantly believe that the Palestinians have violated the Noahide prohibition against theft because they have stolen land from Jews.

Islam

Theological speculation in modern Islam is equally convoluted. Modernity – for Islam, as for Judaism – becomes a force or set of forces against which religious identity is formed and manipulated. Once formed, however, manifold Muslim identities become invested in shaping the modern world to their own perceptions of what Islam should be. Within these many formulations, Islam serves as an interpretive strategy to explain or account for the rise of modernity and to counter an increasingly unfriendly and powerful European bloc and an intransigent Israel. The categorical error is to mistake in this complicated dialectic that there was or is a monolithic theological response to modernity. A plethora of books on “modern Islam” that seek to portray a “clash of civilizations” or a religion that is theologically incapable of adapting to the modern world has made this mistake.⁵¹

Many want to take events such as the attacks of September 11, 2001, as a prism to examine the entire history of Islam. Those hostile to Islam want to find early sources to show how Islam is inherently violent or anti-Semitic. Yet others take various hadith reports to construct a proto-democratic, proto-feminist, or proto-humanist theology of Islam that fits with modern liberal values. In each case, the “real” Islam as defined by each group is singled out from all the sources and interpretations and made to fit with the needs, political or otherwise, of those doing the interpreting.

If we take al-Azhar University to represent normative Sunni Islam, we again see the overlap between theology and law. Al-Azhar’s mission, for example, includes the propagation of Islam and Islamic culture, which it seeks to do by having its theological and legal leaders render edicts (*fatāwā*, or fatwas) on contested issues and disputes submitted to them from all over the Sunni Islamic world regarding, among other things, proper conduct for Muslims.

The official policy of al-Azhar on Jews and Judaism, which is certainly dictated by the current situation in Israel/Palestine, is understandably complicated. There exist edicts that say Jews should be banned from holy sites in Muslim countries as long as Muslims are prevented from visiting Jerusalem alongside those that encourage active dialogue with Jews based on their common monotheistic heritage.

A less normative theological position on Jews may be found in the likes of groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, or even more extreme groups such as al-Qaeda or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Although transnational in scope, militant Islamic groups tend to have various political objectives that revolve around reasserting Islam in the face of American imperialism and U.S. support for Israel, which is perceived to be the archenemy of Islam. Groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS envisage themselves as upholding the pure Islam practiced by Muhammad and his followers and by the generation immediately following them. They see the use of violence as justified – and they go to certain Islamic sources to justify its use on a theological level – to spread their versions of what they consider Islam to be. Whereas critics of the followers of this form of Islam may accuse them of “hijacking” the true Islam, those who struggle against the West and Israel accuse Muslims who do not follow them of being in collusion with the West. In a letter to the scholars of al-Azhar and other normative Muslim institutions of higher learning, Osama bin Laden (d. 2011) excoriates them: “After the Crusader’s occupation of Saudi Arabia, the Jews’ violation of Palestine... and the destruction and slaughter being meted out to Muslims in Chechnya and Bosnia yesterday and throughout the world everyday, can matters get worse?”⁵² Here bin Laden accuses mainstream Muslim theologians of weakness and using their understanding of traditional Islamic theology to keep Muslims weak.

Conclusions

While we should definitely *not* take the positions of Rabbis Shapira and Elitzur or of al-Qaeda to be normative in either contemporary Judaism or contemporary Islam, respectively, it is important to note that their extreme and marginal voices provide definition to the center and its much more grounded attempts to define belief and practice for the majority of religious believers. The present chapter has presented a chronological, though by no means evolutionary, sketch of Jewish-Muslim theology. In the medieval period, we saw Jews develop theological principles that they learned from Muslims. Arabic was their common language as theologians from each tradition sought to articulate the principles, aims, and general structure of their religions. More recent times have witnessed theologians from each tradition trying to think about how to accommodate (or not) those from the other. Where they tend to agree, especially in more “observant” streams, is the rejection of certain aspects of secularism, such as same-sex marriage, and other related issues.

Notes

- 1 For a fuller elaboration of this, see Aaron W. Hughes, *Rethinking Jewish Philosophy: Beyond Particularism and Universalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 14–27.
- 2 Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), pp. 1–15.
- 3 Jacob Neusner, *Judaism’s Theological Voice: The Melody of the Talmud* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 52–56.
- 4 Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 68.

- 5 This influence as we shall see shortly is usually Greek or even Syriac. On the latter see Michael Cook, "The Origins of the *Kalām*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 43 (1980): 32–43.
- 6 Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 85.
- 7 'Abd al-Jabbār, *A Critique of Christian Origins*, ed., trans., and ann. Gabriel Said Reynolds and Samir Khalil Samir (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2010).
- 8 See the exhaustive study in Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 32–45.
- 9 Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, "The Enumeration of the Religious Sciences," in Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (eds.), *Medieval Political Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 30.
- 10 Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, 2 vols., trans. with introduction Shlomo Pines (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 206.
- 11 Maimonides, *Guide*, p. 206.
- 12 Maimonides, *Guide*, p. 178.
- 13 Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 101.
- 14 Quoted in W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Creeds: A Selection* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 37–38.
- 15 Quoted in Watt, *Islamic Creeds*, p. 41.
- 16 Quoted in Watt, *Islamic Creeds*, p. 42.
- 17 Quoted in Watt, *Islamic Creeds*, p. 42.
- 18 The "transcript" may be found in D. S. Margoliouth, "The discussion between Abu Bislr Matta and Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi on the merits of logic and grammar," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 37:1 (1905): 79–129.
- 19 Margoliouth, "The discussion between Abu Bislr Matta and Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi on the merits of logic and grammar," pp. 113–115.
- 20 Maimonides, *Guide*, I.71.
- 21 See Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis Under Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 136–164.
- 22 On his biography, see Sarah Stroumsa, *Dāwūd Ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ's Twenty Chapters ('Ishrūn Maqāla)* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 15–23. See also Shlomo Pines, "Jewish Christians of the early centuries of Christianity according to a new source," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities I*, 13 (1966): 1–73, at 47–48.
- 23 Stroumsa, *Dāwūd Ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ's Twenty Chapters*, pp. 19–20. On Maimonides' reference, see *Guide* I.71.
- 24 Stroumsa, *Dāwūd Ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ's Twenty Chapters*, pp. 126–127.
- 25 Although Judah ben Barzillai, a twelfth-century Catalan Talmudist, reports that Saadia actually studied with al-Muqammiṣ, there is no independent evidence that he did.
- 26 See the comments in Daniel Frank, *Search Scripture Well: Karaite Exegesis and the Origins of the Jewish Bible Commentary in the Islamic East* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 248–257.
- 27 Saadia, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, trans. Alexander Altmann, in *Three Jewish Philosophers*, third ed. (London: The Toby Press, 2006), pp. 141–142.
- 28 Saadia, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, p. 142.
- 29 Saadia, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, pp. 142–143.
- 30 Saadia, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, p. 155.
- 31 For further on Ibn Ḥazm, see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 59–69.
- 32 See the study in Diana Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue: Philosophy and Mysticism in Bahya Ibn Paquda's Duties of the Heart* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 2–10.
- 33 On the evidence, see Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad: 'Izz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) and His Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 8–23.
- 34 See, for example, Hossein Ziai and Ahmed Alwishah (eds.), *Ibn Kammūna: Al-Tanqīhāt fī sharḥ al-talwīḥāt. Refinement and Commentary on Suhrawardī's Intimations. A Thirteenth Century Text on Natural Philosophy and Psychology* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2003).
- 35 An English translation may be found in *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth-Century Essay in the Comparative Study of Religion*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971).
- 36 Perlmann, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths*, p. 1.

- 37 Perlmann, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths*, p. 67. This sounds very similar to the speech of the Christian that may be found in the opening paragraphs of Judah Halevi's (d. 1141) *Kuzari*.
- 38 *Al-Murshid ilā-l-tafarrud wa-l-murfid ilā-l-tagarrud*, ed. and trans. into Hebrew by Paul B. Fenton (Jerusalem: Meqize Nirdamim, 1985).
- 39 The earliest reference to these laws may be found in the Babylonian Talmud *Avodah Zarah* 8:4. The largest discussion may be found in the *Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin* 56a–60b.
- 40 David Shatz, "A Jewish Perspective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*, ed. Chad Meister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 365–380, at 365–367; see also Jon Levenson, "The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 143–169. Shatz states that "I do not explore here discomfiting teachings of those Jewish authors who see innate differences between Jews and non-Jews with respect to spiritual capacities and holiness or that denigrate non-Jews and diminish their dignity" (p. 366). I disagree with Shatz in that these "discomfiting teachings" are important to examine. Even though they may not be "mainstream," they nonetheless provide important discursive sites wherein we can glimpse at both Judaism's multivocality and its ambiguity.
- 41 David Novak, *Natural Law in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Ch. 2.
- 42 Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 73.
- 43 Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, p. 99.
- 44 E.g., *Sifre Deuteronomy* 343; *BT bava Kama* 38a; *BT Avodah Zarah* 2b–3a.
- 45 Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, p. 99.
- 46 Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 101–125.
- 47 Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, pp. 80–84.
- 48 Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism*, pp. 150.
- 49 Yitzack Shapira and Yosef Elitzur, *Torat haMelekh, Part One: Criminal Laws Between Israel and Others* [in Hebrew] (Yeshivat Od Yosef Chai, 2009).
- 50 Instead of mentioning Arabs, the authors use "children of Noah." In their synopsis of Chapter 1, for example, they write: "In this chapter we deal with the notion that the prohibition of 'do not murder' [*lo irtzach*] does not apply to non-Jews. And, the prohibition of Jews killing non-Jews is learned from the prohibition given to the offspring of Noah against killing others. In the appendixes of the chapter we deal with another principle that the Jews are obligated in the commandments given to Noah." (Shapira and Elitzur, *Torat haMelekh*, 17)
- 51 This paragraph reworks my *Muslim Identities: An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 226.
- 52 Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, trans. James Howarth, ed. Bruce Lawrence (London: Verso, 2005), p. 17.

Further reading

- Abrahamov, Binyamin, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998). Focuses on the principal theological struggle in Islam between traditionalism and rationalism by assessing materials from the ninth to sixteenth centuries.
- Adang, Camilla, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Provides an analysis of many key Muslim theologians who discussed Judaism in the medieval period.
- Cook, Michael, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). A comprehensive analysis that examines the history of Islamic reflection on the obligation to "command right and forbid wrong," in addition to showing its relevance for politics and ideology in the contemporary period.
- Eisen, Robert, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). A historical analysis that shows both the ambiguity and complexity of Judaism when it comes to dealing with the "other."

- Goldziher, Ignaz, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). The classic and timeless work on the development and key features of Islamic theology.
- Schmidtke, Sabine (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). The definitive collection of essays on the history of Islamic theology from its beginning until the present.
- Stroumsa, Sarah, *Dāwūd Ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ's Twenty Chapters ('Ishrūn Maqāla)* (Leiden: Brill, 1989). A critical edition and analysis of the earliest *mutakallim* in Judaism.
- van Ess, Joseph, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Provides an examination of the most important issues in early Kalām in addition to discussing the emergence of theology in the classical period and offering comparisons with Christian and Jewish theological traditions.
- Watt, W. Montgomery, *Islamic Creeds: A Selection* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994). Introduces the history of the creeds and provides a selection of the main ones in translation.
- Winter, Tim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). An edited collection that offers a set of reflections on the evolution and major themes of pre-modern Muslim theology.