

Jewish and Islamic Rationalism: Integration and Time-Lag

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Abstract

The tendency of Medieval Jewish thinkers to follow the predominant intellectual trends of their non-Jewish environment has long been recognized by scholars. We thus find the Jews of the Islamicate world adopting the rational theology of the *kalām*, a trend that began in the 9th century with al-Muqammaṣ and became prevalent in the 10th century, with thinkers like Saadia and al-Qirḡisānī. Another tendency, however, that has remained hitherto unnoticed, is the adherence of Jews to these trends long after the waning of their popularity among their neighbors. The present paper will explore this peculiar phenomenon, focusing on the examples of the Mu‘tazila in the tenth-century Islamic East and Neoplatonism in the tenthcentury Islamic West. It will argue that Jewish philosophy, as well as its impact on nonJewish thought, was shaped by the interplay of these two tendencies.