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Theme Section

Post-Enlightenment of Leibowitz and al-Jaberi

Philosophy and Religion

Abstract   The issue of the relation between religion and philosophy has re-surfaced in modern Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Muslim philosophical discourses. Facing unprecedented waves of re-traditionalisation and radicalisation in both Israel and Arab-Muslim societies this issue has become a privileged terrain upon which many ideological, cultural and political "wars" have been waged. In this paper, I shall focus on how two prominent philosophers and public thinkers, Leibowitz (d. 1994) and al-Jaberi (d. 2010), have brought the issue of the relation between faith and reason – and with it critical thinking – back to centre stage by engaging both their own philosophical and theological traditions and European philosophical thought.

> The truth has no other purpose than knowing that it is truth. Since the Torah is truth, the purpose of knowing it is to do it. (Maimonides 2016, 4; Maimonides 1991, 131)

> Since this Law is true and calls to the reflection leading to cognisance of the truth we, the Muslim community, know firmly that demonstrative reflection does not lead to differing with what is set down in the Law. For truth does not oppose truth; rather, it agrees with and bears witness to it. (Averroes 2001, 9)

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> Indeed, if a philosophy of the future exists, it will have to be born outside Europe or as a consequence of the encounters and frictions between Europe and non-Europe. (Foucault 1978, quoted in Almond 2007, 22)

This article offers a close reading of two major works on two modern philosophical discourses – Arab-Muslim and Israeli-Jewish – each of which in relation to its own philosophical tradition. The first is the work of the Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz (1903-1994), *ʾemunāto šel ha-rambam* (Leibowitz 1980).[1] In this small book, he casts his critical gaze on the relationship between philosophy and law from the vantage point of his theory, the synoptic view. Through the lens of this theory, Leibowitz approaches Maimonides of *Mishneh Torah* and the *Guide of the Perplexed* as one and the same. The second is the work of the Moroccan philosopher Mohammed Abed al-Jaberi (1935-2010) on Averroes's legal decision (*fatwā*) on the legal obligation to philosophy-as-act or to philosophize in his critical and analytical edition of Averroes's book *fasl al-maqāl* (*The Decisive Discourse*).[2] Each work offers a philosophical reading of one medieval philosopher, the philosophical legacy of whom continues to be an inexhaustible field of inquiry for many reasons: philosophical as well as socio-political.

Speaking of contemporary philosophical discourse in the Middle East and North Africa – an area which is both erroneously and ironically known for its too-much-religion and far-less-philosophy – requires, I must confess, *une-mise-en-crise* of this perception, the genealogy of which we can trace back to Kant's *The Critique of Judgment* (1914) and Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1892).[3] It seems, however, that both Leibowitz and al-Jaberi were aware of the constraints that the huge and abundant scholarship on Maimonides and Averroes – together or separately – imposed on them. The contributions of each one of them begin with the assertion that no mono-genealogical thought has been able to tame Averroes and Maimonides, neither their image as thinkers – philosophers and scholars of religion – nor their trans-disciplinary erudition (Benmakhlouf 2015). Contrary to Renan's four postulates (Renan 1882) that:

- medieval Arab philosophy was a "pale copy of Greek philosophy"

1. This book was published in English translation under the title *The faith of Maimonides* in 1989.
2. The title as given by al-Jaberi: *fasl al-maqāl fī taqrīr ma bayn al-šarīʿah wal-hikmah minal-ʾittisāl ʿaw wujūb l-nazar al-ʿaqlī wa hudūd al-taʾwīl (al-dīn wal-mujtamaʿ)* (Eng. *The Decisive Discourse: Determining the Nature of the Connection between Religion and Philosophy or the Obligation of the Philosophical Examination and the Limits of Interpretation (Religion and Society)*). This title is very significant in terms of the nature and function of religion and politics in society. (Averroes 2007)
3. One can easily see Leibowitz's critique of Kant's and Hegel's antisemitism as a part of his rejection of the notion of "shared Judaeo-Christian heritage" (Leibowitz 2008, 16–25). In this connection, one should read the ground-breaking article of the Nigerian philosopher Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze: "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology." (Eze 1997; Mignolo 2013).

- Jews were the only ones who took medieval Arab philosophy seriously
- it was impossible to learn anything from Averroes, Arabs [Arab-Jews] or the Middle Ages
- the Qur'an [Jewish scriptures] triumphed after the death of Averroes in 1198 [and Maimonides in 1204]

Leibowitz and al-Jaberi, each in his analytical reading of Maimonides and Averroes, sought to show two things:

- that medieval Arab and Jewish philosophical thought have actually managed to create a new paradigm which cannot and should not be reduced to Greek philosophy
- that their own philosophy cannot and should not be reduced to western philosophy

As my close reading will show, the epistemological theory of both Maimonides and Averroes as understood by Leibowitz and al-Jaberi has nothing to do with the 19th century dualism of reason/faith, but with the relation between *Intellect* and *Law.* For Leibowitz, the faith (*emuna*) of Maimonides is a juridical-philosophical construction (Rechnitzer 2008). In this light, Divine Law's (*halakhah*) goal is construed as the perfection of man, and this requires that man knows God rationally. The latter means knowing God through Logic, Metaphysics (or the ultimate philosophy: *al-falsafa al-'ulā*) and Physics. For al-Jaberi, Averroes's demonstrative syllogistic reasoning (philosophy) – the aim of which is nothing but to demonstrate rationally the very same truth found in the Scriptures – is compulsory (*wājib*) upon every qualified person, according to Islamic Law (*al-šar'*). Both philosophers agree that this paradigm is an expression of a real enlightenment which concurrently generates a rational knowledge of God, and by doing that it frees man from the religious and political authority and despotism of the clergy.

The general aim of this paper is to *show* how the philosophical discourse in Israel and the Arab world re-maps the relationship between intellect and Law as a philosophical question within a paradigm of continuity and discontinuity; continuity of medieval Arab and Jewish philosophical thought and its central episteme*:* the unity of truth and plurality of discursive modes (or to use al-Jaberi's terminology: Reason/Mind (`*aql*)), and discontinuity with

- the ideological claim of the Eurocentric orientalist discourse about the "non-philosophical character" of medieval Arab and Jewish philosophical thought, and
- the doctrine of *two truths:* faith/law and reason/science.

The immediate goal, however, is to present two separate interpretive readings of medieval philosophical thought and the diverse rationalist articulations vis-à-vis the nature and modalities of the epistemological relation between the philosophical and religious as a *relation of difference, not opposition.* The postulate of intrinsic and extrinsic opposition is mere theology and ideology, the accretions of which are manifest in the very discourse which claims that Arab and Jewish philosophies are non-philosophy (Renan 1882). In practice, this paper shall present the synoptic view of the Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz through which Maimonides of the *Guide of the Perplexed* and of *Mishneh Torah* are one and the same. More or less the same can be said about the Moroccan philosopher Mohammed Abed al-Jaberi's reading of Averroes as both *philosopher* and *faqih* under the rubric of "unity within diversity".

I shall argue that Averroes's and Maimonides's epistemic frame of the nature and modalities of the relationship between law and philosophy is as actual and operational in the modern Arab-Islamic and Jewish-Israeli "neo-enlightenment project" as it was in the "enlightenment project" in medieval Arab and Jewish philosophical thought, irrespective of whether this enlightenment is with a capital E or not (Griffel 2009, 1-20). I should also indicate that the ideological implications today of the issue of religion/law/faith and philosophy are salient in the revival and instrumentalisation of Arab-Muslim and Jewish philosophical heritage in the debate about modernity, nation-state, democracy, secularism and political theology – re-traditionalisation of religiosities: local islams and judeities – in the Arab world as well as in Israel.[4]

4. There are various forms of re-traditionalisation in Islamic societies. Unlike the salafiyasation, which means bringing Muslim societies back to one imagined canonised pure form of Islam, re-traditionalisation is a re-introduction or re-vival of various religious beliefs and cultural practices of a historically given community. For sociologists and anthropologists these religious beliefs and cultural practices – construed as popular, folkloric, mythologised – are often the privileged sites of living Islams: for instance, saint veneration, magical practices, Sufi zawayah. In Israel, this phenomenon can be seen in the revival of religious beliefs and practices which a particular community used to have in its country of origin before its settlement in Israel. Saint veneration, Mimouna feast and religious pilgrimage are some of the rituals and practices that are making their ways back to the public space (Bilu 1996, 89–103). The Israeli TV-channel 10 has just begun showing an investigating programme under the title מורה נבוכים (*Guide for the perplexed*) inspired by the very same title of Maimonides's book. The author and investigator of this programme, Avishay Ben-Haim, a journalist on religious and Mizrahi affairs, is dealing with the tension that exists between traditional values – the textual foundation of Judaism – and modernity, and how this tension is perceived and dealt with in a complex and often paradoxical way that characterise "Israeli Judeities" (Ben-Haim 2016).

Leibowitz's Maimonides

The representation of Maimonides as both philosopher and *haham* (sage; religious authority) – a friend of Greco-Arab philosophy and a friend of God– is problematic in modern Jewish-Israeli philosophical and religio-cultural discourses. It is also considered as one of the challenging issues for the role and position of religion in Israeli society, and the very identity of the state as a *Jewish state* (Yeshayahu Leibowitz 1975; Schwartz 1995). For Leibowitz, Maimonides is without a doubt three personae in one. He is a philosopher, a halachic authority and a man of faith. The reception of Maimonides in various intellectual traditions has a long and variegated history. For modern Jewish thought, the political reality after the foundation of the state of Israel has brought Maimonides's intellectual legacy back into a heated debate among the various political and intellectual – and even ethnic – groups in both Israel and world Jewry.

In comparison with the other voices within Jewish and Israeli Maimonideanism (Robinson 2009),[5] Leibowitz's Maimonidean thought is considered one of the most articulate and coherent religious philosophies with a significant social and political output (Rechnitzer 2008). The latter aspect is more salient in his philosophical conceptualisation of faith as commandment and idolatry expressed in his reading of Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* and the *Guide* after his intellectual ideological shift from being a religious-Zionist to becoming a radical critic of it in the 1960s (Hellinger 2008). As we shall see below, Leibowitz's theoretical approach should be seen in conjunction with his social and political views as an active public intellectual and educator. In his work *The Faith of Maimonides*, he presents his dialects as circular theory, according to which the dialectical relationship between faith (philosophical) and commandments (religious practical precepts) is recast as a circular process: a process in which practical precepts/commandments – *mitzvoth* – represent a starting point, an instrument, and a purpose. As instrument, the *mitzvoth* educate and bring man to religious faith. Once faith – in its philosophical sense, i.e. knowledge of God – is reached man realises that the practical expression of this philosophical faith is worship of God for-His-own-sake through the commandments – *mitzvoth*. Doing the Torah – practicing the commandments as a point of departure – becomes the very

5. As editor Robinson has actually managed to include a number of serious papers on the issue of Maimonideanism from the view point of the history of Jewish thought and its reception of Maimonides and his thought. What I find wanting in this book is, for instance, the receptions of Maimonides in pre-modern and modern Arab-Muslim and modern Arab-Jewish thought. This is what I am intending to do in working with pre-modern and modern Arab-Muslim and Arab-Jewish Maimonideanism and Averroism. The present paper represents my first attempt in articulating a coherent thought in a comparative perspective between Israeli-Jewish and Arab-Muslim modern Maimonideanism and Averroism respectively.

purpose of knowing God/philosophical faith, which is immanent in Law (*halakhah*) itself or as Leibowitz puts it: religious faith as torah [*mitzvoth* as the embodiment of Jewish religion in *halakhah*] for its own sake. In this context, he cites Maimonides who analogically equates desiring knowledge in itself as truth with "Torah is truth", on the one hand, and knowing with doing: knowing as doing, on the other hand.

> One ought not to busy oneself with God's Torah in order to earn one's living by it; nor should the end of studying wisdom be anything but knowing it. *The truth has no other purpose than knowing that it is truth.* Since the *Torah is truth, the purpose of knowing it is to do it.* (Maimonides 1991, 131; Maimonides 2016, 4)

With this picture in mind, Leibowitz begins with the issue of representation(s) of Maimonides and his thought – all of which one could gather under two main paradigms: unity versus duality – in modern scholarship (Schwartz 2009, 385-406).[6] Leibowitz's unity paradigm – which he calls the synoptic view – aims at re-constructing an image of Maimonides as the ideal Jew and the ideal man of philosophical faith, in whom Leibowitz finds no contradiction between these three personae: philosopher, halachic authority and man of faith (Leibowitz 1989, 11).

Leibowitz's depiction and *mise en crise* of the dualist paradigm go hand in hand with his criticism of Jewish-Israeli philosophical and religious discourses, on the one hand, and the nationalising-zionising tendencies found in both the religious[7] and secular Zionisms of Maimonides, on the other hand. The dualist paradigm consists not only in the opposition between the religious (prophecy) and the philosophical (reason), but also between what is truly Jewish (internal) and what is foreign (external). As we shall see, Leibowitz's rational approach to the issue of Maimonides's faith through the lens of the unity or synoptic view offers

- a critique of the dualist paradigm,
- a philosophical explanation to the structural relationship between thought and practice, and
- a theo-centric doctrine of the relationship between God and man or the world as the only rationally plausible doctrine.

6. Although Dov Schawrtz does not mention Leibowitz, in his discussion of these two paradigms, in his comparative study between Rabbi Kook (unity) and Zeev Jawitz (duality within religious-Zionist philosophy), it seems to me that Leibowitz's synoptic view sided him with Rabbi Kook's unity paradigm, despite his criticism of religious Zionism, which he calls religious-nationalism (Schwartz 2009).

7. In one of his many interviews Leibowitz is remembered for his analogy between religious nationalism and national socialism: "Religious nationalism is to religion what national socialism is to socialism... National socialism is not socialism but its opposite, likewise religious nationalism is not religion but its opposite." (Leibowitz 2013).

On this point, which seems paradoxical, Leibowitz is seen to be more concerned with saving Maimonides from the ideological implications of the duality-paradigm than sacrificing one of the figures of Maimonides. The dualist-paradigm – either religious or secular – construes Maimonides of *Mishneh Torah* and Maimonides of the *Guide* as two irreconcilable figures and discourses.

Maimonides's faith as man's duty to worship God

Being *exclusively* a philosopher or *not* a philosopher in the general sense are two propositions that frame Leibowitz's conception of the faith of Maimonides under the watching eyes of the synoptic view. Positing the issue in this manner presupposes two things: either being a philosopher or theologian, but not both, and being an ethnic philosopher (non-European) in the sense of being a sage in the Oriental tradition (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 8–9).[8] Instead, Leibowitz offers a third proposition through his theory of dialectics as circular: a friend of God (*halakhah*) is a friend of knowledge (philosophy). With regard to the latter, Leibowitz rightly indicates that Maimonides distinguishes between the desire of knowledge in itself and the desire of knowledge of God.

> When I say that Maimonides *was not a philosopher*, I refer to the *significance* that Maimonides himself allotted to *his own philosophical thinking*. (Leibowitz 1989, 15)

8. In a long passage, Deleuze and Guattari outline their conception of the opposition between Greek philosophy and Oriental wisdom: "Les concepts, nous le verrons, ont besoin de personnages conceptuels qui contribuent à leur définition. Ami est un tel personnage, dont on dit même qu'il témoigne pour une origine grecque de la philo-sophie : les autres civilisations avaient des Sages, mais les Grecs présentent ces 'amis' qui ne sont pas simplement des sages plus modestes. Ce serait les Grecs qui auraient entériné la mort du Sage, et l'auraient remplacé par les philosophes, les amis de la sagesse, ceux qui cherchent la sagesse, mais ne la possèdent pas formellement. Mais il n'y aurait pas seulement différence de degré, comme sur une échelle, entre le philosophe et le sage : le vieux sage venu d'Orient pense peut-être par Figure, tandis que le philosophe invente et pense le Concept." (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 8–9). ("We will see that concepts need conceptual personae that play part in their definition. Friend is one such persona that is even said to reveal the Greek origin of philosophy: other civilisations had sages, but the Greeks introduce these 'friends' who are not just more modest sages. The Greeks might seem have confirmed the death of the sage and to have replaced him with philosophers, the friends of wisdom, those who seek wisdom but do not formerly possess it. But the difference between the sage and the philosopher would not be merely one of degree, as on a scale: the old oriental sage thinks, perhaps, in Figures, whereas the philosopher invents and thinks the Concept." Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 3). For further discussion on this particular topic, I refer the reader to Bell's interesting work on Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?: A Critical Introduction and Guide.* (Bell 2016)

A cardinal point in Leibowitz's depiction of Maimonides the philosopher is Maimonides's self-perception and his perception of what philosophy is. Leibowitz insists that "knowledge of God is not a part, or a detail of general human knowledge – it is a totally different affair" (ibid. 15). In this sense, Maimonides is not a philosopher "because the purpose of his thought was not philosophical", but to worship God through a philosophical (rational) faith. On this very point – Maimonides is and/or is not a philosopher, which once more presents an apparent paradox, Leibowitz has in mind to save Maimonides from both the duality-paradigm and the anthropocentric theology of the unity-paradigm. From the point of view of the duality-paradigm the Maimonides of *Mishneh Torah* – considered holy since it was inspired by the holy Spirit, according to Zev Jawitz (Jawitz 1935, Schwartz 2009), is irreconcilable with the Maimonides of the *Guide* (considered a profane work by both the religious and the secular schools). Through the lens of Leibowitz's synoptic view, Maimonides's epistemological theory that God is absolutely transcendent means that his existence cannot be demonstrated.[9] This serves as the philosophical basis for Leibowitz's conception of the "nature and limitations of Human knowledge" (Goldman 1992). Therefore, "knowledge of God is not a part, or a detail of general human knowledge – it is a totally different affair" (Leibowitz 1989, 15). It is in this sense that we should find what Leibowitz means when he says that Maimonides is not a philosopher. That is, he is not a philosopher in the western sense of the word. In the new paradigm of medieval Arab and Jewish philosophy, however, Maimonides is and should be considered a true philosopher.

The Maimonidean God does not have any positive attributes, but He should be construed negatively (negative theology). In the chapter on "faith and theology", Leibowitz addresses the issue of theism within the framework of philosophy of religion: distinction between the personal God – God of religious belief – and god as an abstract concept – god of philosophical thought. Leibowitz posits Maimonides's negative theology as a negation of the divine attributes current in religious discourse, in which God is conceived in categories of human thought derived from "the *sensual and imaginative experience of man.*" (ibid. 69). Maimonides's doctrine of divinity – as interpreted through the prism of Leibowitz's conception of pure theism – is

9. On this point, see the section on Averroes and his conception of philosophy-as-act – demonstrative syllogistic reasoning. On this very fundamental point, Leibowitz's synoptic view is fundamentally different from the unity-paradigm of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (d. 1935).

the foundation of faith; a faith which "recognises that there is God and that He can be worshiped" (ibid, 70).

One might interpret Leibowitz's statement – that Maimonides is not a philosopher – as a reiteration of an orientalist view (auto-orientalism) of the Eurocentric Enlightenment's discourse which portrays itself as a *rupture* with the Middle Ages and a *continuity* of Greek philosophy (true philosophy). Medieval philosophy – Islamic, Jewish and Christian – in western history of philosophy was therefore considered as non-philosophy; a mere theology. Leibowitz's Judaeo-Zionist centrism, however, stands in the way of any attempt to understand his paradoxical position: his Kantian critique of reason, on the one hand, and his critique of the doctrine of Christian foundation of modernity and enlightenment on the other (Leibowitz 2008; Bensussan 2008). These two positions have led him to these two different conclusions:

- Medieval philosophy was real philosophy:
  This religious philosophy was real philosophy, since the majority of these philosophers *admired* (heb. *heᵉritzu*) knowledge for-its-own-sake and desired (heb. *sha'afu*) a knowledge of reality attained by man although they were convinced from the start that such knowledge is bound and destined to lead to a knowledge of God, and his faith gave the main colouring to their philosophical thinking. (Leibowitz 1989, 16)[10]
- Maimonides's philosophical thinking is a denial of the object of philosophical knowledge-in-itself.

On the latter point, Maimonides's "faith that gave colouring to his philosophical thinking" has led Leibowitz to consider him as the "re-embodiment of the position of Abraham".[11] The example of Abraham's absolute obedience when he was asked to offer his son Isaac constitutes a clear demonstration of the sort of faith according to which "all of man's thoughts, feelings and values become null and void in the face of the fear of God and the love of God" (Leibowitz 1989, 160). In other words, fear and love – key terms in both Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah*, *sefer ha-mada* (book of knowledge) and in the third part of the *Guide* – represent "the quintessence of Maimonides's philosophy, the whole of which is belief in God" (ibid, 17).

10. This excerpt is in Hebrew (Leibowitz 1980), but unfortunately, the Hebrew text on the internet is not paged:

וז תיתד היפוסוליפ התיה זכ-יפ-לע-ףאו
דללצ היתוחוליתד יבדיײ ייׁׁׁׂ היתוחוליה
ואף על פי כן היתה פילוסופיה דתית זו
פילוסופיה ממש, שהרי הפילוסופים האלה
ברובם העריצו את ההכרה כשלעצמה
ושאפו להכרת המציאות על ידי האדם,
אלא היו משוכנעים מלכתחילה שהכרה זו
תכליתה וסופה להביא להכרת אלוהים,
ואמונה זו היא שגיוונה את חשיבתם
הפילוסופית.

Abraham-as-a-friend-of-God and man-of-wisdom functions also in Averroes's *the Decisive Discourse*. In the first section, Averroes quotes the following verse: "So also did We (Allah) show Abraham the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth, that he might [have understanding] and have certitude." (Q 4:75)

Through the synoptic view, Leibowitz hoped to

- overcome an apparent paradox in Maimonides's thought – faith/law versus philosophy or faith of the philosopher as against the faith of the halakhist (orthopraxis) – and
- counterattack any tendencies that might accuse the Jewish philosopher of allowing philosophical pagan heresy (Greek philosophy, and Arab philosophy, branded as heretical by religious orthodoxy) to pollute the purity of the Torah.

For Leibowitz the apparent paradox has been placed wrongly. That is, the distinction is not between philosophy and *halakhah*, but "it exists within the halachic thinking itself" (ibid. 23). As a result, the two aspects of faith in Maimonides should be approached through the lens of the synoptic view that enables us to see Maimonides's philosophical thought (*Guide*) and halachic authority (*Mishneh Torah*) as one whole.[12] In other words, the correct understanding of this issue is to define it as a matter of legal interpretation.

Now, Leibowitz is also aware of the intricacies of religious philosophy as a whole and as an individual religious system: Judaism, Islam, Christianity, pagan religions etc. As a Jew he privileges not only Judaism but rabbinic Judaism and the centrality of rabbinic understanding of *mitzvoth* (Oral Law). His articulation of this fundamental truth comes to the fore in his discussion of what he views as the "quintessence of Maimonides's intellectual thought", namely that the repudiation of idolatry, which, according to both Leibowitz and Maimonides, "consists in adoring something which is not God … in thought or in action. *This includes any conception of the divine whose contents are human categories or values.*" (ibid. 22). This repudiation of idolatry consists of two corollary propositions or interdependent stages: belief in one God (true knowledge in the only true God) cannot be attained except by man's duty to worship God, "in which, and in which alone, he is able to maintain contact [faith] with God" (ibid. 22). Faith (heb. *emuna*) as man's "relation to God" not the other way around. The first means man's "recognition of his own duty to worship God" (Leibowitz 1989, 22). Faith is philosophy whereas *mitzvoth* is *halakhah* (Harvey 2012).

12. This is actually similar to al-Jaberi's approach to Averroes's intellectual project which he considers as one coherent system of thought: Averroes shifts the discussion about the status of philosophy from being a dogmatic issue (ar. *'aqīdah*) about revelation versus philosophy to a juridical issue (ar. *fiqh*). This approach finds its theoretical and analytical articulation in al-Jaberi's Averroist project: a comprehensive work that conjugate editing, publishing Averroes's works with a post-enlightenment reflective-critical-philosophical thinking.

Religious faith as Torah for its own sake

Leibowitz's own perception of faith (philosophy) and religious practices (*halakhah*) as two interdependent categories is in collision course with Israeli judeities: from Ben Gurion's conception of Judaism to religious Zionism. One cannot help noticing Leibowitz's critique of kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism) as a perversion of true Judaism – Maimonidean Judaism.[13]

The fundamental premise upon which Maimonides rests his own perception of God is that "God is 'true Being' in and for himself, not because Him being the cause of the world" (ibid. 26). That is, God is transcendental, and the relationship between God and the world is not a relationship of natural causality. In this connection, the concept of creation is considered by Maimonides as not "essential for a knowledge of God". On the latter point, Leibowitz opens, in chapter 7 (53-57), the door for a brief discussion on Being and Creation; a discussion that he calls "The God of Aristotle and the God of our fathers". As mentioned earlier, Maimonides's doctrine of divinity "that there is God and that He can be worshiped" is what differentiates between "Maimonides's God and Aristotle's or Spinoza's god", in the eyes of Leibowitz (Harvey 2012; Fraenkel 2006). Leibowitz begins with Maimonides's first four *halahot* of *yesodei ha-torah* (the fundamentals of the Torah) in the first book, *sefer ha-madah* (book of knowledge), of Maimonides's monumental work on Jewish law,[14] *Mishneh Torah*. It is stated in the first *halakhah* that:

> The fundament of all fundaments (heb. *yesod ha-yesodot*) and the pillar of wisdom (heb. *'amod ha-hahamot*) is to know that there is a Primary Being (heb. *matzuy rišon*) and He gives being (heb. *mamtzi*) to all beings (heb. *kol nimtza*), and all beings in heaven or on earth or between them have no being except from the truth of His being (heb. *ʾamitat hamtzaʾo*). (Leibowitz 1989)[15]

God as the only *true Being* in a philosophical sense means, according to Leibowitz, "necessary being – that is something the being of which is derived from it being what it is, not something which only has being on account of something else" (Leibowitz 1989, 33-34; Harvey 2012). For Leibowitz, as well as for Maimonides, the scriptural basis for God as "Being" and "Truth" is the prophetic words mentioned in *halakhah 4*:

13. On his very point, one notices that al-Jaberi's dismissal of Sufism and the gnostic reason represented in mashreqi philosophy is quite similar to Leibowitz's dismissal of Jewish mysticism (Al-Jaberi 1982; Weiss 1989).

14. It is worth mentioning, in this context, Averroes's work on the four Sunni legal schools in four volumes: *Bidāyat al-mujtahid wa nihāyat al-muqtasid*, Cairo: Dār al-hadīth.

15. The English translation is a bland of Glucker's and Tougher's. The Hebrew text and its English translation of *Mishneh Torah* is found on this site: chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/904960/jewish/Yesodei-haTorah-Chapter-One.htm
Halakhah 1:

יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות לידע שיש
שם מצוי ראשון והוא ממציא כל נמצא
וכל הנמצאים משמים וארץ ומה
שביניהם לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצאו

> This is implied by the prophet's statement [Jer. 10:10] "And God, your Lord, is truth" – i.e., He alone is truth and no other entity possesses truth that compares to His truth. This is what [is meant by] the Torah's statement [Deut 4:35]: "There is nothing else aside from Him" – i.e., aside from Him, there is no true being like Him. (Leibowitz 1989)[16]

Leibowitz notices that the epistemological implications of Maimonides's ontological theory: "Being" and "Truth" as being unique to God is that "nothing is of significant value for man in this world apart from the knowledge of God ... since God alone is true being" (Leibowitz 1989:36). Leibowitz believes that Maimonides's epistemological theory – the process of knowing God – begins from the Jewish religious belief, according to which *faith* is conceived in categories of *mitzvoth*, not in Aristotle's "doctrine of being" (ontology). On this point, Leibowitz shows that instead of positing faith as a condition for accepting commandments (*mitzvoth*) as do other Jewish and Muslims thinkers, Maimonides arranges faith itself (religious belief) *in* the commandments. The process that teleologically lead to the knowledge of God *should always* be under the watching eyes of Aristotelian rational philosophy (the demonstrative syllogistic reasoning of Averroes), which is the only guarantee or

> the necessary means for avoiding ... deviations which are likely to bring man to regard what is not God as God ... and from falling into the trap of imaginary cognition ... which constitutes the very idolatry. (Leibowitz 1989, 37)

Al-Jaberi: Averroist Post-Enlightenment

Al-Jaberi – as an Arab-Moroccan philosopher and a public intellectual – has made of Averroes the very foundation of a "real" enlightenment – an Arab Post-Enlightenment – which modern Arab-Muslim philosophical discourse should make its object. Successive failures or partial successes of waves of renaissance (ar. *nahdah*) since the 19th century – the time of hegemonic west – shall be seen as a consequence of – inter alia – the dominance of "gnostic reason" and its variegated social and political prac-

16. *Halakhah 4*:

הוּא שֶׁהַנָּבִיא אוֹמֵ֫ר זֹה' אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת הוּא
לְבַדּוֹ הָאֱמֶת וְאֵין לְאַחֵר אֱמֶת כַּאֲמִתָּתוֹ
וְהוּא שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה אוֹמֶרֶת אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ
כְּלוֹמַר אֵין שָׁם מָצוּי אֱמֶת מִלְבַדּוֹ כְּמוֹתוֹ

tices as against the absence of the "demonstrative reason" as thought and practice. The ills of Arab societies cannot be healed without a double critique – critique of itself and of the other. Like most Arab thinkers, the post-Enlightenment discourse recasts the modern Arab post-Enlightenment project as a process of rupture and continuity: rupture with the discourse of decadence and the socio-political conditions that stand behind it, and the Eurocentric discourse of Enlightenment on Modernity that imagines it – i.e. a discourse on itself – as a total rejection of the past and the other (Habermas 1988; Khatibi 2002). Continuity, however, is construed as a continuity of the principle of modernity that medieval Arab-Islamic philosophy has instituted: the authority of Intellect. The latter should not be understood in the sense of opposition to and rejection of Law/faith nor in the sense of harmonisation (Hourani 1967), but rather as a critique of both: the notion of *Raison* as articulated by western metaphysical circles and the theological logos of Islamic *Kalam* (Tizini 1971; Muruwwa 1978). In his critique of Arab Reason,[17] al-Jaberi identifies decadence as primarily a discourse – not as a decadent historical period. Like most modern thinkers al-Jaberi recognises three main paradigms/discourses of decadence-renaissance that were generated as early as the 19th century – and which have been canonised in modern Arab historiography from the time of the first pioneers of Modern Arab Nahdah (Beleqziz 2009; al-Jaberi 1996):

- The westernised paradigm: the discourse of the European Enlightenment versus the decadent Arab-Islamic societies and thought
- The Salafi-reformist paradigm: the puritan Islam of Wahhabism (the non-liberal Salafi thought)
- The pseudo-hybrid paradigm: *'asālah wal mu'āsarah* (authenticity and contemporaeity). The latter means in fact Islamic heritage versus western modernity.

The first paradigm, which has been the product of the socio-political realities of western hegemony, colonialism and its discourse about the orient – Orientalism – consists of emulating the modernization model of Europe as a way out of oriental decadence (Blaut 1993). The second paradigm offers itself as a remedy for the Islamic world's ills through a return to "pure Islam" as reflected in the authentic prophetic model. This paradigm has

17. Al-Jaberi's Critique of the Arab Reason is a four volumes project that began in 1982 with *the Formation of the Arab Reason* and concluded with *the Ethical Reason* in 2001.

resulted in fossilization and sterilization of Wahhabi reformist thought and political totalitarianism (Sabih 2015). As far as the third paradigm is concerned, its pseudo-hybridity is reflected in its timid approach to and its refusal to make the issue of philosophy and Law (Reason and faith) an object for philosophical inquiry. That is to address the nature of the relationship between religion and philosophy as a relationship between religion and society in the same manner as Averroes did in The Decisive Discourse. For al-Jaberi, the paradigm of real hybridity of authenticity and modernity is the one that is and should be double-critical; that is, a critique of Arab Reason – as a cognitive instrument and cultural/intellectual product – on the one hand, and a critique of the essentialist discourse – whether orientalist and/or islam-centrist (religious discourse) – on the Arab Reason (Mind), on the other. Al-Jaberi finds in Averroes's legal discussion (pace Mahdi 1984, 188-202)[18] about the nature of the relation between religion and philosophy a valid precedent in two regards: politico-ideological and intellectual-philosophical. As I mentioned earlier with regard to Leibowitz's reading of Maimonides, "it is this relation between religion and philosophy that have been the object of philosophical thought and a central point of interest in Arab-Islamic culture through the ages" (al-Jaberi 2007, 48), including Arab-Jewish culture which organically is part of it. Most important is the analogy that al-Jaberi makes between this issue at Averroes's time and the issue of authenticity and modernity in modern and contemporary thought:

> The attitudes [Arabs, Muslims, Jews, Christians, etc.] towards philosophy and sciences of the ancients, or let us say: "rational sciences" in the past are almost similar to today's attitudes towards "western thought", or let us say: "modernity". (Averroes 2007, 48)

Al-Jaberi sums up these in two opposing attitudes:

- The rejectionist attitude which is today represented in the Salafi currents
- The rationalist attitude

For the Averroist al-Jaberi – as well as for Maimonides[19] – the rationalist attitude is that which:

18. Muhsin Mahdi (1984, 189) writes: "The kind of inquiry employed in the first part of the *Decisive Treatise* is not a demonstrative inquiry of the kind employed in demonstrative books … rather, it appears that Averroes's position is not legal nor demonstrative, but situated somewhere in between."

19. Leibowitz' wording about the *halakhah* as both a point of departure and a purpose could be understood as if he was saying that the ultimate referential authority is religion, but the truth of the matter is that the rational-philosophical decides what is truth, which for Leibowitz is compatible with Torah is truth.

accepts these "rational sciences", philosophy in particular, as the ultimate referential authority of thought and practice; a referential authority that explains religion, defines the truth of what has been expressed in Figures, and provides demonstrative proofs for what has been defined with proofs." (Averroes 2007, 48)

Al-Jaberi concludes that these are the conditions of and the modalities through which modernity articulated itself in the glorious times of Arab-Islamic culture. "Modernity", says al-Jaberi, "does not recognise any referential authority other than Reason (ar. *marji'iyatu al-'aql*). A modernity – as in the case of today's modernity, that does not avail itself from a kind of "estrangement" (ar. *'igtirāb*) in the thought of the other" (ibid 48). Or as Khatibi calls it: *pensée-autre* (thought-other) (2002, 93-112).[20]

Before I begin discussing how al-Jaberi reads Averroes's philosophical-juridical discussion of the religion-philosophy relation, I would like to show the importance that al-Jaberi bestow upon the issue of authenticity and modernity in Averroes's thought. As a theoretician and practitioner of philosophy, law and jurisprudence, Averroes was actually the best qualified in all these fields to "defend the right to philosophize" through the erudite eye and mind of the legal scholar who reached a legally binding conclusion; a fatwa that stipulated: *philosophical speculation is mandatory upon all those who has the ability to do so.* Since there is only *one truth,* the referential authority of philosophical reason does not contradict prophetic truth. On the contrary, it serves as its rational interpretive tool.

Al-Jaberi's Averroism

Al-Jaberi's Averroism[21] has been considered one of the most coherent current of thought that have been able to articulate an

20. The reader is welcome to see my discussion in my article on Khatibi published in 2015 (Sabih 2015) and which will be published in a new version in the second volume of Mourad El-Khatibi: *Né demain, un ouvrage en hommage à Abdelkébir Khatibi* (forthcoming).

21. In 1999 the University of Lumière Lyon II organised an international conference on Averroes and Averroism, the papers of which were edited and published in French under the title: Averroès et l'averroïsme (XIIe-XVe siècle: Un itinéraire historique du Haut Atlas à Paris et à Padoue). While there is an extensive discussion of the reception of Averroes between the 12th and the 15th centuries, mainly in Europe both in Christian and Jewish traditions, there is only one single paper on the transmission and reception of Averroes in the Arab world (239-248). The author of this article, Ferjani, re-iterates the assumptions of the discourse of decadence recast in Hegelian prescriptive definition of what real philosophy should look like: "Comme disait Hegel: 'le besoin de philosopher est le besoin des besoins déjà satisfaits' et la philosophie ne peut s'épanouir qu'avec un minimum de bien être, de liberté et d'instruction que les pays arabes ont perdu depuis que les découvertes maritime les ont marginalisés dans l'économie monde qu'ils dominaient auparavant." (Ferjani 2005, 247). One should also pinpoint that al-Jaberi's biography of Averroes *ibn Rušd: sīrah wa-fikr* (Averroes: his life and thought), together with his work on the figure and concept of the intellectual *al-muthaqqafūn fī al-hadārah al-'arabiyyah: mihnat ibn hanbal wa-nakbat ibn Rušd* (Intellectuals in Arab Civilization: the Trial of Ibn Hanbal and Averroes) (Al-Jaberi 1998; Al-Jaberi 1995) stand out as two important contributions on Moroccan Averroism.

original theoretical and methodological contribution to modern philosophical thought in the Arab world, particularly with regard to the issue of the relation between religion and society today through a critical reading of Averroes's *fasl al-maqāl* (The Decisive Discourse). Al-Jaberi's critical[22] and analytical edition[23] consists of three parts:

- A general introduction (*madkhal 'ām*): a brief history of the relation between religion and philosophy in Islam (11-50)
- An analytical introduction (*muqaddimah tahlīliyah*) (53-76)
- Averroes's two texts: *fasl al-maqāl* and *al-damīmah* (85-130)

In this section, I shall focus on two issues in al-Jaberi's analytical introduction: a)Truth does not oppose truth; rather, it agrees with and bears witness to it, and b)the belief/unbelief of the philosopher.

One Truth: Philosophy versus religion (law)

In the beginning, al-Jaberi directs his critical gaze to the opening statement that Averroes makes about the nature and objective of the *Decisive Discourse*:

> Our sole purpose (*garadonā*) in this discourse (*qawl*) is to investigate (*nafhasa*), through the lens of legal inquiry (*al-nazar al-šar'ī*) whether inquiry (*al-nazar*) into philosophy (*falsafah*) and sciences of Logic (*'ulūm al-mantiq*) are permitted (*mubāh*) or prohibited (*mahzūr*), or commanded (*ma'mūr*) – either as a recommendation (*al-nadb*) or as an obligation (*al-wujūb*). (Averroes 2007, 85)

Contrary to Mahdi's assumption, al-Jaberi states that Averroes's discussion is juridical, not philosophical, and the objective of

22. Averroes's text *fasl al-maqāl*, which is used by al-Jaberi here, is critically edited by Mohammed Abd al-Wahid al-Asri, who used the Madrid manuscript, no. 5013 as the primary text. See the introduction written by al-Asri, 79-82 (Averroes 2007).

23. The high number of editions of al-Jaberi's works, including his critical and analytical edition of Averroes's book *fasl al-maqāl* has

always puzzled me. His prolific writings on Arab philosophy, philosophy of science, Arab-Muslim thought indicate that al-Jaberi has been one of the most – if not the most – read thinkers in the Arab world even after his death in 2010. I have known al-Jaberi's as the "founder" of Moroccan philosophical school, one of the greatest achievements of which was the introduction of philosophy and

critical Arab-Islamic thought in the mandatory curriculum of Moroccan secondary schools, and at the University of Mohammed V in Rabat. The edition that I am using is the fourth one of 2007. The first edition came in 1997. I know that other publishing houses, such as Markaz al-whadah al-'arabiyyah has published this work and others as well.

the *Discourse* is to elucidate the position of Islamic law (*al-šar'*) with regard to the issue of inquiring into the sciences of the ancients [Greeks]: philosophy and sciences of Logic. The Decisive Discourse is also

- a response to the accusation of "unbelief" raised by al-Ghazali against the philosophers,[24] and
- a critique of the epistemology and ideology of Muslim theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) in general, and ash'arite theology in particular; the latter is by far the dominant theology of Sunni Creed.

With regard to the issue raised in the above-mentioned quote, al-Jaberi makes two observations. The first has to do with why Averroes does not mention the two sub-categories: the forbidden/unlawful (*al-muharram*) and the disapproved (*al-makrūh*) of the legal category of what in Islamic Law (*al-šar'*) is called the prohibited (*al-mahzūr*) contrary to what he does with the category of the commanded (*al-ma'mūr*). For al-Jaberi this issue is of methodological pertinence, since Averroes differentiates between *philosophy-in-itself* (knowledge-in-itself: the essence of philosophy) and man's perception of philosophy (the accidental attributes of philosophy), on the one hand, and between philosophy-as-act and philosophy-as-theory, on the other.

For Averroes, says al-Jaberi, the deontological concerns are not far from the theoretical and methodological concerns of the *Decisive Discourse* (al-Jaberi 2006, 23-34). Asking for a legal opinion to this issue should not in any way be construed as if Averroes believed in its primacy, but as a legal scholar he attempts to show that since the issue being a legal matter it should, therefore, be approached as a juridical matter, not a philosophical one.[25] That is, the matter should be examined through the lenses of Islamic jurisprudence, according to which the Qur'an is enlisted as the primary source. In this regard, Averroes shows that the Qur'anic injunction upon man to use his intellect is evident from several verses. In addition to the scriptural argument, he presents legal arguments that support the obligation (*al-wjūb*) of "inquiry (*al-nazar*) into philosophy (*falsafah*) and sciences of Logic (*'ulūm al-mantiq*)", i.e. philosophy-in-itself. As far as man's perception of philosophy is concerned, Averroes warns against the fatal consequences if a non-qualified person or if a person with no intellectual disposition engages with phi-

24. Averroes mentions two of al-Ghazali's works in which al-Ghazali accuses Arab-Muslim philosophers of unbelief (*kufr*): The Incoherence of philosophers (*tahāfut al-falāsifah*) and The Distinction (*al-tafriqah*) (Averroes 2001, 12).

25. Please compare al-Jaberi's with Leibowitz's earlier discussion.

losophy. Averroes states this point clearly in the following excerpt:

> If someone goes astray in reflection and stumbles – due to a *deficiency in his innate disposition*, *poor ordering of his reflection*, *his being overwhelmed by his passions*, *his not finding a teacher to guide him to an understanding of what in them* [the books of ancient philosophy] ... It does not follow that they are to be forbidden to the one who is suited to reflect upon them. *For, this manner of harm coming about due to them is something that attaches to them by accident, not by essence.* (Averroes 2001, 7)[26]

Law calls for consideration of existing things by means of intellect and for pursuing cognizance of them by means of philosophy-as-act (*fiʼl al-falsafah*), which is a sort of syllogistic reasoning, the operating mechanism of which is "nothing more than inferring and drawing the unknown from the known" (ibid. 2). The legal conclusion which Averroes draws here is that the legal evidence that Revelation is not and should not be the only source of knowledge is evident from Revelation itself. Averroes argues that in Q 16:125, one finds a typology, which he turns into a taxonomy of ways of reasoning, each of which corresponds to its own discourse:

> Anyone who wants to know God and all kinds of existing things by means of demonstration set out first to know the kinds of demonstrations, their conditions, and in what way may demonstrative syllogistic reasoning differ from dialectical, rhetorical, and sophistical syllogistic reasoning. (Averroes 2001, 3)

The statement "truth does not oppose truth, rather, it agrees with and bears witness to it" is Averroes's *a priori* truth which he applies in his legal argumentation in order to show that the four principles/sources of Sunni jurisprudence do not support neither the jurists's nor the theologians's claim that there is an innate contradiction between knowing God trough Scriptures (true faith) and knowing God through demonstrative syllogistic reasoning (*kufr* (unbelief), *bidʼah* (rejected innovation)). The assumption of contradiction between philosophy and law/faith/religion in al-Jaberi's line of argumentation serves an ideologi-

26. The emphasis is mine, not Buttersworth's.

cal-political agenda rather than being about law and philosophy *per se* (Salem 2008; al-Jaberi 2006:23-34).

The belief/unbelief of the philosopher

If the legal decision makes it incumbent upon man to use philosophy-as-act, i.e. demonstrative syllogistic reasoning as one of the three modes of demonstration, the most plausible interpretation of Q 16:125: "invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with *wisdom* [demonstrative reasoning], *beautiful preaching* [rhetorical reasoning] and *argue* with them in ways that are best and most gracious [dialectical reasoning]", would be that:

> because people's natures vary in excellence with respect to assent ... when this divine Law of ours called to people by means of these three methods, assent to it was extended to every human being. (Averroes 2001, 8)

The term philosopher – friend (φιλό) of wisdom (σοφος) in Averroist sense refers to a) the ancient Greek philosopher and b) the one who uses demonstrative syllogistic reasoning. As a friend of sophia (*hikmah*) and a friend of Law (*al-šarʿ*), al-Jaberi's Averroes defends the philosopher's right to philosophy-as-act, and against al-Ghazali's accusations of unbelief which he raised against Muslim philosophers.

As a legal category, al-Jaberi argues that philosophy *could* fall into the category of the disapproved (*al-makrūh*) if – and only if – philosophy was not used properly either by the non-qualified person or by a misplacement. The latter could be the use of, for instance, demonstrative syllogistic reason in an area where rhetorical reason or other forms of reasoning were required.

Averroes shows that al-Ghazali is methodologically wrong since he treats theological issues under the legal category of consensus (*ʿijmāʿ*), which he used against the peripatetic school. In this regard, al-Ghazali has used three issues that, in his eyes, warranted the unbelief (*kufr*) of Muslim philosophers. He stated that these philosophers believed that:

- The world is eternal
- God does not know particulars
- There is no resurrection of bodies

Averroes shows that a) consensus is unconceivable in interpretation, and b) as a result one should not charge someone who goes against consensus with unbelief. As far as the three issues which al-Ghazali raised against Muslim philosophers are concerned, Averroes unveils al-Ghazali's faulty understanding. With regard to God's knowledge, Averroes states that the peripatetic school does say that God does not know particulars, but He simply knows them by a knowledge which is different from human knowledge. The latter is a knowledge of the existing thing, and as such it is caused by them. Whereas God's knowledge is prior to and a cause of the existing things. As a result, it is absurd to compare God's knowledge with human's or even to describe God's knowledge in terms of generals and particulars.

As far as the eternity of the world is concerned, Averroes identifies it as a semantic problem in the sense that the difference between the ash'arite theologians and ancient philosophers is a problem of *naming* and *conceptual definition*. While they agree about the two extremes of the existing things they disagree about the intermediate. The two extremes they agree about are:

- generated things (*muhdathāt*), that is "existing things that exist from something other than itself and by an agent cause" (Averroes 2001, 14), and
- "eternal" things (*qadīm*) that is "an existing thing that does not come into existence from something or by something and that time does not precede ... This existing thing is apprehended by demonstration: it is God" (Averroes 2001, 15).

The intermediate, however, is defined by Averroes as "the sort of being ... that has not come into existence from something and that time does not precede, but that come into existence by something – I mean by an agent" (Averroes 2001, 15). The dispute then with regard to the intermediate is that theologians and philosophers disagree about the past time. While they agree about the future time as infinite, theologians and Plato consider past time as finite, whereas Aristotle considers both past and future time as infinite. With regard to the intermediate Averroes concludes that

> it is not truly generated, not truly eternal. For what is truly generated is necessarily corruptible, and what is truly eternal has no cause. Among them are those who name it "everlasting generated", namely Plato and his sect, because time, according to them, is finite with respect to the past. (Averroes 2001, 15-16)

Al-Jaberi's discussion of these two issues: *philosophy versus religion* and the *belief/unbelief of the philosopher* brings about the significance and relevance in contemporary Arab-Muslim societies, and re-posits them as cardinal problematics that do not cease to threaten the very social and political fabric of these societies. Al-Jaberi is also aware of the intellectual importance that he allocates to this issue in modern philosophical discourse: the socio-political dimensions of these issues are embedded in Averroes's *Decisive Discourse.*

Conclusion: Religion and society

Part of the revival and instrumentality of both Maimonides's and Averroes's philosophical and legal thought in modern Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Muslim thought has to do with finding alternative interpretive frameworks to the current nationalist, religious-fundamentalist ideologies, and popular perceptions and practices that consistently construe religion – Islam and Judaism – as an unredeemable opposition between intellect and Law in the name of tradition: religion and philosophy/science. A critical reading of thinkers, such as Leibowitz and al-Jaberi, has yielded the irrefutable truth that it is necessary today to engage this under-researched area, Middle Eastern and North African philosophical thought under its double genealogy – or as Derrida calls it: double genitive – in terms of its filiation and affiliation to and with its own tradition, on the one hand, and to and with western philosophical tradition, on the other. In the words of Leibowitz, the matter should be read through the lens of the grammar of this double genitive:

> There is no Jewish ethic, no Jewish policy, no Jewish concept of society. Jews and Gentiles alike differ on all these matters, and the dividing line is not between Jews

and non-Jews but between man and man. Jews and Gentiles were not in disagreement as Jews and Gentiles except when it came to practicing their religion by keeping the law and the commandments. (Leibowitz 1975, 315-316)[27]

Not surprisingly, al-Jaberi states that the true and applicable modernity – as post-enlightenment – is the authority of the intellect.

This is the main venue of this project that I am engaged in, namely mapping Arab and Jewish reception – in terms of nature and modalities – of medieval Arab-Jewish philosophical thought: Maimonideanism and Averroism. The reception and interpretation of Arab and Jewish shared philosophical heritage in modern Middle Eastern and North African philosophical and critical thought would in my view yield surprising results if approached comparatively.

27. I am using Melamed's English translation in his article "Is there a Jewish Political thought? The Medieval Case Reconsidered" in Hebraic political Studies 1(1):24-56 (2005). In opposition to Melamed, I have rendered Gentiles with a capital G. Melamed rightly takes up the discussion in Israel academia with regard to the question of whether one should prefix the epithet Jewish to philosophy. The very issue is of an Orientalist origin and reflects a general conception towards non-western philosophies.

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