Atheism Across Abrahamic Faiths: A Theoretical Analysis into Islamic, Jewish and Christian Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how atheism is understood and theologically assessed within the three main Abrahamic religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Although all three affirm belief in a transcendent, personal God and normatively reject atheism, their approaches to unbelief are shaped by distinct doctrinal structures, historical trajectories and socio-cultural contexts. Using a qualitative, comparative-theological design, the study employs textual and conceptual analysis of scriptural, classical and contemporary theological sources from each tradition. The findings suggest that Islamic discourse usually frames atheism in terms of *tauhid, kufr*, and *ilhad*. These terms are used to characterise a broad denial of God, prophecy, revelation, and the unseen, with significant doctrinal, legal and communal consequences. Jewish perspectives, by contrast, often locate atheism within a covenantal and communal matrix, employing notions such as kofer *be'ikkar*, *min* and *apikoros* to describe various forms of unbelief, while allowing for the persistence of Jewish identity alongside explicit non-belief. Historically, Christian thought has addressed atheism under the rubrics of heresy and apostasy, and, in modernity, has engaged with it intensively through philosophical apologetics, ethical critique, and reflection on the problem of evil. The study concludes that atheism functions as a revealing point of contrast across the Abrahamic faiths, exposing shared concerns about truth, morality and salvation. In addition, it highlights divergent theological logics and response strategies. The article offers a structured comparative framework that can guide further interfaith dialogue and modern discussions between religious and atheistic worldviews.

Keywords: Islam, Judaism, Jewish, Christian, Atheism, Abrahamic Faith

INTRODUCTION

This research examines the relationship between atheism and the Abrahamic faiths, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, highlighting the shared monotheistic foundations. Although most scholarly work overlooks the development of atheism within Jewish history, focusing instead on Classical and Christian ideas, this study seeks to address that gap. It explores the distinctive philosophical and theological issues that lead to non-belief in all three traditions. The universal presence of a supreme deity in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, despite differences in its interpretation, provides a valuable framework for understanding atheistic challenges. This comparative method is essential for understanding how each tradition has historically understood and addressed disbelief, ranging from outright denials of divine existence to more subtle forms of scepticism, additionally, by examining the historical development of "atheism" within each Abrahamic faith. This transitioned from denying specific deities to a broader repudiation of all religious systems. Atheism and related forms of non-religion are no longer marginal phenomena in contemporary public life. Global surveys indicate that the religiously unaffiliated (often called "nones") grew from about 1.6 billion people in 2010 to about 1.9 billion in 2020, rising from roughly 23% to 24% of the world's population; this broad unaffiliated category includes self-identified atheists and agnostics as well as those with no particular religious identity (Strawn, 2019).

These shifts renew the urgency of asking how major religious traditions interpret unbelief, not only as an abstract philosophical claim, but also as a lived social reality shaped by institutions, law, communal boundary-making, and modern cultural change. Within the Abrahamic religions, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity share a commitment to a transcendent, personal God. Nevertheless, they have developed distinct doctrinal grammars for naming disbelief and distinct repertoires for responding to doubt, disaffiliation, and explicit atheism. The rise of

atheism in contemporary discussions, particularly in Muslim-majority societies, underscores the importance of examining how these traditions address the absence of belief (Samuri & Quraishi, 2014). The rise of secularism, modernity, and philosophical scepticism in recent centuries has heightened the salience of atheism as a theological and sociocultural issue, prompting renewed reflection within religious scholarship (Shepherd, 2020).

In Islamic theology (ʿilm al-kalam), atheism is typically viewed not only as a denial of divine existence but also as a rejection of the prophetic message and the moral framework established by divine revelation (Khairuddin, 2022). The Qur'anic discourse often addresses disbelievers (*kuffar*) in theological and ethical terms, distinguishing between ignorance, obstinacy and outright denial. By contrast, Jewish thought, especially within classical Rabbinic literature, approaches atheism more through the lens of covenantal breach and communal identity, rather than purely metaphysical denial. While explicit discussions of atheism are less prevalent in early Jewish texts, modern Jewish philosophy has grappled with atheism, particularly in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and the Holocaust. Christianity, historically intertwined with Greco-Roman philosophical traditions, developed a range of responses to atheism, from Patristic apologetics to modern existential theology. Christian theological engagement with atheism has often centred on the problem of evil, human autonomy and the crisis of faith (Gasparov, 2022). This article begins by clarifying four key concepts. It uses atheism primarily in its philosophical sense as the denial of God's existence, while also recognising its common psychological interpretation as a lack of theistic belief.
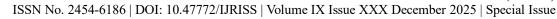
Unbelief is an umbrella term encompassing atheism, agnosticism, and various forms of practical indifference. Religious disaffiliation refers to the sociological process of abandoning a religious identity, which does not necessarily mean atheism. Secularism is presented as a political principle concerning the relationship between religion and public authority, whereas secularisation describes broader social processes that can weaken the influence of religious institutions. Building on these definitions, the paper offers a comparative-theological analysis of how each tradition interprets atheism within its own categories, references unbelief in classical sources, and redefines these concepts in modern contexts in which debates over science, morality, suffering and political power have intensified. The goal is not to determine which tradition is "correct" but to provide a balanced comparative framework that highlights similarities and differences, fostering more meaningful dialogue between religious and non-religious perspectives (Castel, 2016).

Problem Statement

Existing literature often treats atheism either in general philosophical terms or within the scope of a single religious tradition, with limited exploration of how these faiths engage with atheism in different ways across scripture, theology and ethical discourse (Dodds, 2009). This lack of comparative theological analysis hinders a fuller understanding of the nuanced ways in which atheism is framed within Abrahamic thought. In Islamic discourse, atheism is often framed as a violation of *tawḥid* and an existential threat to the social and moral fabric of Muslim societies. This is especially evident in the Muslim context, where the rise of atheistic thought among former Muslims is driven by rationalist, existentialist and humanist ideologies, which have prompted strong institutional responses and calls for theological reassertion (Duile, 2018). Conversely, Judaism, while affirming belief in God as central to traditional halakhic life, exhibits greater historical and cultural tolerance of internal dissent, scepticism, and even non-theistic identity, particularly within modern and secular Jewish movements (Werczberger & Azulay, 2011). Christianity, with its long tradition of philosophical apologetics and existential theology, often treats atheism as both a doctrinal rejection and an opportunity for spiritual dialogue (Mantsinen & Tervo-Niemelä, 2020).

Although atheism is increasingly linked to contemporary phenomena such as secularisation, scepticism, and disaffiliation, comparative work often remains textual and normative, engaging less with contemporary atheist arguments and self-understandings, and with empirical scholarship on how unbelief is lived and narrated in different settings (Haushofer & Reisinger, 2019). Despite these developments, current scholarship tends to address atheism within isolated religious frameworks or general philosophical terms, without systematically comparing theological responses across Islam, Judaism and Christianity. This gap limits interreligious understanding and obscures the unique ways each tradition addresses contemporary challenges related to secularism, disbelief, and post-religious identities.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the divergent theological responses to atheism within Islam, Judaism,

and Christianity, focusing on both classical doctrinal positions and modern reinterpretations. By examining these perspectives through a comparative theological lens, the paper aims to contribute to a more comprehensive and contextualised understanding of atheism within the Abrahamic religious framework. Moreover, it limits the capacity for interfaith dialogue on shared challenges posed by secularism, scepticism and religious disaffiliation in contemporary societies. Addressing this gap is essential not only for advancing theological scholarship but also for fostering constructive engagement among religious and non-religious communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative-theological research design. It is theoretical in nature and relies primarily on textual and conceptual analysis of key Islamic, Jewish and Christian sources that address atheism or disbelief in God. Primary sources consist of authoritative texts from each tradition. For Islam, these include the Qur'an, selected ḥadīth, classical works of 'ilm al-kalam and usul al-din that discuss kufr, ilhad and related concepts, as well as contemporary Muslim writings that respond to atheism in modern contexts. In Judaism, the primary sources are the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), Rabbinic literature (Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash), and representative medieval and modern Jewish philosophers who address doubt, covenant, and secularism. For Christianity, the primary sources comprise the New Testament, patristic and medieval theological texts and modern or contemporary Christian authors who explicitly engage with atheism and secular worldviews. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, theses, and reference works in theology, religious studies, and comparative religion. These are used to provide historical context, clarify doctrinal frameworks, and identify ongoing scholarly debates on atheism and Abrahamic faiths. Texts are selected using purposive sampling. They are selected because they are influential within their traditions, represent prominent views on unbelief, and cover different historical periods (classical, modern, and contemporary).
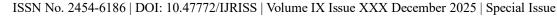
These themes are coded and synthesised to create a clear theological profile of each tradition's position on atheism. Second, the three profiles are compared within a shared framework. Similarities and differences are examined with respect to terminology, doctrinal focus, tolerance of doubt, and the balance between individual belief and communal identity. This comparison shows where the traditions agree (for example, in seeing atheism as a serious spiritual issue) and where they differ (for instance, in how much atheism is regarded as a legal, communal, or existential matter). Finally, the results are discussed through a constructive theological reflection, highlighting implications for interfaith dialogue and contemporary engagement with secularism and ex-believer phenomena.

Comparative Perspectives on Atheism in Islam, Judaism and Christianity

This comparative analysis highlights both the shared concerns of the Abrahamic faiths regarding atheism and the distinctive ways in which each tradition has responded to it. All three affirm belief in a transcendent, personal God and generally regard atheism as a serious theological and moral deviation. However, their engagements with unbelief have followed different socio-intellectual trajectories. In Muslim-majority contexts, overt atheism tends to be perceived primarily as a direct challenge to tawḥid and to the religiously informed social order, eliciting responses that are simultaneously theological, legal and communal. In Judaism, modern discourse has often framed the issue more in terms of secularisation and cultural or ethnic continuity than in terms of explicit doctrinal atheism, allowing for the persistence of strong Jewish identity alongside religious non-belief. Christianity, shaped by its long history of philosophical apologetics and its deep entanglement with Western modernity, has commonly approached atheism through rational argument, pastoral dialogue and existential reflection, especially in relation to questions of suffering, meaning and autonomy. Together, these patterns show that while Islam, Judaism and Christianity converge in rejecting atheism at the level of doctrine, they articulate and manage that rejection through differing historical experiences, institutional structures and cultural contexts.

Islamic Perspective

Within the Islamic tradition, atheism is generally understood as a direct negation of tawḥīd (the oneness of God) and a deviation from the innate human disposition (fiṭrah) to believe in a Creator. The Qur'an repeatedly affirms that recognition of God is rooted in human nature and in reflection upon creation. Therefore, denial of God is seen not only as an intellectual error but as a moral and spiritual failure. Atheism thus represents a rupture in the

foundational relationship between God and the human being, with consequences for both personal salvation and the ethical order of society (BAKKAR et al., 2020)

Classical Islamic scholarship distinguishes several categories related to disbelief. Terms such as *kufr* (disbelief), *ilḥād* (deviation, usually associated with denial of God or distortion of religious truths), and zandaqah (heresy) are used to describe different forms of doctrinal deviation. Atheism, in the strict sense, is the denial of any divine reality and is included within these broader categories. Early Muslim theologians and jurists debated the status of those who deny God, revelation, or the Hereafter, and generally agreed that such positions contradict the essential pillars of iman (faith). In this view, atheism is not regarded as a neutral philosophical choice but rather as a rejection of revealed truth and the guidance of prophets.

Historically, the Islamic intellectual tradition encountered ideas resembling atheism through certain philosophical, literary, and heterodox currents. Some individuals openly mocked religious beliefs, questioned prophecy, or reduced the world to purely material causes. These tendencies were critically examined by mutakallimūn (theologians) and other scholars, who developed rational arguments for God's existence, the necessity of revelation, and the coherence of belief in the unseen. The discipline of ʿilm al-kalam emerged, in part, as a systematic response to such challenges, integrating reason and revelation to defend the core doctrines of Islam against both internal deviations and external philosophies. (Khairuddin, 2022; Mujib & Hamim, 2021).
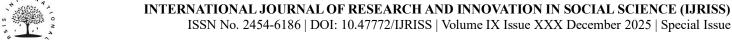
In modern times, Islamic discussions of atheism are often shaped by encounters with secularism, scientific materialism and globalised critiques of religion. Contemporary Muslim scholars highlight a range of factors that may contribute to atheistic tendencies, including misunderstandings of religious teachings, perceived contradictions between science and faith, moral objections to believers' behaviour, and broader cultural pressures toward individual autonomy and relativism. While acknowledging these sociological and psychological dimensions, Islamic thought continues to frame atheism primarily as a theological problem: a denial of God, prophecy and the unseen that undermines the comprehensive worldview of Islam (Friawan et al., 2020).

At the same time, contemporary Islamic responses to atheism are not limited to legal or condemnatory approaches. Many scholars and *daʿwah* movements emphasise pastoral, educational and dialogical strategies, seeking to address doubts through intellectual engagement, spiritual nurturing and ethical example. Atheism is thus approached as both an intellectual challenge, requiring robust rational and scriptural argumentation, and a spiritual crisis, requiring renewed attention to the heart, character formation and the lived embodiment of Islamic values. In this way, the Islamic perspective on atheism remains firmly rooted in the defence of tawḥīd, while also recognising the complex personal and societal factors that shape modern disbelief.

Judaism Perspective

In Jewish thought, atheism is often discussed less as a standalone metaphysical thesis and more as a spectrum of challenges to covenant, Torah authority and communal belonging. Rather than a single equivalent of "atheism," rabbinic and later Jewish sources deploy categories such as kofer be'ikkar, min, and apikoros to mark different kinds of denial (e.g., denial of providence, revelation, or resurrection) and to negotiate the boundaries of the community. This section, therefore, clarifies these terms and their limits as translations of modern "atheism," outlines classical and early-modern episodes where unbelief is framed as covenantal breach and communal deviance, and highlights modern configurations, especially secularisation, cultural Judaism, and post-Holocausttheology, in which "belonging" can persist alongside explicit non-belief. Attention is also given to how social and political settings (diaspora, emancipation, Zionism, and communal institutions) shape the tone and function of Jewish responses to unbelief.(Langton, 2024)

Historically, one of the most common forms of "atheist" in Jewish discourse has been the imagined or rhetorical unbeliever constructed within scriptural and rabbinic texts. The "fool" of Psalm 14, who says in his heart that there is no God, or the sceptical figures portrayed in the writings of Philo and Josephus, exemplify a type of practical atheism: people who live as if God does not see or judge, even if they do not formulate a systematic philosophical denial of God. Rabbinic literature similarly discusses figures who deny providence, reward and punishment, or the authority of Torah, presenting them as internal threats to the covenantal community. Such portrayals serve primarily didactic and pastoral functions; they warn the faithful against patterns of life and

thought that amount to treating God as absent or irrelevant, even when explicit metaphysical atheism is not articulated.

Alongside these rhetorical constructions, Jewish history records individuals who were accused of atheism by their contemporaries because they challenged key theological assumptions. Thinkers such as Uriel da Costa, Juan de Prado and, especially, Baruch Spinoza were condemned as minims or apikoros for rejecting traditional doctrines of revelation, immortality, or divine intervention in history. Whether or not these figures were "atheists" in the strict modern sense, their critical stances toward Torah, providence and the supernatural were perceived as functionally atheistic within the communal framework. Their cases highlight the fact that in Judaism, atheism has often been negotiated through intra-Jewish polemics over the limits of acceptable reinterpretation of God, law and peoplehood (Langton, 2024)
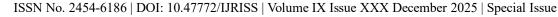
A further complexity arises in the case of major Jewish philosophers who remained personally theistic yet developed theological models that inadvertently created conceptual space for later atheism. Thinkers such as Maimonides and Gersonides, with strong negative theology and rationalist accounts of providence and miracle, emphasised divine transcendence and unknowability to such an extent that God could become increasingly abstract and philosophically distant. While these authors did not deny God, their reconceptualisation of divine attributes and action made possible later positions in which "God" is reduced to a symbol, a process, or an ethical ideal and, for some readers, to explicit non-belief. In this way, intellectual tools associated with Jewish orthodoxy could also become resources for heterodoxy and later forms of Jewish atheism (Berkovitz, 2024).

In the modern and contemporary eras, Jewish engagement with atheism is further reshaped by secularisation, science and the traumatic events of the twentieth century, particularly the Holocaust. The emergence of secular Zionism and culturally Jewish but religiously non-observant identities shows that atheism or agnosticism does not necessarily entail a rupture with Jewish peoplehood. One can be a "Jewish atheist" in the sense of rejecting belief in a personal, transcendent God while retaining a strong attachment to Jewish history, culture and national identity. Parallel to this sociological development, some modern Jewish theologians, such as Mordecai Kaplan and, later, Holocaust theologians, proposed non-supernatural or "post-theistic" conceptions of God as the sum of the forces that make for salvation, or as a symbolic expression of ethical commitment. These moves provoked accusations of atheism from more traditional quarters, yet they also indicate how Jewish theology itself has been reshaped under the pressure of atheistic and secular critiques. Within Jewish populations in the United States (as one prominent case study), 27% of U.S. Jews identify as "Jews of no religion" (e.g., atheist, agnostic, or "nothing in particular"), illustrating that disaffiliation can occur alongside continuing Jewish identification and belonging (Strawn, 2019).

Taken together, these patterns suggest that, in the Jewish context, atheism is less a clean external opposition and more a continuum of internal negotiation around belief, doubt and covenantal belonging. Unbelief is often evaluated not only in metaphysical terms, whether God exists, but also in relational and communal terms: whether one remains within the orbit of Torah, peoplehood and historical responsibility (Berkovitz, 2024). This distinguishes the Jewish experience from some Islamic treatments, where atheism is more clearly framed as a violation of *tawhid* and communal religious law and from specific Christian approaches that emphasise apologetic and existential responses to atheism. For the present comparative study, the Jewish case demonstrates that an Abrahamic religion can accommodate persistent forms of atheism and agnosticism within its social body, thereby complicating any simple binary between "faith" and "unbelief" across the Abrahamic traditions.

Christian Perspectives

Within Christianity, atheism has historically been interpreted through the intertwined categories of heresy and apostasy, especially in periods when ecclesial authority was closely linked to social and political order. In modernity, however, atheism increasingly appears as a philosophical and cultural movement, as well as a sociological phenomenon connected to secularisation and religious disaffiliation. This section, therefore, clarifies the classical Christian vocabulary for unbelief and "falling away," traces how church–state relations and disciplinary practices shaped the perceived threat of "godlessness," and surveys contemporary Christian engagements with atheism ranging from analytic apologetics and pastoral dialogue to sustained debates with "New Atheism" and moral objections grounded in the problem of evil. In doing so, it highlights how theological

argumentation and institutional power dynamics jointly influence Christian responses to unbelief (Gasparov, 2022).

Historically, the "heresy/apostasy" framework often meant that explicit denial of God was not treated as a distinct philosophical stance but as the most radical form of religious and moral deviance, an offence against both divine order and civic stability. In early modern Britain, denial of core doctrines could be prosecuted under heresy or blasphemy statutes, sometimes with severe penalties. For example, Edward Wightman was burned in 1612 for heresy, an episode that illustrates how doctrinal deviance could still be imagined as a public threat requiring exemplary punishment. Even after burning for heresy waned, public sanction for blasphemy persisted. In Scotland, Thomas Aikenhead was executed in 1697 for blasphemy, widely described as the last execution for blasphemy in Great Britain. These cases support the broader point that Christian societies have at times constructed "atheism" not merely as an intellectual error but as a destabilising force that justified legal coercion is revealing the deep entanglement of theology with institutional authority and state power (Edwards, 2013).
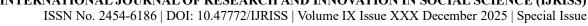
However, with the Reformation and later the Enlightenment, the landscape shifted: theological debates over salvation and grace (e.g., Calvinist versus Arminian views on whether believers can fall away) were accompanied by new currents of liberalism and secular humanism that openly challenged Christian belief. Modern processes of secularisation in Europe, along with complex phenomena such as "believing without belonging" and "belonging without believing," have further blurred the boundary between cultural Christianity and explicit nonbelief, prompting churches to reconsider how they interpret leaving the faith and adopting atheistic or nonreligious identities (Mantsinen & Tervo-Niemelä, 2020).

Contemporary empirical data make clear why these conceptual shifts matter for Christian responses to atheism. In the United States, for instance, Pew Research Centre (2025) reports that the religiously unaffiliated ("nones") are about 29% of adults in recent surveys; this includes people identifying explicitly as atheist or agnostic as well as those reporting "nothing in particular." Pew also notes that Christianity's long decline has slowed and may have levelled off in the 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study, which reframes "atheism" not only as a philosophical challenge but also as part of a broader ecology of disaffiliation, switching, and hybrid identities. These trends reinforce a central analytical point: in contemporary contexts, Christian engagement with atheism is shaped not only by arguments about God's existence but also by institutional questions concerning authority, credibility, social trust, and the conditions under which religious belonging is sustained or lost (Pew Research Centre, 2025).

A second line of contemporary Christian thought focuses on the problem of evil as a key point of contact with atheism. Igor Gasparov (2022) reconstructs an argument and then evaluates it from a philosophical-theistic perspective. Gasparov contends that, while an atheist effectively challenges Christian theism on the moral credibility of its concept of God, his constraints on what a just God must do in response to evil and his rejection of traditional theistic responses (free will, soul-making, sceptical theism) are not entirely convincing (Gasparov, 2022).

Against this backdrop, contemporary Christian engagement with atheism is shaped strongly by philosophical and ethical debate. Aaron Shepherd (2020) analyses the so-called "New Atheism" of figures such as Dawkins, Harris, Hitchens, and Dennett as presenting a "threefold challenge" to religion: epistemic (religion is irrational), moral (religion is harmful), and practical (religion is socially dangerous). He argues that much analytic philosophy of religion, which focuses on abstract arguments for God's existence, is poorly equipped to address this challenge. Instead, he proposes a pragmatic Christian response that evaluates religious and atheistic worldviews in terms of their lived consequences, moral practices and capacity to foster human flourishing, reframing the debate away from purely theoretical proofs toward experiential and communal outcomes (Shepherd, 2020).

The existence of such detailed intra-philosophical debate shows that many Christian thinkers regard atheism, particularly "ethical atheism" rooted in moral protest, as a serious rational and moral challenge that warrants thoughtful theological and philosophical responses. Overall, these materials indicate that Christian views on atheism operate on two linked levels. Historically, atheism was frequently treated as apostasy or extreme heresy, an offence against the sacramental and communal life of the Church, often mediated through law and public discipline. In modernity, atheism is engaged as both a philosophical interlocutor and a sociological reality, raising

questions about rationality, morality, suffering, and the credibility of institutions in secular societies. Modern Christian responses thus range from pragmatic assessments of the lived consequences of belief and unbelief to sophisticated philosophical argumentation on evil and divine justice, demonstrating that Christianity's engagement with atheism is not only defensive but also reflective, prompting ongoing reconsideration of how God, salvation and human freedom are articulated under conditions of secularisation and disaffiliation.

Comparative Findings: Atheism in Islam, Judaism and Christianity

The comparative analysis shows that Islam, Judaism and Christianity share a common normative stance towards atheism as a serious deviation from belief in a transcendent, personal God. However, they conceptualise and respond to it in significantly different ways. In all three traditions, denial of God is not merely an intellectual position; it is regarded as a disruption of the proper relationship between human beings and the divine, with implications for moral responsibility, communal life, and ultimate destiny. Nevertheless, the theological categories used to describe unbelief, the boundaries between heterodoxy and atheism, and the strategies adopted in response are shaped by distinct doctrinal structures and historical experiences.

In the Islamic tradition, atheism is mainly viewed through the lens of tawḥīd and ʿaqīdah. It falls under broader categories such as kufr, ilḥād, and zandaqah, which are seen as a complete rejection of God, prophecy, revelation, and the unseen. The response has been primarily doctrinal and juridical, reinforced by the disciplines of *kalām* and fiqh, often linked to concerns about maintaining the integrity of a religiously guided social order. Judaism, on the other hand, tends to place atheism within a covenantal and communal context. Different forms of unbelief are discussed under the headings of kofer be'ikkar, min, and apikoros. Nevertheless, the focus frequently shifts from abstract metaphysical denial to faithfulness to Torah, peoplehood, and historical responsibility. Modern Jewish experience allows for a strong Jewish identity to coexist with explicit non-belief, resulting in a range from internal heresy and radical reinterpretation to openly secular or atheistic positions that remain culturally Jewish.

Traditionally, Christians have regarded the denial of God as heresy and apostasy, highlighting the deviation from the Church and faith in Christ. In recent times, particularly in Western societies, Christian engagement with atheism has been significantly influenced by philosophical apologetics, debates over rationality and science, and extensive discussions on the problem of evil (Mantsinen & Tervo-Niemelä, 2020). Modern Christian responses range from logical arguments for the existence of God, through ethical and pragmatic critiques of atheism, to pastoral and existential approaches to doubt and moral protest against God. This gives Christian discourse on atheism a difference between defining doctrinal boundaries and fostering open dialogue.

Across the three traditions, several convergences are evident. All affirm that atheism undermines the coherence of their respective worldviews; all link unbelief to moral and spiritual consequences; and all have produced intellectual resources to defend belief, whether in the form of kalām, rabbinic and philosophical reflection, or Christian apologetics and systematic theology. Nevertheless, the divergences are equally important. Islam emphasises the protection of *tauḥīd* and the legal-moral order; Judaism emphasises covenant, text and communal belonging. Meanwhile, Christianity emphasises faith in Christ and the credibility of God in the face of suffering and modern critique. These differences suggest that atheism is not a single, uniform challenge across the Abrahamic traditions, but is refracted through the particular theological, legal and socio-historical configurations of each faith.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine atheism is understood and engaged with within Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, highlighting both shared patterns and unique differences. Using a qualitative, comparative-theological approach. It analysed key doctrinal themes and historical developments in each tradition, focusing on how unbelief is named, evaluated, and addressed. The findings suggest that while all three Abrahamic faiths share a monotheistic foundation and a normative rejection of atheism, they differ significantly in how they interpret and respond to it.

Islam generally views atheism as a serious violation of tawḥīd and a negation of the pillars of īmān, requiring responses that are theological, legal, and communal. Judaism, shaped by its covenantal self-understanding and diasporic history, often approaches atheism through fidelity to the Torah and peoplehood, resulting in complex

configurations in which religious belief, practice, and identity do not always align. Christianity, deeply intertwined with Western intellectual traditions, confronts atheism not only as apostasy from church life but also as a philosophical and ethical challenge- particularly regarding rationality, morality, and the problem of evil.

Compared with other traditions, the study shows that atheism serves as a "mirror," revealing each tradition's core commitments and vulnerabilities. Islamic responses emphasise the unity of divine law; Jewish responses highlight the tension between belief and belonging; Christian responses stress the credibility of God's goodness and presence within a secular, pluralist society. Recognising these differences does not diminish the shared concern of the Abrahamic religions with unbelief; rather, it clarifies that there is no single Abrahamic model for engaging with atheism, but multiple, historically conditioned patterns.

The research contributes to theology and religious studies by offering a structured comparative framework for understanding atheism across the Abrahamic faiths, moving beyond analyses of individual traditions or purely philosophical approaches. It also indicates that meaningful dialogue between believers and atheists, as well as among the three religions, depends on understanding these internal logics rather than assuming a uniform "religion versus atheism" dichotomy. Future research could build on this theoretical foundation by conducting empirical studies of contemporary Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities to explore how these classical and modern theological patterns are reflected, challenged, or transformed in lived experience.

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