

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Brian Davies observes that ‘much philosophy of religion focuses on the topic of God. He notes that all through the centuries philosophers have asked whether there is a reason to believe that God exists. See, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 1.
2. This definition is derived from the John Bishop’s understanding and construal of the thesis of religious ambiguity. See *Believing by Faith: An Essay in Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1. I also accept Bishop’s view that ‘classical philosophical theism specifies the nature of God as the omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, supernatural personal Creator *ex nihilo* of all that exists’, p.7.
3. John L. Schellenberg argues that: ‘the weakness and ambiguity of our evidence for the existence of God is not a sign that God is hidden; it is a revelation that God does not exist’. *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 1. See also, Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
4. Keith Ward, ‘Truth and the Diversity of Religions’, in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity* (eds.) Philip L. Quinn and Kevin Meeker (Oxford University Press, 2000).
5. John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp.73–74. See also, John Hick, ‘The Philosophy of World Religions’, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1984, 37: 229–245.
6. Robert McKim has defended the view that neither the existence of God nor the nature of God is apparent or obvious. Such a view is consistent with, if not identical to, that of the ambiguity thesis. For a fuller discussion and defence of McKim’s view, see *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2001). See also, Graham Oppy, *Arguing About Gods* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). In this work Oppy argues that none of the contemporary arguments for and against the existence of God is powerful enough to change the minds of reasonable participants involved in the debate. This view is also in accordance with the ambiguity thesis.
7. Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis, ‘Religious Language Games’, in *Realism and Religion: Philosophical and Theological* (eds.) Andrew Moore and Michael Scott (Ashgate Publishing, 2007), p. 123.
8. Ibid.
9. William James, *The Will to Believe, Human Immortality* (Dover Publications, 1956).
10. John Bishop, *Believing by Faith: An Essay in the Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
11. I do, however, endorse Seyyed Hoessien Nasr’s account of traditional Islam. Nasr’s account turns on the following three terms, namely; *din*, *iman*, and

*ihsan*. The Arabic word *din* is defined by Nasr to mean 'religion', though it also describes an attitude whereby one 'humbles oneself before God', or the surrendering of oneself to the Divine. The term 'Islam' is said to 'refer to that universal surrender to the One and that primordial religion contained in the heart of all heavenly inspired religions'. The word *iman* is translated to mean 'faith'. Nasr also appeals to the Quran which defines the faithful as including, 'those who have faith [in what is revealed to Muhammad] and those who are Jews and Christians'. These verses suggest that whoever has faith in God and the Last Day and lives a virtuous life will be numbered amongst the faithful. The third term *ihsan* is said to mean 'beauty, goodness, and virtue'. Consequently, 'the goal of human life is to beautify the soul through goodness and virtue and to make it worthy of offering to God, Who is *the beautiful*'. Nasr suggests, 'the person who has realised *ihsan* is fully aware of the centrality of the qualities of compassion and love, peace and beauty in the Islamic spiritual universe'. Islamic theism, as seen by Nasr, represents an inclusive worldview and values all who pursue virtue while having faith in God. A true believer is a person who is humble before the Divine, and is inspired by faith to value and express compassion and love. Accordingly, the total religion that is traditional Islam can be understood to consist of the levels of *din* (surrender), *iman* (faith), and *ihsan* (spiritual beauty). See, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (Harper San Francisco, 2002).

12. Frank Griffel, 'Al-Ghazālī', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/al-ghazali/#CumPosOccSecCau>, 28/01/2009).
13. See Richard Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite School* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology: An Introduction to the Study of his Life and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Farouk Mitha, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and Authority in Medieval Islam* (I.B.Tauris, 2002); Ebrahim Moosa, *Ghazālī on the Poetics of Imagination* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Eric Orsmy, *Ghazālī: The Revival of Islam* (Oneworld, Publications, 2008); and Montgomery Watt, *al-Ghazālī the Muslim Intellectual*, (Kazi publications, 2003).

## 1 A Jamesian Account of Faith

1. William James, *The Will to Believe. Human Immortality* (Dover Publications, 1956), p. 31.
2. John Bishop, 'Faith as Doxastic Venture', *Religious Studies*, 2002, 38(4): 474. A passionate cause can be regarded as a broad category which captures all non-evidential causes of belief.
3. John Bishop, *Believing by Faith: An Essay in the Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 24..
4. Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, pp. 125–126.
5. Within the tradition of Islam, the Mahdi is a person who will prefigure the return of Jesus. It is possible that James's example of belief in the Mahdi may have been inspired by Muhammad Ahmad ibn as Sayyid Abdallah, a religious

- leader in Sudan who claimed to be the Mahdi in 1881. James's essay was published in 1896.
6. James, *The Will to Believe, Human Immortality*, p. 11.
  7. William Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief', reprinted in *Philosophy: The Big Question* (ed.) Ruth J. Sample, Charles W. Mills and James P. Sterba (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), pp. 87.
  8. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
  9. *Ibid.*
  10. James, *The Will to Believe, Human Immortality*, p. 11.
  11. Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief', p. 86.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Bishop, 'Faith as Doxastic Venture', p. 477, see also Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, p. 165.
  14. An ethical evaluation can have far-reaching consequences, especially with regard to the classical notions of God, providence and eschatology. A full discussion of these implications, however, would take me beyond the scope of this study.
  15. In addition, the works already cited, e.g., Bishop's paper 'Faith as Doxastic Venture,' and his book *Believing by Faith*, there are two works that are relevant to assessing the viability of the Jamesian account of faith: the first is Anderi A. Buckareff, 'Can Faith be a Doxastic Venture?' *Religious Studies*, 2005, 41(4): 435–445; and the second is John Bishop, 'On the Possibility of Doxastic Venture: A Reply to Buckareff', *Religious Studies*, 2005, 41(4): 447–451.
  16. John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 35–46.
  17. *Ibid.*
  18. Gary Gutting, *Religious Belief and Religious Skepticism* (University of Notre Dame Press, c1982), pp. 106–107.
  19. Robert McKim, *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 182–183.
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
  21. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
  22. McKim, *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity*, pp. 113–114.
  23. *Ibid.*
  24. *Ibid.*
  25. McKim defines the Disaster Avoidance Principle as follows: God will arrange it so that we are not deprived by our circumstances of any good that is necessary for our long-term flourishing. *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity*, p. 120.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
  27. Bishop, 'Faith as Doxastic Venture', p. 474.
  28. Bishop, *Believing by Faith*, p. 24.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
  30. This argument is inspired by Hick, who suggests that, 'Belief in reality of Allah, Vishnu, Shiva, and of the non-personal Brahman, Dharmakaya, Tao, seem to be experientially well based as belief in the Holy Trinity...if only one of the many belief-systems based upon religious experience can be true, it follows that religious experience generally produces false beliefs, and that it is thus a generally unreliable basis for belief formation...'. See John Hick,

'The Epistemological Challenge of Religious Pluralism', *Faith and Philosophy*, 1997, 14: 277–278.

31. 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight' (Proverbs 3: 5–6); 'And put your trust in the Ever-Living, Who never dies' (Quran 25: 58). These verses emphasise trust in God, and one may argue that in order to trust in God, a believer must also trust their inclinations that there is a God who is worthy of their trust.
32. A study which explores and responds to a wide range of critiques directed at James is authored by Robert J. O'Connell, *William James on the Courage to Believe* (Fordham University Press, 1997).

## 2 The Challenge of Al-Ghazālī's Scepticism

1. For a full biography, see Peter Adamson, *Al-Kindi* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
2. To trace the historical reception and development of philosophy within Islamic thought, see Shabbir Akhtar, 'The Possibility of a Philosophy of Islam', in *History of Islamic Philosophy* (ed.) Oliver Leaman and Seyyed Hossien Nasr (Routledge, 1996), pp. 1162–1169.
3. The quote is from al-Kindi's work entitled *On First Philosophy*, retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/al-kindi/25/9/2007>. An English translation of this work is available: see A. L. Ivry, *Al-Kindi's Metaphysics: A translation of Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi's Treatise 'On First Philosophy'* (University of New York Press, 1974). In this work, he defines philosophy as: 'knowledge of the true nature of things, insofar as is possible for man' (p. 55).
4. For a full-blown Muslim critique of philosophical reasoning, see Muwaffaq al-Din `Abd Allah ibn Ahmad Ibn Qudama, *Censure of Speculative Theology*, Trans. George Makdisi (E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series, 1962). For a summary of Ibn Qudama's arguments, see Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 24–24 and J. Pavlin, 'Sunni Kalam and Theological Controversies', in *History of Islamic Philosophy* (ed.) Oliver Leaman and Seyyed Hossien Nasr (Routledge, 1996), Vol. I, pp. 113–115.
5. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (eds), *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 40.
6. Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology*, pp. 30–31.
7. Oliver Leaman, *A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy* (Polity Press, 2001), p. 22.
8. For a Muslim defence of philosophical reasoning, see Abd Al-Jabbar, 'The Book of the Five Fundamentals', trans. by R. C. Martin, M. R. Woodward and D. S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mutazilism from Medieval Schools to Modern Symbol* (Oneworld, 1997); Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī, *The Just Balance: al-Qistas al-Mustaqim*. Trans. by D. P. Brewster (Ashraf Printing Press. Lahore. 1978); and, Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Rushd, *Decisive Treatise & Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. by Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001).

9. Brian Davies, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. viii.
10. Beverley Clack and Brian R. Clack, *The Philosophy of Religion: A Critical Introduction* (Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p. 7.
11. Akhtar, 'The Possibility of a Philosophy of Islam', p. 1162.
12. Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1960), p. 2. Asgar Ali Engineer offers a critical appraisal of Iqbal's philosophy of Islam; see 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam: A Critical Appraisal', *Social Scientist*, March 1980, 8(8): 52–63.
13. J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God* (Oxford, 1982), p. 1.
14. A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 85.
15. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of Holy Quran* (Brentwood, MD., USA: Amana Corp., 1993), Chapter 31, Verse 20.
16. 'O you who have attained to faith! If you will remain conscious of God, he will endow you with a standard (*furqan*) by which to discern the true from the false...'. Ali, *The Meaning of Holy Quran*, Chapter 8, Verse 29. In a footnote on the Quranic use of the term *furqan*, Muhammad Asad writes: 'Muhammad Abduh amplifies the interpretation...of *al-furqan* (adopted by Tabari, Zamakshari and other great commentators) by maintaining that it applies also to 'human reason', which enables us to distinguish the true from the false... While the term *furqan* is often used in the Quran to describe one or another of the revealed scriptures... it has undoubtedly also the connotation pointed out by Abduh for instance, in (8:29), where it clearly refers to the faculty of moral valuation...' See, *The Message of the Quran* (Dar Al-Andalus, 1980), fn. 38, p. 12. The precise meaning of the Arabic term *furqan* is varied and at times contentious; see Fred M. Donner, 'Quranic Furqan', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 2007, 55(2): 279–300.
17. Hannah Arendt viewed Adolf Eichmann – the architect of the Holocaust – as 'being constitutively incapable of exercising the kind of judgement that would have made his victims' suffering real or apparent for him. It was not the presence of hatred that enabled Eichmann to perpetrate the genocide, but the absence of the imaginative capacities that would have made the human and moral dimensions of his activities tangible for him. Eichmann failed to exercise his capacity of thinking, of having an internal dialogue with himself, which would have permitted self-awareness of the evil nature of his deeds. This amounted to a failure to use self-reflection as a basis for judgement, the faculty that would have required Eichmann to exercise his imagination so as to contemplate the nature of his deeds from the experiential standpoint of his victims'. See, Majid Yar, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/a/arendt.htm#H6,9/02/2009>).
18. Ali, *The Meaning of Holy Quran*, Chapter 86, Verses 5–14.
19. There are two key terms in relation to Islamic philosophical thought, *kalam* and *falsifa*. '*Kalam* is the common name of medieval Islamic, mostly rationalist, sometimes apologetic (or polemic) and religious philosophy. The literal meaning of the Arabic word is speaking, speech, things said, discussion. In the context of religious thought, it seems that around the middle of the eighth century, *kalam* came to denote a method of discussing matters relating

- to religious doctrines, or to politico-religious questions...Those engaged in such arguments, or debates, and in reflection and speculation of them, were called *mutakallimun*. For them, the attainment of knowledge was not an end in itself, but rather a means in the service of religious doctrine and practice. The *mutakallimun* must be distinguished from thinkers (Muslims as well as Christians) who considered themselves committed to the legacy of Greek philosophy, mainly a Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotelianism. These were the *falasifa*, and their systems and methods [referred to as] *falsifa*. The *falasifa*, who were, with few exceptions, observant members of their respective religious communities (Muslims, Christians and Jews), professed the attainment of true knowledge for its own sake, as the actual realization of perfection'. Haggai Ben-Shammai, 'Kalam in Medieval Jewish Philosophy', in *History of Jewish Philosophy* (ed.) Daniel Frank and Oliver Leaman (Routledge, 1997), p. 115.
20. Al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. by Michael M. Marmura (Bringham Young University Press, 1997), p. xxii.
  21. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.
  22. Abu Yusuf al-Kindi, regarded as the first Muslim philosopher was an exception. Al-Kindi believed that the world could not be eternal and that it was created in time (*muhdath*). See 'Al-Kindi' in *History of Islamic Philosophy* (eds) Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (Routledge, 1996), p. 170
  - 23 For a consideration of al-Ghazālī's arguments and responses to them, see Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 38–59.
  - 24 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
  - 25 Al-Ghazālī, 'Al-Munqidh min al-dalal', trans. by W. M. Watt in *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī* (London, 1967), p. 36.
  - 26 Frank Griffel notes the following with respect to al-Ghazālī's attitude toward reason: 'Al-Ghazālī follows Aristotle and the *falasifa* in their opinion that reason ('aql) is executed most purely and precisely by formulating demonstrative arguments, which reach a level at which their conclusion are beyond doubt. He remains true to the rationalist approach, which was shared by both Ash'arites as well as *falasifa* ...' *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology: An Introduction to the Study of his Life and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 116.
  - 27 Al-Ghazālī also relates his observation to a tradition, where Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, is to have said, 'Everyone is born with a sound nature, it is one's parents who make one into a Jew, Christian or a Magian' – *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: Al-Munqidh Min Al-Dalāl*; English translation with introduction by Muhammad Ab'ulaylah Nurshif Abdul-Rahim Rifat; introduction and notes, George F. McLean (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001), p. 62.
  - 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63.
  - 29 Eric Ormsby, *Ghazali: The Revival of Islam* (Oneworld Publications, 2007), p. 1.
  30. He uses scepticism as a foil against which he develops his Sufi epistemology of religious belief. In the chapter to follow, I will also elaborate on the complementary relationship between scepticism and the Sufi path.
  31. Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty*, p. 65.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 66–68.
34. W. Doney (ed.), *Descartes: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Macmillan, 1968), pp. 145–146. Tamara Albertini observes that while the similarities between al-Ghazālī and Descartes are striking, they in fact pursue very different philosophical aims. See ‘Crisis and Certainty of Knowledge in Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) and Descartes (1596–1650)’, *Philosophy East & West*, January 2005, 1–14.
35. Al-Ghazālī’s crisis involves a loss of trust in the deliverances of human rational capacities. The Quranic verses quoted earlier, however, suggest that human rational capacities can be trusted. Accordingly, we may interpret al-Ghazālī’s crisis as one of religious faith, since his inability to trust in reason runs counter to the ethos of the Quran.
36. Jeffery Whitman, *The Power and Value of Skepticism* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), p. 16.
37. Stewart Cohen, ‘Contextualism, Skepticism, and the Structure of Reasons’, *Noûs*, 1999, 33 (Supplement); *Philosophical Perspectives*, 13; *Epistemology*, 58.
38. *Ibid.*
39. A full defence of fallibilism is beyond the scope of this study, although it is a view that is endorsed by a majority of epistemologists. See Baron Reed, ‘How to Think About Fallibilism’, *Philosophical Studies*, 2002, 107(2): 143–157.
40. Baron Reed makes this point with reference to Descartes, and I think it is equally applicable to al-Ghazālī. See ‘A New Argument for Skepticism’, *Philosophical Studies*, 2009, 142(1): 92.
41. Our response to al-Ghazālī’s case for scepticism should not be seen as a definitive answer to scepticism. At best, the evaluation of al-Ghazālī’s scepticism suggests that it is self-undermining. There are a variety of ways to refine and defend a sceptical stance. See Reed, ‘A New Argument for Skepticism’, pp. 91–104. A deeper study of scepticism would, however, extend us beyond the scope of this study.

### 3 Al-Ghazālī’s Sufi Account of Faith

1. The broader argument views human reason as fallible and therefore unsuitable as foundation for ‘certain knowledge’. The case for scepticism aims to demonstrate the limits of human reason.
2. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: Al-Munqidh Min Al-Dalā; English translation with introduction by Muhammad Ab’ulaylah Nurshif Abdul-Rahim Rifat; introduction and notes. George F. McLean* (Washington. D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001), p. 67.
3. I have adapted this argument from Immanuel Kant. See Paul Guyer. ‘Immanuel Kant’, (ed.) E. Craig, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998; 2004). Retrieved from <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/DB047SECT5,27/05/2009>.
4. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (Brentwood. MD: Amana Corp., 1993), Chapter 4, Verse 163.
5. I have compared and contrasted al-Ghazālī’s metaphysics with the aesthetics of Arthur Schopenhauer, See ‘Al-Ghazālī and Schopenhauer on Knowledge and Suffering’, *Philosophy East and West*, 2007, 57(4): 409–419.

6. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazālī, *The Niche of Lights: Mishkat al-anwar*, trans., introd., and annot. by David Buchman (Brigham Young University Press, 1998), p. 12.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.
9. *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–41.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
21. Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty*, p. 67.
22. This point suggests that the Sufi account can be consistent with the Jamesian account.
23. Michael Sudduth, 'Reformed Epistemology and Christian Apologetics', *Religious Studies*, 2003, 39: 303.
24. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 95.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
26. *Ibid.*
27. There are other approaches to Reformed epistemology; for example, William Alston defends the view that Christian Mystical Practice is a reliable source of beliefs about God. See William Alston, *Perceiving God, Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Cornell University Press, 1991).
28. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
32. Michael Sudduth, 'Reformed Epistemology and Christian Apologetics', p. 303.
33. John Bishop and Imran Aijaz, 'How to Answer the *de jure* Question about Christian Belief', *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, 2004, 56: 116. I have altered the quote slightly, replacing the word 'Christian' with the word 'theistic'.
34. Plantinga maintains that if God does indeed exist, then basic beliefs about God will be warranted. He notes, 'that theistic belief produced by the *sensus divinitatis* can also be *properly basic with respect to warrant*. It isn't just that the believer in God is within her epistemic rights in accepting theistic belief in the basic way. That is indeed so; more than that, however, this belief can have warrant for the person in question, warrant that is often sufficient for knowledge. The *sensus divinitatis* is a belief-producing faculty (or power, or mechanism) that under the right conditions produces belief that isn't evidentially based on other beliefs. On this model, our cognitive faculties



have been designed and created by God; the design plan, therefore, is a design plan in the literal and paradigmatic sense. It is a blueprint or plan for our ways of functioning, and it has been developed and instituted by a conscious, intelligent agent. The purpose of the *sensus divinitatis* is to enable us to have true beliefs about God; when it functions properly, it ordinarily *does* produce true beliefs about God. These beliefs therefore meet the conditions for warrant; if the beliefs produced are strong enough, then they constitute knowledge'. *Warranted Christian Belief*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 178–179.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
36. The evidentialist principle is the thesis that a person can take *p* to be true if and only if they are evidentially justified in holding *p* to be true.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–122.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Duncan Pritchard, 'Reforming Reformed Epistemology', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 2003, 43: 43–66.
44. 'John and Aijaz, 'How to Answer the *de jure* Question about Christian Belief', p. 122.
45. One may suggest that proponents of PRE might be concerned that their account of how to set aside the *de jure* question could apply only to a minority of theists.

#### 4 A Jamesian Reading of Al-Ghazālī

1. We may construe al-Ghazālī's illumination experience as involving a passionate cause of a belief. A passionate cause, or a non-evidential cause of a belief, to recall, is defined as being any cause of a belief other than a cause that provides the believer with evidence for its truth.
2. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: Al-Munqidh Min Al-Dalāl*; English translation with introduction by Muhammad Ab'ulaylah Nurshif Abdul-Rahim Rifat; introduction and notes. George F. McLean. (Washington. D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. 2001), p. 67.
3. Kojiro Nakamura, *Al-Ghazālī and Prayer* (Islamic Book Trust, 2001), p. 10.
4. Al-Ghazālī writes, 'what I seek is knowledge of the true meaning of things. Of necessity, therefore, I must inquire into just what the true meaning of knowledge is. Then it became clear to me that *sure* and *certain* knowledge is that in which the thing known is made manifest that no doubt clings to it, nor is it accompanied by the possibility of error and deception...'. Richard McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfilment* (Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 63.
5. Imran Aijaz, *Islamic Philosophy of Religion: Reflections on Fideism, Rationalism and Religious Ambiguity* (Ph.D. Dissertation, 2009), p. 150.
6. Paul Moser, *The Elusive God* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 102.
7. *Ibid.*

8. Paul Sands, *The Justification of Religious Faith in Soren Kierkegaard*, John Henry Newman, and William James (Gorgias Press, 2003), p. 257.
9. 'Muslim spirituality as we have said, is demanding and, through the Islamic teaching, touches all the dimensions of life... The return to one's self gives birth to a feeling of humility that characterises the human being before God. This humility should spread wide and deep through all the areas of life: at every stage of working on one's self there will be a struggle against complacency, pride and the pretentious human desire to succeed alone, using one's own resources (on the social, professional, political, or intellectual level)'. Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 122. See also Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and Vincent Cornell, *Voices of Islam* (Praeger Publishers, 2007).
10. Osman Bakar notes that al-Ghazālī understands certainty (*yaqin*) in two distinct ways: 'the term *yaqin* can be employed to signify lack or negation of doubt, in the sense that the knowledge or the truth in question is established from evidence which leaves no place for any possibility of doubt. The second meaning of the term *yaqin*... refers to the intensity of religious faith or fervour which involves both the acceptance, by the soul, of that which prevails over the heart and takes hold of it and the submission of the soul to that thing in question'. Bakar also suggests that: 'For al-Ghazālī, both kinds of *yaqin* need to be strengthened, but it is the second kind of *yaqin* which is the nobler of the two, since without it serving as an epistemological basis for the first kind of *yaqin*, the latter would definitely lack epistemic substance and value. Moreover, it fosters religious and spiritual obedience, and praiseworthy habits. In other words, philosophical certainty is of no value if it is not accompanied by submission to the truth and by the transformation of one's being in conformity with that truth'. *The History and Philosophy of Islamic Science* (Islamic Texts Society, 1999), pp. 55–56.
11. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translations of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9 vols. (Beirut, 1405/1985), I, p. 3. This account of the Prophet's first meeting with the Angel is a Sunni account, and thus accepted by the majority of Muslims.
12. Muhammad's response also suggests that disobeying the commission was not a possibility that he has seriously considered, that is, it was not a live hypothesis.
13. Tim Winter, 'Pluralism from a Muslim Perspective', in *Abraham's Children: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation* (ed.) Norman Solomon et al. (T. & T. Clark Publishers, 2006), p. 203.
14. Abdulaziz Sachedina, 'The Quran and Other Religions', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (ed.) Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 293.
15. Bruce Waller, *Critical Thinking: Consider the Verdict* (4th ed.) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), p. 14.
16. *A Common Word Between Us and You*, retrieved from <http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=option1>, 26/11/2008.
17. The number of signatories has now grown close to 300.
18. *A Common Word Between Us and You*.

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. The document also notes that the three faculties are also acknowledged in the Old and New Testament: 'Mark 12:32...contain the three terms *kardia* ("heart"), *dianoia* ("mind"), and *ischus* ("strength")...In the *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! / You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength*). In Hebrew the word for "heart" is *lev*, the word for "soul" is *nefesh*, and the word for "strength" is *me'od*.'
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Admittedly, a proponent of al-Ghazālī's account, or its 'Reformed' counterpart, can also claim that their accounts of faith also have these three components, namely: *understanding*, *willing*, and *feeling* are also consistent with their accounts of faith. However, as we have already discovered, al-Ghazālī's account and its Reformed counterpart are deeply problematic from a philosophical and theological point of view. Although, we will need to concede that having the components of *understanding*, *willing*, and *feeling* is a necessary but not a sufficient conditions of an Islamic account of faith.
26. Abdullah Saeed, 'The Need to Rethink Apostasy Laws', in *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam* (ed.) Abdullag Saeed and Hassan Saeed (Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 172.
27. Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Quran* (Dar Al-Andalus. 1980), pp. 3–4.
28. D. B. Macdonald-[L. Gardet], 'al-Ghayb', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, by H. A. R. Gibb et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960– [i.e., 1954–]–2001), pp. 1025–1026.
29. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir Juz' 1 (Part 1): Al-Fatihah 1 To Al-Baqarah 141* (2nd edn) (ed.) Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman (MSA Publication Limited, 2009), p. 65.
30. Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, fn. 3, p. 4.
31. The 'will of God' can also be considered to be *al-ghayb*, as opposed to the existence of God. I do not think alternative definitions of *al-ghayb* undercut my argument, since the exegesis I offer is an accepted reading of the term. My argument, if correct, also establishes the possibility that belief in God is a case of believing in *al-ghayb*, and this seems compatible with the ambiguity thesis.

## 5 The Challenge of Contemporary Evidentialism

1. Jonathan E. Adler, *Beliefs' Own Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), p. 52.
2. Ibid., p. 26.
3. Ibid.
4. Jonathan E. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot Be Believed', *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, 2005, XII(1): 70.
5. Ibid., p. 73.
6. Ibid., p. 74.
7. William James, 'The Will to Believe', in *Essays in Pragmatism* (Holloway Press, 2007), p. 90.

8. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot be Believed', p. 68.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
13. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics*, p. 105.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
17. John L. Schellenberg, *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason* (Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 10.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 153.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot be Believed', pp. 66–67.
22. *Ibid.*, refer to p. 78, n. 8.
23. William James, *The Will to Believe, Human Immortality* (Dover Publications, 1956), p. 11.
24. Also see p. 19, where I use the example of the mountaineer to explain the claim of epistemic parity.
25. See Bishop, 'Faith as Doxastic Venture', *Religious Studies*, 2002, 38(4): 471–487.
26. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot be Believed', p. 72.
27. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics*, p. 29.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
33. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot be Believed', p. 70. Adler explains that 'overtness' signals that nothing of the agent's epistemic position – in particular, his evidence, his relevant beliefs, that the propositional-attitude involved is belief, and his essential commitments in regard to belief – is hidden. Full awareness suggests a methodological idealisation as opposed to a psychological state. In *Belief's Own Ethics* (p. 29), Adler articulates the test in the following terms: '*p* is incoherently believed by anyone X just in case *p* is believed by X, but, if X became fully aware of his epistemic position in regard to *p* (his believing that *p* is true, and his assessment of his evidence of reasons to believe it), X could not continue to believe that *p* (since the corresponding thought would be an overt contradiction)'.
34. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics*, p. 30.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
37. Peter Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1962, 48: 187–211.
38. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics*, p. 216.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

41. Ibid., p. 216.
42. Ibid., p. 220.
43. Ibid., p. 223.
44. Ibid., p. 224.
45. Adler, 'William James and What Cannot be Believed', p. 69.
46. Adler, *Belief's Own Ethics*, p. 36.
47. Ibid.
48. To defend the view that 'one should assert  $p$  only if one knows  $p$ ', Adler cites Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford University Press, 2002). According to Williamson, there are reasons to think that: (a) knowledge is purely a mental state, and (b) that one's total evidence is simply one's total knowledge. For a response to these claims, see Adam Leite, 'On Williamson's Arguments that Knowledge is a Mental State', *Ratio* (new series), June 2005, XVIII(2): 165–175.
49. Even if we accept that properly believing also entails knowing, we encounter the issue of subjectivity, since knowing, given Adler's account, assumes that the reasons we have for believing have been judged by us to be adequate. If judgments do vary, then there will be differences on whether reasons for believing will be judged as being adequate or sufficient, and these differences will carry over into claims pertaining to knowledge. The concern here is that Adler is using the term 'knowledge' in a way that presumes it to be a common agreed-upon standard, but the subjective element means the concept will turn out to mean different things to different people.

## 6 Challenges to Religious Pluralism

1. Imran Aijaz, 'Belief, Providence and Eschatology: Some Philosophical Problems in Islamic Theism', *Philosophy Compass*, 2008, 3(1): 231–253.
2. Ibid., p. 233.
3. Ibid.
4. Alvin Plantinga, 'Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism', in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity* (ed.) Philip Quinn and Kevin Meeker (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 174.
5. Alvin Plantinga, 'Ad Hick', *Faith and Philosophy*, 1997, 14(3): 296.
6. Ibid., pp. 296–297.
7. Robert McKim, *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 136.
8. Ibid.
9. Plantinga, 'Pluralism: a Defense of Religious Exclusivism', p. 190.
10. Ibid., p. 176.
11. The atheist can also be an exclusivist, since they can also deny absolute epistemic parity, i.e., belief in God can be portrayed as the product of: (a) ignorance and fear in the face of the hostile forces of nature (Hume); (b) an inequitable social order (Marx); or, (c) an immature infantile psychology (Freud). See Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis, 'Religious Language Games', in *Realism and Religion: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives* (ed.) Andrew Moore and Michael Scott (Ashgate, 2007), p. 125.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
13. Plantinga may argue that he does have *good reason* to doubt overall epistemic parity, thus he is entitled to an exclusivist stance. However, as I have already noted, Plantinga's exclusivist strategy can also be employed by a Muslim or Jew. Accordingly, there would be multiple and mutually exclusive claims of epistemic superiority. This state of affairs indicates that if we are to doubt overall epistemic parity, then we need reasons that are independent from a given theological framework, i.e., reasons which do not first presuppose the truth of a given theological framework.
14. John Hick notes the following distinction between pluralism and exclusivism: 'Pluralism is...not another historical religion making an exclusive religious claim, but a meta-theory about the relation between the historical religions. Its logical status as a second-order philosophical theory or hypothesis is different in kind from that of a first-order religious creed or gospel. And so the religious pluralist does not, like the traditional religious exclusivist, consign non-believers to perdition, but invites them to try to produce a better explanation of the data'. 'The Possibility of Religious Pluralism', *Religious Studies*, 1997, 33(2): 163.
15. Kelly James Clark, 'Perils of Pluralism', *Faith and Philosophy*, 1997, 14(3): 318.
16. In an autobiographical work entitled *From Fundamentalist to Freethinker*, Ray Bradley summarises his negative childhood experiences with religion as follows: 'Given what I've told you of my story so far, you could be forgiven for supposing that my struggles to free myself from the bondage of Baptist beliefs occurred in an atmosphere of sweetness and light. How about the darker side that we normally associate with the term "fundamentalism"? Condemnation of films, dancing, immodest clothing, lipstick, alcohol, and the like? Prohibitions against work – even homework – on the Lord's Day? Blasphemy-charges? Book-burnings? Beating those who dared to differ? Sad to say, I experienced all these at the hands of those who most sincerely sought to save my soul from perdition: my parents. The book-burnings occurred when my Biology teacher, Peter Ohms, lent me a textbook outlining evolutionary theory and a novel depicting St. Paul as a misogynist who occasionally sought relief in the warm flesh of a woman of the night. Both books disappeared mysteriously from my shelves. It was only when questioned that my parents revealed the fate of both. They had been thrown into a bonfire along with "other garbage." My teacher was magnanimous. But that didn't erase my shame and outrage'. Retrieved from <http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/bradley/Fundamentalist%20to%20Free-thinker.pdf>, 29/10/2008.
17. Robert Wicks, 'Arthur Schopenhauer', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/>, 25/02/2009).
18. Aijaz, 'Belief, Providence and Eschatology', pp. 231–253.
19. Aijaz notes that *tawhīd*, which is often translated as belief in 'Islamic monotheism', and also understood to mean believing that nothing has the right to be worshipped apart from God alone, and believing that certain names and attributes are unique to God (so that there is nothing in creation that is like God).
20. I am grateful to Imran Aijaz for helping me in formulating a presentation of his argument in standard form.

21. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (Brentwood. MD: Amana Corp., 1993), Chapter 7, Verse 172.
22. Aijaz, 'Belief, Providence and Eschatology', p. 244.
23. Aijaz notes that 'the language used by the Qur'ān, in those particular narratives in which the *kāfir* is accused of rejecting religious truth, makes sense only if the *kāfir* actually has knowledge of the relevant religious truth and literally 'covers up' or 'conceals' that knowledge and truth' (p. 238).
24. Aijaz, 'Belief, Providence and Eschatology', p. 239. The quote itself is from, Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology* (Basingstoke: Yurindo, 1965), pp. 7–8.
25. *Ibid.*, p.242.
26. D. B. Macdonald, 'Fitra', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed.) H. A. R. Gibb [et al.] (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960– [i.e., 1954–]–2001), pp. 931–932.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. This definition of *fitrah* is provided in *Islam Key Concepts* by Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman (Routledge, 2007).
31. Abdullah Yusuf ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (Brentwood. MD: Amana Corp., 1993) Chapter (Surah) 45, Verses 3-4.
32. J. J. G. Jansen, 'Mu'Min', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, by H.A.R. Gibb [et al.] (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960- [i.e.1954-] – <2001), pp. 554–555.
33. *Ibid.*
34. W. Bjorkman, 'Kāfir', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed.) H. A. R. Gibb [et al.] (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960– [i.e., 1954–]–2001), pp. 407–408.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Quran* (Dar Al-Andalus. 1980), p. 907.
39. *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, Verses 97–99.
40. *Ibid.*, p.124.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. The tradition is quoted by Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman, *Islam: Questions and Answers Volume 1* (MSA Publication Limited, 2003), p. 465.
44. Sherman Jackson, *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam : Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī's Fayṣal al-Tafriqa Bayna al-Islām wa al-Zandaqa* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 126.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
46. A recent paper on the work of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya suggests that universal salvation may be compatible with an exclusivist perspective. Ibn al-Qayyim argues that every person will eventually be encompassed by God's mercy. He maintains that hell is not merely punitive, but also therapeutic, i.e., a person will be cleansed from their sins, including the sin of non-belief. See Jon Hoover, 'Islamic Universalism: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Salafi Deliberations on the Duration of Hell-Fire', *The Muslim World*, January 2009, 99(1): 181–201.
47. *The Translations of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 8, Bk. 73, No. 116.

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