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THE JUST WAR AND JIHAD

VIOLENCE IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

EDITED BY R. JOSEPH HOFFMANN

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INTRODUCTION

THE GOD OF HOSTS

R. Joseph Hoffmann

The papers collected in this volume represent the independent and considered thinking of scholars from a variety of disciplines concerning the relationship between religion and violence, with special reference to the theories of “just war” and “jihad,” technical terms that arise in connection with the theology of early medieval Christianity and early Islam, respectively.

In the long history of the monotheistic tradition, violence—often-bloody violence and warfare—has been not an occasional abnormality but its defining activity. Leaving aside ancient conflicts, like the violent taking of Canaan by the Hebrew tribes, and focusing simply on reviewing how the two younger of the monotheistic traditions has treated the eldest, the pattern is well established before the Middle Ages and prior to the preaching of the First Crusade (1095): the following list does not deal specifically with the wars of religion, prompted by the Protestant Reformation, the deaths of heretics by the thousands during the Inquisition, or the loss of life in contemporary struggles between Islam and the other monotheistic traditions.