

the type of approach brought to the central Christian confessional claim of the resurrection fascinating in terms of how it might be applied to central claims of their own faith.) In summary, this is one of *the* major theological publishing events of 2011.

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Robert Audi *Rationality and Religious Commitment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Pp. xvi + 311. £25.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 19 960957 4.

The overall issue which concerns this book is whether religious commitment, understood as consisting of both theoretical and practical elements, can be rational. Audi's approach to tackling this question makes the book a wide-ranging one. He deals with large topics including rationality, the nature of faith and belief, religious experience, divine command ethics, the nature of human and divine persons, the challenge of secular naturalism to religious commitment, and the problem of evil.

In part I of the book, Audi offers an outline account of rationality which emerges from his previous writings. He distinguishes between rationality and the stronger concepts of justification and reasonableness. His main concern is whether religious commitment can meet the standard of rationality rather than satisfy the more stringent requirements of these latter concepts. Even regarding rationality, Audi emphasizes (pp. 46–47) the importance of not adopting the 'artificially high standard of rationality' demanded by the religious sceptic. Audi's concern, therefore, is not with convincing the sceptic but rather with defending the intellectual respectability of religious commitment.

In part II, Audi explores the dimensions of rational religious commitment. He distinguishes between different kinds of faith and also between faith, belief, acceptance, and hope. Audi stresses that faith is not reducible to belief and that non-doxastic faith can play a central role in religious life. Audi writes of the kind of religious commitment he defends in the book that 'although many religious beliefs must be part of it, its central faith need not be doxastic' (p. 287). This does not seem true to the self-understanding of many religious people within, say, the Abrahamic faiths.

Beyond taking religious commitment to include cognitions not necessarily restricted to beliefs, Audi emphasizes the importance of assessing the rationality of religious practice and not just cognition. He is concerned to defend the rationality

of a broad notion of religious commitment which includes attitudes, emotions, and behaviour. This resistance to the influential picture of religious commitment as 'mainly intellectual' (p. 89), as primarily a matter of belief, would be interesting to test against the self-understanding of thoughtful adherents of particular religions. In the case of Judaism, for example, the issue of the relative significance of belief and practice remains a hotly contested one, as recently evidenced by Menachem Kellner's stimulating and provocative study *Must a Jew Believe Anything?* (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2nd edn, 2006) and the responses to it. However, even the staunchest advocate of the centrality of belief in Judaism would recognize the importance, even if not the equal importance, of other elements of religious commitment, and Audi's emphasis on the multi-faceted nature of religious commitment seems an important insight in general.

Part II also includes a discussion of religious experience, its nature, and its role in supporting religious commitment.

Part III is devoted to religious commitment in its relationship with moral, aesthetic, and socio-political dimensions of human life. The most interesting discussion here is in chapter 6, where Audi develops, though he does not ultimately endorse, a sophisticated divine commandability version of the Divine Command Theory of ethics. He argues, rightly in my view, that theists are not required to adopt a Divine Command Theory of ethics, though such a theory is naturally appealing to many religious people. Audi shows how the commandability version of Divine Command Theory is compatible with ethics enjoying epistemic autonomy. That independent moral knowledge is possible is a position that would resonate with many religious people and Audi is correct to highlight it. Again to take the Jewish tradition as an example, despite the variety of perspectives on the relationship between divine commands and morality implicit in classical Jewish sources, a consistent theme across biblical, rabbinic, and philosophical texts does seem to be that human moral knowledge is at the very least not entirely dependent on divine revelation.

Audi's main goals in part IV are, first, to ward off the objection that the problem of evil constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the possibility of rational religious commitment, and second to undermine the appeal, even if religious commitment is admitted to be rational, of secular naturalism as a rival and more attractive world-view.

Audi's approach to the problem of evil is a novel one. The core idea is that the issue should be conceived in a theocentric rather than cosmocentric way, asking not whether the creation is good enough to have been created by God but 'whether *creating* and *experiencing* the universe is good enough for *God*' (p. 215). On Audi's view, evil must be appraised taking into account the 'incalculably great' (pp. 213, 245) value of divine experience and the total reality which includes both God and the creation. While Audi's philosophically complex and sophisticated discussion of the problem of evil contains much which is illuminating, it is open to

question whether his approach issues in a satisfactory response to the problem of natural evil, in particular. At one point, Audi suggests that the suffering of an innocent child with cancer might play a role in yielding a divine experience of enormous value, 'like a part of a beautiful painting that is itself ugly yet is essential in the beauty of the whole' (pp. 232–233). Many religious believers might feel that no divine experience, however valuable, could counterbalance the evil of a child's suffering, and that an approach to the problem of evil which suggests otherwise is unacceptable.

I turn now to what seem to me broader problems concerning the argument of the book. Audi repeatedly stresses that the religious commitment whose rationality he is concerned to defend is not that of any particular theology or religion (though he most commonly refers to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, especially the latter, and towards the end of the book, in particular, sometimes uses 'classical theism' as a substitute for 'religious commitment') but abstracted from particular religions. It is hard to escape the feeling, however, that that kind of religious commitment which Audi primarily has in mind is not only Abrahamic, featuring an omniscient and loving God, but also of a particular and rather comfortable, almost 'bourgeois' sort. (One would not expect Audi to support the rationality of commitment to, say, radical Islamism, but he does claim to set out to defend the rationality of religious commitment in some kind of general sense.) In one application of what he terms the 'aesthetic analogy', Audi argues (p. 42) that just as if I enjoy contemplating a certain work of art, it is reasonable for me to pay a considerable sum of money in order to purchase it, so it is reasonable to pursue religious practice if 'I find religious practice rewarding'. This brings immediately to mind, by way of retort, the Talmudic dictum that 'the commandments were not given for the sake of benefit'. As the most influential Talmudic commentator in Jewish history, Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, known as Rashi (1040–1105), glosses: 'The commandments were not given to Israel in order that their observance bring them benefit, but were given as a yoke upon their necks.' Focus on the personal fulfilment that I experience when pursuing religious practice eclipses the element of obligation central to, for example, the religious practice of Judaism. I am obliged to observe the commandments of the Torah whether I find them rewarding or not. My sense of fulfilment and even enjoyment in observing them is, to be sure, often a religious value, but whether or not I find a given practice rewarding is absolutely not, on any traditional understanding, a criterion determining whether or not I should carry out the practice.

A striking feature of the entire kind of religious commitment whose rationality Audi sets out to champion in this book is that it often sounds very much as if it is refracted through a liberal, western, humanistic lens. The emphasis is all on love, on respect for all human beings as created in the image of God, and even on not interfering with the freedoms of others. Audi consistently refers to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as if they unambiguously endorse these values and

exemplify the rational religious commitment that he wishes to support – as if there were not conflicting trends and teachings within the long and complex history of each of the Abrahamic faiths. Relatedly, as noted above, Audi plays down the role of belief, and says of even non-doxastic faith that it ‘need not be held dogmatically’ (p. 287).

The wide-ranging nature of the book, noted above, involves its addressing several large issues, each of which, as Audi himself notes in some cases, might have had (and indeed often have had) entire books devoted to them. As a result, some topics are dealt with too briefly, for example the relationship between religious commitment and science (pp. 181–184) and what Audi calls ‘the aesthetic dimension of religious commitment’ (pp. 184–186). This sometimes leads to implausible claims, for example that the fact that the aesthetic appreciation of many works of art, literature, and music is enhanced by a sense of their religious significance ‘is itself a consideration that favors making or nurturing a religious commitment’ (p. 184). A further case in point is Audi’s suggestion (p. 185) that theists tend to react more sharply than non-theists to depictions of the degradation of human beings in art, since for the theist human beings are children of God or at least are created by a caring omniscient God. This comes perilously close to the bald claim that theists value human beings and human life more than do non-theists. Indeed, Audi states a little further on that a secular world-view can provide ‘no reason for countenancing a sacredness in persons’ (p. 187). If by ‘sacredness’ Audi intends the usual religious meaning of the term, then his claim is trivial. If he means something like ‘extraordinary value’, then his claim is false. Thinkers such as Nietzsche succeed precisely in ascribing secularized sacredness or holiness to features of the human world.

Audi’s exaggerated assertions in such passages illustrate a more general and problematic feature of the book, namely the contrast between the sophistication, precision, and nuance displayed by Audi when discussing philosophical issues, on the one hand, and his unconvincing and sometimes sweeping remarks about religion and its advantages over secularism on the other. This unevenness in turn suggests something of a bias towards religion on Audi’s part. This perhaps becomes clearest towards the very end of the book (p. 291). In what sounds like a gentle, again somewhat ‘bourgeois’ version of Pascal’s Wager, Audi writes:

What cost must I pay, supposing my life is, for instance, that of a serious Christian? I will have enjoyed many a religious service, given more to charity than I would have, and forgiven more offenses. I will have seen the beauty of nature as a gift, enjoyed certain music more richly in taking it to express the power of God working in the creative spirit of composers and performers.

(Note here Audi’s reference to the ‘enjoyment’ of religious services, as if that were their primary purpose.) Audi’s ‘wager’ unsurprisingly contains no threat of the hellfire for the non-believer that at least some of Pascal’s interpreters take him as

presenting as the alternative to 'wagering for God'. Yet one can imagine a secularist responding to Audi sharply and at some length, beginning something like this: 'What cost must I pay? I will have wasted time, money, and energy on religious ceremonies, services, and festivals which provided some personal pleasure or sense of family and community cohesion, but nothing that could not have been bettered by a dozen secular alternatives that I would rather have pursued. I have forgiven offences of people who were ungrateful and undeserving, who interpreted my forgiveness as weakness and continued to annoy or harm me. I have denied myself pleasures that would have involved no harm to anyone else only because they were forbidden by religious teachings.' Audi takes no account of the possibility of such a response.

One also senses bias in Audi's suggestion (pp. 291–292) that unlike the Macbeth of 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' or the Matthew Arnold of 'Dover Beach', the religiously committed person, unlike the secularist, will 'never have to take evil as ultimately triumphant or darkness as permanently unilluminable'.

In sum, the nuanced philosophical discussions sustained across an impressive range of issues make this a worthwhile volume. Ultimately, however, the version of religious commitment that Audi endorses is too parochial for the book's overall project of providing a defence of the rationality of religious commitment in a broad sense to succeed.

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Trent Dougherty (ed.) *Evidentialism and its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Pp. xii + 335. £45.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 19 956350 0.

Kelly James Clark & Raymond J. VanArragon (eds) *Evidence and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Pp. x + 214. £35.00 (Hbk), £24.94 (Kindle). ISBN 9780 19 960371 8.

Evidentialism, like most philosophical theories, begins with a truism and ends in some confusion. 'One is epistemically justified in accepting that *p* if and only if believing that *p* fits the evidence that one has for *p*' (Lehrer, *Evidentialism and its Discontents* (hereafter *ED*), p. 55, after Conee and Feldman). But what is it to 'believe', and can we *choose* our beliefs? I may find myself simultaneously *believing p* and also believing that I have no objective right to that belief (no one