Skepticism for the Supernatural: Modernist readings of miracles in the Bible and the Quran

Studies on the hermeneutical reception of miracles in Biblical literature lie at the intersection of discourses on Biblical criticism, Jewish and Christian apologetics, and the varied reception of scientific theories and ideals of the Enlightenment in religious communities. This study situates the work of modernist Muslim exegetes in an era in which European writers also grappled with the interpretation of miracles in Jewish and Christian scripture. I survey exegetes who viewed themselves as modernists and reformers in their attempts to reinterpret the miracles attributed to Israelite prophets mentioned in the Qur’ān. The case studies in this survey include the miracles attributed to Moses, Solomon, and Christ. Authors in this survey include Mawlvi Muḥammad ‘Alī, Mālik Ghulām Farīd, Ghulām Aḥmad Parwez, and Muhammad Asad. Questions include: what is the definition and purpose of a miracle? How do these authors respond to traditional Muslim interpretations of miracles? Do these authors consider prophetic miracles to have been historical events or allegories?