

How to Think About Muslim Difference: A view from Islamic scripture and tradition

Abstract

Drawing on his recently published book, *The Muslim Difference* (Yale 2022), Youshaa Patel explores the vexing Islamic discourse of reprehensible imitation (tashabbuh), a discourse that enjoins ordinary believers to embody and display their religious difference from Christians, Jews and others in public life. Moderating cross-cultural imitation and assimilation was as crucial to the construction of Muslim identity and alterity during Islam's formative period as it is today. This lecture situates the religious discourse within Islamic scripture and tradition, casting new light on a long history of how small differences have defined Muslim interfaith encounters.

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