

the history of Islam and science and the creative thinking of contemporary Muslims—one of many reasons that I am so thrilled to be here to learn from you.

In brief, let me sketch three ways in which Christians and Jews have encountered modern science. As Muslims, you may recognize all of these as options within the Muslim world and you might add some of your own.

ONE: EITHER/OR

This model assumes that the religious tradition must inevitably be in conflict with modern sources of knowledge. Within the either/or model there are two ways to go. One is to reject modern science, as happened in the history of Christianity at various junctures from the persecution of Galileo by the church to the pious Protestant lady who, upon hearing of Darwin's theory of Evolution, said "Descended from apes? Let us pray it is not true. If true, let us pray it does not become widely known."

The other is to reject faith. In the secular Jewish world in which I grew up, becoming a doctor or a scientist was about the greatest honor you could bring to your family. Most people I knew believed with Sigmund Freud—wrongly, as it turns out-- that science would be the Messianic harbinger of a new and better world and that modern science would inevitably replace religion, except for those people too weak to do without it. (If you wonder how I came from that milieu to become a rabbi, that too is another story for "over tea." Let me also add that at our next meeting, I hope that we will have an opportunity for small groups to gather to discuss our own personal faith journeys. I think I speak for most of you when I say that we are not here for academic reasons alone, but because this dialogue is part of a personal passion for us.)

TWO: EACH TO HIS OWN