

Preface

The present volume contains the results of a conference on the concept of freedom in Judaism, Christianity and Islam held at the Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen on May 10 – 11, 2017. The conference was organized by the Research Unit “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses” (KCID) in cooperation with the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation.

The Research Unit KCID offers an innovative approach for studying the development of the three interconnected religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. With this aim in mind, KCID analyzes the history of ideas in each of these three religions, always taking into account the history of interreligious exchange and appropriation of these very ideas. In doing so, KCID investigates the foundations of religious thought, thereby establishing an “archaeology of religious knowledge” in order to make manifest certain commonalities and differences between the three religions via dialogic study of their conceptual history. Thus, KCID intends to contribute to an intensive academic engagement with interreligious discourses in order to uncover mutually intelligible theoretical foundations and increase understanding between these different religious communities in the here and now. Moreover, KCID aims to highlight how each religion’s self-understanding can contribute to mutual understanding and peace between the three religious communities in the world.

In order to explore key concepts in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, KCID organizes conferences individually dedicated to specific concepts. A renowned set of researchers from various disciplines explore these concepts from the viewpoint of all three religions. The results of each conference are published in a volume appearing in the book series “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses”. Particularly salient selections from each volume are made available online in Arabic, English and German.

In this fashion, KCID fulfills its aspirations not only by reflecting on central religious ideas amongst a small group of academic specialists, but also by disseminating such ideas in a way that will appeal to the broader public. Academic research that puts itself at the service of society is vital in order to counteract powerful contemporary trends toward a form of segregation rooted in ignorance. Mutual respect and acceptance amongst religious communities is thereby strengthened. Such a result is guaranteed due to the methodology deployed by the research unit, namely the dialogic investigation of the history of concepts as documented in the present volume.

We wish to thank all of those who put their efforts into organizing the conference and producing the volume: Dr. Philipp Hildmann from the Hanns-Seidel-

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The Editors