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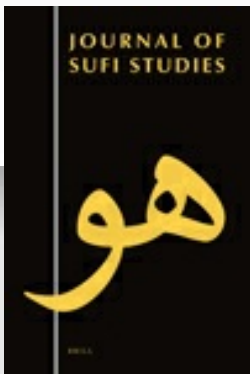
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Jews and Judaism in Classical Sufi Literature

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This paper addresses a paradox at the heart of the classical Sufi tradition. On the one hand, key Sufi writers express 'transconfessionalism' in their mystical verse. This has led a variety of modern scholars to identify Sufism as an eclectic tradition. On the other hand, in other writings the selfsame authors conduct a vigorous literary polemic and celebrate unbelievers of all stripes, yet with a notable emphasis on Jewish unbelievers. This article examines the image of Jews in both Arabic and Persian between the tenth and thirteenth centuries through a variety of motifs, including the embodiment of the demonic and as archetypal unbeliever. These images become critical to the literary function of Sufi texts with little connection to their historical role in Near Eastern societies.



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