The voluminous corpus of the rabbinic genre known as midrash and aggadah involves not just law (halakhah), but also a prolific repository of unrefined philosophical theology. The aggadic and midrashic style encompasses narrative, allegory, and a deeply intimate exegetical engagement with every syllable of the biblical text. It may not correspond neatly to the kinds of systematic treatises, largely identified with the Christian tradition, through which theology is traditionally delivered. The philosophy and theology that inhere in the midrashic genre are, at the very least, of equal profundity and complexity. One needs only to be attuned to its manner and style of communication, consisting of an unrelenting intricate weave of ciphers and cross-references to its biblical antecedents, to hear a literal barrage of philosophical theology.

Introduction
James A. Diamond

The Introduction provides an outline and summary of the separate chapters in the book and the overarching goals of the book. The first is to shatter the stereotype of Judaism as a religion of law absent of any theology. The second is to actually forge a Jewish philosophical theological discourse that spans a continuum of Jewish texts, thinkers, and exegetes from the Bible, to the classical rabbis, to the medieval...
commentators (parshanim), to Hasidism, to modern secular philosophy. All the issues in the book are explored from a decidedly Jewish stance, both existentially and intellectually. That entails both bringing God into the quest and reading my own particular religious tradition’s foundational scriptures as they examine life from their various perspectives. There is a particular subplot that courses its way through all the chapters. It is the promotion of freedom—in both acts and thought—encouraged by the Jewish God.