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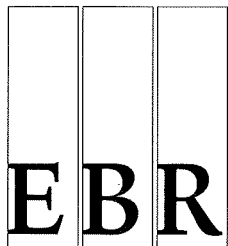
Abstinence

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Recommended Citation

Wimbush, Vincent L. "Abstinence," in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, ed. Hans-Josef Klauck et al (Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 244-245.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF THE BIBLE
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Aaron –
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Walter de Gruyter
Berlin · New York

spread of private penance pioneered by Celtic and Anglo-Saxon monks and the formulation of books of penance, private penance made to a priest began to include formulae of deprecatory, or intercessory, prayer for the forgiveness of sins. The power of the keys received increased emphasis from the Carolingian period on, as we can see in the Isidorian, or False, Decretals. Absolution, however, remained a vague term until the development of the theology of the sacraments in the 12th century. Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Bk. 4, dist. 14–22, include penance among the seven sacraments and discuss the power of the keys in dist. 18–19. It was not until the mid-13th century that the declarative statement of absolution (“I absolve you from your sins...”) emerged in the Latin practice of the sacrament of penance and was defended by Thomas Aquinas in his treatise *The Form of Sacramental Absolution* sent to John of Vercelli, the Master General of the Dominican Order. Nevertheless, there was still disagreement among the scholastics about the constitution of the sacrament of penance and the relation the divine act of forgiveness and the indicative formula of the priest.

Many of the Reformers in the 16th century retained auricular confession, though not as a sacrament. Formulae of absolution, especially of the indicative sort, were discouraged and emphasis placed on saving faith. In 1551 the Council of Trent reaffirmed the late medieval practice, emphasizing Christ's institution of the sacrament of penance and stressing the indicative formula of absolution as a juridical act (Session XIV, cap. 1, 3, and 6). The Anglican church stayed closer to the Roman model and even today makes use of absolution pronounced by the presider within the context of the Eucharistic celebration. In contemporary Roman Catholicism since Vatican II questions have emerged about the relation between private penance, which in the current Catholic ritual begins with an intercessory formula and concludes with the indicative formula, and the general administration of penance by priest or bishop, which is discouraged except in special circumstances. In the Eastern churches intercessory formulae are the general rule.

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Bernard McGinn

See also → Forgiveness; → Repentance; → Sin, Sinners

Abstinence

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Greco-Roman Antiquity
- IV. Judaism
- V. Christianity
- VI. Islam
- VII. Other Religions

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Abstinence is defined as the practice of temporarily refraining from satisfying vital human needs such as sexuality, eating and drinking (especially alcohol) or participating in celebrations. In the Hebrew Bible, such a temporary “withdrawal” from everyday life happens for mostly religious and cultic reasons. It is to express or restore a special closeness to YHWH. In this context, sexual abstinence serves to acquire cultic purity (cf. Exod 19:15; 1 Sam 21:5). The individual or collective fasting can be an expression of deep mourning (cf. 2 Sam 1:11–12). Or a fast day is proclaimed that may be either institutionalized (cf. the Day of Atonement: Lev 16:29–31; 23:26–32) or established for specific purposes in order to do penance and reconfirm the help and support of God (cf. 2 Sam 12:15–23; 1 Kgs 21:9, 12 and the penitential prayers of Ezra 8:21, 23; Neh 1:4, 9; Dan 9:3; Jonah 3). The fasting rituals are characterized by fixed recurring elements such as the ripping of clothes, shearing of hair, rolling in the dust or temporary abandonment of food (Podella). Merely superficial fasting is criticized (Isa 58:3, 5). According to Amos 2:11–12, the Nazirites are not allowed to drink wine (cf. Heb. *nāzîr* “devoted, consecrated” and *nzr* in Niph “consecrate oneself”). This motive also characterizes the Rechabites' symbolic act in Jer 35 which, however, cannot be analyzed as a historical ritual (cf. Levin). In this context, special importance has to be attributed to the account on the Nazirite (*nāzîr*) Samson in Judg 13–16 (Bernhardt). Being a hero consecrated to God, he is prohibited to shear his scalp hair (Judg 13:5; 16:17, 19, 22; cf. 1 Sam 1:11). Furthermore, his mother is obligated to abstain from drinking wine or inebriant potion and from eating impure food as reveals the prefixed birth account which was added subsequently (Judg 13:4, 7, 14; cf. 1 Sam 1:15). In the older Samson tradition comprised in Judg 14–15, however, the Nazirite character plays no role at all. Apparently the figure of Samson became linked with the three Nazirite commandments in Num 6:1–21 only at a relatively late stage in order to make him appear as a hero of Old Testament salvation history (Witte).

Surprisingly, the texts on the Nazirite character are among the younger traditions of the Hebrew Bible which cannot be traced far back into Israelite religious history. From the point of view of religious history, however, it is very likely that the forms of abstinence here described used to serve as

a means for holding off both demoniac and divine powers (of death) and that this is where they originate from.

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Uwe Becker

II. New Testament

All the major books of the New Testament, except for the Gospel of John, provide evidence for the practice of abstinence among early Christians and their neighbors. One form of abstinence endorsed by Christians was abstention from food, or “fasting.” Although Jesus is remembered as having suspended fasting during his ministry (Matt 9:14–15 par. Mark 2:18–20 par. Luke 5:33–35; Matt 11:18–19 par. Luke 7:33–34; but see also Matt 4:1–2 par. Luke 4:1–2; Matt 6:16–18), it was later practiced in combination with prayer (Acts 13:3; 14:23; cf. *varia lectio* at Mark 9:29; 1 Cor 7:5; see also Luke 2:36–37; Acts 27:9, 21, 33–38), and sometimes culminated in a revelation (Acts 13:2; cf. 9:9–19; 10:9–16). Abstinence from sleep was practiced during extended periods of worship and “prayer vigils” (Matt 26:36–46 par. Mark 14:32–42 par. Luke 22:39–46; Luke 6:12; Acts 16:25; cf. 12:12; 20:7–12), as was abstinence from marital intercourse (1 Cor 7:5). Finally, some church leaders demanded abstention from certain foods and from wine to avoid offending other Christians (Acts 15:19–21, 29; 21:25; Rom 14:15–23; 1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:28–29; cf. Rom 14:1–4; 1 Cor 14:19–33).

But early Christians also rejected various forms of abstinence. These included: practices designed to achieve ritual purity (Matt 15:10–20 par. Mark 7:14–23; Acts 10:11–16, 28; Rom 14:14, 17–18; Titus 1:15); practices deriving from an interpretation of tradition that was deemed too rigid or pietistic (Matt 12:1–14 par. Mark 2:23–3; 6 par. Luke 6:1–11; Gal 4:8–10; Col 2:16–23; Heb 9:9–10; 13:9–16; cf. Rom 14:5–6; 1 Tim 5:23); abstinence undertaken for public recognition (Matt 6:16–18); and, in one instance, abstinence based on the rejection of the goodness of Creation (1 Tim 4:1–5).

Finally, it should be acknowledged that abstinence, *per se*, was never conceptualized as a discrete category of New Testament theology. On the one hand, it seems always to demand a voluntary and deliberate “going without” (rather than simply “giving up”) something; and it had to be practiced with respect to things that were neither right nor wrong (“indifferents”). Thus one does not “abstain” from acts of kindness or, in the strict sense,

from wickedness (cf. 1 Pet 2:11) or fornication (cf. Acts 15:20). On the other hand, abstinence was practiced from a variety of motivations (e.g., cf. 1 Cor 10:19–20 with vv. 28–29), and it is not always possible to distinguish it from such kindred practices as self-control and austerity (e.g., 1 Cor 7:36–38; Tit 1:8; Tit 2:5, 6, 12), self-denial (e.g., Matt 3:4 par. Mark 1:6; Matt 16:24–26 par. Mark 8:34–37 par. Luke 9:23–25; Acts 23:12–14; 1 Cor 9:1–23; 1 Thess 2:7–9; Rev 14:1–4), and asceticism (e.g., 1 Cor 9:27; Rev 11:3).

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Will Deming

III. Greco-Roman Antiquity

Ancient philosophers, doctors, and religious cults advocated various forms of abstinence in Greco-Roman antiquity. Two forms predominate: abstinence from meat and sexual abstinence.

In ancient medicine abstinence was a common therapy. Galen (129–216 CE), the ancient doctor whose works influenced medical theory and practice for generations, connected abstinence to both food and sexuality. Part of his normal medical regimen for his patients involved careful attention to the regulation of sexual activity through periods of abstinence as well as careful attention to the effects of certain foods, some of which he maintained should be avoided, on the psychological and physical body. His medical regime for producing healthy semen, common to both males and females, for the production of children involved abstinence from certain foods and wine (Shaw: 58). Michel Foucault studied the regimes of abstinence and sexual engagement in ancient society as exemplifying the “care of the self” that pervaded Greco-Roman social teaching. Sexual intercourse depleted the life-force, the semen, and so abstinence prolongs a person's life.

Greco-Roman philosophers advocated abstinence from eating meat. Porphyry (ca. 234–305 CE), a Neoplatonist, wrote a comprehensive treatise on abstaining from eating animal meat (*De Abstinentia*) in which he advocated not killing because animals have souls and the killing of animals interfered with the human killer's ascent to the divine. He also argued that meat harms humans because it leads to bodily imbalance, an imbalance not produced by vegetables and other non-meat foods that are more easily digested. Porphyry presents a metaphysical argument for abstention from meat based upon his Neoplatonic philosophy. He believed in reincarnation of the human soul, which was resident in the body, and so the consumption of ensouled beings violated the natural progression of existent beings to the intellectual and divine realm. His treatise combines medical, philosophical, and theological knowledge in advocating abstinence.

Some Greco-Roman religious cults advocated or demanded abstinence for their adherents. The Vestal Virgins of Rome renounced sexual activity for the period of their service to the Roman goddess Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, the center of the Roman household. Although the scholarship is not conclusive, there is some evidence that points to abstinence from meat and wine among initiates to some mystery religions, reserving in the case of the Mithras cult the eating of the flesh of the bull as a ritual meal of union with the god. Women and men devotees of Isis practiced periods of sexual continence as part of their religious practice in preparation for their ritual death and resurrection and new birth. And the priests of the cult of the Great Mother were known for castrating themselves in order to reserve their entire body for devotion to the goddess. These cultic practices of abstinence of various forms were not unusual in Greco-Roman society, given ancient medical theory on the dangers of excesses.

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Richard Valantasis

IV. Judaism

Periodic and selective abstinence were central aspects of Judaism from the Second Temple and onward. As in biblical Israel, abstinence was practiced through refraining from wine and other alcoholic beverages, fasting and limiting or refraining from sexual relations.

During the Second Temple and rabbinic periods individuals continued to take upon themselves vows of *nezirut*, or naziritship, which forbid one to consume grapes, wine or any grape products; see 1 Macc 3:49–51; Josephus, *Ant.* 19 §294; Acts 21:23–24; *mNaz* 3.6, 5.4 and 6.11; *tNaz* 2.7; *BerR* 91.4. Although the *nezirut* delineated in Numbers is temporary, ending with the Nazirite shaving his or her head and offering sacrifices, lifelong forms of *nezirut* developed in the post-biblical period. One of these, called *nezirut Shimshon* (the naziritship of Samson), was a lifetime abjuration of grapes and grape products as well as a lifetime ban on haircutting; however, unlike the biblical Nazirite, such a Nazirite was allowed to come into contact with the dead (*mNaz* 1.2). This feature was significant because, on the one hand, after the destruction of the temple no means of purifying oneself from corpse impurity was available and, on the other, by the 11th century it was assumed that everyone had contracted corpse impurity because safeguards against impurity were no longer in place. This form of *nezirut* was particularly widespread in the Balkans,

Turkey, Egypt, Syria and the land of Israel in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

It is possible that the inhabitants of Qumran did not partake of wine. They refer to the wine served at their meals as *tirash*, “new wine” (1QS VI, 4–6; 1QSa II, 19–20), which may in fact have been unfermented grape juice. The author of *History of the Rechabites* (1st–4th cent. CE) describes a community that observes abstinence from wine among other abstinent practices; it is not clear whether this work, clearly fictional, was inspired by the existence of an actual community of ascetics. Later on, Jewish mystics such as R. Joseph Karo (16th cent.) abstained from or limited their intake of wine as part of an ascetic discipline.

Abstinence from wine was sometimes a form of mourning the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. In the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple there were Jews who abstained from wine and meat (*tSot* 15.11–12; cf. *2 Bar.* 10:6–19). Beginning in the 9th century a movement arose among the Karaites known as Avelei Tsiyyon, “mourners of Zion”; these were a group of Karaites and non-Karaites who spent their lives in Jerusalem mourning the destruction of the temple, in part by refraining from meat and wine.

Periodic fasts by individuals were common in the Second Temple and rabbinic periods. Many of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha mention fasting as a means of atonement (e.g., *T. Reu.* 1:9–10), as a form of mourning (*Jdt* 8:6) or as preparation for receiving a divine or angelic revelation (*4 Ezra* 5:20). From Christian and rabbinic sources it would appear that fasting on Mondays and Thursdays was common among Jews in the land of Israel during the late Second Temple period (see *bShab* 24a). Moreover, according to rabbinic tradition the *anshei ma'amad*, Jews who “participated” in the sacrificial cult by gathering to read scripture, fasted (and presumably prayed) as a form of supplication on behalf of Israel (*yTaan* 4.3, 68b).

Numerous sages of the rabbinic period are described as fasting as an act of penitence (e.g., *bNaz* 52b). Other scholars fasted regularly as a form of spiritual discipline (e.g., *yTaan* 3.11, 66a). Some saw fasting as a substitute for the sacrificial cult (*bBer* 17a) or for the institution of the Nazir (see *bTaan* 11a). Some rabbis in fact opposed fasting, either because they saw it as an unwarranted form of self-affliction (*bTaan* 11a) or because it interfered with the study or teaching of Torah or with one's work obligations (*bTaan* 11b; *yPea* 7.3, 26b).

Fasting continued to be prevalent during the medieval period and into early modernity. A list known as *Megillat Ta'anit Batra*, “the latter fast scroll,” probably composed in the land of Israel in the early medieval period, catalogues over 20 days during the year on which one should fast. Mystics fasted as a form of penance, in preparation for mys-

tical experiences and as part of a general ascetic regime. Although in principle they opposed excessive self-denial, the German pietists of the 12th and 13th centuries engaged in many forms of self-affliction including fasting either to counteract their impulses or as a form of penance. With the rise of the Hasidic movement in the 18th century many Hasidic masters such as Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav advocated fasting as a form of penance, in particular to atone for nocturnal emissions.

Total sexual abstinence was uncommon throughout Jewish history, in large part because of the importance placed on procreation. Moreover, the rabbis understood Exod 21:10 as obligating husbands to engage in regular sexual activity with their wives (*mKet* 5.6). Nonetheless sexual activity was limited in numerous ways. The period of separation between a woman and her husband following the onset of her menses was extended significantly during the rabbinic period; according to a rabbinic tradition this was a stringency that women accepted upon themselves (*bNid* 66a).

The sages themselves either delayed marriage for many years (the land of Israel; *bQid* 29b) or left home for a significant period after marriage (Babylonia; *bKet* 62b) in order to study Torah. The practice of married men traveling far from home for long periods of time or of secluding themselves during the week in order to study Torah continued into the 19th century. Finally, the practice of limiting sexual relations to Friday night, advocated in the Talmud for Torah scholars (see *bKet* 62b) was given mystical significance by the medieval kabbalists, who taught that relations on Friday night would be theurgically effective in uniting the male and female aspects of the godhead.

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Eliezer Diamond

V. Christianity

Abstinence is the English translation of the Latin term *abstinentia* (*abstinere*), the use of which among important segments of the earliest Christians was an attempt to articulate a new ethos and worldview and reflect the appropriately mandated practices and social orientation. As one of the many catch-terms used to reflect earliest Christian piety, the term captures not merely the “action or practice” of “refraining from something,” “the forbearance of any indulgence of appetite” (*Oxford English Dictionary* I: 54), or explicit proscriptions. To be sure, the term was used to refer to practices having to do with avoidance or a turning away from and guarding against certain things and associations (*ἀπέχω*, *ἀπέχεσθαι* τινός; *φυλάσσω*). Borrowed mainly from historical and contemporary Jewish and other an-

cient Mediterranean world traditions and their exemplars, many early Christians made renunciations and abstentions their own through the associations they made with their deep convictions, strong impulses and varied motivations, including insecurities, fears, and hopes.

Abstentions – especially from certain foods and sex – were the surface practices of a worldview under construction and only sketchily named and articulated in the earliest period of the Christian movement. Although there is evidence that some abstentions were observed from the very beginning of the movements that developed in the aftermath of the death of Jesus (Luke 6:20–21, 39; 12:51–53; 14:26–27; *Gos. Thom* 16:1–4; 36; 54, 55; 95:1–2), it is clear that from the 2nd century onward – especially by the 4th century – abstentions and other practices were both popular (across the Mediterranean worlds) and elitist (increasingly associated with certain groups), and were intensified and rationalized and made compelling as they were made the consistent explicit subject of oral and scripted exemplary lives, polemical arguments and apologetics, handbooks and other catechetical instruments, and institutional rules. Most importantly, they were the ideological lens through which and the wedge by which scriptures, and all the heroic figures and exemplars within them, were interpreted.

But, of course, fairly similar practices were made to mean differently – even if only in slight terms. With the differentiation and extensive growth of the Christian movements in the first four centuries different practices and different motives and rationalizations were advanced. Some communities emphasized as a reflection of commitment to the new ethos and worldview a complex of moderate and traditional practices and virtues – self-control (*ἐνκρατεία*), discipline (*ἀσκησις*), the cultivation of self-possession and appropriate temperament (*σωφροσύνη*). Some devotees, out of concern over pollution and purity issues, advocated a turning away from social-cultural associations and involvements and practices over a limited period of time and in certain circumstances (Rom 14:3, 6; 1 Tim 4:3; Acts 15:20, 29). Some others, out of their conviction of the imminence of the end time, were convinced of the ongoing necessity of certain abstentions (1 Thess 4:3; 5:22). Differences in the registration of renunciation and abstention reflected differences in the new communities and their charismatic leaders, in physical and social environments, in social statuses and their attendant politics and psychologies and in the social-cultural-political challenges that different localities presented. What was at stake was finding the appropriate response to the world that would dramatically mirror and represent the compelling new experience(s) and self-understanding(s).

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Vincent L. Wimbush

VI. Islam

A significant teaching of the Qur'an is that humans, as creatures who have been placed on the earth by God, should enjoy the good things that have been provided for them. At the same time they should not indulge themselves to excess, particularly at the expense of others. The just medium is the ideal, as is illustrated in the advice in S 17:29 about giving to the needy: "Do not let your hand be chained to your neck, nor open it to its widest extent so that you sit down blameworthy, destitute" (cf. S 17:26; S 25:67). Muslims are called the middle or justly balanced community (S 2:143), a title that is frequently interpreted as indicating that in their conduct they are to follow the way that lies between extremes.

In the light of these teachings, no particular virtue is attached to abstinence for its own sake. Thus, the Qur'an celebrates the marriage bond, and encourages husbands and wives to enjoy one another (e.g., S 2:187; S 2:223; S 30:21). And when the Prophet Muhammad's companion 'Uthmān ibn Maz'ūn, who refused wine even before it was prohibited in the early Muslim community, neglected his wife and asked for permission to become a celibate, the prophet discouraged him in the most emphatic terms (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* 62.11).

Nevertheless, this world is not an end in itself. According to the Qur'an, life "is like the rain which we send down from the skies: the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter"; it continues, "The things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of your Lord for rewards, and best for hopes" (S 18:45-6). And there is a clear sense that the path to greater closeness to God lies through self-discipline and detachment from possessions and the pleasures of the world (e.g., S 3:14; S 16:96; S 28:60), which are even interpreted as a test for true believers (S 18:7; S 20:131).

Muslims are called to show their devotion to God by two major exercises in abstinence that are prescribed within the Five Pillars of Islam. One is the yearly fast during the lunar month of Ramaḍān, when adults are required to abstain from food and drink as well as marital relations during the hours of daylight, the purpose being "that they may learn self-restraint" (S 2:187). A saying of the Prophet underlines this, "The odour of the mouth of one fasting is sweeter in the estimation of Allah than

the odour of musk – he gives up his food and his drink and his desire for My sake; fasting is for Me and I will grant its reward" (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* 30.2). There may be subsidiary reasons, such as experiencing the plight of the hungry, but the main motive is to obey God and to seek his favour.

The other is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which Muslims are required to make at least once in their lives if their circumstances allow. During this liminal experience they undergo multiple deprivations, including for males the exchange of their own clothes for two strips of uncoloured cloth, abstinence from sexual relations and a series of exacting observances in and around the main shrine of Islam (S 2:197-203; S 22:6-30), and all expressly to please God.

Renunciation of a sustained, ascetic kind, usually termed *zuhd*, has a respected place in Islamic beliefs, both among Sūfī mystics and ordinary believers. A measure of asceticism is usually regarded as an indication of sincere faith, and it is often adduced as a sign of saintliness in the case of the Prophet and early leaders of the community ('Alī al-Ṭabarī 23-9, 61-76). Extravagant shows of this among extreme mystics have typically met with disapproval from ordinary believers, though the most ascetic Sūfī masters have commanded respect bordering on veneration. Within Islamic tradition, one of the paradigmatic exponents of renunciation is the person of Jesus, who in his actions and words is taken as a byword for detachment and abstinence from the things of the world.

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David Thomas

VII. Other Religions

Other contemporary forms of western spirituality sometimes regard any form of abstinence with suspicion, because it seems to interfere with the pursuit of happiness. New Age movements sprang up in the 1970s and 80s, offering mostly middle-class people an alternative, therapeutic and individualistic spirituality. Numerous New Agers regard this present historical epoch as the Age of Pisces, troubled by unreasonable institutionalized faith and destined to give way to the more individualistic, rational and scientific Age of Aquarius. New Agers draw, often indiscriminately and superficially, upon a wide range of pagan, Hindu, Buddhist and other religions of the ancient as well the modern world in order to construct their spiritual lives, but many are hostile to Christianity and even to Jesus as the iconic figure of the Age of Pisces. Although they have biblical ideas and symbols as part of the residual cultural background to their lives, many

prefer to seek light from elsewhere, though they are not always willing to study patiently the texts of, e.g., ancient Egypt and India but instead are usually content to ransack them for names and ideas that can be conformed to their ideal of individual well-being. Indeed, in such an eclectic, diverse, and individualistic phenomenon as the New Age, any form of abstinence is rarely thought of in communal terms but rather, mostly in terms of an individual's self-realization. Some New Agers eat organic vegetarian food, and may justify this from South Asian religious customs, but without any deep understanding of the beliefs from which such traditions spring. Such insouciant and shallow borrowing can be deeply offensive to others whose customs are being used in this (from their point of view) trivial way.

For most religious people, however, abstinence is a spiritual discipline that draws its meanings from the deep roots of established religions. Most religions encourage periods of abstinence from food, drink and sex, and many require followers always to refrain from eating certain food or following certain practices. Then there are religious people, often "holy" or "separate" from ordinary people, who choose or are chosen to abstain from some act, often sex, as part of their religious role for others.

Although the Bible has influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam in its food laws, teaching about proper and improper sexual activity, and other forms of abstinence, other major world religions developed parallel notions without any biblical influence. For example, Jains are vegans and many, though not all, Hindus and Buddhists are strict vegetarians, but these practices arise from different sources of religious authority than the Bible. An obvious example is that most Hindus who do eat meat avoid eating beef because of the sacredness of the cow, but have no faith-derived veto on pork or shell-fish products.

Nevertheless, in our modern and postmodern globalized world, there has been a group of people who are influenced by a wider range of sources than just their own religion, and whose own influence upon others has been considerable. An obvious example is Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948), the *mahatma* or "great soul" of modern India, whose views, including those on abstaining from certain foods and practices were formed by the Hinduism and Jain influences of his earliest days, but reinforced by his later meetings with Christians, especially Friends or Quakers, and Muslims, and his reflection upon the teaching of their religions.

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See also → Ascetics, Asceticism; → Dietary Laws;

→ Fast, Fasting; → Nazirites

Abu Et-Twein, Khirbet

→ Abu Tuwein, Khirbet

Abū al-Faraj, Gregor

→ Abū al-Faraj Hārūn Ibn al-Faraj

Abū al-Faraj Hārūn Ibn al-Faraj

Abū al-Faraj Hārūn Ibn al-Faraj was a Karaite grammarian of Hebrew who lived in Jerusalem in the first half of the 11th century. He wrote numerous works in Arabic on the Hebrew language of the Bible. The largest of these is a work on Hebrew morphology and syntax entitled *al-Kitāb al-Muṣ-tamil 'alā al-'Uṣūl wa-l-Fuṣūl fī al-Luġa al-'Ibrāniyya* ("The Comprehensive Book of General Principles and Particular Rules of the Hebrew Language"). This was produced in a shortened version known as *al-Kitāb al-Kāfi fī al-Luġa al-'Ibrāniyya* ("The Sufficient Book on the Hebrew Language"), which itself had an epitome known as *al-Mukhtaṣar* ("The Short Version"). He wrote an introductory treatise on grammar entitled *Kitāb al-Madkhal 'ilā 'Ilm al-Diqduq fī Turuq al-Luġa al-'Ibrāniyya* ("Book of Introduction into the Discipline of Careful Investigation of the Ways of the Hebrew Language"). Also extant are manuscripts of a grammatical commentary on the Bible known as *Tafsīr al-'Alfāz* ("Interpretation of Words") that is attributed in the colophons to Abū al-Faraj. We are indebted to Abū al-Faraj Hārūn also for one of the most important treatises on the pronunciation and cantillation of the Tiberian masoretic tradition of biblical Hebrew known as *Hidāyat al-Qārī* ("Guide for the Reader"). Abū al-Faraj also applied himself to Bible exegesis. One surviving example of this is a reworking by Abū al-Faraj of a commentary on the Pentateuch by Abū Ya'qūb ibn Nūḥ.

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Abu Hawam, Tell

Tell Abu Hawam was an important harbor city located at the mouth of Kishon River at the southern edge of Acco bay in northern Israel. As a harbor city, the site was an important stopping point for ships traveling between Egypt, Cyprus, and the northern Levant. The strategic importance of the site also rested in its position at the mouth of the Kishon River. The Kishon was a major access point between the coastal cities north of Carmel and the