How can we, as people and communities with different religions and cultures, live together with integrity? Does tolerance require us to deny our deep differences or give up all claims to truth, to trade our received traditions for skepticism or relativism? Cultural philosopher Lenn E. Goodman argues that we can respect one another and learn from one another’s ways without literally sharing them or relinquishing our own insights and heritage. Commitment to our own ideals and norms, he argues, need not mean dogmatism or intolerance. In this study, Goodman offers a trenchant critique of John Rawls’s troubling claim that religious and metaphysical voices must be silenced in the core political deliberations of a democracy. Inquiry, dialogue, and open debate remain the safeguards of public and personal sanity. Any of us, Goodman shows, can learn from one another’s traditions and explorations without abandoning our own.

Lenn E. Goodman is Professor of Philosophy and Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Vanderbilt University. A summa cum laude graduate of Harvard University, he received his D.Phil. as a Marshall Scholar at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University. His many books include *Creation and Evolution* (2010); *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* (2008); *In Defense of Truth: A Pluralistic Approach* (2001); and *God of Abraham* (1996), winner of the 1997 Gratz Centennial Prize. Goodman serves on the editorial boards of *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, *Political Theology*, and *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*. A past president of the Metaphysical Society of America, he is an associate editor of *Asian Philosophy* and has served as Vice President and Program Chair of the Institute for Islamic/Judaic Studies, as well as program chair for the APA panels of the Academy for Jewish Philosophy.
Religious Pluralism and Values in the Public Sphere

LENN E. GOODMAN

Vanderbilt University
Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction 1
1 Religious Pluralism 11
2 Naked in the Public Square 54
3 Minima and Maxima 102
4 The Road to Kazanistan 144
Some Concluding Thoughts 193

Bibliography 203
Index 213
Acknowledgments

Profound thanks are due to many for the warmth, candor, skill, and insight they expended in behalf of this project over a period of years. Each of the chapters began its life as a paper and received thoughtful comments from committed scholars and learned philosophers before it took its present form. Chapter 1, “Religious Pluralism,” began as a paper for a conference on Varieties of Pluralism that my colleague Rob Talisse and I organized at Vanderbilt ten years ago. It profited from the probing comments of Nick Rescher, Joe Margolis, Bill Galston, John Lachs, Susan Haack, and others who took part in that conference. The paper grew and morphed over time. An abbreviated version appeared in *Political Theology* in 2012. Chapter 2, “Naked in the Public Square,” was tried out in embryonic form at a conference on The Place of Theology in the Liberal State, held at the University of Wisconsin. Len Kaplan, David Novak, Jean Elshtain, and Arnie Eisen were among the participants whose valuable conversation enriched my understanding. Again the paper morphed and grew. A version appeared in *Philosophia* in 2012. Parts of Chapter 3 appeared in 2010 under the title “Some Moral Minima,” published in *The Good Society*, a PEGS journal; in addition, I tried out some of my thoughts about the Decalogue, now developed in the same chapter, at a 2006 conference on the Ten Commandments held at the University of Wisconsin. Chapter 4,
Acknowledgments

“The Road to Kazanistan,” grew from an article of the same title published in 2008 in *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Warm thanks are due to Julie Clague, the editor of *Political Theology*; Tom Bailey, the special editor, and Asa Kasher, the general editor of *Philosophia* (and to Springer Verlag, the publisher); to Stephen Simon, special editor of *The Good Society* (and Penn State University Press, the publisher); and finally to Nick Rescher, the founding executive editor of *American Philosophical Quarterly*. I owe a debt of gratitude to all of them, not just for their willingness and that of the journal publishers to see in new and expanded form the materials they first published but also for the warm welcome they gave to thoughts that sometimes ran against prevailing currents and fashions in academe.

As I worked to integrate the original essays into the present book, I was aided immensely by my student and research assistant Nick Oschman and by the careful readings of the full manuscript by Alan Mittleman at the Jewish Theological Seminary and David Novak at the University of Toronto. My colleagues, Rob Talisse and Larry May, made sure that the evolving manuscript knew the rough and tumble of any discussion addressed to political and social philosophy in general and to the contributions of John Rawls in particular. Neal Kozodoy gave me sage advice about the book, and Lewis Bateman at Cambridge University Press welcomed it there, conveying the heartening enthusiasm of his fellow editors and the Syndics of the Press, where this project found its proper home. As always I owe profound appreciation to Roberta, my loyal partner and fellow adventurer, for her insight, wisdom, and love of truth.