



Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities

Reza Aslan (Editor) , Aaron J. Hahn Tapper (Editor)

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Jews and Muslims make up less than 3% of the total population of the United States. Yet, despite their relatively small numbers, the members of these two minority groups often find themselves the focus of a disproportionate amount of media attention, particularly when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Beyond such international issues, American Jews and American Muslims find themselves struggling with similar inter-communal concerns when it comes to matters like education (for example tensions between student populations of Jews and Muslims on university campuses), politics (such as the swearing in of the first Muslim Congressman in the House of Representatives, Keith Ellison, or the omnipresent emails and robo-calls linking President Obama to the Muslim community that emerged during the 2008 Presidential election), or even pop culture (think of such recent Hollywood productions as *Kingdom in Heaven*, *Munich*, *Paradise Now*, and *Traitor*, to name but a few). In all of these matters, American Jews and American Muslims have consistently engaged each other in conversation – whether directly or indirectly; constructive or not – in ways that have usually eluded their co-religionists throughout the rest of the world. This has partly to do with America’s ethos as a “melting pot” of different religions, ethnicities, and cultures. But it also has to do with the innovative ways in which Judaism and Islam have absorbed, and been radically altered, by the so-called “American experience.”

This book is an exploration of contemporary Jewish-Muslim relations in the United States and the distinct and often creative ways in which these two communities interact with one another in the American context. Each essay discusses a different episode from the recent twentieth and current twenty-first century American milieu that links these two groups together. Some deal with case examples of local inter-communal interaction, such as “dialogue groups,” which can help us better understand national trends of similar activities in other parts of the country. Others focus on national trends themselves, thus giving us greater insights into individual incidents.

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Hoodsy says

I've used this book to support my main argument in my BA thesis which revolves around the Jewish community in America and their characteristics. Aslan successfully amalgamates both religions, namely Judaism and Islam, in his book and analyzes them by juxtaposition and through chronological order within history, which therefore, drives the reader to draw his own conclusion about the position of the two religions in USA nowadays,
