

Some Recent Publications on Islam/Muslims

Defending Muhammad in Modernity by Sher Ali, Notre Dame Press. 2019

In this groundbreaking study, SherAli Tareen presents the most comprehensive and theoretically engaged work to date on what is arguably the most long-running, complex, and contentious dispute in modern Islam: the Barelvī-Deobandī polemic. The Barelvī and Deobandī groups are two normative orientations/reform movements with beginnings in colonial South Asia. Almost two hundred years separate the beginnings of this polemic from the present. Its specter, however, continues to haunt the religious sensibilities of postcolonial South Asian Muslims in profound ways, both in the region and in diaspora communities around the world.

Defending Muḥammad in Modernity challenges the commonplace tendency to view such moments of intra-Muslim contest through the prism of problematic yet powerful liberal secular binaries like legal/mystical, moderate/extremist, and reformist/traditionalist. Tareen argues that the Barelvī-Deobandī polemic was instead animated by what he calls “competing political theologies” that articulated—during a moment in Indian Muslim history marked by the loss and crisis of political sovereignty—contrasting visions of the normative relationship between divine sovereignty, prophetic charisma, and the practice of everyday life. Based on the close reading of previously unexplored print and manuscript sources in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu spanning the late eighteenth and the entirety of the nineteenth century, this book intervenes in and integrates the often-disparate fields of religious studies, Islamic studies, South Asian studies, critical secularism studies, and political theology.

**Law, Empire, and the Sultan: Ottoman Imperial Authority and Late Hanafi
Jurisprudence** by Samy A. Ayoub.2020 .Oxford University Press. New York

Reconsiders fundamental premises about Ottoman sultanic authority.Gives a new perspective on the later development of the Hanafi school of Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire

Explains how legal revisions by Muslim jurists of the period were not temporary strategies but rather involved the use of built-in mechanisms to reinterpret Islamic law and

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keep it relevant to the changing social, political, and economic circumstances of the Ottoman Empire.

Provides detailed analysis and fresh insights on a wide range of legal issues through careful reading of understudied sources, uncirculated manuscripts, and extensive references to authoritative Hanafi texts.

Slavery and Islam by Jonathan A. Brown, 2019. One World .Academic

What happens when authorities you venerate condone something you know is wrong?

Every major religion and philosophy once condoned or approved of slavery, but in modern times nothing is seen as more evil. Americans confront this crisis of authority when they erect statues of Founding Fathers who slept with their slaves. And Muslims faced it when ISIS revived sex-slavery, justifying it with verses from the Quran and the practice of Muhammad.

Exploring the moral and ultimately theological problem of slavery, Jonathan A.C. Brown traces how the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions have tried to reconcile modern moral certainties with the infallibility of God's message. He lays out how Islam viewed slavery in theory, and the reality of how it was practiced across Islamic civilization. Finally, Brown carefully examines arguments put forward by Muslims for the abolition of slavery.

Islamic Empires: The Cities that shaped Civilization by

Justin Marozzi, 2020 .Pegasus Books

A history of the rich and diverse civilizations over fifteen centuries of Islam seen through its greatest cities.

Islamic civilization was once the envy of the world. From a succession of glittering, cosmopolitan capitals, Islamic empires lorded it over the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and swathes of the Indian subcontinent, while Europe cowered feebly at the margins. For centuries the caliphate was both ascendant on the battlefield and triumphant in the battle of ideas, its cities unrivaled powerhouses of artistic grandeur, commercial power, spiritual sanctity, and forward-looking thinking, in which nothing was off limits.

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Islamic Empires is a history of this rich and diverse civilization told through its greatest cities over the fifteen centuries of Islam, from its earliest beginnings in Mecca in the seventh century to the astonishing rise of Doha in the twenty-first.

Marozzi brilliantly connects the defining moments in Islamic history: from the Prophet Mohammed receiving his divine revelations in Mecca and the First Crusade of 1099 to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the phenomenal creation of the merchant republic of Beirut in the nineteenth century, and how this world is continuing to change today.

That can be arranged: A Muslim Love Story by Huda Fahmy. 2020.

Andrews McMeel Publishing

Chaperones, suitors, and arranged marriages aren't only reserved for the heroines of a Jane Austen novel. They're just another walk in the park for this leading lady, who is on a mission to find her leading lad. From the brilliant comics *Yes, I'm Hot in This*, Huda Fahmy tells the hilarious story of how she met and married her husband. Navigating mismatched suitors, gossiping aunties, and societal expectations for Muslim women, *That Can Be Arranged* deftly and hilariously reveals to readers what it can be like to find a husband as an observant Muslim woman in the twenty-first century.

So relevant in today's evolving cultural climate, Fahmy's story offers a perceptive and personal glimpse into the sometimes sticky but ultimately rewarding balance of independent choice and tradition.

Sunni and Shi'a : A Political History by Laurence Louer.2020.

Princeton University Press

A compelling history of the ancient schism that continues to divide the Islamic world.

When Muhammad died in 632 without a male heir, Sunnis contended that the choice of a successor should fall to his closest companions, but Shi'a believed that God had inspired the Prophet to appoint his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as leader. So began a schism that is nearly as old as Islam itself. Laurence Louer tells the story of this ancient rivalry, taking

readers from the last days of Muhammad to the political and doctrinal clashes of Sunnis and Shi'a today.

In a sweeping historical narrative spanning the Islamic world, Louer shows how the Sunni-Shi'a divide was never just a dispute over succession—at issue are questions about the very nature of Islamic political authority. She challenges the widespread perception of Sunnis and Shi'a as bitter enemies who are perpetually at war with each other, demonstrating how they have coexisted peacefully at various periods throughout the history of Islam. Louer traces how sectarian tensions have been inflamed or calmed depending on the political contingencies of the moment, whether to consolidate the rule of elites, assert clerical control over the state, or defy the powers that be.

Timely and provocative, *Sunnis and Shi'a* provides needed perspective on the historical roots of today's conflicts and reveals how both branches of Islam have influenced and emulated each other in unexpected ways. This compelling and accessible book also examines the diverse regional contexts of the Sunni-Shi'a divide, examining how it has shaped societies and politics in countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen, and Lebanon.

Muslims in a Post 9/11 America; A Survey by Rachel M. Gillun 2020

The University of Michigan Press.

Muslims in a Post-9/11 America examines how public fears about Muslims in the United States compare with the reality of American Muslims' attitudes on a range of relevant issues. While most research on Muslim Americans focuses on Arab Muslims, a quarter of the Muslim American population, Rachel Gillun includes perspectives of Muslims from various ethnic and national communities—from African Americans to those of Pakistani, Iranian, or Eastern European descent. Using interviews and one of the largest nationwide surveys of Muslim Americans to date, Gillun examines more than three generations of Muslim American immigrants to assess how segments of the Muslim American community are integrating into the U.S. social fabric, and how they respond to post-9/11 policy changes. Gillun's findings challenge perceptions of Muslims as a homogeneous, isolated, un-American, and potentially violent segment of the U.S. population.

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Despite these realities, negative political rhetoric around Muslim Americans persists. The findings suggest that the policies designed to keep America safe from terrorist attacks may have eroded one of law enforcement's greatest assets in the fight against violent extremism—a relationship of trust and goodwill between the Muslim American community and the U.S. government. Gillum argues for policies and law enforcement tactics that will bring nuanced understandings of this diverse category of Americans and build trust, rather than alienate Muslim communities.

Muhammad: Prophet of Peace and Clash of Empires by Juan Cole. 2020 .

Bold Type Books

In the midst of the dramatic seventh-century war between two empires, Muhammad was a spiritual seeker in search of community and sanctuary.

Many observers stereotype Islam and its scripture as inherently extreme or violent—a narrative that has overshadowed the truth of its roots. In this masterfully told account, preeminent Middle East expert Juan Cole takes us back to Islam's—and the Prophet Muhammad's—origin story.

Cole shows how Muhammad came of age in an era of unparalleled violence. The eastern Roman Empire and the Sasanian Empire of Iran fought savagely throughout the Near East and Asia Minor. Muhammad's profound distress at the carnage of his times led him to envision an alternative movement, one firmly grounded in peace. The religion Muhammad founded, Islam, spread widely during his lifetime, relying on soft power instead of military might, and sought armistices even when militarily attacked. Cole sheds light on this forgotten history, reminding us that in the Qur'an, the legacy of that spiritual message endures.

A vibrant history that brings to life the fascinating and complex world of the Prophet, *Muhammad* is the story of how peace is the rule and not the exception for one of the world's most practiced religions. How do you prove that you're Muslim?

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Far from the Caliph's Gaze: Being Ahmadi Muslims in the Holy City of Qadiyan by

Nicholas Evans. 2020 .Cornell University Press

This is not a question that most believers ever have to ask themselves, and yet for members of India's Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, it poses an existential challenge. The Ahmadis are the minority of a minority—people for whom simply being Muslim is a challenge. They must constantly ask the question: What evidence could ever be sufficient to prove that I belong to the faith?

In *Far from the Caliph's Gaze* Nicholas H. A. Evans explores how a need to respond to this question shapes the lives of Ahmadis in Qadian in northern India. Qadian was the birthplace of the Ahmadiyya community's founder, and it remains a location of huge spiritual importance for members of the community around the world. Nonetheless, it has been physically separated from the Ahmadis' spiritual leader—the caliph—since partition, and the believers who live there now and act as its guardians must confront daily the reality of this separation even while attempting to make their Muslimness verifiable.

By exploring the centrality of this separation to the ethics of everyday life in Qadian, *Far from the Caliph's Gaze* presents a new model for the academic study of religious doubt, one that is not premised on a concept of belief but instead captures the richness with which people might experience problematic relationships to truth.

Iran and Saudi Arabia: Taming a Chaotic Conflict by Ibrahim Frahat.2020.

Edinburgh University Press

Sets a realistic agenda for managing the intractable conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia

- Discusses the issues of sectarianism, regional security and domestic political leadership to shed light on the long-standing debate about whether this conflict is sectarian in nature or driven by other concerns, such as international balance of power.
- Charts the international response to the conflict, including various attempts at Track One mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia from the West and regional powers

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- Establishes dialogue, mediation, Track Two diplomacy, peace zones, rebalancing of the regional order and reform of existing conflict strategies as the pillars of conflict management and resolution that corresponds with Iran's and Saudi Arabia's individual needs, interests and concerns
- Builds on an analysis of more than 60 interviews with scholars and former policy makers from Iran, the Arab Gulf states, Europe and the United States. Hostile relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are a major contributing factor to political instability in the Middle East. This book argues that rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh is possible and delves into the complexities of managing their long-standing conflict. By interviewing scholars and former policy makers from the Gulf region and abroad, the author draws out the core themes, strategies, and dynamics of the conflict since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 to form a basis of an agenda for achieving peace. The result is a fresh perspective on a dangerous and unpredictable rift that affects not only its primary parties - Iran and Saudi Arabia - but also the geopolitics, economic stability and civil wars of the wider Middle Eastern region.

The Sorrowful Muslim's Guide by Husain Ahmad Amin. 2020.

Edinburgh University Press

Published in Association with the *Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations*

Explores the interaction between pre-Islamic tradition and modern supporters of continuity, reform and change in Muslim communities

Published as *Dalil al-Muslim al-hazln ila muqtada-l-suluk fr'l-qarn al-'ishrin* in 1983, this book remains a timely and important read today. Both the resurgence of Islamist politics and the political, social and intellectual upheaval which accompanied the Arab Spring challenge us to re-examine the interaction between the pre-modern Islamic tradition and modern supporters of continuity, reform and change in Muslim communities.

This book does exactly that, raising questions regarding issues about which other Muslim intellectuals and thinkers have been silent. These include - among others - current

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religious practice vs the Islamic ideal; the many additions to the original revelation; the veracity of the Prophet's biography and his sayings; the development of Sufism; and historical and ideological influences on Islamic thought.

Key Features

- Makes available in English an important contribution to modern Muslim thought from a prominent Egyptian thinker
- Looks at how current religious practice conforms (or not) to the Islamic ideal when Islam was first revealed
- Explores the relationship between core, inner religious values and ritualistic practices
- Engages critically with the sources by using historical, literal and logical criticism
