

## Islam in Israel

Islam is the religion of the majority of Arab citizens in Israel and since the late 1970s has become an important factor in their political and socio-cultural identity. This leads to an increasing number of Muslims in Israel who define their identity first and foremost in relation to their religious affiliation. By examining this evolving religious identity during the past four decades and its impact on the religious and socio-cultural aspects of Muslim life in Israel, Muhammad al-Atawneh and Nohad 'Ali explore the local nature of Islam. They find that Muslims in Israel seem to rely heavily on the prominent Islamic authorities in the region, perhaps more so than minority Muslims elsewhere. This stems, *inter alia*, from the fact that Muslims in Israel are the only minority that lives in a land they consider to be holy and see themselves as a natural extension of the Middle Eastern Arab Islamic community.

MUHAMMAD AL-ATAWNEH is an associate professor in the Department of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He has published extensively on Islamic law and society in contemporary Arab and Islamic worlds. Research interests focus on the study of Islam in modern times, mainly in three concurrent areas: (1) Islamic law and modernity; (2) state and governance in contemporary Islamic thought and practice; and (3) Islam in Israel which cover significant issues regarding Muslim daily life, attitudes, beliefs, levels of (dis)satisfaction, and attitudes towards the Israeli establishment and Israeli society.

NOHAD ALI is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Western Galilee College and senior researcher at the Jewish–Arab Center at the University of Haifa. He is the Head of the Arab–Jewish–State Unit at the Samuel Neaman Institute, Technion. He is an expert on religious fundamentalism (Jewish and Islamic in Israel), political Islam, Jewish–Arab relations in Israel, Arab women, and violence.

## Advance Praise for *Islam in Israel*

“The case of a non-dominant Muslim minority in a highly secular, Jewish and Zionist state, in an Islam-endowed land, is historically unprecedented and unparalleled. *Islam in Israel* is the first book that tells us how Muslim Arabs conduct themselves under these inhospitable and unique circumstances.”

**Professor Sammy Smooha, University of Haifa**

“Israel’s 1.2 million Muslims are a unique population in the Middle East. In this exciting and timely book, Al-Atawneh and Ali provide the scholarly community with its first comprehensive look at the Muslim religious identity in Israel. Through richly detailed survey data, interviews and narrative insight, they show how Israeli Muslims have developed in relation to broader regional trends in Islam as well as to the experience of living in the Jewish state.”

**Professor Rameez Abbas, The National Defense University,  
Washington DC**

“Al-Atawneh and Ali present us with a sterling and erudite analysis of a unique Muslim minority trapped in a complex political situation. This is a must-read for scholars and laymen who are grappling to understand contemporary Islam as politics and identity in non-Muslim states. A tour de force!”

**Professor Nimrod Luz, Western Galilee College**

“This book is a significant contribution to the study of three areas of theoretical interest: Muslims and Islam in general, and in Israel as a Jewish state in particular; minorities in general, and the Palestinian minority in Israel in particular; and interactions between religious groups in a religiously divided reality, such as that among Palestinians in Israel. Questions of coping with the challenges of modernity, attitudes towards others, processes of return to religion, and the development of a unique heritage that fits the political/social context are discussed at length, in a manner that has not been discussed so far. The authors systematically use a variety of quantitative, qualitative methodologies, anthropological observations and their own involvement in the field in order to provide us with a diverse and real account of the lives of Muslims in Israel. There is no doubt that the contribution of the authors and the book is absolutely vital to any student who has an interest in the aforementioned fields of interest.”

**Professor As‘ad Ghanem, University of Haifa**

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Muhammad Al-Atawneh , Nohad Ali  
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# Islam in Israel

*Muslim Communities in Non-Muslim States*

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Muhammad Al-Atawneh

*Ben-Gurion University of the Negev*

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To Nimrod Hurvitz, a scholar of depth and  
a man of style.

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## Notes on Transliteration and Translation

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This book follows the transliteration standards of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Arabic terms are italicized, except for those that recur often, such as Shari‘a, ‘ulama’, qadi, and fatwa; ‘ is used for ‘ayn and ʾ for the hamza. No subscript or superscript diacritics are used. Definitions of the Arabic terms are provided when they are first used, either in the text or in a bibliographical footnote.

Direct translations from the Arabic were initially made by the authors and then rendered into better English by the English editor. All the English translations of Qur’anic verses were done by ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali.\*

\* The English translations of Qur’anic verses are taken from ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur’an* (Brentwood, Md.: Amana Corporation, 1989).