

**Know Thy Neighbor:**  
*Understanding Islam*  
*for Jewish Communal Professionals*

A STUDY GUIDE



**DEAR** fellow Jewish communal professional:

We are pleased to present our Islam Seminar DVD and a complementary Study Guide, which are both devoted to the topic of understanding Islam. As reality changes before our eyes, it is necessary for us to understand the context and complexity of those changes. The study of Islam and its interaction with Western society should be a priority for leaders in the Jewish community. Therefore, we encourage you to make use of these materials in a constructive and meaningful manner.

While the DVD and the Study Guide can each be employed separately, they are most effective when utilized together. The DVD and Study Guide should be a basis for further exploration of the Islamic religion by local groups, students and professionals. Furthermore, we would like to recommend that you make use of local clergy, academicians and Jewish communal resources in order to supplement for this program as well as promote the imperative values of education and awareness which this program supports.

We would be glad to respond to any comments or questions related to these materials and we welcome evaluative feedback.

B'Shalom,

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# Table of Contents

	Introduction <i>Rabbi Michael Paley</i>	4
<b>I</b>	Basic Beliefs	6
<b>II</b>	Timeline	7
<b>III</b>	The True Voice of Islam <i>King Abdullah II of Jordan</i>	9
<b>IV</b>	Rabbinic Judaism and Interreligious Co-Existence <i>Rabbi David Rosen</i>	11
<b>V</b>	Dialoguing Text Study <i>Reuven Firestone</i>	14
<b>VI</b>	How to Organize a Dialogue Program <i>Rabbi A. James Rudin</i>	17
<b>VII</b>	Jewish-Muslim Dialogue in America: Challenges and Opportunities <i>David Dolev and Salma Kazmi</i>	19
<b>VIII</b>	Excerpts from the American Religious Identification Survey 2001	21
<b>IX</b>	Demographic Facts	26
<b>X</b>	Map of the Muslim World	27
<b>XI</b>	Resource List:	
	a. Interfaith Dialogue	28
	b. Judaism and Islam (a comparison)	30
	c. Islam in America	32
	d. Islam (history and belief)	34
	e. Different Branches of Islam	38
	f. Women in Islam	39
<b>XII</b>	Questions for Consideration	40

# Introduction: Towards the Next Golden Age

*Rabbi Michael Paley*

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1972, when I was a college student at Brandeis University I traveled to Israel to study. It was not my first trip to Israel, but it was the first I was on my own and that I could travel and explore what I wanted. The first night of my journey I decided to join a group of American students that I had met on the airplane and stay on the roof of the Petra Hotel, just inside the Jaffa Gate of the Old City in Jerusalem. We were backpackers and innocent of any knowledge of Arab culture or Islam. The hotel staff must have thought of us as just the latest version of scruffy, ignorant westerners.

Before dawn the next morning, when we had slept for just a few hours, all of a sudden a birth of static crackled from the unnoticed blue loudspeakers on the adjacent building. *Allah U Akbar* - God is Great, I didn't know what it meant at that time but its musical quality pierced my heart. Longer streams of prayer emerged disturbing my new friends and even encouraging them to respond to the praise in explicatives of the pre-dawn variety. But I remember getting up and walking over to the power pit of the roof and see to my astonishment thousands of people kneeling palms outstretched yearning and preparing on the roofs of all the building between me and the astonishing gold dome that sat on the Temple Mount. A moment later, prompted by a well-practiced ritual, the great throng leaned forward and prostrated itself in a way that I could only remember my Rabbi doing on Yom Kippur. You can see the power and unity, old men and children greeting a new clear blue Jerusalem day. That morning I also stretched out on the roof of my hotel and felt the power and moment of "surrender" or in Arabic "Islam." It started for my lifelong engagement with the beauty of Islam.

In the last few years, the whole world has begun to observe the power of this more than 1400-year-old world religion. From the tragic and horrible moment of September 11th in New York and through years of suicide bombs in Israel and now in other places around the world, we have begun to discover Islam and its confrontation with Modernity in the worse possible light. It is hard to hear the romance of the call the prayer when the front page of the newspaper is covered in violence. It is nearly impossible to see the spiritual vitality of a tradition of 1.4 billion people when confronted with books called "What Went Wrong with Islam" and "Militant Islam Reaches America."

History works in complicated ways. The terror of Islam and fundamentalism has also demanded of us that we know more about the tradition and its great achievements. Today we are in a period in which more people will be introduced to Islam than ever before and we must make an attempt to do it in a fair and open way. Like any tradition of its size and history there have been bad times and moments where Jews have been persecuted and despised. But Islam has also provided the Jewish world with its best moments: Maimonides,

Saadia, Yehuda Halevi, and Ibn Gabirol, all lived and flourished in the world of Islam. Andalusia, Spain inspired our music, art, literature, particularly science and even the prayers and poems we use in the high holidays. Of all the traditions in the world, Judaism is most like Islam with its daily prayer, dietary approaches, charitable giving, and most importantly, radical belief in the unity of God.

It is difficult to imagine the flowering of a relationship between Muslims and Jews in the midst of the strife of our current situation. But it is important to remember that Israel is in the Middle East and that soon most Jews will be surrounded by a world that holds Islam as its faith. It is important to look deeply and not only at the aberrations of a billion people, but also at its history, culture and prospects. The best future of us all would be the next Golden Age. And only knowing each other better will allow it to emerge.

# Basic Beliefs

## I. Muhammad

Muhammad was born in Mecca, Arabia in 571 C. E. He received his first revelation at the age of forty and is considered the final messenger of Allah.

## II. Five Pillars of Islam

1. *Shahadah*—to declare that there is no God to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is his final messenger.
2. *Salah*—to pray five times a day in the direction of Mecca.
3. *Zakah*—to give charity.
4. *Sawm*—to fast during the month of Ramadan, from sun up to sun down.
5. *Hajj*—an obligation to make a pilgrimage to Mecca for those who can afford to undertake it, at least once in their lifetime.

## III. Qur'an

Muslims consider Qur'an the final book of guidance sent to Muhammad from Allah by the angel Gabriel.

## IV. Hadith

Hadith is a recorded oral tradition that consists of sayings, actions and silent approvals of Muhammad that explain the Qur'an and how to practice it. Muhammad's companions recorded it.

## V. Dietary Laws

Islamic law requires an animal to be slaughtered while invoking the name of Allah. Pork and blood are prohibited. All varieties of alcoholic drinks are also forbidden.

## VI. Different Sects

*Sunni*—Compose 90% of the world's Muslim population. They believe leadership of Islam should come from the Quraish Arabs (Muhammad's tribe) and emphasize the individual's direct relationship with God without any human mediation. Sunni's are culturally and religiously diverse and do not insist on uniformity of faith or practice.

*Shiite*—Comprise about 10% of the world's Muslim population. They believe leadership of Islam should come from descendants of Fatima (Muhammad's daughter) and her husband Ali. The original name of the sect Shi'at Ali literally means Party of Ali. Shia Islam places an emphasis on leaders called Imams who are inspired purveyors of truth and allows for a charismatic leader to interpret Islam.

*Sufism*—a system of mystical philosophy that is associated with Islam. Sufi's exist across the Sunni and Shiite divisions. They seek a direct union with God through asceticism, contemplation and prayer.

## Timeline

**570 C.E.** Muhammad is born to a noble family in Mecca; eventually he is well known for his honesty and upright character.

**610 C.E.** According to Muslim belief, at the age of 40, while on retreat in a cave near Mecca, Muhammad is visited by the angel Gabriel. The angel recites to him the first revelations of the Qur'an and informs him that he is God's prophet. Later, Muhammad is told to call his people to the worship of the one God, but they react with hostility and persecute him and his followers.

**622 C.E.** After enduring persecution in Mecca, Muhammad and his followers migrate to the nearby town of Yathrib (later to be known as Medina), where the people there accepted Islam. This marks the *hijrah* or "emigration," and the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad establishes an Islamic state based on the laws revealed in the Qur'an and the inspired guidance coming to him from God. Eventually he begins to invite other tribes and nations to join Islam.

**630 C.E.** Muhammad returns to Mecca with a large number of his followers. He enters the city peacefully, and eventually all its citizens accept Islam. The prophet clears the idols and images out of the *Kaaba* and rededicates it to the worship of God alone.

**633 C.E.** Muhammad dies after a prolonged illness. The Muslim community elects his father-in-law and close associate, Abu Bakr, as caliph, or successor.

**638 C.E.** Muslims enter the area north of Arabia, known as "Sham," which includes Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

**641 C.E.** Muslims enter Egypt and rout the Byzantine army. Muslims consider their conquest as the liberation of subjugated people, since in most instances they were under oppressive rule.

**655 C.E.** Islam begins to spread throughout North Africa.

**661 C.E.** Imam Ali is killed, bringing to an end the rule of the four "righteous caliphs": Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. This also marks the beginning of the Umayyad rule.

**711 C.E.** Muslims enter Spain in the West and India in the east. Eventually almost the entire Iberian Peninsula is under Islamic control.

**732 C.E.** Muslims are defeated at Potiers in France by Charles Martel.

**750 C.E.** The Abbasids take over rule from the Umayyads, shifting the seat of power to Baghdad.



**1000 C.E.** Islam continues to spread through the continent of Africa, including Nigeria, which served as a trading liaison between the northern and central regions of Africa.

**1099 C.E.** European Crusaders obtain Jerusalem from the Muslims. Eventually Muslims defeat the Crusaders and regain control of the holy land.

**1120 C.E.** Islam continues to spread throughout Asia. Malaysian traders interact with Muslims who teach them about Islam.

**1299 C.E.** The earliest Ottoman state is formed in Anatolia, Turkey.

**1453 C.E.** Ottomans conquer the Byzantine seat of Constantinople, changing its name to Istanbul.

**Circa 1800 C.E.** Approximately 30 percent of Africans forced into slavery in the United States are Muslim.

**1870-1924 C.E.** Muslim immigrants from the Arab world voluntarily come to the United States, up until the Asian Exclusion Act is passed in 1924.

World War I ends with the defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which was the last of the Islamic empires. Many regions populated by Muslims in Africa and Asia are colonized by Europeans. Traditional religious ways of life are threatened and, in some cases, destroyed.

**1930 C.E.** W. D. Fard creates the Nation of Islam in the U.S.. It is based on some Islamic ideas, but contains innovations, such as the appointment or declaration of Elijah Muhammad as a prophet.

**1948 C.E.** The state of Israel is created. Some Palestinian and Lebanese refugees flee to the United States; among them are Muslims and Christians.

**1952 C.E.** The McCarran-Walter Act loosens the U.S. ban on Asian immigration. Muslim students come to the U.S. from many nations.

**1965 C.E.** Revisions of immigration law further open the doors to Muslim immigration.

**1975 C.E.** Wallace D. Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad, takes over leadership of the Nation of Islam after his father's death and brings most of his followers into mainstream Islam. He later creates the Muslim American Society, which attracts many members, most of whom are African-American.

**1979 C.E.** The Iranian Revolution results in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the first attempt at an Islamic state in the modern era.

Timeline of Islam. PBS. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/muslims/timeline.html>>

# The True Voice of Islam

*King Abdullah II of Jordan*

**T**HIS WEEK marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, when Muslims throughout the world take time to reflect upon the values of our faith: compassion, goodwill and respect for others. These are core ideals in Islam, the faith that my family, the Hashemites, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, has served for 40 generations. Our religion calls us to live and work for justice and to promote tolerance. Daily, we share God's blessing: Salaam Aleikum -- "Peace be upon you."

This is the true voice of Islam, but it is not the voice that Americans always hear. Instead, they hear the hatred spewed by groups mistakenly called Islamic fundamentalists. In fact, there is nothing fundamentally Islamic about these extremists. They are religious totalitarians, in a long line of extremists of various faiths who seek power by intimidation, violence and thuggery.

Extremists violently reject the original moderation and openness of Islam -- qualities that made the Muslim world the historical home of diversity and learning. Nor does their violence constitute *jihad*, or "holy war". The Prophet Muhammad tells us that the "greater" holy war is not against others at all, but against one's own failings -- the "war against the ego." Moreover, in a famous speech, the Prophet's follower and first successor, Abu Bakr, commanded Muslim soldiers: "Do not betray, do not deceive, do not bludgeon and maim, do not kill a child, nor a woman, nor an old man . . . do not burn, do not cut down a fruit tree. . . . If you come across communities who have consecrated themselves to the [Christian church], leave them."

These words are part of the most basic religious education that Arab and Muslim schoolchildren receive. I know, because I was one of them. So when today's terrorists target innocents, they provide direct evidence of their real agenda: power politics, not religion. In fact, long before so-called Islamic terrorists began attacking the West, they were targeting fellow Muslims. The goal was to silence opposition and obliterate the Islam of peace and dialogue. I carry the name of my great-grandfather, Abdullah I, who was assassinated by an extremist. In the same attack, my father, then age 15, was hit by a bullet. He survived, and as King Hussein, he too became a great peacemaker. He always believed a real leader stands up against the forces of destruction

Among the world's 1.2 billion Muslims, extremists are, of course, a tiny minority. For decades, many Muslims thought that because they had nothing to do with this criminal fringe, they could ignore it. Sept. 11, 2001 changed that kind of thinking. The idea that anyone could exploit our religion to sanction the killing of innocents outraged Muslims everywhere. To my knowledge, every Muslim country, every center of traditional Islamic scholarship and every major Islamic organization in the United States condemned the Sept. 11 attacks absolutely. They did so not out of diplomatic nicety, nor out of fear of the United States, but because our faith demands it.

Yet we must do even more to make sure the real voice of Islam is heard. Today Muslims must speak out boldly in defense of a dynamic, moderate Islam -- an Islam that upholds the sanctity of human life, reaches out to the oppressed, respects men and women alike, and insists on the fellowship of all humankind. This is the true Islam of the Prophet, and the Islam that terrorists seek to destroy.

But this is not a challenge for Muslims alone. All religions have suffered from the violence and extremism of a few. Even as we begin the 21st century -- an era of global exchange and exploding knowledge -- God's name is being exploited to promote rifts and justify conflict.

Differences between faiths become differences between people, and all humanity suffers. Together, we share a responsibility to prevent the abuse of religion by those who would divide us. We have a special duty to combat injustice, which is so often exploited by extremists. Nowhere is our help needed more than in the Holy Land, where Palestinians and Israelis alike are crying out for peace, stability and security. Together we must urge their leaders to hear the voices of reason and peace, end oppression and occupation, stop the violence and create a future of hope.

My father and great-grandfather believed that a peaceful, political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict would be essential to defeating extremism and building a world of mutual acceptance and peace. Events show that they were right. What is needed now is clear to all sides: a fully independent Palestinian state and an Israel that is integrated, in peace and security, into its Arab neighborhood. This is why Jordan has strongly supported the Arab peace initiative that came out of Beirut last March, which commits all Arab states to a peace agreement with Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state and includes collective security guarantees and an agreed solution to the refugee problem. Jordan is also working with the United States, Russia, Europe and the United Nations to craft a road map and timetable for a permanent, sustainable end to the conflict.

It is a terrible truth that for many people, the Holy Land has come to symbolize extremism and injustice, rather than peace on Earth. But we, Earth's citizens and leaders, have a chance to defy hatred and defeat terror. In doing so, we can help this region, so important to all our faiths, lead the way to a better future for all the world.

Salaam Aleikum.

# Rabbinic Judaism and Interreligious Co-Existence

*Rabbi David Rosen*

**WHILE JUDAISM** is the particular religious way of life of a particular people born out of particular historical experiences, its purpose and aspiration is universal. Abraham himself is told to "be a blessing" (Genesis ch. 12 v.2) and that through him and his seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

The Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants is ratified at Sinai where the children of Israel are called to be a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation (Exodus ch. 19 v.6). This mandate to sanctify God's Name (Leviticus ch.22 v.32) is perceived within Biblical Tradition in two ways: through the very existence of the children of Israel in history as testimony to the Divine Presence (Isaiah ch. 43 v.10, Ezekiel ch.36 v.23) and through the commitment to the way of life and precepts, revealed in the Pentateuch. The ultimate goal for this world, which the Jewish people are to help bring about accordingly, is a society in which all men and women live in keeping with the Divine Will, in justice, righteousness and peace, i.e. - the Messianic ideal (Isaiah ch. 11 v. 9, 10).

It should be pointed out that this vision is not a denationalized one, but an international vision in which "many peoples shall go and say let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His Paths ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation and they shall not learn war any more" (Isaiah ch. 2 v. 3-4). In other words, the vision is not of a society in which everyone is Jewish (see also Zecharia ch. 14 v. 16), but rather a society in which while there is shared recognition of the Divine Presence and the ethical values that flow there from, particular identities, loyalties and traditions remain, born out of different cultural and historical factors.

Indeed Judaism teaches that all humankind is "called" or "commanded" from the outset to live such righteous lives. Jewish tradition understands all Humankind as "covenanted" with God through the Covenant with the Children of Noah made after the flood (Genesis ch. 9 v. 9). The Tradition understands the demands of this Covenant to consist of seven commandments - the quintessence of universal morality. These are the prohibitions against murder, idolatry, theft, incest, blasphemy, dismembering of any living animal and the command to establish courts of justice (Bereshit Rabbah 34, 8). One who lives in accordance with the demands of the Noahide Covenant is not only perceived as a righteous gentile (who merits the World to Come), but under the rule of Jewish Law enjoys status of *ger toshav*, the resident gentile who is entitled to all civil rights as well as obligations of the society (Maimonides, Issurei Biah ch. 14 hal. 7, Melachim ch. 10 hal.12).

Nevertheless, for the first millennium and half of the Jewish history, gentile acceptance of Noahide standards was seen as exceptional. Then, society at large was perceived as idolatrous and corrupt, pagan and degenerate.

Early Christianity did not change that Jewish perception. Originally seen as a sectary, the emergence of the Holy Roman Empire, the crystallization of its theology and its hostility towards the Jewish people, enabled Judaism to view early Christianity as just a new version of pagan power. Even the acknowledgement of fundamental positive aspects in Christianity, as on the part of Yehudah Halevi and Maimonides, did not mitigate that basic perception. Theologically, Judaism viewed Islam more positively (Maimonides Resp. 448).

Yet, in Christian lands Jewish scholars occasionally grappled with what appeared to them to be the contradictions between the ethical monotheism of Christianity that taught principles of Providence, Revelation, Reward and Punishment on the one hand; while on the other hand, those doctrines, as well as the use of effigies, that were perceived as idolatrous.

While the noted Rabbi Menachem HaMeiri of Perpignan (13-14th centuries) seemed to have had no such difficulty and taught that both Christians as well as Muslims should be viewed in the category of "nations bound by the ways of religion", there was a predominant perception of Christianity as "flawed monotheism". This was defined in the term *shittuf*, literally, "partnership" or "association" of an additional power with God Himself. However, the pragmatic position emerged that while *shittuf* would compromise Mosaic monotheism and was thus prohibited to Jews, it was not incompatible with the Noahide prohibitions and thus Christians were not actual idolaters. (Tosafot Sanhedrin 63b and Bechorot 2b). (This position was bolstered by reference to the statement in the Talmud, tractate Chullin 13b, that excludes all gentiles outside the land of Israel from the category of idolaters). Yet the positive attitude of the Meiri frequently found its echo amongst Ashkenazi luminaries, well before the effects of Emancipation and the Enlightenment. Notable amongst them are the Be'er HaGolah, (R. Moshe Rivkes) in the early 17th century and in the 18th century, the Chavot Yair (R. Yair Bachrach) and the Noda BiYehudah (R. Yechezkel Landau).

Instructive in this regard are the words of the Be'er HaGolah, Rabbi Moshe Rivkes, on the Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat, sect. 425: "The peoples in whose shade we, the people of Israel, take refuge and amongst whom we are dispersed, do believe in the Creation and the Exodus and in the main principles of religion and their whole intent is to serve the Maker of Heaven and Earth as the codifiers wrote and is thus stated by Rabbi Moshe Isserlis in Orach Chayim, section 156. We are obliged to save them from danger and are even commanded to pray for their welfare, as Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, the author of Ma'aseh Hashem, explained in his commentary on the Haggadah on the verse "pour out thy wrath... "

Rabbi Rivkes' reference to Christians sharing with Jews not only belief in the God of Creation but also belief in the same God as God of the Exodus, implies a factor emphasized by others subsequently; namely, shared religious history and Scriptures. What is recognized here accordingly is the special relationship between those who share the Hebrew Bible and its history.

On the basis of the position of the Meiri (Bet Habehirah, Bava Kama, 113b) and while recognizing both Muslims and Christians as monotheistic believers bound by the minimal-moral code, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi in Israel, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kuk, ruled that Muslims and Christians living in a predominant Jewish society must be treated as *gerim toshavim*, i.e., with full civil liberties, just as Jews (Iggeret 89; Mishpat-Cohen 63). (Similarly, the First Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, Rabbi I.H. Herzog; "The Rights of Minorities according to Halacha", Tchumin 2, 5741). However, as indicated at the outset, ideal Jewish religious conduct is predicated on more than the legal protection and civil rights guaranteed to Noahides, *gerim toshavim*.

Maimonides makes this clear in his legal magnum opus, Yad Hachazakah, Hilchot Melachim ch. 10, halacha 12. After quoting the Talmud (Gittin 61) concerning the obligation to visit the sick, even of heathens, to bury their dead with the Jewish dead and to provide for their poor together with the Jewish poor in order to advance "ways of peace", he adds the following verses: "Behold it is stated. God is good to all and His mercy is to all His creatures" (Psalm 145 v.9), and it is stated "Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace" (Proverbs ch. 3 v. 17). The latter quotation appears in the Talmudic passage

preceding the above (Gittin 59b) which declares that "the whole Torah itself is for the sake of 'the ways of peace' as it is written 'her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace'". Maimonides thus follows the Talmud in affirming that the Torah requires us, in fact, to go beyond the letter of the law, in order to serve the teleology of Torah, namely, peace and good will to all.

However, Maimonides goes further than the aforementioned Talmudic text. It is not only the societal teleology of Torah that requires us to behave in this manner, he declares, but also and perhaps above all, the highest personal religious goal: "Behold God is good to all and His mercies extend to all His creatures" and therefore, says Maimonides, we must behave accordingly. Maimonides thus emphasizes the Biblical commandment and goal of *Imitatio Dei* (Leviticus ch. 19 v.1). In the words of Abba Shaul, "Just as He is gracious and merciful so you be gracious and merciful" (Mekhilta, Canticles, 3).

Judaism views it as both our personal religious duty as well as our societal religious obligation to be compassionate and caring towards all, even heathens; how much more so then, towards believers and righteous gentiles.

Of course the religio-ethical imperative in relation to all human beings is rooted in the Biblical concept of the Image of God, in which all persons are created (Genesis ch. 1 v. 27). Thus, as Ben Azai and Rabbi Tanhuma teach (Bereshit Rabbah, 24), disregard for the dignity of any human being is disregard for God Himself (see also, Korban Aharon on Sifra Kedoshim 4, 12; Tiferet Yisrael on Avot ch. 3 m. 14; Netziv, Introd. to commentary on Genesis).

Moreover, the pursuit of justice and righteousness for all is not only a goal of the Messianic era but in fact, we are told that it is only through the pursuit of justice and righteousness that Redemption will take place (Isaiah ch. 1 v. 27).

Furthermore, inextricably linked to such Redemption and to the above conduct is the higher (if not highest) value, to which reference was also made at the outset. Namely, the obligation upon Jews, both individually and collectively, to sanctify God's Name through their conduct, before society at large (Bereshit Rabbah 49, 16; Maimonides Hilchot Eduyot, ch. 1 hal. 2).

For this reason the Tosefta (Bava Kama ch. 10) declares an offense by a Jew against a heathen to be a worse sin than when it is done to another Jew, because it involves a universal desecration of the Divine Name. Accordingly, our sages declare (Yalkut on Deuteronomy ch. 6 v. 5 and similarly in Seder Eliyahu Rabbah ch. 26) "See that you yourself are beloved by human beings and keep far from sin and theft from Jew, heathen and from any person...for the Torah was only given to sanctify God's Name, as it says: 'And I will put a sign on them...and they shall declare my glory among the gentiles' (Isaiah ch. 66 v. 19)."

The obligation to be respectful and ethically meticulous in our relations with all people, Jews and non-Jews, is thus central to the Jewish ethos and purpose, as well as to its destiny. By living accordingly we sanctify His Name and merit the Divine Promise of that destiny for the people of Israel gathered and living in its Land as envisaged by the prophet Ezekiel in ch. 37 v. 26, "And I will establish a Covenant of Peace with them - it shall be an eternal covenant with them."

# Dialoguing Text Study

Reuven Firestone

**DIALOGUE**, WHICH IS DERIVED FROM two Greek words that mean “speaking across,” is any kind of discourse that involves exchange, oral or written, polemical or harmonizing. Traditional Jewish learning in the style of *machaloqet* (taking opposing positions on principle and working through them) is dialogical at its core.

Dialogue between people of different religions has taken many forms historically, from the swapping of stories about religious figures in market conversation to formal disputation under the sponsorship (and usually, control) of the sovereign. Today, the purpose of dialogue is not to make believers of the dialogic partner, but rather to foster and gain better understanding with the dialogic partner. Jewish-Christian dialogue tends to be structured around theology; Jewish-Muslim dialogue is often structured around “issues” such as war and peace. Some of the best dialogue emerges when two different religious groups or communities engage in action projects of *tikkun*, or “repair”.

In my experience, the most rewarding and effective dialogue for stimulating thinking about the religious “self” and the religious “other” is structured around the reading of sacred texts. And there is no more fascinating and positive context for this than Jewish-Muslim textual dialogue. The scriptures, oral tradition, and legal literatures of Islam and Judaism exhibit many parallels, both simple and profound in form, content and language. There are plenty of differences as well, and these differences distinguish two separate and independent religious systems. Even the linguistic parallels between Jewish and Islamic religious vocabulary convey subtleties of meaning that encourage discussion and wonder.

Take *tzedakah*, which is the required giving of charity in Judaism, for example. The word derives from the root *tzedek*, meaning justice. Islam uses the same word, but for voluntary rather than required giving, and the meaning of the root in Arabic is closer to “sincerity” or “truth.” The Islamic term for required giving (paralleling our *tzedakah*) is *zakaat*, and its basic meaning is “purity” and “innocence.” The cognate Hebrew word is *zekhut*, meaning “merit,” or “virtue.” One could write sermons and essays on these subtle differences. But this conversation cannot occur without study of the sacred texts out of which the subtleties of meaning derive.

When dialoguing, I lay out the texts in two columns: original scriptural language in the right column and English translation in the left column.

If the topic is to learn about required giving, I might begin with Qur’an 2:215 and 9:60 with Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 15:7-8. Or Qur’an 3:130 and 2:276-277 with Leviticus 25:35-37. The first set of texts treats the divinely commanded obligation for material giving; the second provides the source texts for the prohibition against charging interest (Hebrew *ribit*, Arabic *riba*). When Qur’an and biblical texts are learned together by *chevrotot*, intimate study groups, the participants encounter not only the texts but also a wide range of critically important related issues including the range of interpretations that participants bring to the discussion. Some of these interpretations are formal, traditional positions; others are absorbed informally, simply by growing up in a particular religious civilization. When studying a text with other Jews, we often fail to notice how we insert meaning into our sacred texts intuitively, out of our natural Jewish contexts. It is precisely

because the non-Jews with whom we learn do not share our intuitive readings that they are able to approach the text from a different angle and consequently, they offer new insights about our own texts.

Muslims and Jews tend to relate to their sacred writings differently, and recognizing this can lead to a profound realization. Muslims tend to be surprised at the level and intensity of argument that Jews display when engaging with their own scripture. They are impressed, but also apprehensive at the range of meanings that Jews are willing to try out on a text and on the Jewish custom of taking opposing positions. In the Islamic religious context, scripture is revered differently. Jews, on the other hand, are impressed with the profound and unmitigated love and respect that Muslims express to the Qur'an, a relationship-with-text-as-relationship-with-God that has been lost by many Jews.

I do not encourage groups to address difficult or controversial texts until they begin to feel “textually comfortable” with one another, meaning that they begin to really understand and respect the differences as well as the similarities in the texts and in the particular processes each religious system has for unraveling them. I also establish a number of “rules” in the engagement process in order to create a fair and trustful environment. The first rule is that a careful balance is maintained in the choice of texts. That is, if the goal (after getting to know and trust one another over a number of sessions) is to study the war texts of the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an, we take care to choose appropriately parallel texts. We move beyond the obvious blunder of taking peaceful texts from one tradition and warlike texts from the other. We also line up texts that highlight issues that would be interesting to the dialogue partners. While we don't avoid problematic texts, we engage them in a way that they don't become polemical. Throughout, we repeat the mantra that the goal is to understand and respect rather than persuade and conquer.

The second rule ensures that the discourse of dialogue is one of discovery and not accusation. For example, no one is allowed to use the word combination “you said,” because it may be a false accusation. The choice of words must be, rather, “I think I heard you say...” The third rule mandates study from the English column so that everyone can participate equally, and sophisticated linguistic ability is unnecessary. The original languages are referred to only to clarify particular ambiguities in the translation. The fourth rule guides the reading process. I always begin by having the *chevruta* partners slowly read one English verse, and then pause. After a few seconds, the next person reads the following verse, and so on. This way, everybody reads everybody's sacred text. Everyone is equally engaged. In a room with sixteen or more people, four or more tables read to one another, and the room is abuzz.

I serve as a resource to the tables, walking among them and answering procedural or contextual questions. The procedure, I should add, is always a work in process — remaining flexible to accommodate issues as they arise and are eventually regulated. Whenever I engage in a dialogic text study between Jews and Muslims, the experience is extraordinarily successful, and participants want to further engage the next layer of sacred text, the oral traditions. This, however, is more difficult because it is harder to locate texts in translation, and the accurate meanings (even in translation) and styles are less accessible.

We Jews have learned that the dialogic style of *chevruta* study is a mode of engaging our sacred texts deeply and with humility. Studying with another forces us to consider our readings very carefully; it keeps us honest. The same benefits of this mode of learning are garnered from dialogic text engagement with religious people of other faith systems. In the



course of serious dialogic text study, we not only gain a deeper and more truthful understanding of the other, but we also gain a profound understanding of ourselves.

<p>Qurʾān 2:215 They ask you what they should contribute. Say: "The good you have contributed is for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, and the wayfarer. God knows whatever good you do."<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>سورة البقرة يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ [215]</p>
<p>Leviticus 19 <sup>9</sup>When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup>You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God.</p>	<p>ויקרא יט (ט) וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תְכַלֶּה פְּאֵת שְׂדֵךְ לְקִצֹר וּלְקֵט קִצִּירְךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט : (י) וּבְרִמֶּךָ לֹא תַעֲזֹל וּפְרֹט בְּרִמֶּךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעֹנִי וְלְגֵר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְדֹנֵד אֱלֹהֵיכֶם :</p>

<sup>1</sup> Q.2:177 adds that contributions should go also to those who free slaves, observe prayers, and give funds themselves [understood in general to refer to all members of the Muslim umma].

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Firestone, Reuven. "Dialoguing Text Study." *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*. May 2005  
<<http://www.shma.com/may05/Reuven.htm>>

# How to Organize a Dialogue Program

*Rabbi A. James Rudin*

(From: "A Jewish Guide to Interreligious Relations," March 1996)

The following suggestions, derived from decades of AJC interreligious programming, may help ensure a successful and meaningful encounter. The Interreligious Affairs Department of the AJC is always ready to assist in all phases of interreligious programming.

1. Interreligious dialogue should lead to mutual respect and understanding between religious groups. It is also possible for the dialogue process to produce joint action on specific problems or themes, including public statements, educational materials, the interpretation of key issues for public officials, and/or overseas study missions. In all cases, there must be no hidden agendas on the part of the participating individuals or groups.
2. There should be adequate joint planning by the Jewish participants and their partners in dialogue. This planning includes not only the specific logistical details of the program, but the specific themes and topics as well. The planning process is an integral part of the total dialogue experience.
3. In addition to the Jewish sponsor, which is the AJC, appropriate co-sponsorship from other faith communities is essential. The co-sponsor(s) can be a local house of worship, a clergy association, seminary, religious or community organization, college or university, or any other related institute.
4. The precise number of dialogue sessions should be announced at the beginning of the program, so participants will know exactly how much time they are expected to give to the undertaking.
5. If possible, there should be an equal number of participants from each community, and women from the involved religious communities must be adequately represented.
6. An appropriate balance is needed between clergy and laypeople among the participants. Obviously, this does not apply if the program is for clergy only or for laypeople only. It is always important to ensure that clergy members do not dominate a dialogue when laypeople are present. While the clergy are professionally involved with their religion, it is the laity who constitutes the membership of every religious community.
7. While some dialogues do take place in a home setting, it is generally better to house an interreligious program in a synagogue, church, mosque, school, or similar public location. The programs can be rotated from a Jewish location to the co-sponsor's building or site.
8. Two discussion leaders should be selected in advance, one from each community. These leaders should meet prior to the formal program so they can jointly develop the project, decide on ground rules, etc.
9. Ideally, basic reading materials from both communities should be sent to all participants in advance of the dialogue. Experience has shown, however, that

- participants frequently do not read articles and papers before dialogue sessions. But once the dialogue is under way, participants often turn in great interest to the printed material they have received. All participants should receive the same materials to ensure a successful program.
10. Once a dialogue project has started and matured, it may be useful to feature guest speakers or specialists who can focus on a specific issue or theme. However, this should not take place until the participants themselves have had the opportunity "to bond" and to establish their own identities in the dialogue process.
  11. It is best to refrain from "interreligious services." No matter how well intentioned, they usually water down the particular faith commitments of the participants. If religious services do take place, each religious community should be encouraged to conduct its own authentic service. Christian dialogue participants should be invited to attend a Jewish service, and vice versa, as a way of developing mutual understanding and respect.
  12. Except for rare circumstances, "trialogues"-that is, Jewish-Christian-Muslim programs-should be discouraged. Experience has shown that such programs frequently "overload the circuits" and even confuse participants. For that reason, emphasis should be given to bilateral interreligious programs-Jewish-Roman Catholic, Jewish-Islamic, Jewish-Greek Orthodox, Jewish-Presbyterian, etc.
  13. The presence of "Hebrew Christians" in interreligious activities usually skews the dialogue and creates unnecessary dissonance and polarization.
  14. Once the programs are concluded, contact should be maintained with the participants by the AJC or any other Jewish co-sponsor. Participants often return for additional programs, and they are excellent means of strengthening and publicizing the dialogue in the media, churches, synagogues, mosques, schools, and other community institutions.

# Jewish-Muslim Dialogue in America: Challenges and Opportunities

*David Dolev and Salma Kazmi*

IN AMERICA, Jews and Muslims have the opportunity to foster creative, fruitful relationships. In order to do so, we must decide consciously to walk down a path of engagement and understanding — recognizing the inherent worth of each human being.

Four core obstacles threaten a constructive process of dialogue. The first is the mistrust between our two communities; both Muslims and Jews have difficulty trusting the intention of their dialogue partners, each wondering about hidden agendas. This mistrust has roots in the Middle East, the discomfort of being an immigrant or a minority, and misinformation and limited knowledge about the other group.

The second obstacle is that Muslim and Jewish communities in America are in vastly different developmental stages. Muslims are recent arrivals to the American landscape, and their institutions and religious leadership structure are still evolving. The very character of the “Muslim American” identity, in fact, is in rapid flux, as literally dozens of nationalities and cultures attempt to meld into a cohesive religious community in their new homeland. Much of the Jewish community, meanwhile, is already two or three generations away from a similar mass immigration and is deeply rooted in the American cultural and political landscape. Jewish institutions are highly organized, specialized, and are often operated by large numbers of paid staff.

These different developmental stages influence priorities and capacities within the two communities. For example, while much energy in the Muslim community is devoted to internal development, the Jewish community is able to work on both internal and external issues.

The third obstacle is that Jews and Muslims engage in dialogue for different reasons. Many Jews, troubled by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, see dialogue with Muslims as a mechanism to work toward peace. This “reaching out” reflects the Jewish community’s desire to “do something” in order to promote peace between the two communities. Many in the organized Muslim community, meanwhile, are more concerned with civil rights abuses of Muslims in the United States and frequent misrepresentations of their faith in the media. Therefore, Muslims often engage with Jews, and others, in order to clarify misconceptions of their faith; they understand that in order to thrive in the American society, they must reach out to their neighbors of all backgrounds.

Finally, organized Muslim and Jewish communities that are interested in dialogue tend to have different approaches to sacred law and authority. Broadly speaking, members of the organized liberal Jewish community are more open to a variety of approaches to sacred law and are comfortable with the idea that religious observance may vary from one individual to another. Most Muslims affiliated with mosques agree that there are fundamental requirements of religious law that all Muslims should adhere to, although in practice individual observance may vary.

Despite these differences, however, Jews and Muslims share much in common. They share the historical roots of their respective traditions, their adherence to a sacred law, their

experiences as minority faiths in America, and even their presence in similar geographic regions of the country.

Here are a few guidelines for positive engagement between the two communities:

- ❖ Start slowly and get “buy-in” from participants in each community.
- ❖ Organizers/facilitators should work together to understand the different motivations of each community and where these motivations overlap.
- ❖ Dialogue may not be appropriate in all settings. Find a way to engage that which motivates each group. For some communities, relationship building and social action might be the central focus of interfaith work. For others, text study and joint professional interests are more appropriate.
- ❖ Both communities include members who represent a wide range of perspectives on the issue of Jewish-Muslim relations. Certain individuals are enthusiastic about working on this issue; these people are both easy to engage with and important to involve in dialogues because of their energy and optimism. Other people may be valuable to involve regardless of their enthusiasm because of the weight that their endorsement will carry with their co-religionists. Dialogue organizers should consider investing more time in recruiting people whose engagement may have a stronger impact on the mainstream of each community.

Muslims and Jews share many things: a common religious heritage as children of Abraham, the challenge of sustaining vibrant faith communities in a majority Christian community, a deep conflict with roots beyond our borders, and the responsibility to forge our future together. Learning and working together to develop constructive relationships will bring benefits to both communities and to society at large.

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# Excerpts from the American Religious Identification Survey 2001:

*ARIS was conducted by Dr. Barry A. Kosmin and Dr. Egon Mayer of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York*

## 1. POPULATION SIZE

THE ARIS 2001 total in Table 1, which shows 1,104,000 Muslim adults, is smaller than the figures in current circulation. Yet it is twice the number reported in the NSRI survey in 1990. Allowing for a sampling error of +/-0.5 percent, the ARIS 2001 figure maybe adjusted upwards to its maximum range of 1.0 percent of all 208 million American adults (see Table 1). With such an adjustment, the total national figure for US Muslims is 2.2 million, giving a total national population (including children) of just under 3 million. By comparison, the CUNY National Survey of Religious Identification 1990 found that 0.3 percent of respondents adhered to Islam.

There are a number of logical, technical reasons for the ARIS 2001 findings, aside from the fact that its numbers are the only estimates in existence that are based on objective scientific measurement (Smith, October 2001). Nevertheless certain inherent difficulties have to be acknowledged. Some have to do with terminology. Others relate to varying levels of cooperation with surveys, which require sample weighting and efforts to adjust for specific problems stemming from the undercounting of recent immigrants to the US.

### The Confusion of Arabs with Muslims

First, considerable confusion exists in many circles between the Arab-American and Muslim populations. Put simply: the majority of Arab-Americans are not Muslims and the majority of Muslims are not Arab-Americans.

This counter-intuitive fact may seem strange to those who are not aware of the nation's religious and immigration history. Yet recent research by the Arab-American Institute confirms the 1990 NSRI (Kosmin & Lachman 1993) as well as ARIS 2001 findings in this regard.

### The Arab-American Population

Unfortunately, the term Arab-American, as an ethnic category, is not counted directly by the US Census. In addition, the country of birth data, which shows a little over one million persons born in Arab states (The Wall Street Journal, 9/28/01), obviously does not include US-born Arab-Americans.

The Arab-American Institute (AAI), claims there are 3.5 million Americans who have some Arab heritage, the majority of whom are Lebanese. More noteworthy still, AAI also reports the Christian component to be 75 percent, while the Muslim component is only 25 percent i.e. around 850,000 Arab-Americans.

Since most Muslim experts claim that around 1 of 4 American Muslims is of Arab origin, then if we use this AAI estimate of 850,000 Arab-American Muslims, the total Muslim population logically cannot be more than 3.4 million-which, in fact, is close to the upper range of the ARIS 2001 estimate of 2.8 million.

The above AAI figures also appear to point to the fact that even recent immigrants from Egypt, Jordan and Iraq are disproportionately Christian. This is not surprising. From a sociological perspective we should expect the most westernized populations from these countries to be most attracted to settle in the US. Moreover, Arab Christians such as Egyptian Copts, Lebanese Maronites and Iraqi Chaldeans and Assyrians have long suffered from an identity crisis and insecurity in the strife-torn Middle East.

A similar pattern can be assumed to have occurred among immigrants from Iran, a non-Arab country. This explains why the religious minorities of Iran such as Christians, Jews, Baha'i, Zoroastrians and agnostics happen to be strongly represented among Americans of Iranian descent. It stands to reason that few strict believers in the Shiite Muslim faith would leave the Islamic Republic to dwell in the "Great Satan".

## 2. THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF US MUSLIMS

According to the National Congregational Survey carried out by Hartford Seminary, there are 1,209 mosques in the U.S.; ARIS found that 62 percent of Muslim respondents claimed to belong to a mosque. This suggests, while using the population range outlined above, that somewhere between 600,000 and 1.2 million adults are involved with a mosque, giving 600 to a thousand members per mosque. The Islamic section of the Hartford project has estimated that around 2 million people are religiously involved with mosques and that 411,000 worshippers attend the weekly Friday *Jum'ab* prayers (Bagby, Mamiya and Nimer, 2001).

The demographic characteristics of the Bagby report are in line with the ARIS findings, which are reported in Table 1; they show a predominantly young, male, unmarried population. Mosque attendees are also overwhelmingly male (78 percent), while half are under 35 years of age. Bagby also reports that 30 percent of Mosque attendees are African-American, a figure which is almost exactly in line with the ARIS findings of 27 percent of all Muslim adherents.

Bagby's report also shows that two-thirds of the 19,000 converts a year to Islam are men and that 14,000 are African-Americans. The ARIS findings support this portrait of religious conversion; they show that 183,000 people have indeed converted to Islam. However, in addition, ARIS also counts people who *leave* the faith; they number 98,000.

In addition, ARIS asked about the religion of spouses and partners, so it is now possible to report that 27 percent of Muslims with a spouse or partner live in mixed religious families. Thus, in relation to Table 2, it is relevant to note that not every member of a "Muslim household" is an adherent of Islam, particularly given the preponderance of male adherents in this religious group.

### 3. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The geographical distribution reported in Table 1 is in accordance with expected patterns of residence. Muslim Americans tend to be heavily concentrated in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit and Texas.

Table 2 shows that Muslim households are larger than the national average; a figure which reflects the younger than average median age of the population (28 years of age). In terms of income, Muslim households are more polarized than average: the number of poor, low-income families is larger than that of families who obtain a middle income.

In the political arena Muslims have only half the national rate of voter registration. Their party preferences show that 35 percent favor the Democratic Party and 19 percent the Republican, while 39 percent declare themselves to be independent.

Finally, although ARIS 2001 shows that Muslims account for 0.5 to 1.0 percent of Americans of all racial backgrounds, they comprise approximately 2 percent of the total African-American population, and 5 percent among those who report themselves as Asians.

#### **Concluding remarks**

Given the fact that the U.S. Constitution precludes any national census from investigating the religious preferences and characteristics of American citizens, it is impossible to obtain a precise, definitive number for the size of U.S. religious groups. It is likewise unfeasible for any independent body to conduct an investigation with the reach and depth of the U.S. National Census. Religious researchers are therefore limited to two possibilities; they can investigate the places of worship and religious institutions themselves, or they can survey a representative national sample, as with ARIS 2001.

To be sure, the counting of attendees of places of worship and formal members of a religious group obviously does not usually include the full range of adherents, particularly the occasional worshipper and those who only attend for life cycle events such as marriage and funerals. For this reason, religious leaders' observations and their administrative records are neither comprehensive nor scientifically reliable as to the religious self-identification of the total U.S. population.

Consequently, there will always be a gap between the view of the religious institutions as to the size and range of their potential constituency and that provided by the members of the public themselves. Depending on their membership criteria and overall religious outlook, it is possible for religious groups to inflate, or deflate, the size of their prospective constituencies.

In the case of a minority religious group, the only way to scientifically measure the size and characteristics of the population and increase the precision over and above the data provided in Tables 1 and 2, is to sample an even larger number of representative households than the 50,281 covered by ARIS 2001.



**Table 1**  
**Demographic Characteristics of US Muslim Adults (18 and over)**

<u>Demographic Variable</u>	US Pop.	MUSLIMS		
		<u>All</u>	<u>White/Asian/other</u>	<u>Black</u>
TOTAL	208,000,000			
<b>ARIS weighted estimate</b>		<b>1,104,000</b>	800,000	300,000
<i>Upper range estimate</i>		<i>2,200,000</i>		
Median age	43	28	27	32
Percent female	52%	38%	43%	27%
Percent married	59%	49%	59%	14%
Percent college graduate	33%	46%	52%	25%
Percent employed full-time	55%	55%	53%	60%
Percent registered to vote	80%	44%	35%	70%
Political preference				
Democrat	31%	35%		
Republican	31%	19%		
Independent	30%	39%		
other/none	8%	7%		
Percent of total in 10 selected states				
New York	7%	24%	26%	22%
Illinois	4%	10%	10%	14%
California	12%	9%	10%	2%
Texas	7%	9%	12%	1%
Michigan	4%	6%	4%	13%
New Jersey	3%	5%	2%	9%
Ohio	4%	4%	3%	9%
Maryland	2%	4%	3%	8%
Georgia	3%	4%	3%	9%
Virginia	3%	4%	4%	2%

SOURCE:

American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Dr Barry A Kosmin & Dr Egon Mayer

**Table 2**  
**Characteristics of US Muslim Households**

HHs with at least one Muslim adult

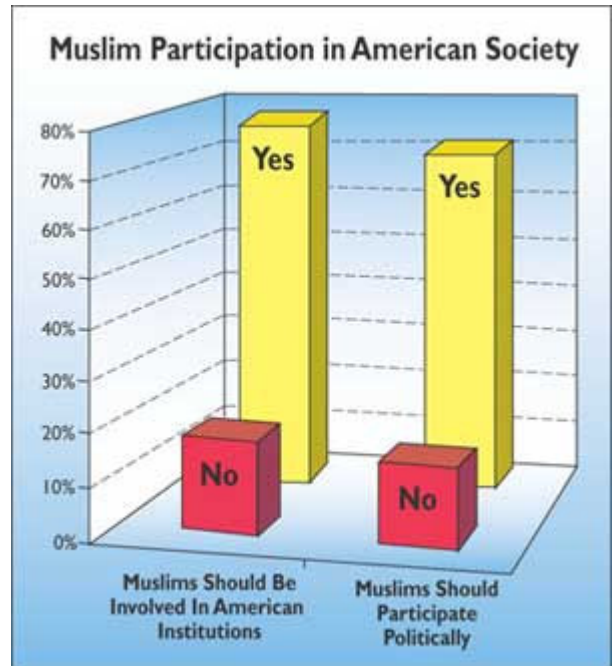
<u>Demographic Variable</u>	<u>US Pop</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>White/Asian/other</u>	<u>Black</u>
TOTAL	105,000,000			
<b>ARIS weighted estimate</b>		<b>486,000</b>	<b>360,000</b>	<b>126,000</b>
<i>Upper range estimate</i>		<i>975,000</i>		
Average no. of persons per household	2.6	3.4	3.5	3.0
Average no. of adults per household	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.2
Percent who own their homes	71%	38%	41%	31%
Percent in income categories				
Under \$25,000	27%	42%	36%	54%
\$25,000-49,999	27%	26%	28%	23%
\$50,000-74,999	20%	11%	11%	5%
\$75,000-99,999	12%	8%	9%	10%
\$100,000 or over	14%	13%	16%	8%

SOURCE:  
American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001  
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Dr Barry A Kosmin & Dr Egon Mayer

## Demographic Facts

- ❖ Mosques in the United States: **1,209**
- ❖ American Muslims associated with a mosque: **2 million**
- ❖ Increase in number of mosques since 1994: **25 percent**
- ❖ Proportion of mosques founded since 1980: **62 percent**
- ❖ Average number of Muslims associated with each mosque in the United States: **1,625**
- ❖ U.S. mosque participants who are converts: **30 percent**
- ❖ American Muslims who "strongly agree" that they should participate in American institutions and the political process: **70 percent**
- ❖ U.S. mosques attended by a single ethnic group: **7 percent**
- ❖ U.S. mosques that have some Asian, African-American, and Arab members: **nearly 90 percent**
- ❖ Ethnic origins of regular participants in U.S. mosques:
  - South Asian (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Afghani) = 33 percent**
  - African-America = 30 percent**
  - Arab = 25 percent**
  - Sub-Saharan African = 3.4 percent**
  - European (Bosnian, Tartar, Kosovar, etc.) = 2.1 percent**
  - White American = 1.6 percent**
  - Southeast Asian ( Malaysian, Indonesian, Filipino) = 1.3 percent**
  - Caribbean = 1.2 percent**
  - Turkish = 1.1 percent**
  - Iranian = 0.7 percent**
  - Hispanic/Latino = 0.6 percent**
- ❖ U.S. mosques that feel they strictly follow the Koran and Sunnah: **more than 90 percent**
- ❖ U.S. mosques that feel the Koran should be interpreted with consideration of its purposes and modern circumstances: **71 percent**
- ❖ U.S. mosques that provide some assistance to the needy: **nearly 70 percent** U.S. mosques with a full-time school: **more than 20 percent**



*(Chart based on information from the Hartford Institute for Religious Research)*

The information above was drawn from the "Mosque in America: A National Portrait," a survey released in April 2001. It is part of larger study of American congregations called "Faith Communities Today," coordinated by Hartford Seminary's Hartford Institute for Religious Research in Connecticut. Muslim organizations cosponsoring the survey are the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Islamic Society of North America, the Ministry of Imam W. Deen Muhammed, and the Islamic Circle of North America.

*Charts throughout this publication are from the same study.*

Demographic Facts. U.S. Department of State. <<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife/demograp.htm>>

# Map of the Muslim World



# Resource List

## I. Interfaith Dialogue

### A. Print Resources

- ❖ Magonet, Jonathan. Talking to the Other: Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims. I.B.Tauris & Company, Limited, 2003.

*From the publisher:* "For a rabbi, confronted on a daily basis with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the importance of a dialogue between Jews and Muslims is of obvious importance. Because Jews and Muslims share the experience of being minority religious communities in Europe, they have parallel experiences and needs. Moreover, both have to address the impact of the Middle East conflict on their own communities." Jonathan Magonet has long been engaged in such interfaith dialogue. In this book he explores the issues that arise in such an encounter, the traps that so easily hinder relationships and the historical and theological problems to be confronted once a basis of trust has been established.

*Synopsis:* A unique expression of the Jewish experience of interfaith dialogue, this book is based on over three decades of practice, as well as extensive study of the questions central to each faith and their relationship to each other.

- ❖ Selengut, Charles. Jewish-Muslim Encounters: History, Philosophy, and Culture. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001.

*Book Description:* This volume is authored by a wide range of distinguished Muslim and Jewish scholars, including philosophers, historians, political scientists, and theologians. The essays examine the Muslim-Jewish encounter in history, philosophy, religious thought, and cultural life, as well as theological and religious elements from these traditions. The essays reveal the complex history of Islam and Judaism, and the interconnectedness of the two traditions.

- ❖ Smock, David R. Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding. United States Institute of Peace Press (USIP Press), 2002.

- ❖ Weiss, Andrea L. and Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor. Shalom/Salaam: A Resource for Jewish-Muslim Dialogue. UAHC Press, 1998.

*Description:* This guide contains a collection of articles and programs, designed to forge ties of friendship and understanding between American Muslims and Jews.

- ❖ Windmueller, Steven. You Shall Not Stand Idly By. American Jewish Committee, 2004

*Annotation:* A handbook designed to assist professionals and lay leaders engaged in community relations to understand the field's best practices and proven strategies.

## **B. Internet Resources**

- ❖ Jewish Interfaith Endeavors: Abrahamic Dialogue. The Pluralism Project at Harvard University.  
<<http://www.pluralism.org/research/profiles/display.php?profile=73433>>

*Annotation:* Provides a summary of the various forums in which Abrahamic dialogue occurs.

- ❖ Swidler, Leonard. "What is Dialogue?"  
<[http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/2002nov\\_comments.php?id=120\\_0\\_16\\_0\\_C](http://www.theamericanmuslim.org/2002nov_comments.php?id=120_0_16_0_C)>

## II. Judaism and Islam (a comparison)

### A. Print Resources

- ❖ Duran, Khalid. Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Islam for Jews. Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2001.

*Annotation:* The book discusses the theological and moral resemblance between Judaism and Islam, as well as the historical relationship between Jews and Muslims worldwide. Furthermore, constructive Muslim-Jewish interaction is presented as a means for the advancement of knowledge and culture.

- ❖ Gilbert, Martin. The Jews of Arab Lands: Their History in Maps. Oxford, 1975.
- ❖ Gohari, M. J. Islamic Judaism: An Account of References to Jews and Judaism in the Quran. Oxford Logos Press, 2002.
- ❖ Goitein, S.D. Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.
- ❖ Katsch, Abraham Isaac. Judaism in Islam: Biblical and Talmudic Background of the Koran and its Commentaries. Third ed. Sepher-Hermon Press, 1980.
- ❖ Levy, Avigdor. Jews, Turks, and Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth Trough the Twentieth Century. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002.
- ❖ Lewis, Bernard. The Jews of Islam. Princeton University Press, 1990.

*Annotation:* A look at the Judeo-Islamic tradition in medieval and modern history.

- ❖ Peters, F.E. The Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Princeton University Press, 2004

*Annotation:* The book covers the similarities and differences which are inherent to the religion of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

*From the publisher:* "F.E. Peters, a scholar in the comparative study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, revisits his pioneering work after twenty-five years. Peters has rethought and thoroughly rewritten his

classic *The Children of Abraham* for a new generation of readers, at a time when the understanding of these three religious traditions has taken on a new and critical urgency." Peters traces the three faiths from the sixth century B.C., when the Jews returned to Palestine from exile in Babylonia, to the time in the Middle Ages, when they approached their present form. He points out that all three faith groups, whom the Muslims themselves refer to as "People of the Book," share much common ground; most notably, each embraces the practice of worshipping a God who intervenes in history on behalf of His people.

- ❖ Neusner, Jacob and Tamara Sonn. Comparing Religions through Law: Judaism and Islam. Routledge, 1999.

*From the publisher:* Both Judaism and Islam define the character of their social order, morality and theology through law, reflecting the shared view that there is nothing in human life beyond the scope of divine concern. The unique nature of the two religions is apparent in those issues which differ from one religion to the other; the idea of the "Land of Israel" has no counterpart in Islam, while Islam's *jihad* is nowhere to be found in Jewish law. The authors compare the classical statements of the Torah and of classical Sunni Islamic law to present an innovative study that compares and contrasts the two religions, and offers an example of how comparative religious studies can provide the grounds for mutual understanding.

## **B. Internet Resources**

- ❖ Firestone, Reuven. "Symposium on Judaism and Islam: An Introduction." CCAR Journal. Fall, 2000.  
<<http://data.ccarnet.org/journal/1100rf.html>>



### III. Islam in America

#### A. Print Resource

- ❖ Nimer, Mohamed. The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada. Taylor and Frances, Inc., 2002.

*From the Publisher:* "Muslims in the United States and Canada have long been misunderstood by many members of the public and misrepresented by the media. *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada* identifies Muslim communities in North America and provides a synthesis of the Muslim values and institutions in the two countries. It presents a balanced view of the history of Islam on the continent through discussion of topics such as immigration and population, organizations, religious influence and practices, economics, education, and many other cultural issues. A timely antidote to the heated climate concerning Muslim communities in the United States and Canada since September 11, 2001, the book dispels the myths of Muslims as outsiders by showing them as loyal citizens and equal partners in building a better future. It also illustrates that the aims of Muslims in North America are no different from those of the rest of the population as a whole." In addition to providing material on the Muslim experience in North America, the guide contains an extensive directory of schools, mosques, and other organizations. The directory is listed alphabetically by state for the United States and by province for Canada, and it gives contact information for the various institutions. There is also a reference list of print and electronic resources for further study.

#### B. Internet Resources

- ❖ History of Islam in the United States. Colorado State University. <[http://www.colostate.edu/Orgs/MSA/history\\_of\\_islam\\_in\\_us.htm](http://www.colostate.edu/Orgs/MSA/history_of_islam_in_us.htm)>
- ❖ Pipes, Daniel. "The Danger Within: Militant Islam in America." November 2001. <<http://www.danielpipes.org/article/77>>
- ❖ Smith, Jane I. Patterns of Muslim Immigration. <<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/muslimlife>>

*Annotation:* Provides an overview of Muslim immigration in America and includes a chart with Muslim ethnicity percentages.

- ❖ Smith, Tom W. “Estimating the Muslim Population in the United States.” The American Jewish Committee. <<http://ajc.org/InTheMedia/Publications.asp?did=356>>
- ❖ Smith, Tom W. “Religious Diversity in America: The Emergence of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Others.” The American Jewish Committee. <<http://ajc.org/InTheMedia/Publications.asp?did=400>>
- ❖ “The End of American Jewry’s Golden Era: An Interview with Daniel Pipes.” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. May 2, 2004. <<http://www.danielpipes.org/article/1759>>
- ❖ Wistrich, Robert. “Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger.” The American Jewish Committee. <<http://ajc.org/InTheMedia/Publications.asp?did=503>>

## IV. Islam (History and Belief)

### A. Print Resources

- ❖ Grunebaum, Gustave E. Classical Islam: A History, 600 A. D. to 1258 A.D. Transaction Publishers, 2005.

*From the publisher:* *Classical Islam* examines the relationships, both cultural and political, between the Islamic world and the Mediterranean countries and India, while elaborating on the economic, social, and intellectual factors and forces that helped shape the Muslim world and mold its interactions with "infidels." The work is written in a clear and direct narrative form, while simultaneously emphasizing the major intellectual trends as well as the political events and tendencies of the formative period in Islamic history which still resonate today.

- ❖ Lewis, Bernard. Islam and the West. Oxford University Press, 1994.

*Annotation:* In this enlightening and highly-praised collection of essays, extensively revised, Lewis explores the vast common heritage shared by Islam and the West, the history of the troubled relationship, and the perceptions each side holds of the other. This is a matchless guide to the background of Middle East conflicts today from an eminent authority.

*From the publisher:* In *Islam and the West*, Bernard Lewis brings together in one volume eleven essays that indeed open doors to the innermost domains of Islam.

- ❖ ---. What Went Wrong? : The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East. HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

*From the publisher:* For many centuries, the world of Islam was in the forefront of human achievement--the foremost military and economic power in the world, the leader in the arts and sciences of civilization. Christian Europe, a remote land beyond its northwestern frontier, was seen as an outer darkness of barbarism and non-belief from which there was nothing to learn or to fear. And then everything changed, as the previously despised West won victory after victory, first in the battlefield and the marketplace, then in almost every aspect of public and even private life. In this intriguing volume, Bernard Lewis examines the anguished reaction of the Islamic world as it tried to understand why things had changed--how they had been overtaken, overshadowed, and to an increasing extent dominated by the West. Lewis provides a fascinating portrait of a culture in turmoil. He shows how the Middle East turned its attention to understanding European weaponry and military tactics, commerce and industry, government and diplomacy,

education and culture. Lewis highlights the striking differences between the Western and Middle Eastern cultures from the 18th to the 20th centuries through thought-provoking comparisons such as that of Christianity and Islam, music and the arts, the position of women, secularism and the civil society, the clock and the calendar. Hailed in The New York Times Book Review as "the doyen of Middle Eastern studies," Bernard Lewis is one of the West's foremost authorities on Islamic history and culture. In this striking volume, he offers an incisive look at the historical relationship between the Middle East and Europe.

- ❖ ---. Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East. Second Ed. Open Court Publishing Company, 1997.

*From the publisher:* From the first expansion of Islam to the exploits of Saddam Hussein, Middle Eastern society has been fatefully involved with the West. This collection of essays by a leading Western expert on Islam and the Middle East gives essential background to the present Middle Eastern conflicts and their interaction, through mutual misunderstandings, with Western conceptions.

- ❖ ---, et al. The World of Islam: Faith, People, Culture. Thames and Hudson, 1991.

*From the publisher:* In spite of its astonishing impact upon the modern world, the civilization of Islam is still *Terra Incognita* for many in the West. The thirteen contributors to this volume, all eminent specialists, aim to remedy that situation. Islam itself, and the peoples who accepted it, come first in the story. The central area and period of Islamic greatness - the Middle East and North Africa from the advent of Islam in the seventh century to the aftermath of the Mongol conquests in the thirteenth - produced a culture of extraordinary depth, variety and richness. Art, social life, trade, mysticism, literature, music, science and warfare – all are fully considered and lavishly illustrated in their Islamic form in this book.

Islam spread far outside its core space and time: Spain, Iran, Ottoman Turkey and Monghul India – each one of these countries developed its own striking variation of basic Islamic institutions and artifacts. Then, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Islam came into close contact with the advancing West; and until this very day the two cultures are still struggling to come to terms with each other. All of these themes are fully developed in the book, which serves as a comprehensive coverage of the subject.

- ❖ Peters, F. E. Islam: A Guide for Jews and Christians. Princeton University Press, 2003.

*From the publisher:* The Quran is a sacred book with profound, and familiar, Old and New Testament resonances. The message which the Quran promulgates, Islam, had peaked during an extraordinarily rich era of entwined interaction among monotheists. Jews, Christians and Muslims had not only worshipped the same God, but shared similar aspirations and operated in the same social and economic environment; while sometimes living side by side and indistinguishable by language, costume or manners. Today, of course, little of this commonality is apparent, and Islam is poorly understood by most non-Muslims. Entering Islam through the same biblical door Muhammad did, this book introduces readers with Christian or Jewish backgrounds to one of the world's largest, most active, and, in the West, least understood religions.

Frank Peters, one of the world's leading authorities on the monotheistic religions, starts with the central feature of Muslim faith and life: the Quran. Across its pages move Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, John the Baptist, Jesus and the Virgin Mary. The Quran contains remarkably familiar accounts of Genesis, the Flood, Exodus, the Virgin Birth, and other biblical events. Notably, Peters highlights Muhammad's very different use of Scripture and explains those elements of the Quran most alien to Western readers, from its didactic passages to its remarkable poetry.

Peters goes on to cogently explain Islam's defining features, including the significance of Mecca, the manner of Muhammad's revelations and the creation of the unique community of Muslims, all in relation to the Judeo-Christian tradition. He compares Jesus and Muhammad, describes Islamic commandments and rituals, details the structures of Sunni and Shi'ite communities, and lays out central Islamic beliefs on war, women, mysticism, and martyrdom. The result is a crucial and extremely accomplished book that offers Western readers a professional, yet highly accessible, understanding of Islam at a time when we need it most.

## B. Internet Resources

- ❖ "Islam." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.  
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam>>

*Annotation:* The article goes over the etymology, beliefs, organization, branches, history and includes references which are necessary for the exploration of Islam.

- ❖ "Islam." Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2005.  
1997-2005 Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved.  
<<http://encarta.msn.com>>

*Annotation:* The article provides an overview of Islam, starting from the early expansion of the religion to Islam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- ❖ “Qur’an.” Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.  
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an>>

*Annotation:* The article provides an explanation of the Qur’an with various literary examination of the language and verses.

## V. Different Branches of Islam

### A. Print Resources

- ❖ Halm, Heinz. Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution. Markus Weiner Publisher, 2001.

*From the publisher:* The author highlights the three main aspects of Shi'a Islam: its historical development, especially the history of the Imams; the rituals, including flagellation and passion plays; and the rule of the mullahs, known as the "government of experts." It began as an exclusively Arab political issue of succession to Muhammad, and was later embraced by the Iranians. At the core of Shi'i religious practice are rituals of mourning and atonement. Halm describes the elegies of mourning and the *ta'ziye* (passion plays), while including travelers' accounts over the course of several centuries which establish striking similarities between Iranian and particular Christian practices. Halm explains the exalted position of the religious scholars, the mullahs and ayatollahs, who established themselves as clergy in the Safavid empire and defined themselves as "administrators" for the Hidden Imam. Their authority is based on *idtschihad*, the rational interpretation of the Koran and the traditions of the Imams. The relationship between the rulers of Iran and the mullahs has always been tense. The Khomeini revolution was the powerful culmination of a lengthy history of conflict.

- ❖ Lewis, Bernard. The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam. Basic Books, 2002.

*From the publisher:* *The Assassins* is a comprehensive, accessible and authoritative account of history's first terrorists. An offshoot of the Ismaili Shi'ite sect of Islam, the Assassins were the first group to make systematic use of murder as a political weapon. Established in Iran and Syria in the 11th and 12th centuries, they aimed to overthrow the existing Sunni order in Islam and replace it with their own; they attempted to achieve their goal by terrorizing their foes with a series of dramatic murders of Islamic leaders, as well as some of the Crusaders, who brought their name and fame back to Europe. Particularly insightful in light of the rise of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. and in Israel, this account of the group that lent its name to politically motivated murder, places recent events in historical perspective and sheds new light on the fanatic mind.

### B. Internet Resource

- ❖ "Sufism." Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.  
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufism>>

## VI. Women in Islam

### A. Print Resources

- ❖ Speaker-Yuan, Margaret. Women in Islam. Gale Group, 2005.

*From the Critics:* This series of essays includes an incredible range of opinion on the topic. Many of the essays come from speeches or books by the individual authors. The opening essay by Amina Wadud defends her belief that the Koran itself gives women the same rights as men. Wadud is the American Muslim woman who led prayers in a tradition-breaking event in a New York City mosque in early 2005. She is immediately followed by Azam Kamguian, an Iranian secularist woman who believes all religions oppress women. There are several essays by Islamic religious leaders who believe a woman's place remains in the home only: a lone essay defending polygamy; pro and con essays on *hijab*, the Muslim head-scarf for women; an essay by former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on economic independence for women and another by Robert Spencer, who leads an American organization that issues regular warnings about radical Islam. Many of the essays have a scholarly tone while others are angry or defensive. There are many specific references to verses in the Koran from people writing on all sides of the issue. The individual essays are fairly short and could be used in class for selected readings, discussion or debate. The collection definitely makes the reader aware of the wide range of belief and opinion about women within the Muslim world itself.

- ❖ Brooks, Geraldine. Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women. Random House, Inc., 1996

*Synopsis:* As a foreign correspondent covering the Middle East for the Wall Street Journal, Brooks examines the attitudes of Muslim women toward a society that many Western feminists consider oppressive. Donning the hijab, the black veil, Brooks sought to enter the world of Islamic women--in Egypt, Iran, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank--to report on topics such as dress codes, polygamy, belly dancing, as well as specific events like the Saudi women's revolt over their government's ban on women driving.



## Questions for Consideration:

- ❖ What are the basic tenants of Islam and how do they compare with those of Judaism?
- ❖ What is my responsibility as a Jewish communal professional in interacting with Muslim groups?
- ❖ What are the implications of the spread of Islam in America and the world as a whole?
- ❖ What are the implications of the spread of Islam for the American Jewish community and for Israel?
- ❖ How can I assist in building a better relationship between Muslims and Jews?