



### Description

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

This book is an exploration of contemporary Jewish-Muslim relations in the United States and the distinct and often creative ways in which these two communities interact with one another in the American context. Each essay discusses a different episode from the recent twentieth and current

twenty-first century American milieu that links these two groups together. Some deal with case examples of local inter-communal interaction, such as “dialogue groups,” which can help us better understand national trends of similar activities in other parts of the country. Others focus on national trends themselves, thus giving us greater insights into individual incidents.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *Foreword*

Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN)

### *Introduction*

Dr. Reza Aslan

## **Part I Case Examples: Lessons Learned?**

*You Can't Handle the Truth . . . or Maybe You Can*

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield

*Who Put Hate In My Sunday Paper?: Uncovering the Israeli-Republican-Evangelical Networks behind the “Obsession” DVD*

Dr. Omid Safi

*Children of Abraham in Dialogue*

Rabbi Amy Eilberg

*The Khalil Gibran International Academy—Lessons Learned?*

Debbie Almontaser

## **Part II Identity Formation: Muslims, Jews, and the American Experience**

*Evolving from Muslims in America to American Muslims: A Shared Trajectory with the American Jewish Community*

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf

*The War of Words: Jews, Muslims, and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict on American University Campuses*

Dr. Aaron J. Hahn Tapper

*Muslims, Jews, and Religious Visibility on American College Campuses*

Dr. Taymiya R. Zaman

*J Street and Current Directions in American Muslim-Jewish Dialogue*

Hannah Ellenson and Rabbi David Ellenson

### **Part III Challenges and Opportunities in Reaching across the Divide**

*Introduction to Speeches by Rabbi Eric Yoffie and Dr. Ingrid Mattson*

Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed

*Inaugural Address at the Forty-fourth Annual Convention of the Islamic Society of North America*

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie

*Address at the Sixty-ninth Conference of the General Assembly of the Union for Reform Judaism*

Dr. Ingrid Mattson

*Integration or Separation: The Relationship between Iranian Jewish and Iranian Muslim Communities in Los Angeles*

Dr. Saba Soomekh

*Challenges and Opportunities for Muslim-Jewish Peacemaking in America*

Salam Al-Marayati

### **Part IV Toward the Future: New Models in Jewish-Muslim Relations**

*Beyond Sarah and Hagar: Jewish and Muslim Reflections on Feminist Theology*

Dr. Aysha Hidayatullah and Dr. Judith Plaskow

*Status Quo versus Solution: A New Middle East Playbook*

Dr. Eboo Patel

*Sacred Text Study as Dialogue between Muslims and Jews*

Rabbi Reuven Firestone and Hebah H. Farrag

*American Jews and American Muslims of Love*

Rabbi Michael Lerner

*Afterword*

Peter A. Geffen