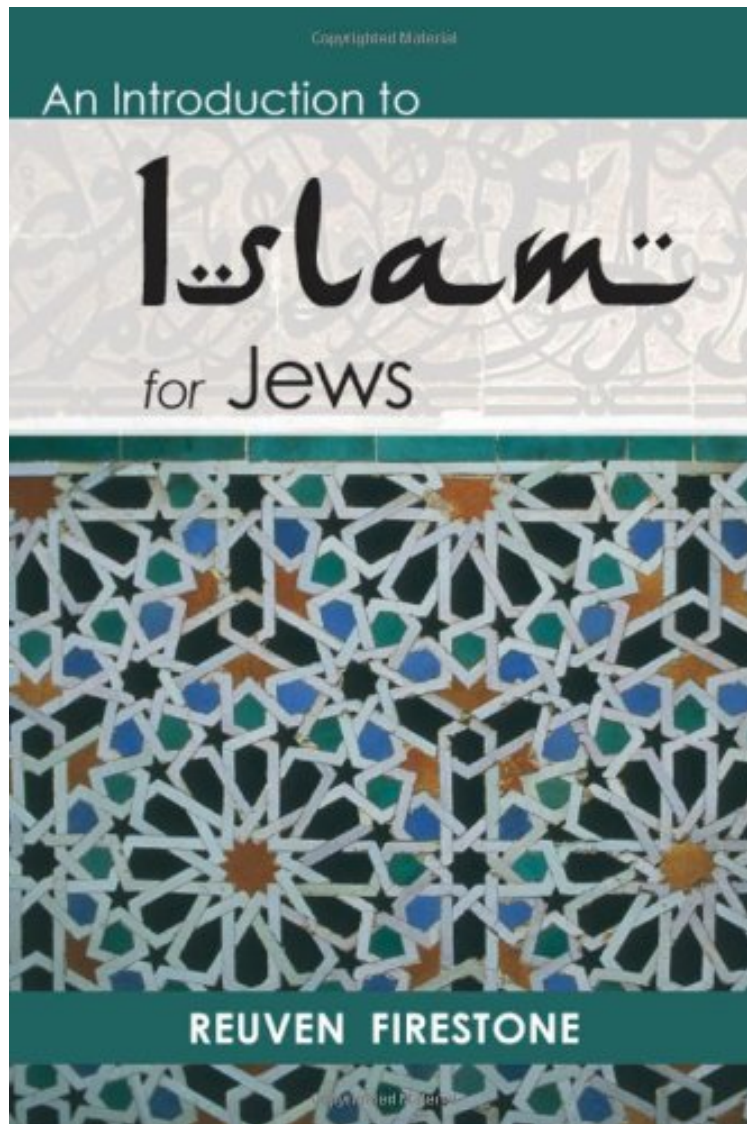


[Pdf free] An Introduction to Islam for Jews

An Introduction to Islam for Jews

Reuven Firestone PhD

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Reuven Firestone PhD : An Introduction to Islam for Jews before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Introduction to Islam for Jews:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very balanced book By C. D. Varn Firestone's book fills a niche in that covers both an introduction to Islamic religion and culture as well as comparative religious treatments on the relationship between people of the book. It is a fairly balanced tome that seeks to balance a deep sense of sympathy with Islamic religion and culture with an honest treatment of tensions between Islamic and Jewish cultures. Many will see this balance as either "white-washing" the history of Muslim-Jewish relations or a subtle undermining of the truth

of either the Torah or the Qu'ran. In many more negative reviews, I have seen accusations that Firestone ignores the doctrine of tahrif, which Firestone does not name, but discuss. He also discusses counter-veiling tendencies in the Qu'ran and the Hadith as well as the ways the Hadith developed in more strict way it first appears in the Qu'ran, and that this actually does parallel, fairly directly, halakkah developments and the oral law in Judaism. Indeed, Firestone makes it clear that distrust between Judaism and Islam goes both ways and has a long history. While it is true that Firestone does paint things sympathetically, he does not deny the particular tension between Jews and Muslims. Indeed, he points out that while Jewish and Islamic theology and approaches to religious law are actually more similar than either Jewish and Christian or Christian and Muslim relations, Islamic tradition has been more forgiving of Christians as people of the book than Jews, and has made less claims on its tradition beyond the Qu'rans particular reading of stories that also appear in the gospels, albeit in a profoundly different light in creedal Christian readings. Firestone points out a lot of both the cultural and linguistic relationship to the Judaism in the Qu'ran and in Arabic culture at large. The clear relationship of Hebrew and Arabic as semitic languages, the mutual readings of the common tradition, and the overlapping and often competing cultural milieu is brought into focus. Historical development of Islam is discussed in some detail as are competing traditions of Shari'ia. The tensions of the "Jewish Golden Age" in Islamic Spain are brought out clearly as are the occasional backlashes against Jews in the pre-modern Muslim world. Firestone does mention that these were not as brutal or repressive as in Christian Europe nor were massacres of Jews as common as in pre-reformation Christian world or the early 20th century. Firestone does shy away from discussing the tensions post-Zionism too directly, and this is small flaw in the book. The reversal of Muslim fortunes under modernity is discussed as is colonialism, but the establishment of Israel out of the British mandate is glossed over in a few sentences, and the profound distrust this creates on both sides of the divide is played down. That caveat is an important one as is some of the historical tensions described within the Firestone's treatment. It strives to be honest and yet respectful of believers in all three of the largest "Abrahamic" faiths, and while I think it works, that is still going to be alienating to some. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting links between Islam and Judaism By Howard Readers of my review will have to understand that I am Jew who abhors ANY organized religion. I wanted to better understand the psyche of radical islamists. I thought that more familiarity with Islam and the Koran might help me in that endeavor. I did find that I was intrigued with the historical connections between Jews and Muslims and seriously lament the schism that occurred. But I have come to the conclusion that radical islam has no serious relation or connection to what I would call Islam and the Koran. I highly recommend this text to people who want to better understand the historical connections between Jews and Muslims, and learn about interesting tidbits about each of the religions. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Exceptional Read and Eye Opener By Philip Weismehl Our congregation had this as a read for our book group and sometime later had the author as a guest speaker. The book is exceptionally well written and clarified so many things for me not only in terms of Islam but Judaism and Christianity as well, e.g., that each faith reached a point where it closed off prophecy and viewed what came later as heresy. Highly recommended on so many levels. Very insightful and very accessible.

Muslim-Jewish relations in the United States, Israel, and Europe are tenuous. Jews and Muslims struggle to understand one another and know little about each others traditions and beliefs. Firestone explains the remarkable similarities and profound differences between Judaism and Islam, the complex history of Jihad, the legal and religious positions of Jews in the world of Islam, how various expressions of Islam (Sunni, Shi'a, Sufi, Salafi, etc.) regard Jews, the range of Muslim views about Israel, and much more. He addresses these issues and others with candor and integrity, and he writes with language, symbols, and ideas that make sense to Jews. Exploring these subjects in today's vexed political climate is a delicate undertaking. Firestone draws on the research and writings of generations of Muslim, Jewish, and other scholars, as well as his own considerable expertise in this field. The book's tone is neither disparaging, apologetic, nor triumphal. Firestone provides many original sources in translation, as well as an appendix of additional key sources in context. Most importantly, this book is readable and reasoned, presenting to readers for the first time the complexity of Islam and its relationship toward Jews and Judaism.

From Publishers Weekly Firestone provides a balanced introduction to Islam that will be helpful for all beginners, but particularly for the Jewish readers for whom it is intended. The first part offers a survey of Islamic history, with special emphasis on the interactions of Jews and Muslims throughout (and an entire chapter devoted to the violent relations in seventh-century Medina). Firestone extends a real effort to be fair to both sides; in his discussion of Muhammad's massacre of between 600 and 900 Jewish men, for instance, he reminds readers that the Jews had committed treason and points to examples in the Hebrew Bible where Israelites engaged in similar tactics. Part two digs into the foundations of Islamic law and belief, discussing the Qur'an, the prophetic tradition, key doctrines and sharia law. The final, and perhaps most interesting, part explores Islam in practice. Firestone undertakes an in-depth discussion of the Five Pillars of Islam, finding much common ground: like Muslims, Jews have an ancient tradition of praying at set times; early Muslims, like Jews, fasted on the 10th day of a particular month. (Aug.) "Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved." "Reuven Firestone's eminently readable

book contains a comprehensive, authoritative, and sympathetic introduction to Islam, written for Jews, but speaking to all men and women of good will. Throughout, the author offers a sober and nuanced analysis of relations between Islam and other religions, particularly Judaism, without succumbing to the temptation to say who took what from whom. The book represents a major contribution to better understanding of the "real" Islam, which differs from the extremist and militant variety that dominates the news."Marc Cohen, professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University