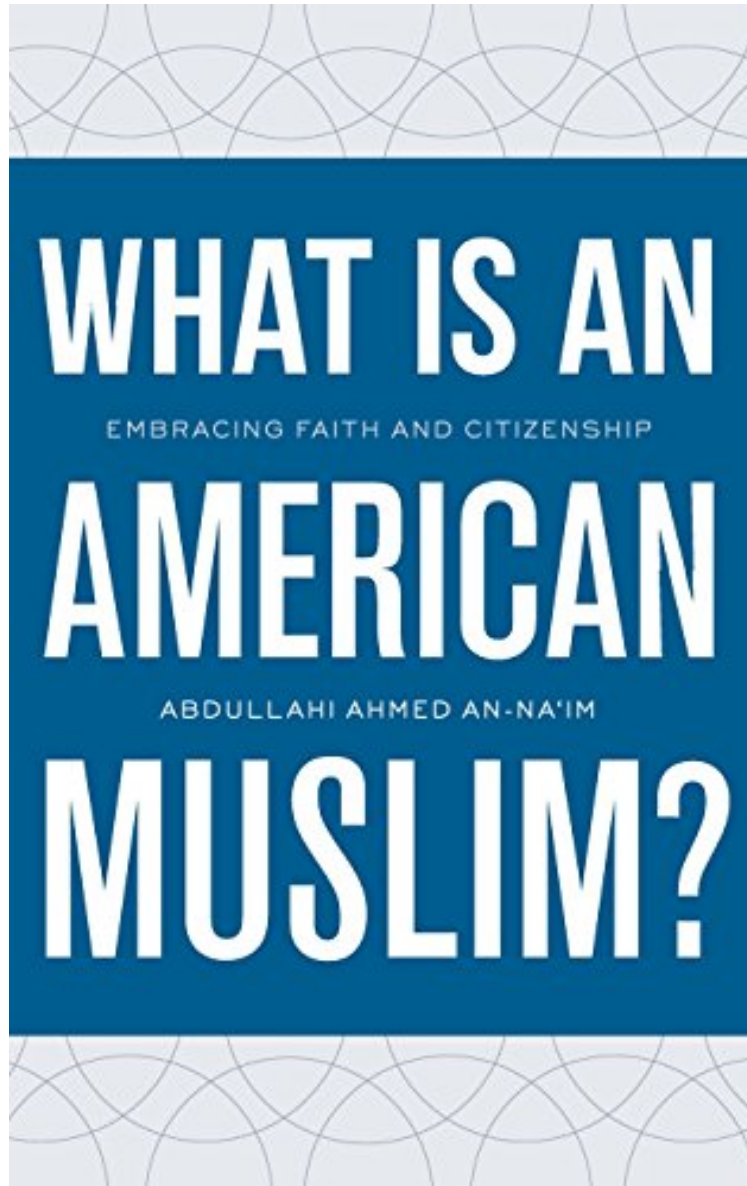


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What Is an American Muslim?: Embracing Faith and Citizenship

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im

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Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im : What Is an American Muslim?: Embracing Faith and Citizenship before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Is an American Muslim?: Embracing Faith and Citizenship:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Tore LindholmSerious, thoughtful, unconventional book!

Since 2001, there has been a tremendous backlash against the very idea that it is possible to be both American and Muslim-the controversy over the so-called "Ground Zero Mosque" and the attempts to ban shari'a law are examples. Even within the Muslim community many leaders urge believers to integrate more fully into the mainstream of American life. Is it possible to be both fully American and devoutly Muslim? An American citizen born and raised in the Sudan, an internationally recognized scholar of Islam, and a human rights activist, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im brings a unique perspective to this crucial question. By demanding that Muslims assimilate, he argues, allies and critics alike assume that American Muslims are a monolithic bloc, a permanent minority set apart from that which is truly "American." An-Na'im wholeheartedly rejects this notion and urges Muslims to embrace their faith without fear. Islam, he argues, is one of many dimensions of identity-Muslims are also members of different ethnic groups, political parties, and social circles, not to mention husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, baseball fans and movie buffs. In short, Muslims share a vast array of identities with other Americans, but the most important identity they all share is as citizens. Muslims, An-Na'im argues, must embrace the full range of rights and responsibilities that come with American citizenship, and participate fully in civic life, while at the same time asserting their right to define their faith for themselves. They must view themselves, simply, as American citizens who happen to be Muslims. *What Is an American Muslim?* is a bold and provocative take on the future of Islam in America.

From Booklist Currently, American Muslims are reluctant to talk about their identity, even as more Americans feel that being Muslim and American are incompatible. An-Na'im starts with the assumption that being American and Muslim is not incompatible and explores academic notions of identity. He rejects the idea that minority subgroups need to assimilate into the mainstream but instead advances the notion that Americans have a multitude of identities (professional, family, political, etc.), which in some cases places them in the majority, in others, the minority. And while religion is one of those identity markers, he believes that the most important identity Americans share is that of citizens. An-Na'im advocates that emphasis should be put on a common basis for public discussion and debate rather than a set of common core beliefs. He presents his case from several different perspectives, drawing extensively from contemporary academic works on identity and citizenship. The writing style is academic, but those interested in Islam in America, American Muslims, and citizenship will find this of interest. --Muhammed Hassanali "Abdullahi An-Na'im is arguably America's most important Muslim thinker and in this book he lays out the most compelling argument I've ever read about what it really means to be Muslim and American in a post-9/11 world." --Reza Aslan, author of *No god but God and Zealot* "This book is an eloquent call for American Muslims to stand at the crossroads of faith and citizenship and look both ways at once. I highly recommend it." --Eboo Patel, author of *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice and the Promise of America* "Well-known scholar, lawyer, and human rights activist Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im draws on his wealth of knowledge in these fields to examine critical issues bearing on Muslim-American citizenship, illuminating its meanings and implications-legal and otherwise-and the rights and responsibilities it implies. Arguing that Muslim-Americans should take a proactive, affirmative view of citizenship, he explores a range of issues, including the highly topical one of sharia law in America. As always, An-Na'im's analyses and reflections cast much-needed light on an important and controversial subject." --Leila Ahmed, author of *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* "The success of an-Na'im's arguments in *What Is an American Muslim?* will not only strengthen American Muslim identity, but create a more authentic USA. This book is a welcome addition to the literature on North American Islam." --Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations About the Author Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law at Emory Law, associated professor in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences, senior fellow of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion, and senior faculty fellow of the Emory University Center for Ethics. An internationally recognized scholar of Islam and human rights, An-Na'im is the author of six books, including, most recently, *Islam and the Secular State*. He is the former Executive Director of Human Rights Watch/Africa.