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The Jew Is Not My Enemy: Unveiling The Myths That Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism



Synopsis

A liberal Muslim and critically acclaimed author explores the historical, political, and theological basis for centuries of Muslim animosity towards Jews, debunking long-held myths and tracing a history of hate and its impact today. More than nine years after 9/11 and 60 years after the creation of the state of Israel, the world is no closer to solving, let alone understanding, the psychological and political divide between Jews and Muslims. While countless books have been written on the subject of terrorism, political Islam, and jihad, barely a handful address the theological and historical basis of the Jew-Muslim divide. Following the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November 2008, in which Pakistani jihadis sought out and murdered the members of a local Jewish centre, Tarek Fatah began an in-depth investigation of the historical basis for the crime. In this provocative new book, Fatah uses extensive research to trace how literature from as early as the seventh century has fueled the hatred of Jews by Muslims. Fatah debunks the anti-Jewish writings of the Hadith literature, takes apart the Arab supremacist doctrines that lend fuel to the fire, and reinterprets supposed anti-Jewish passages in the Quran. In doing so he argues that hating Jews is against the essence of the Islamic spirit and suggests what needs to be done to eliminate the agonizing friction between the two communities. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Muslim reformer Tarek Fatah tackles the issues of antisemitism within Islam - its origins and the mechanisms that sustain it. He's a modern secular Indo-Pakistani immigrant Canadian Muslim journalist of Hindu ancestry - a man of many pasts. The book begins with a 2006 trip to his native

Pakistan where in a land of no Jews he found widespread examples of antisemitic prejudice. Jews were accused of causing both the 2004 tsunami and the "Bird Flu" epidemic. A shopkeeper hands him a copy of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", assuring him that it's true. (pp 18). Peshawar millionaires with retinues of servants complain how Muslims are marginalized by Jews, Israel and the United States then asked how they could get a green card for their sons so that the family could migrate to the US. Then in 2008 Punjabi villagers make special pains to target the Jewish Chabad centre in Mumbai, their controller advising them that killing one Jew is worth more than killing 50 people. Of course we know the problem is much broader and the author supplies related examples throughout the Muslim Ummah. Even the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Matathir bin Mohamad, a man Fatah has admired, subscribed to the belief that it was the "Jewish Lobby" that was behind the war in Afghanistan, and that Jews had to be contained in ghettos and periodically massacred in Europe to contain their influence. Fatah traces multiple causes of this poisonous dysfunction. Chapters 3 & 2 provide a thorough albeit out of sequence background on Palestinian/Arab powerbroker Hajj Amin al-Hussayni and those he influenced both during and after the war including Veli Kayum Khan and Sayd Qutb. Husayni, who's voice was behind the anti-Jewish riots of 1920, 21 and 29, was also responsible for the Arab Strike which boycotted Jewish businesses and waged a guerrilla war from 1936-39 against the British Mandate and Arab rival clans who were more conciliatory. In 1937 he engineered the death of Lewis Andrews, the British Consul for Galilee and was forced to flee to Syria. During the late 30s and 1940s his Arab Higher Committee was largely funded by the Nazis and he spent much of the war engaged in anti-Jewish propaganda directed at the Arab world as an honoured guest of the Reich. In 1945 Husayni escaped via France to Cairo where Arab political threats were used to prevent the west from extraditing him for war crimes. A second source is Islamofascism which the author claims distorts original the meaning and intent of the Quran by basing itself on questionable Hadiths and interpretations. In particular (Ch 6 & 7) he argues against the authenticity the Battle of the Trench as related by Ibn Ishak who wrote about the Prophet's massacre of Jewish Banu Qurayza tribe, often used to emphasize Islam's superiority and Jews' responsibility for their own death. Citing a lack of corroborating Jewish sources and physical evidence (not that the Saudis are that interested in archeology - he notes their destruction several historic sites including Mohammad's home) he concludes that this event, which would show Mohammad as a mass murderer, never happened. The problem is that many Muslims have been taught that it did and believe that the justification for these events lie in the innately evil nature of Jews. Yet the first two influences might have died out if not for the Arab discovery of high priced oil in the 1970s. In previous decades clerics were often

made fun of as inconsequential. Saudi financed madrases drilled negative imagery across the middle east resulting in a hardline politicization of Islam. In rival Shia Iran the Ayatollah Khomeini introduced the idea of clerical guardianship of the political stream. But on an everyday level communal peer pressure to conform is also a problem. Fatah's acquaintances routinely dismissed his positive reports on the status of Israeli Arabs. One Muslim couple with similar experiences confided that they could not relate this to their friends: "We have to live in our community and cannot be seen as not being anti-Israel." (pp180)Ch. 4 asks whether or not Israel itself is unintentionally fueling anti-semitism, and here is where we differ. Fatah argues that although the Palestinians have shown great incompetence over the years, both in constructing a national infrastructure and in accepting Israeli overtures for a political settlement, it is Israel who holds all the cards. The author's real fear is that that Islamicism will triumph over secularism - resolving the conflict will take away the "oxygen" that fuels the Islamicists and antisemitism. He recommends that if Israel is unable to get the Palestinians to the negotiating table that they unilaterally withdraw to borders of their own choosing. Fatah cites two examples of Jewish racism and notes that even though these were the exception and disowned by the vast majority of Jews and Israelis, they were blown out of proportion by Israel's enemies. I don't think unilateralism will work. Hiz b'Allah still thinks it has to liberate Lebanese territory (none is held by Israel) and withdrawal from Gaza hasn't muted Hamas' claims for liberating Al Aqsa (controlled by the Islamic Waqf) and Tel Aviv. Nor are conspiracy theories about Jewish control foreign to Arab secularists who've been influenced by both Marxist and Islamicist propaganda over their formative years. Israel should not be condemned for the imperfection of individuals within it's society that are far more prevalent in it's neighbours, especially when due process prevents instant and autocratic solutions. Even though this might not be clear in Cairo but it should be obvious in Ottawa and New York. Internalization of a new paradigm of acceptance of and collaborative partnership with an non-Muslim Modern Westernized Democratic Middle Eastern Jewish State requires Arab buy in. Previously I've read Fatah's "Chasing a Mirage", which argued for separation of mosque and state. Both books are well worth reading.

This is a well researched and thought provoking book. The subject is very sensitive and I am sure it triggers lot of emotions in people of all sorts of cultural backgrounds. Mr. Tarek Fatah's writing is captivating and one can learn a great deal about history and shifting in attitudes over time in many Islamic countries. Based on the history of Islam, Mr. Tarek Fatah has a lot of work cut out for him beyond the "The Jew is Not My Enemy." Since Islam has problems with pretty much everyone, books like "Hindu is not my enemy", "Christian is not my enemy", "Sikh is not my enemy",

"Buddhist is not my enemy", "Jain is not my enemy", "Pagans are not my enemy", "Shia is not my enemy", and even "Cows are not my enemy" are expected in the near future. Mr. Tarek Fatah has just opened up a Pandora's box, and I will look forward for more of his exciting books. Thank you once again for writing this book. You are a courageous and fearless writer, and I love to watch your interviews on youtube.

Tarek Fatah presents an unbiased view of the situation in Israel/Palestine and debunks many myths. It is extremely well written and holds the reader's attention the entire time. Much history which all of us need to know to dispell prejudices on both sides.

A very informative read. Highly recommend it! Please make it available in Audible as well. Can't wait for Tarek's next book about Jinnah, founder of Pakistan.

A highly recommended work for every Muslim by a masterful historian and expert on Islam, clearing the misconception and propaganda that is force-fed into Muslims' minds all over the world by their political and religious leaders.

Balanced and interesting analysis of the Muslim - Jews relationship. The cover art is could be improved. I recommend it.

A fabulous and studied book by a courageous scholar! This is not a book that should be read without some thought. Indeed reading slowly, ruminating over the chapters, and digesting them in small aliquots is what I would suggest. In my view this is a fair book which brings into stark relief the reasons why those on the radical radical fringes of Islam think and act the way they do. At the same time he chastises right wing Jews as well. In so doing I am sure he makes neither group completely happy. The topic is serious but the prose is one that can be easily read and understood. I recommend it highly to anyone who is open minded to explore an uncomfortable subject and one who is interested in the quest for peace for the sake of it.

This book is pure reading delight ... so smart, so provocative, so factual.... I can't put it down...
HUGE recommend!

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