

Omer Awass, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Religious Studies. Specialization: Islamic Law. 2014.

Temple University. Department of Religion.

Dissertation Title: *Fatwa: The Evolution of a Legal Practice and its Influence on Muslim Society.*

M.A., Religious Studies. Specialization: Islamic Studies. 2010.

Temple University. Department of Religion.

ED.M., Education. Specialization: TESOL. 2005

State University of New York at Buffalo. Graduate School of Education.

Licence (equivalent to B.A.), Quranic Studies. Specialization: Quranic Exegesis and its Sciences. 2001.

Al-Azhar University- Cairo, Egypt. Faculty of Theology (*Usul-edin*). (Arabic).

-All requirements for this degree have been completed except for one examination that will be taken at some indefinite time in the future.

Certificate of Completion, Hadith Studies. Specialization: Hadith and its Sciences. 2000.

Al-Azhar University- Damascus Branch: Al-Fatih Islamic College. Faculty of Theology (*Usul-edin*). (Arabic).

B.A., Philosophy. 1996.

State University of New York at Buffalo. Department of Philosophy.

B.A., Political Science. 1996

State University of New York at Buffalo. Department of Political Science.

OTHER AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Asian Religion and Philosophy | Islamic Thought | Western Religion and Philosophy | Religion and Modernity/Globalization | Religion and Colonialism/Postcolonialism | Religion and Social Scientific Theory | Religion and International Affairs | Ethnography | Islamic History | Islamic Finance | Middle East and North Africa | South Asia | Southeast Asia | East Africa | Indian Ocean Studies.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Thematic: Fatwas | Legal Reasoning | Law and Society | Discourse and Practice | Anthropology and Sociology of Religion.

Areas: Muslim World | Middle East | Indian Ocean Societies | West Africa | East Asia.

TEACHING INTERESTS

Islam | Islamic Law and Legal Reasoning | Islamic Philosophy and Theology | Islamic History | Islamic Spirituality | Quranic Studies | Islam and Modernity | Religion and Globalization | World Religions | Western Religions | Asian Religions.

FACULTY EXPERIENCE

2014-Present. **Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies.** American Islamic College, Chicago, IL.

- Chairman of the Faculty Council (2015-2016) and Graduate Studies Advisor (2014-2015).
- Teach a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses in Islamic Studies, advise students, member of several faculty committees.

2013-2016. **Adjunct Professor.** Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT.

- Contemporary Islamic Ethics
- The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

2012-2013. **Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.**

The Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations.
Hartford Seminary, Hartford, CT.

- Dialog in the World of Difference
- Contemporary Islamic Ethics
- The Quran and its Place in Muslim Life
- The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

2006-2012. **Instructor,** Department of Religion. Temple University. Philadelphia, PA.

- Introduction to Islam
- Religions in the World
- Asian Thought and Behavior
- Religion & Society
- Western Religions

PUBLICATIONS

Fatwa and the Making and Remaking of Islamic Law.

McGill-Queens University Press has expressed interest in publication of this book manuscript after a re-evaluation of the revised manuscript.

Forthcoming. "Fatwa and the Art of Ethical Embedding." The Journal of the American Academy of Religion. Article accepted for publication.

"Contending with Capitalism: Fatwas and Neoliberal Ideology." The Journal of World-System Research has expressed interest in publication of this article manuscript after a re-evaluation of the revised manuscript, which has been submitted.

"Fatwa, Islamic Law, and Contemporary Governance in Iran: A Conversation with the Rafsanjanis." Submitted to the *Sociology of Islam Journal* for publication consideration.

"Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Production of Shari'a." In *Sharia Dynamics: Islamic Law and Sociopolitical Processes*, ed. Timothy P. Daniels, 31-61. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.

"Secular Nationalism and Islam in the Twentieth Century Muslim World." *Hamdard Islamicus*. Winter 1996, Vol. XIX No.4.

"The Representation of Islam in the American Media." *Hamdard Islamicus*. Autumn 1996, Vol. XIX No.3.

CONFERENCE PAPERS/PRESENTATIONS

3/30/2019. "Re-Embedding the Economy: Fatwas, Islamic Finance, and Neoliberal Capitalism." Paper to be delivered at the International Studies Association annual conference. Toronto, CA.

11/18/2018. "Fatwa and the Art of Ethical Embedding." Paper to be delivered at the American Academy of Religion annual conference. Denver, CO.

4/14/2018. "Ibn Taymiyya's Fatwas on the Mongol Incursions c. 1300." Paper delivered at Midwest Association for Middle East and Islamic Studies annual conference. Romeoville, IL.

4/7/2018. "Fatwa, Islamic Law, and Contemporary Governance in Iran: A Conversation with the Rafsanjanis." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. San Francisco, CA.

4/5/2018. "Fatwas and Capitalism: Discursive Responses to Neoliberal Economic Practices." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. San Francisco, CA.

2/8/2018. "Negotiating Islamic Law in Post-Revolutionary Iran." Presentation: Invited faculty to the Islamic Studies Workshop in conjunction with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. Chicago, IL.

12/14-16/2017. "Normative Responses to Neoliberal Globalization: Fatwas and the Capitalist Economy." Paper to be delivered at the Association of Global South Studies annual conference. Marrakesh, Morocco.

3/21/2017. "Politicizing Religion and the Politics of Religion." Panel discussion: Invited faculty to the Center for Global Islamic Studies and Bob Graham Center for Public Speaking at the University of Florida. Gainesville, FL.

2/22/2017. "Contending with Capitalism: Postcolonial Fatwas on Islamic Economics and Finance." Paper delivered at International Studies Association annual conference. Baltimore, ME.

1/4/2017. “Fatwa, Shari‘a, and the Postcolonial Condition.” Presentation: Invited faculty to Misbah University. Qom, Iran

5/7/2016. “Fatwa, Islamic Law, and Modernity.” Paper delivered at the Middle East History and Theory Conference at the University of Chicago. Chicago, IL.

4/7/2016. “Monotheism and Prophecy in Sunni Theology.” Presentation: Invited faculty to *Sunnis and Shi‘ites in Historical Perspective: Differences and Commonalities*. A symposium sponsored by the Department of Religion at George Washington University. Washington, D.C.

12/16/2015. “Transformation in Islamic Law through the Lens of the Postcolonial Fatwa.” Paper delivered at the International Conference for Legal Pluralism for the Commission on Legal Pluralism in collaboration with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology. Mumbai, India.

12/3/2014. “Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Production of Shari‘a.” Paper delivered at the American Anthropological Association’s annual conference. Washington, D.C.

RESEARCH/FELLOWSHIPS

12/2016-1/2018. **Al-Majlis al-Ilmi al-Ala (Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs)**. Rabat, Morocco.

- Conducted research interviews with members of the Moroccan government’s official fatwa issuing body (Hay’at al-Ifta) of the Supreme Council For Islamic Affairs about its fatwa production process and their responses to the challenges posed by modernity. Obtained the officially sanctioned contemporary fatwas of the Moroccan state for future analysis.
- Interviewed the directors of the Local Councils for Islamic Affairs (Al-Majalis al-Ilmiah al-Mahaliah) in the cities of Fes, Marrakech, and Tangiers regarding the role of such Councils in Moroccan society.

12/2016-1/2017. **Researched Fatwas of Iranian-based Twelver Shiite Jurists**, Qom, Iran.

- Interviewed the late Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of the Expediency Council (Majma Tashkhis Maslahat) and Mr. Muhammad Rafsanjani, former Minister of Television and Radio for Iran and current member of the Expediency Council, about the role of fatwa in the policies of the Iranian government.
- Interviewed major Iranian and Iranian-based scholars, jurists (mujtahids), and master-jurists (marja’s) in several Iranian cities (Isfahan, Mashhad, Qom, and Tehran) on contemporary approaches to fatwa production in the Twelver Shiite school of law. Among these informants: Ayatollah Jawad Fadil Lankarani, Ayatollah Mahdi Hadawi, Ayatollah Alawi Bourjourdi, Ayatollah Riyadh Al-Hakim, Ayatollah Kamal Haidari, etc.

- Interviewed students who were training to be Twelver Shiite jurists (*dars al-kharij*) on their process of instruction.

12/2015-1/2016. **Islamic Fiqh Academy (India)**, New Delhi, India.

- Carried out field research on the fatwa production processes of the organization through the agencies of its Secretary-General Shaikh Khalid Saifullah Rahmani and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Academy for future analysis.

12/2015-1/2016 **Al Mahadul Aali Al Islami**, Hyderabad, India.

- Researched and documented the contemporary fatwa training program at this Indian Islamic institute that grants mufti diplomas to those who undergo this preparation.

8/2015 **Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of Oman**, Muscat, Oman.

- Carried out research interviews with several of the Ministry's muftis including the Deputy Grand Mufti Kahlan Al-Kharusi on its fatwa production process and obtained the collections of fatwas of the Ministry for future analysis.
- Researched Ibadi Islam with the assistance of professors from Sultan Qaboos University and The College of Shariah in Muscat, Oman.

1/12/2015-1/23/2015 **International Islamic Fiqh Academy** (An organ of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- Conducted research interviews with the Director of its Fatwa Department Dr. Abdulqahir Qamar and members of the fatwa committee about its fatwa production process and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Academy for future analysis.

1/1/2015-1/11/2015 **Presidency of Religious Affairs, Republic of Turkey**, Ankara, Turkey.

- Conducted research interviews with the president of the High Board of Religious Affairs and members of the Department of Legal Consultancy on the process of fatwa production in the Presidency (Turkey's highest governing religious body) and obtained the collection of fatwas of the Presidency for future analysis.

6/2011-8/2011 **ISM Institute**, Istanbul, Turkey.

- Performed independent research on historical Ottoman fatwas and traditional fatwa procedures under the supervision of Murteza Bedir, Professor of Islamic Law at Istanbul University.

8/14/08-9/7/08 **International Institute of Islamic Thought**. Herndon, VA.

- Scholars Research Grant. Received a grant to carry out research in Zanzibar, Tanzania and Mombasa and Lamu, Kenya. Conducted interviews in these three regions with East African scholars/teachers who studied traditional Islam in the Middle East to document the existing scholarly networks across Indian Ocean societies.

7/14/08-8/14/08 **International Institute of Islamic Thought**. Herndon, VA.

- Scholars Research Program. Selected to participate in a five week research seminar exploring the intersections of Muslim scripture and modern life. Wrote a paper entitled: "Authenticating the Sunnah" which applies modern historical and textual methods to authenticate Islamic sacred texts. Presented paper in program conference.

7/07-9/07 **Henry Luce Foundation**. New York, NY.

- Indonesian Fellowship. Completed a course in religion and modernity at the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies at Ghadja Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Conducted interviews in Yogyakarta with Indonesian scholars/teachers who studied traditional Islam in the Middle East to document the existing scholarly networks across Indian Ocean societies.

RELEVANT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

6/2011-8/2011 **Instructor**, ISM Institute, Istanbul, Turkey.

- Taught English and World Religions courses to students from the Faculty of Theology at Marmara University.

7/99-8/99 **Instructor**, USEV Educational and Cultural Foundation; Istanbul, Turkey.

- Taught Arabic as a second language to university students

8/93-5/94 **Instructor**, Cora P. Maloney College. SUNY at Buffalo, NY.

- Topics in Islamic Civilization
- Islam in America

LANGUAGES

English and Arabic.