that imams who are not trained as judges, but are nevertheless called on to adjudicate divorce cases among Muslim couples, are increasingly reaching agreements that "blend Islamic and civil law outcomes" (156). Though it is not altogether clear in An-Na'im's arguments how this blending avoids the concern that secular authority will divest Sharia from religious authority, it nevertheless provides a tangible and valuable guide for proactively seeking out religious self-determination through dialogue.

Chapter Five reviews the text's major themes as possibilities for re-imagining American Muslim communities. Here, An-Na'im includes a section on Internet communities and concludes that these are not real communities because they lack the physical geographic ties that ground traditional communities. In part because of its brevity, his discussion of Internet communities could benefit from a clearer and more consistent discussion of how he conceptualizes virtual spaces. Though not as strong as his other arguments, An-Na'im's inclusion of contemporary communications technologies in a work that calls for increased dialogue among Muslims regarding who is an American Muslim is timely and welcomed.

As a call for American Muslims to proactively engage their faith and citizenship, An-Na'im has once again contributed clear and compelling arguments to vibrant discussions regarding modern interpretations of Islam and of civil rights advances, while providing further historical specificity to these discussions by focusing on an American context.

***Human Rights Under State-Enforced Religious Family Laws in Israel, Egypt and India*. By Yüksel Sezgin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 322 pp. $99.00 cloth. $79.00 eBook**

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With the global resurgence of religion in recent decades has come new attention not only to religious pluralism, but also to legal pluralism in places where religious law is allowed, accommodated, and in some cases even applied by state systems. Plural religious laws are especially commonplace in postcolonial states, as the residue of colonial policies that often served

to "divide and rule" colonized peoples by allowing their religious laws to apply, particularly in matters of family law, inheritance, and other domestic matters that fall into the category of "personal law" (3). Yüksel Sezgin is one of a new generation of scholars with a strong grasp of both the religious and legal dimensions and implications of these systems, especially in the field of women's rights and human rights. This book is a highly detailed and cogently argued tour of state-enforced religious family laws in three nations — Israel, Egypt, and India — where the application of religious law has been highly contested and where struggles over law and religion continue to make headlines and invite analysis today.

The animating question for Sezgin's analysis is the question of why the modern nations of Israel, Egypt, and India "continue to apply different sets of norms to people from different ethno-religious backgrounds, and hold men and women to different legal standards despite their constitutional commitments to treat everyone equally before the law" (4–5). To many modern observers, these inequalities seem as outdated and anti-democratic retrogression to a past in which "imperial and colonial rulers employed the pluri-legal personal status systems to compartmentalize their subjects into ethno-religious and confessional groupings, and to distribute goods and services accordingly while denying certain populations the benefits of full membership in the political community" (3). These religious pluri-legal systems, Sezgin argues, persist despite modernization efforts aimed at achieving either institutional unification, normative unification, or both in the states that he surveys.

Though Sezgin's research methods are social scientific in nature, there is a strong normative direction to his arguments when it comes to human rights — particularly the rights of women. Sezgin identifies four particular groups of rights that tend to be threatened under state-enforced religious family laws. These include rights to freedom of religion, equality before the law, marital and family rights, and various procedural rights (9). Even with religion and religious rights squarely in issue, Sezgin challenges common assumptions of "inevitable or irreconcilable conflict between 'religion' per se and fundamental rights and liberties," while also cautioning that "state application of religious laws does not necessarily do a service to religious people or communities" (10, 11). Sezgin's abiding concern is for human rights, which leads him to propose a "field of human rights as testing ground approach" in assessing the validity — and equality and justice — of state-enforced religious laws (12). Sezgin categorizes the systems operative in Israel, Egypt, and India, variously, as "fragmented confessional," "unified confessional," and "unified semi-

confessional" along specific indicators. The details are too complex to elaborate here, but they are helpfully illustrated by graphics and tables, which along with the volume's comprehensive collection of local laws, glossary of terms, list of court cases, extensive bibliography, and abundant notes make it especially resourceful for pedagogy and research on the topic of religious legal pluralism. This is an exceptionally well-researched and rigorously documented study.

The real crux of the analysis, carried through the individual case studies of Israel, Egypt, and India in successive chapters, is contained in the book's third chapter on the impact of state-enforced personal status laws on personal rights. There, Sezgin argues that personal law systems, rather than representing "divine" or "sacred" law are "socio-political constructions" designed to achieve highly human and temporal objectives (44). These systems, Sezgin maintains, "have a negative impact on fundamental rights and freedoms, especially when people are not presented with alternative civil or non-denominational institutions . . . and are forcibly subjected to the jurisdiction of or religious norms and authorities" (44). The main antidote to these systems comes from "resistance strategies," including "forum-shopping" and the "formation of hermeneutic and rule-making communities" (45). The term "forum-shopping" may involve more or less forced religious conversion, as in the case of Egypt's Coptic, who must convert to Islam to secure divorces on grounds not recognized in their religion. The term "hermeneutic communities" will likely be foreign to those working out of the textually interpretive fields of law and religion. Sezgin describes these hermeneutic communities, particularly feminist ones, as offering "enlightened and emancipatory readings of original scriptural and prophetic sources in order to promote and protect rights and liberties that are either denied or not sufficiently protected under the existing state-sanctioned interpretations of personal status laws" (45).

Some of the most problematic aspects of religious law come not from the laws themselves, but from clumsy state enforcement. Sezgin argues that "all countries that apply religion-based personal status laws, undertake similar processes of etatization through which they distort, desacralize and appropriate religious norms and mold them into profane enactments that no longer represent the original source and divine foundation but the coercive power and political will of the state" (48). Indeed, in his case studies of Israel, Egypt, and India, Sezgin recounts numerous examples of a phenomenon by which etatization ends up reifying into law conservative religious positions that often have the strongest voices in the postsecular religious resurgence. These state-ratified religious interpretations come

down especially hard on women and religious and ethnic minority groups — with gender and family being key battlegrounds in contests for group identity. Thus, Sezgin argues that "personal status laws are not just secular, socio-political constructions, but also andro- (and often ethno-) centric legalities built through selective interpretations of sacred text, traditions, and narratives that came to heavily influence the rights and freedoms of women and subaltern groups while denying them terms of equal membership in the political community" (49). Against the "monolithic and static" interpretations of religion and religious law that underlie some of these etatist renderings, Sezgin argues for a more "flexible and dynamic" paradigm, in which feminist hermeneutical communities can work toward new understandings that protect their human rights (51, 214–221). Sezgin's study is a masterful analysis of these possibilities, blending both social scientific method and normative concern that will be informative for readers in law and religion, human rights, feminist politics, and specialists in Israeli, Egyptian, and Indian affairs alike.

## *Mainstreaming Torture: Ethical Approaches in the Post-9/11 United States*. By Rebecca Gordon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 244 pp. $26.96 Cloth. $9.99 eBook

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When Barack Obama was President-elect, he set out what would become the mantra of his administration on accountability for torture. Asked by George Stephanopoulus on *This Week* whether he would appoint a special prosecutor to investigate possible criminal actions by the Bush administration with regard to torture, President-elect Obama said: "We're still evaluating how we're going to approach the whole issue of interrogations, detentions, and so forth. And obviously we're going to be looking at past practices and I don't believe that anybody is above the law. On the other hand I also have a belief that we need to look forward as opposed to looking backwards."