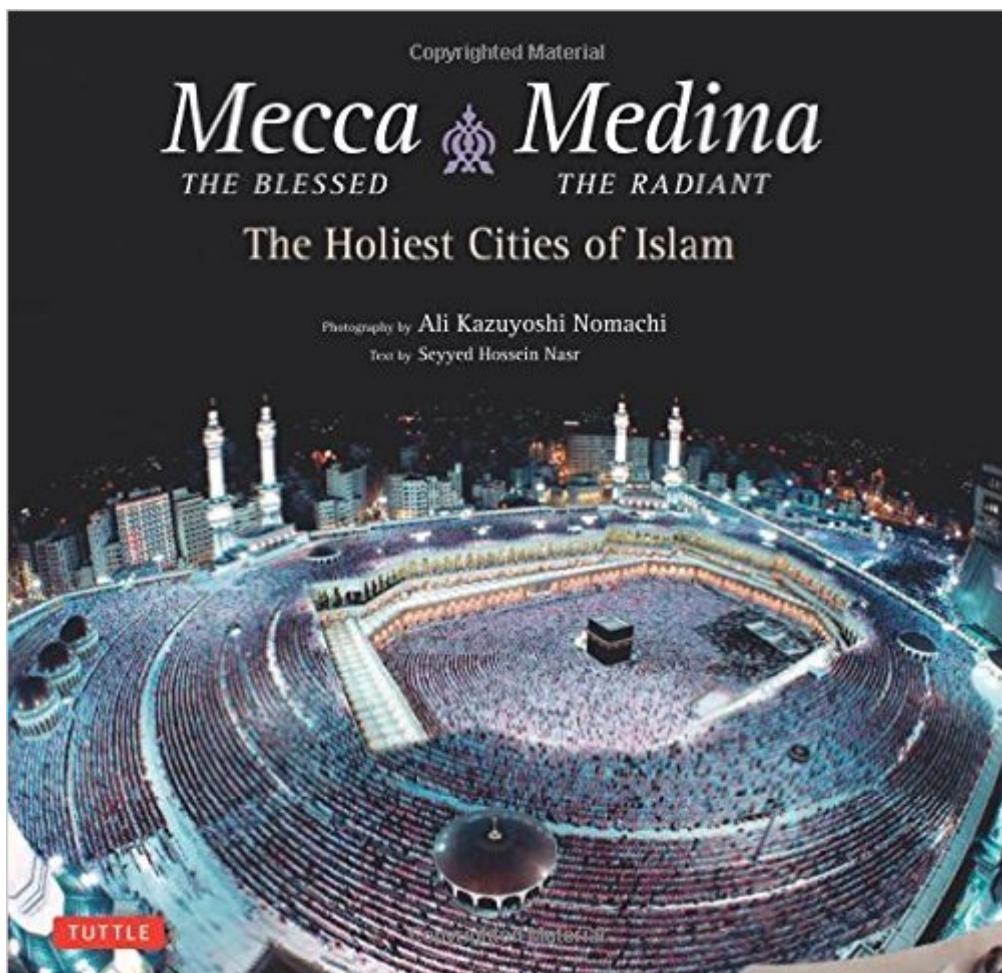


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# Mecca The Blessed, Medina The Radiant: The Holiest Cities Of Islam



## Synopsis

Mecca the Blessed, Medina the Radiant is an unprecedented photographic exploration of the most holy cities of Islam and the hajj, or annual pilgrimage during Ramadan, when more than a million faithful journey to Mecca's Great Mosque to commemorate the first revelation of the Qur'an (Koran). This book allows both Muslims and those unfamiliar with the Islamic faith complete access to the holiest sites of one of the world's major religions, practiced by a quarter of the world's population but often misunderstood in the west. Photographer Ali Kazuyoshi Namachi, a Muslim convert from Japan, garnered the full support of Saudi Arabian authorities "rarely given" to shoot in cities where photography is strictly controlled and non-Muslims are not allowed. An expansive work of photojournalism, Mecca the Blessed, Medina the Radiant includes: 140 full-color, never-before-seen photographs. Mystical places and scenes of Islam. Breathtaking aerial photographs of the Arabian terrain. Vistas of teeming crowds of worshippers surrounding the Ka'bah, Mecca's sacred center. Intense portraits of faithful Muslims in prayer. Magnificent architecture reflecting the faith of the believers. Archival illustrations. Text by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, one of the most highly regarded scholars of Islam, enhances the stunning Islamic holy city photographs to illuminate many aspects of Islamic belief that have remained enigma to non-Muslims "until now."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

... revealed. Ali Kazuyoshi Nomachi is an outstanding Japanese photographer who converted to Islam. Seyyed Hossein Nasr is Iranian-born, and a Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University when this book was first published in 1997. They had "access," which should

probably be written in capital letters. You have to have ACCESS to take aerial photographs in Saudi Arabia, and they are most impressive. The "access" came from the Saudi Royal family, in the personages of the governors of Mecca and Medina. The other essential piece of this collaborative effort is the publisher, "Aperture," perhaps THE publisher of photographic books, with my copies of their books on W. Eugene Smith, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paul Strand, et al., readily coming to mind. The result of this collaboration is a very high quality, and in many ways unique book, that can be appreciated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Dr. Nasr commences with a historical explanation of the relevance of the region, starting with Adam and Eve, through Abraham, and then the origins of Islam, with the Prophet Mohammed. I have an overall familiarity with the story, and found the summary useful. The heart of the book, of course, is the photographs. Nomachi has a keen eye, and brings out the sheer diversity of those who consider themselves Muslims, and live over that vast swath of earth from Mauritania to Indonesia. For example, there are some colorfully dressed African women, probably from Nigeria, and other more uniformly dressed women from Indonesia. In another picture, Nomachi brings out the fact that the Muslim men and women from South Africa pray in a single straight line, which is not the norm.

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