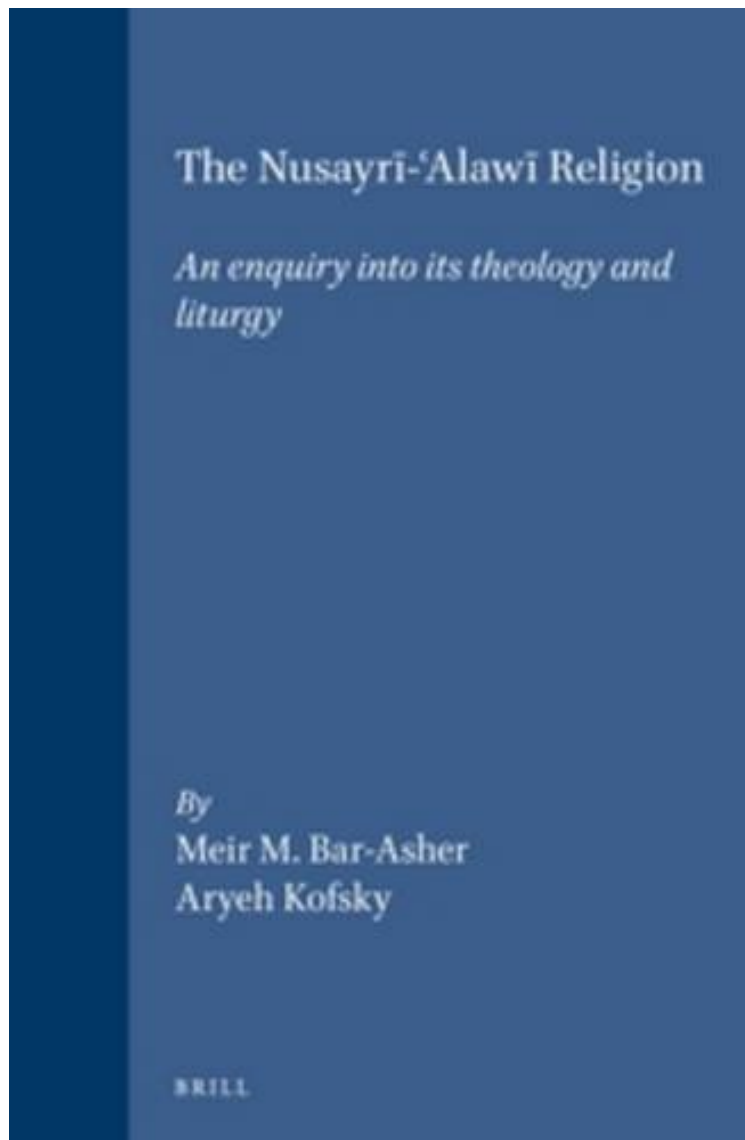


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The Nusayri-Alawi Religion: An Enquiry into Its Theology and Liturgy (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture, 1)

Meir M Bar-Asher, Aryeh Kofsky
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The Nusayrs - also known as Alaws - have been in power in Syria for the past three decades. Little is known of their origins or their long history, while their religious creeds and thought are somewhat better known. The main reason for our fragmentary knowledge of the Nusayr religion is that, since its beginnings, it has always been the secret faith of a self-conscious elite that zealously guarded its sectarian literature. The Nusayr-Alaw faith is a clear example of a syncretistic religion. It combines and fuses elements of cults and creeds of very disparate, and remote, origins. Among these are various pagan beliefs (residues of ancient Mesopotamian and Syrian cults), as well as Persian, Christian, Gnostic, and Muslim - both Sunn and Sh - religious precepts and practices. All these components have been brought together in a syncretistic religious system that has assumed a heterodox Sh garb. The present volume presents a mosaic of fundamental aspects of Nusayr theology and liturgy. It demonstrates the complexity of Nusayr theology and the diversity of religious thought within the Nusayr fold.

About the Author Meir M. Bar-Asher (Ph.D.) is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His most recent publication is *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imm Shiism* (Brill, 1999). Aryeh Kofsky (Ph.D.) is Lecturer of Comparative Religion at the Department of Land of Israel Studies at the University of Haifa in Israel. His most recent publication is *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Brill, 2000).