



The Charm of Graves: Perceptions of Death and After-Death Among the Negev Bedouin

Gideon M. Kressel, Sasson Bar-Zvi, Aref Abu-Rabi'a

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This work provides a detailed picture of burial, mourning rituals, commemoration practices, and veneration of the dead among the Negev Bedouin, the nomadic tribes of Arabs who live in the Negev region of Israel. Bringing together integrated findings of three scholars, based on decades of field work that combine close to 65 years of scrutiny, *The Charm of Graves* shows how the varied attitudes, beliefs, and customs surrounding each gravesite, when combined on a longitudinal scale, reveal changes over time in beliefs and practices in grave worship and burial, mourning, and condolence customs. Analysis of the data reveals that the dynamic of grave worship among the Negev Bedouin throws light on ancient traditions in a complex relationship with mainstream Islamic doctrine and the impact of modernity on Bedouin conduct and belief. The authors' observations and interviews with practitioners about their beliefs are compared and augmented with references that exist in the professional literature, including grave worship elsewhere in the Arab world, making this book essential reading for anthropologists, scholars of the sociology of religion, and students of Islam.

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