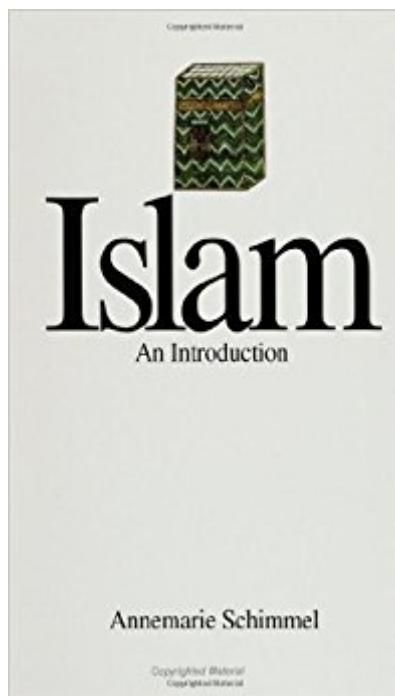


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Islam: An Introduction



Synopsis

A comprehensive introduction to Islam.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is a splendid introduction carefully researched and comprehensive, yet readable. It corrects many popular and erroneous notions about Islam that prevail in non-Muslim societies. For the general reader there are many profound insights of great consequence, for example, the passages on women, marriage, and inheritance, or the section on jihad, nearly always completely misunderstood in the press. The topic is becoming more significant because Islam is the most rapidly growing religion in the world. This book provides a thorough and sophisticated, but at the same time clear-headed and reliable, overview. Kevin Lacey, State University of New York, Binghamton This survey represents and distills a lifetime of scholarship devoted to the Islamic tradition. In the Introduction, Schimmel remarks that the book follows the traditional view of Islamic history without venturing into the vast field of sociological or political approaches. In practice, this translates into a traditional view of Islam as experienced by Muslims. It is difficult to imagine a book that would better represent how most Muslims conceive their own religion. It is likely that Muslims will be most eager to read and quote from this book since it faithfully presents a perspective with which they can identify. Carl W. Ernst, Pomona College "It is a splendid introduction--carefully researched and comprehensive, yet readable. It corrects many popular and erroneous notions about Islam that prevail in non-Muslim societies. For the general reader there are many profound insights of great consequence, for example, the passages on women, marriage, and inheritance, or the section on

jihad, nearly always completely misunderstood in the press. "The topic is becoming more significant because Islam is the most rapidly growing religion in the world. This book provides a thorough and sophisticated, but at the same time clear-headed and reliable, overview." -- Kevin Lacey, State University of New York, Binghamton "This survey represents and distills a lifetime of scholarship devoted to the Islamic tradition. In the Introduction, Schimmel remarks that the book follows 'the traditional view of Islamic history without venturing into the vast field of sociological or political approaches.' In practice, this translates into a traditional view of Islam as experienced by Muslims. It is difficult to imagine a book that would better represent how most Muslims conceive their own religion. It is likely that Muslims will be most eager to read and quote from this book since it faithfully presents a perspective with which they can identify." -- Carl W. Ernst, Pomona College

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Superb writing from a truly learned scholar and linguist. Good for understanding classical Islam with some material on modern issues (up to colonialism). Schimmel contributes some stunning insights in just a few sentences.

Well written over view of Islam. Very easy to read and informative!

Good

Used moderately

This is a simple, highly readable and quick introduction on Islam: a multi-dimensional and dynamic religion that is growing very rapidly in all parts of the world. Professor Schimmel has done an excellent job of introducing this great religion as it has been practiced since centuries. I highly recommend this book to journalists and people who are related to media to get a clearer and true understanding of this religion. This book does its part of justice to clarify some of the misconceptions about Islam in media. I also recommend this book to readers who already have an understanding of this religion; Professor Schimmel besides introducing Islam (both its form and essence) also provide her views from the understanding of vast body of Islamic literature, history and culture. I would like to specially point to the last section of this book in which Professor Schimmel discusses the future of

Islam in today's currents of modernism. She has provided some of her most summed up thoughts about this topic, which I am sure, will make sense to most of young Muslim readers like me. I also highly recommend her book on the topic of the "Mystical Dimensions of Islam."

In a field where textbooks are often beyond the comprehension of the general reading public, where the by-word of academic rigor often results in books that even undergraduates cannot fathom, often the only alternative is the "pulp journalism" characteristic of "international" correspondents who base their credibility on a few trips to the Near and Middle East. They generally do not know the languages of the areas in question, and come to conclusions that tell us more about their ignorance than they do about the religion and society they are supposedly so well informed about. Schimmel, however, is not characterized by any of these shortcomings. She is an established academic, the doyenne of Islamic studies (especially Islamic mysticism); yet she writes with a clarity and purposefulness which virtually anyone can understand. She brings a sympathetic and yet not uncritical eye to her subject matter. The only seeming difficulty she displays is the understandable desire to include as much as possible in her "Introduction". This gives her work something of the feel of a "Review" as well as being introductory. No matter; this can only serve to enhance the ultimate value of the book.

Annemarie Schimmel's "Islam: An Introduction" is definitely not the best introductory work on Islam out there. There is a sense of dilettantism in this work that is particularly disconcerting. Not to say that Schimmel is not a scholar of high talent, she just does not show it here. As a prime example, there are no footnotes anywhere in her work, which makes tracing some of her quotations a little harder, to say nothing of seeing where her arguments are drawn from. This book does everything which an introductory book on Islam should do - cover the history of the faith to some degree and introduce the central tenets - but it does so in a way not designed to really sink these facts in for the reader. The language used, a rather self-consciously archaic series of constructions ("It is this rejection of, nay, cursing of..." being a prime example of her normal turn of phrase) is partly responsible for this. At the same time, there is a general impression of the faith being compartmentalised. The reader could well be excused for thinking that Islam is no longer a major force in world politics, where of course current events prove that hypothesis well and truly incorrect. (...) Schimmel's prose distances the reader from the subject. A book of this length could sometimes be seen as having that as an advantage over longer works on the same subject - as it won't deal with minute details of the subject. Unfortunately, Schimmel's reluctance to deal with complexity must

be contrasted with her insistence on the full array of diacritics on any Arabic word. I am firmly of the belief that the more diacritics the casual reader - to say nothing of the undergraduate student using this as a resource - is presented with, the less engaged with the subject he or she is. I really cannot recommend Schimmel's work for anyone for whom such luminaries as Esposito are available. In lieu of them (and they are easily orderable from this website), then Schimmel might be a very poor alternative.

I am a Muslim and consider myself reasonably educated about Islam, but I hadn't realized the true diversity in Islam until I read this book. Truly magnificent snapshot of Islam, its Founder the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), its beliefs and practices and the history of Islam, its various movements, its flavors.... The book is very easy reading, and in my opinion, to a westerner, this book is perhaps as good an introduction to Islam as can be. Professor Schimmel is most well versed and experienced in the topic that she address in this book. Her credentials regarding the subject are very high indeed.

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