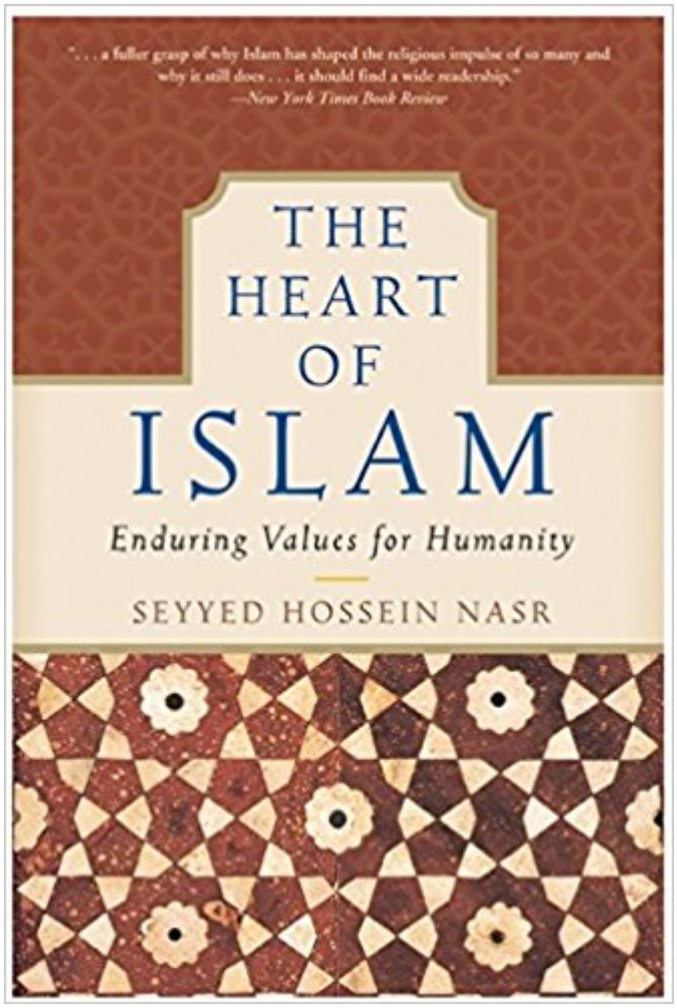
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The Heart Of Islam: Enduring Values For Humanity



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Synopsis

As the specter of religious extremism has become a fact of life today, the temptation is great to allow the evil actions and perspectives of a minority to represent an entire tradition. In the case of Islam, there has been much recent confusion in the Western world centered on distorted portrayals of its core values. Born of ignorance, such confusion feeds the very problem at hand.In The Heart of Islam one of the great intellectual figures in Islamic history offers a timely presentation of the core spiritual and social values of Islam: peace, compassion, social justice, and respect for the other. Seizing this unique moment in history to reflect on the essence of his tradition, Seyyed Hossein Nasr seeks to "open a spiritual and intellectual space for mutual understanding." Exploring Islamic values in scripture, traditional sources, and history, he also shows their clear counterparts in the Jewish and Christian traditions, revealing the common ground of the Abrahamic faiths.Nasr challenges members of the world’s civilizations to stop demonizing others while identifying themselves with pure goodness and to turn instead to a deeper understanding of those shared values that can solve the acute problems facing humanity today. "Muslims must ask themselves what went wrong within their own societies," he writes, "but the West must also pose the same question about itself . . . whether we are Muslims, Jews, Christians, or even secularists, whether we live in the Islamic world or in the West, we are in need of meaning in our lives, of ethical norms to guide our actions, of a vision that would allow us to live at peace with each other and with the rest of God’s creation." Such help, he believes, lies at the heart of every religion and can lead the followers of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as well as other religious and spiritual traditions to a new future of mutual respect and common global purpose.The Heart of Islam is a landmark presentation of enduring value that offers hope to humanity, and a compelling portrait of the beauty and appeal of the faith of 1.2 billion people.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nasr, a professor at George Washington University and a living legend in Islamic studies, was commissioned by Harper San Francisco to write this book after the attacks of September 11. Presented as "an explanation of the authentic teachings of Islam anew in light of the challenges of the present-day situation," this is an adequate and accurate reference tool, particularly for comparisons of the text of the holy books of the three major, monotheistic Western religions. Further, Nasr's ability to perceive profound spiritual meaning from Islamic theory, though exploited only a few times in this book, has no rival. The writing is best when he's discussing his own life. He also succeeds when taking on current critics of Islam, especially his persuasive counter-arguments to the "What Went Wrong?" school of thought. However, Nasr's fans, and those seeking to improve their understanding of Islam, will be disappointed. In aiming to discuss each value that is significant in Islam, Nasr has created an unfocused, sometimes dull book. He discusses the importance of values like justice and community and distinguishes between true Islam and local, tribal culture, but the absence of a guiding thesis alienates the reader. Though his purpose is to counter negativity about Islam in the post-9/11 era, Nasr instead rambles on about esoteric, irrelevant points. This is an unengaging read that fails to illuminate the titular "heart" of Islam.Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Unbound edition.

HarperCollins commissioned this book to cut through misinformation and give American readers a clear sense of just what Islam is and what it isn't. A first-tier Islamic scholar, Nasr (George Washington Univ.) speaks for traditional Muslims (as distinct from "modernists" and "puritan reformers"), and it is hard to imagine a better introduction to the faith. Nasr does not sidestep the issues that non-Muslims have on their minds, but he addresses them within the context of the vitality and vision of Islam more generally. In the process, he conveys both the "outer sense" of the Qur'anic scripture and sacred traditions that shape the faith as a social phenomenon, and the "inner sense" that is the root of its spiritual power. Nasr does a very good job of expounding the commonalties and contrasts of Islam with other faiths, especially Judaism and Christianity. Rather than seeing Islamic strength as a threat, he argues that Islam and other religions share values that commit them to opposing the deadening effects both spiritual and literal of secularism and

globalization. Recommended for all academic and public libraries. Steve Young, McHenry Cty. Coll., Crystal Lake, ILCopyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Unbound edition.

Presents clear and concise overview of mainstream Muslim beliefs and practices

it is one to help in the understanding of the followers of a faith that is find only more questions.

Frankly, this book is an antidote for all the hate-mongering, anti-Islamic propaganda that one sees in such prevalence today. Since 9/11, people are understandably concerned about Islam and certain elements within it who are seemingly out to destroy America and Western civilization. Professor Nasr does a wonderful job at not only distancing Islam from those thugs who misuse it, but also revealing the true beauty and diversity of Islam which at its heart stands for beauty, compassion, love and justice. Nasr goes in depth to describe the differences between Sunnis, Shia and Sufis, the rights and responsibilities of members of the Islamic community-including Shariah-and the ethical and spiritual nature of human life from the Islamic perspective. One could say that Nasr's description of Islam is a kinder, gentler version than one is used to hearing, but unfortunately for the bigots, it is also firmly rooted in the facts.Many people often use the prevalence of Islamic terrorists as an argument against Islam itself, claiming that if all these people use Islam to justify their deeds, the religion itself must be violent. Nasr answers this with a simple, but to my eyes accurate response, that being that Muslims do violence in the name of their religion because unlike most Westerners, they still do everything in the name of their religion. While we in the west, even most believers, have become completely secularized, most Muslims still live their entire daily life enveloped in God and religion.Nasr also makes some interesting and necessary comparisons between Islamic and Western civilization, pointing out some rather unpleasant truths for those of us who take our moral superiority for granted. He also points out the arrogance of certain people who ask "what went wrong?" with Islamic civilization when one could certainly stand to ask that question of our own society. Muslims, like any other people, simply want the right to develop and live in their own ways without having foreign powers impose their will and ideas on them. In any event, this is a great introduction to both the religion and civilization of Islam from a brilliant Muslim who has lived in both East and West and wants nothing more than for Westerners to understand and respect the Heart of Islam.

This is a great informative book on Islam for devout Muslims to recent convert, to people just interested learning the truth about Islam and not the misconceptions. I reccommend this book to anyone looking for a in-depth view of what Muslims believe and what the faith of Islam teaches without cultural influences.

Good to know that Islam, like christianity, has a lot to offer for humanity. Political events and extreme individuals tend color the 99% silent majority with something different than their true values.

In this book you will find a truthful and accurate presentation of Islam from a tremendous scholar. If you want to know what over a billion of the world's people find so attractive about this religion, then read this book because you will find the correct answers here.Unveiling Islam and Sword of the Prophet of Islam are pure trash and biased presentations aimed at defiling one of the world's great religions.Just check out Prof. Hossein Nasr's credentials and you will find a man of immense integrity, humility, compassion and a genuine seeker of truth.

This book is so full of wisdom and just written so beautifully. So many people are so ignorant to the teachings of islam and have a totally warped idea of muslims and what I love about this book is that it educates you about the religion without putting the others down. In fact it teaches you how most religions are related to each other. Its the best book for anyone wanting to know the truth about islam.

Lovely.

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