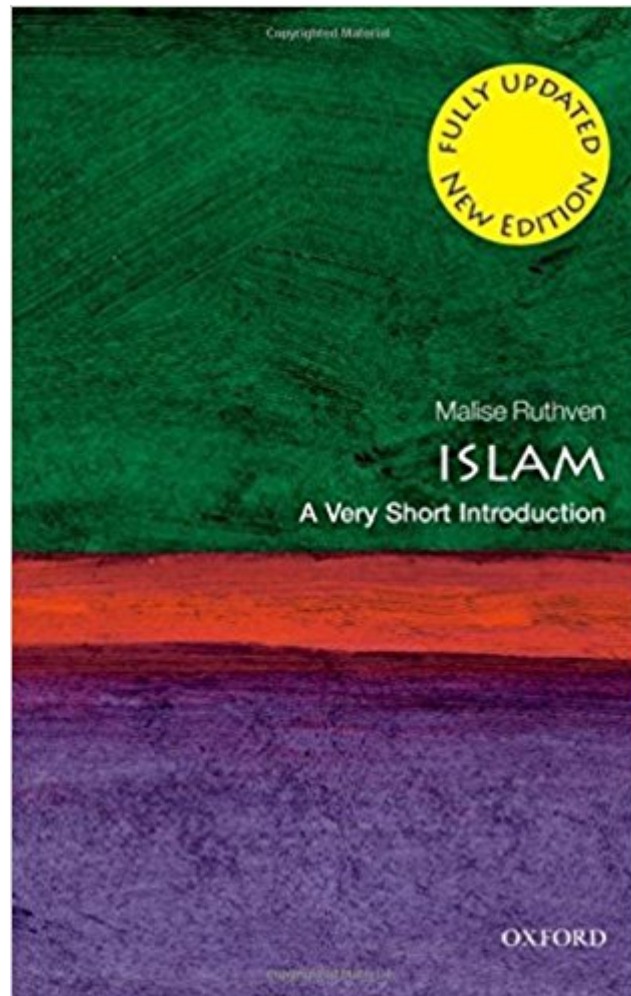




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Islam: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

Islam dominates the news, often in stories filled with images of violence. Yet these disturbing images are at odds with a faith that most adherents--who now number over a billion worldwide--would regard as no less pacific than Buddhism or Christianity. Indeed, the word Islam in Arabic means "self-surrender" and is closely related to salaam, the word for peace. In this thoroughly revised new edition, Malise Ruthven offers a balance, compact, and reliable overview of Islam. An internationally recognized authority on Islam, Ruthven offers essential insights into this major world religion, examining such issues as why Islam has such major divisions between movements such as the Shi'ites, the Sunnis, and the Wahhabis, and the central importance of the Shar'ia (Islamic law) in Islamic life. He also provides fresh perspectives on contemporary questions: Why is the greatest Jihad (holy war) now against the enemies of Islam, rather than the struggle against evil? Can women find fulfillment in Islamic societies? How must Islam adapt as it confronts the modern world? For the new edition, Ruthven brings the text up-to-date, shedding light on some of the most significant changes in the Muslim world in recent years; from the emergence of al-Qaeda and the attacks on New York and Washington on 9/11 and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, to the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. Ruthven includes a new chapter on "Globalized Islam," which examines the effects of economic globalization, the impact of international events in Middle Eastern countries, the questions surrounding Islam and democracy, and the reception and perception of Islam in the West.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Review from previous edition: "very readable" --RE Today 01/01/2002"excellent little book" --The Guardian 02/02/1998

Malise Ruthven teaches at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He is the author of *Islam in the World*, a highly acclaimed overview of Islamic faith and history, and his reviews, essays, and blogs appear regularly in the *New York Review of Books*.

This is an excellent introduction to an understanding of the position and the role of Islam in the contemporary world. The author does not evade the difficult debate about the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, but succeeds in creating a broader perspective on this controversial issue. One can only regret that this is not the most accessible volume in the "Very Short Introduction" series. It requires substantial background knowledge to follow the author in his argumentation. A little more basic information about the facts of Islamic religion and its history would have helped considerably.

This and the introduction to the Koran should be read together. Combined they give a fair and impartial treatment of these two intertwined subjects. I like this series of books and have over a dozen of them.

Disappointing in comparison to Ruthven's other work -- he is perhaps the best English-speaking "interpreter" of Islam.

Very Short Introduction books do exactly that: a quick-study in whatever subject you are looking for! I was not disappointed by this book and am glad to have a bit more insight into another of the world's religions.

It gives me a deeper understanding of the past and a deeper understanding of recent world events. Very timely read considering the world situation.

Before 9/11 I had never heard of Islam or Muslims, but since then this religion and its followers are omnipresent. I hear either about the Islamic world, the Middle East, or Muslims on a daily basis. Often this news relates to the constant fighting taking place in the Middle East. This may be the image created by the media, but it was the image I had and still do to a degree and a driving force in

my reason for buying and reading this book. I am happy with the book and think it definitely taught me a thing or two about Islam. I recommend it to anyone who knows little to nothing about the religion and is looking to further their knowledge of Islam. I gave it 4/5 stars because although I liked it. It did not blow my mind. I hope this helps.

Very "flowery" and lacking in substance compared to other books in the A Very Short Introduction series.

Very informative

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