



A Closer Look at Islam

Syed B. Ali

Xlibris AU (Nov 9, 2016)

Softcover \$16.12 (302pp)

978-1-5245-1698-7

Syed B. Ali's book makes a logical, timely, and relevant case for Islam.

Can a whole religion be blamed for the actions of some of its followers? Syed B. Ali's *A Closer Look at Islam* seeks to provide a clearer look at the Islamic faith, showing that there's a lot more to the Qur'an than initially meets the eye.

"Islam has always had the unfortunate distinction of hosting a sizeable stash of enemies," writes Ali. "And if that wasn't enough, thanks to some Muslims on their wild rampage, it has, in recent times, managed to add to that pile." He examines the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of Islam, from inconsistencies and lack of consensus on what is recorded in the books of sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*); to the insistence of fundamentalist Muslims on literal interpretations that obliterate the grace of metaphor; to the abuse of the faith demonstrated by those who act in violation of Islam's principles, based on passages of scripture taken out of context.

Ali shows that, in Islam, it's irrelevant whether you love someone or not, as long as their rights are honored and, to the extent that it's possible, their needs are met.

Ali brings passion, extensive study, and reason to his arguments on Islam's behalf. He refutes the claims of some Muslims who have left the faith—a complicated task, given that there are multiple versions of Islamic history and that some of what they disavow actually comes from cultural traditions rather than from the prophet's teachings.

Ali gives evidence that Islam was actually ahead of its time in its treatment of women and slaves, and he clarifies the meaning of the much-used word *jihad*. Though the term has come to denote "faith-based aggression," it actually refers to "the application of effort towards a given goal," with subduing the ego and speaking the truth to a tyrant the greatest of these. Inspiring stories of Muhammad's followers who are worthy role models for contemporary practitioners of the faith are provided.

This is a work written with eloquence and zest. The use of different spellings for commonly used words is made clear. Ali's statement of purpose is compelling, and his arguments, by taking into account the historical context of the issues discussed, dispel commonly believed myths about Islam and the character of the prophet.

The book is well organized; its interior layout and design make for pleasurable reading. It is amply annotated and referenced, and includes appendices on the teachings of the Qur'an, Islamic sayings, and much more.

Syed B. Ali's *A Closer Look at Islam* makes a logical case that Islam cannot be blamed for the acts of terrorists. Timely and relevant, it affirms the ability of Islam to make "ideal human beings" of its followers.

KRISTINE MORRIS (April 21, 2017)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.