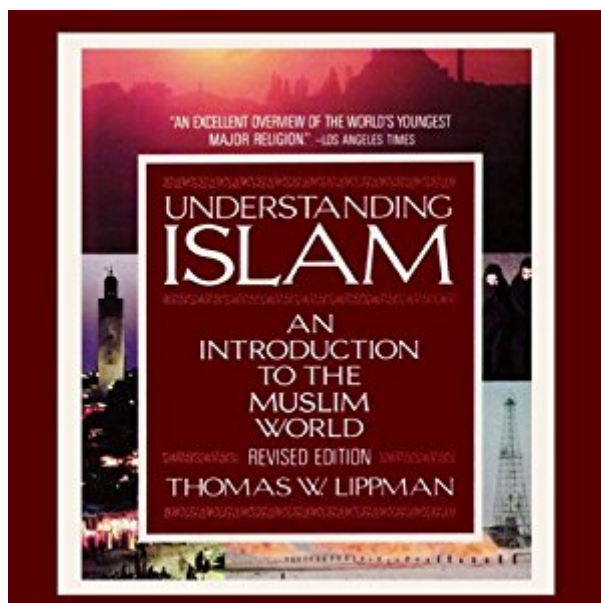


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# Understanding Islam



## Synopsis

Since the Gulf War, many have asked the question, "Why do Middle Easterners think and act as they do?" Of the 900 million people who today follow the Islamic faith, all are profoundly affected by the teachings of Muhammad and by Muslim traditions that have developed over the past 1300 years. This comprehensive guide offers an informative and insightful introduction to Islam, both as a religion and as a political-economic force. It tells the story of Muhammad and the rise of Islam; outlines the sacred book, the Koran; explains "the five pillars of the faith"; explores the interplay between religion and government; describes the differences that divide Islam; and above all, shows the influence of Islam on world affairs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A MUSLIM is one who believes that 'there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.' A Muslim worships one all-powerful and eternal deity, called Allah in Arabic, who revealed His will and His commandments to the prophet Muhammad of Mecca in the seventh century A.D. Those revelations are recorded in the Koran, the Holy Book of Islam." Thomas Lippman provides an excellent introduction into the Islamic world. Lippman is neither a historian nor a religious expert, but a journalist. As a journalist, he is able to easily explain Islamic Culture, practices, and history to an audience completely unfamiliar to this subject. Lippman spent a great deal of time in various Islamic countries as a journalist, and gives an easy to understand introduction into various aspects of Islam: (1) Basic Beliefs and Practices, (2) The Prophet Muhammad (3) The Koran, (4) Law and Government in Islamic Countries, (5) The Advance of Islam, (6) Schism and Mysticism, and (7) The

Islamic Community Today. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in knowing more about Islamic beliefs and or history.

learn the truth and don't be mislead anymore

Rather dry reading.

One of the best overviews of Islam that I've read.

Great read

This book had been on my shelf for a while but I finally decided to read it after taking a few courses on Islam and Islamic theology. I'm continually reminded of how vast the philosophical and doctrinal variations of Islam can be. Lippman offers a very simple and quick view of Islam emphasizing that law, religion, state and ethics are all intertwined. There is no separation in Islam but all are one. Islam is a complete way of life. The five pillars are uniting factors, done in moral obligation, not forced. Lippman rarely even uses the word 'ethics' but instead its synonyms: social and legal duties, spiritual standards, conducts, beliefs and attitudes. Ethics in Islam is interpreted by the different schools of Islam. It's difficult for any author to describe the 'true' teaching of Islam. Apart from all Muslims believing in God's oneness and justice, the interpretation and personal application of these unifiers is the fork in the road for Islam's schools of theology. I like how Lippman avoids making direct comparisons to Islam from other religions. For instance he warns against comparing how Christians view the Bible to exactly how Muslims view the Qur'an. Lippman also does a good job of describing a few of the intriguing details of Islamic faith, the logic behind not only Muslim actions but mentality. On the down side the book is a little skewed to Sunni ideas. The Shi'a are described in only a small part of an end chapter. This book is a good start to Islamic studies and should spur a zeal for further study which is a good quality in any book.

Publisher's Note: A little over thirteen centuries ago, the prophet Muhammad converted a few Arab desert tribes to the belief in a single god, Allah, thus founding the religion of Islam. Within a century, that belief had created one of history's mightiest empires - and today Islam continues to shape events around the globe. This comprehensive guide offers an informative and insightful introduction to Islam both as a religion and as a political-economic force. It tells the story of Muhammad - and

the rise of Islam; outlines the sacred book, the Koran; explains "the five pillars of faith

Realizing I knew nothing about Islam, I picked up this book in an attempt to become a bit more knowledgeable about the religion and current events. I was very surprised at how the religion began and what it has evolved to. They call it the world's youngest religion as it post-dates Christianity. I did not realize the extent to which it is based on Judeo-Christian writings. Muslims in fact recognize prior writings of this faith as the word of God, though not God himself. As Lippman describes, Islam was the religion of the minority and the poor of the time. He shows why it had such wide spread appeal. Lippman also discusses in detail how the violence that has come to be associated with this religion is not actually a part of the doctrine. He tells of the story of the hypocrites who find their root as posers of Muslim faith who were of a neighboring resentful tribe. He explains in these terms why the Jewish conflict has existed since that time, despite Muslim religion beginning with great respect for the doctrine of Jewish faith. He shows very clearly that, despite what has come to be associated with Islamic faith, Muhammad did not persecute or clear the ranks of Hypocrites precisely because he did not want to set a precedent of blood bath. It saddens me to read how similar Islamic religion, Christianity and Judaism are and yet they can not resolve conflicts that have existed for over a thousand years. You would think the peaceful side of each religion would prevail. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants a very short read on a belief system held by a large population of the world.

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