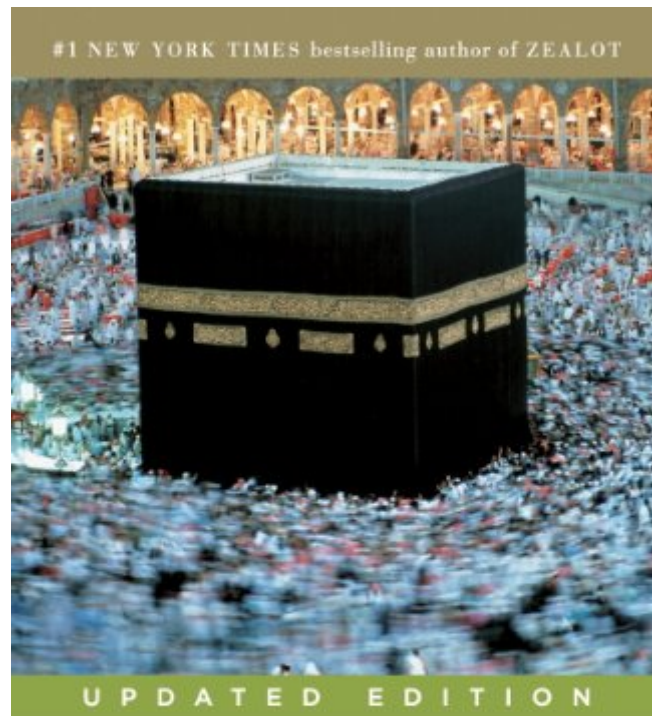


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No God But God (Updated Edition): The Origins, Evolution, And Future Of Islam



Synopsis

A fascinating, accessible introduction to Islam from the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *No god but God*. A finalist for the Guardian First Book Award. In *No god but God*, internationally acclaimed scholar Reza Aslan explains Islam "the origins and evolution of the faith" in all its beauty and complexity. This updated edition addresses the events of the past decade, analyzing how they have influenced Islam's position in modern culture. Aslan explores what the popular demonstrations pushing for democracy in the Middle East mean for the future of Islam in the region, how the Internet and social media have affected Islam's evolution, and how the war on terror has altered the geopolitical balance of power in the Middle East. He also provides an update on the contemporary Muslim women's movement, a discussion of the controversy over veiling in Europe, an in-depth history of Jihadism, and a look at how Muslims living in North America and Europe are changing the face of Islam. Timely and persuasive, *No god but God* is an elegantly written account that explains this magnificent yet misunderstood faith. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a fascinating read. Starting with the pre-Islamic Arabia, it traces the evolution of Islam all the way to the recent popular pro-democracy uprisings in the middle east - the updated edition that is. Along the way, it marries history with erudite commentary, answers a few dogmatic points of views, & raises, rather honestly, quite a few questions. Quite a good many of the chapters dwell on the rise of Islam in the desert of the Arabian peninsula, the life of Muhammad & its strife, the power struggles after Muhammad's death, the expansion of Islam to far away corners beyond its humble Arab origins, & the consolidation of the ways & practices into codified religion. It further does a great job of articulating both the evolution & description, if not definition, of the various sects - namely the Sunni, the Shia, & the Sufi. The tales continue into the modern nineteenth, twentieth & twenty first centuries - the story of Iran is a gripping one - & the book continues its journey into the many ideological branches that evolved in this period - the politics of Islam at battle with colonialism & a fast modernizing world, & the divergent pulls of reformist agendas against fundamentalist ones. Finally, the author speculates a little on the future of Islam, its diaspora in the western world with deep connections to each other & the larger community using the internet. For me, the chapters on what defines a Muslim, to the extent possible, & the related symbolism of such practices was an eye-opener. Refreshing, & reinvigorating too, was the chapter on the Sufi - I think the author deliberately changed the tone of his writing in this chapter to sound more mystical - as was the content & commentary on the evolution of the Shia sect, its beliefs & symbols.

Iranian born Dr. Reza Aslan was seven years old when his family fled the Iranian revolution and arrived in America. He would grow up a Persian Muslim in a relatively open America. Here he would earn a Master's degree from Harvard Divinity School and his doctorate in the Sociology of Religion from the University of California, Santa Barbara. In other words Dr. Aslan grew up in a world where he was very separate and distinct from his surroundings and reacted to the situation by seriously studying the history and meanings behind these distinctions. In his book *No God but God* the reader is given the benefit of this thoughtful man's years of study. The majority of this book is a readable and systematic description of the theology and history of the Muslim religion. One of my favorite old Bible stories is that of the "Still Small Voice". The lesson from this story is to ignore the storms and bombast the world can give us and listened to the quiet internal logic of real inspiration. Dr. Aslan would never claim to be the still voice of God, but the tone of his book is that of a calm, confident, and knowledgeable instructor. In reading the biography of Mohammed we meet a man whose divine inspiration may be a matter of debate in the West; but who lived a life remarkable for his ability to succeed in building one of the world's great religions. Along the way he would negotiate alliances

and conduct warfare with and without the advantages that would normally guarantee diplomatic or military victory. The collections of his sayings that would be later assembled into the Koran appear to reflect the co-mixture of the words needed to inspire an Army, promote cooperation from allies and to inspire fear in enemies.

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