



Understanding Islam: Origins * Beliefs * Practices * Holy Texts * Sacred Places

By Matthew S. Gordon

Watkins Media, United Kingdom, 2010. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 239 x 183 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Islam, the last of the major monotheistic traditions to emerge in human history, dates back to the early seventh century. Today the Islamic community reflects a range of national, ethnic, socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds. This enlightening book outlines Islam's essential practices and beliefs, including its origins and historical development, sacred texts, beliefs on death and the afterlife, as well as themes such as society and religion. Topical issues such as Political Islam, Islam and Israel, and Fundamentalism are addressed with intelligence, skill and sensitivity.



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In Islam, there are two main sacred texts: the Quran (also spelled "Koran") and the Hadith (or Hadeeth). These books teach and illustrate Islamic beliefs, values, and practices. They are also important historical documents (especially the Quran), which tell the story of the origins of the Islamic faith. The Quran is the most sacred text, as it is believed to be the literal word of God as revealed to Muhammad. The Hadith is a secondary text that records sayings of Muhammad and his followers. These two texts form the basis for all Islamic theology, practice and Sharia (Islamic law). Th In this text, references to verses of the Holy Quran have been placed in the endnotes and are given in the modern numerical system. In these references, we have counted Bismill'hir-Ra'á,¥m'Anir-Ra'á,¥'m as the rst verse, except for S'rah At-Taubah (that is Chapter 9 of the Holy Quran). In these notes, the rst number refers to the S'rah (chapter) and the second number refers to the 'yah (verse).Â The book helps a person enhance their understanding of true Islam as opposed to the one often portrayed in the media. This book comes at a time when a genuine need was felt to address the topics of aggressive Jihad or holy war, violence and oppression, that are incorrectly assumed to be a part of Islam. Origins. Sacred Texts. The word "Quran" means "recitation," because the Quran was first heard in sermons and public readings. Muslims believe it is still best communicated by being recited.Â It is the primary source of belief and practice for Muslims, and is the source for understanding God's will for humans. It contains solutions to disagreements and practical challenges. As the territory under the Muslims expanded, and as time passed, the original context of the Quran changed. It became more urgent to understand the Quran's meaning in changed circumstances. The pursuit of historically textualized explanation and interpretation of the Quran became known as tafsir, or exegesis.

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