



Islam

Matthew S. Gordon

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From angry street demonstrations in the Middle East to the terrorism of Osama bin Laden, the news is filled with images of Islam as a militant and rabidly anti-American religion. Now, in this lavishly illustrated volume, Mathew Gordon offers a different view, in a clear and informative guide to virtually every aspect of Islam.

Gordon begins with a historical overview of Islam, from the divine revelations Muhammad received in Mecca to the triumphant rule of the Caliphs. He illuminates the central features of Islam, from the structure and teachings of the Koran, to the Sharia (the intricate and subtle web of legal teachings), to the duties of worship (the profession of faith, the daily cycle of prayer, alms-giving, the Ramadan fast, and the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca). The book offers lucid and insightful discussions of the different branches of Islam, such as the Shii (also called Shia or Shiite), the Ismaili, and the mystic traditions of Sufism. In addition, he explains the importance of divinely inspired figures, or Imams, in Shiism; includes sidebars on such things as Islamic literature and art; and offers boxed features on topics such as the Hajj, the historical place of conquered non-Muslims in the Arab Islamic empire. Gordon also addresses the role of women in Islamic societies, the many political crosscurrents, and much more.

Islam has spread around the world--from the Philippines to Pakistan, and from Albania to Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. This clear, honest, and respectful guide, featuring dozens of striking color photographs, clears away the misconceptions and reveals Islam's true beauty and power.

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