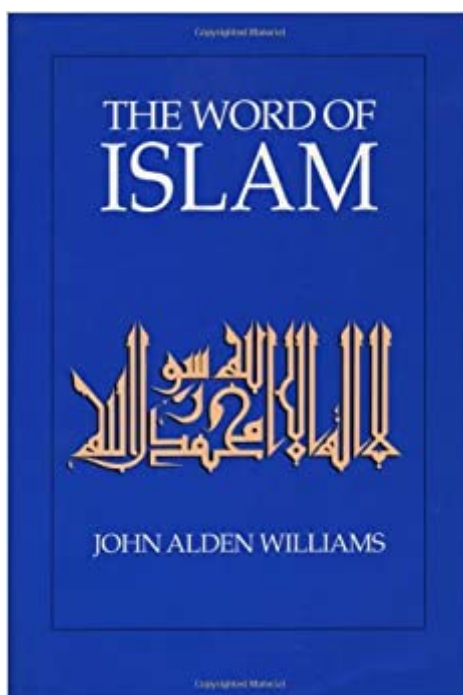


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The Word Of Islam (Avebury Studies In Green Research)



Synopsis

Since the 1970s, Islam has been undergoing a tremendous resurgence throughout the world. This resurgence has often been labeled "Islamic fundamentalism" by the media, but it includes believers of every persuasion, from the most conservative to the most liberal. Given this fact, it is vital for the West to understand the terms in which Islam thinks and to communicate effectively with Muslims. This anthology includes writings central to Islamic thought, some translated earlier but here redone, and others which have never before appeared in any Western language. The selections include an interpretation of the Qur'an, as well as portions of the Hadith, or sayings and actions of the Prophet; Islamic law; mysticism (Sufism); theology; and sectarian writings. A final essay on Islam today places these writings in their contemporary context and shows the breadth and variety of Islamic belief and practice. Compiled with the intention of letting Islam describe itself in its own words, the book is an important source for all students of Muslim culture and world religions. This book is similar in scope to Williams' well-known 1961 George Braziller publication, but freshly written and much improved.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This work is destined to be treated as a pioneer and a classic in its field.... It offers a highly readable, lively, and proportionate examination of the Islamic canon and its various internal currents." (American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences)

John Alden Williams is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Humanities in Religion at the College

of William and Mary.

i had to get this book for class, And for me in particular it was a hard read. i highly recommend getting "Key words in Islam" by Ron Greaves to compliment the book.

A book about a religion which does not allow its adherents to say, "Yes, it is like this," has a necessarily limited value. Thank you Dr. Williams for not turning faith into an object of study, but rather to allow a tradition to speak for itself. I love the author's underlying belief that ". . . every great religion is an ocean, with many bays, inlets, and unplumbed areas; we cannot pour it into a bottle and hold it up to the light. We can only come to it, smell it, taste it, touch it, observe what thrives there, and listen to its many moods. Our apprehension of it will be incomplete, but we will not falsify it by reducing it to an image or a model." This work is a treasure and a must-have in a library of anyone who wants to understand.

Any one interested in Islam should have this book. So many books try to tell you what Islam is. This anthology *shows* you Islam through classic works from within the tradition. It has elegant translations for important passages from the Quran, and extensive excerpts from the hadith of the Prophet (anecdotes about him that are normative for Muslims, as a kind of scripture). There is an excellent chapter on Islamic Law displaying the logic and content of that complex field. There is a generous and appealing section on Sufism (Islamic mysticism). And finally, theology and minoritarian movements are both explored through wide-ranging excerpts that discuss predestination, the role of dissent, and the significance of the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali. Unlike the textbooks that abound, Word of Islam helps the reader not just to understand, but to appreciate these sometimes complex topics through careful choices of material and through lucid and sympathetic introductions. And the translations are both accurate and very sensitive.. I've given away several copies and everyone who has received one has loved it. It's also a wonderful classroom text, and discussion-group support.

"The Word of Islam" (1994) is a watered-down version of "Islam" also edited by J.A. Williams and published in 1963 by the Washington Square Press in New York. This version seems to have been revised not out of "fear of the Jews" but out of fear of the Moslems. What was "The Cosmic Man" in "Islam" (p.139) is "The Great Man" in "The Word of Islam" (p.125). Likewise "God" is mostly replaced by "Reality." However, the Evening Prayer of Rabi'a of Basra (d.801) is retained intact on p.114.

That is possibly the most beautiful prayer that I [a Catholic] know.

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