What Do Muslims Believe?: The Roots and Realities of Modern Islam

By Ziauddin Sardar

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Perfect for adolescents and teens who are beginning to ask the big questions about life, religion, and current events, What Do Jews Believe? and What Do Muslims Believe? are the first a new series exploring the history and practices of world religions, their influences on current events and conflicts, as well as discussions on where these religions are headed. Both include a chronology of the religion's history through today, a glossary of terms, and recommended further reading lists.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Pakistani-born and British-educated Sardar, author of 40 other books on Islam, pens this elucidating and very original introduction to the religion. He describes the basics of Islam, including the Qur'an and hadith, the life of Muhammad and the history of Islam and Muslims, in an easy-to-read and cogent manner. Sprinkled throughout are surprising facts, including that Muslims do not believe in original sin and that there are as many Muslims in China as in Egypt. Sardar clarifies some troubling aspects of the Prophet Muhammad's life, explaining polygamy as mainly alliance building and Muhammad's participation in battle as more limited than generally described. He criticizes Muslims for their rigidity and for losing touch with reason—which, in his opinion, is a cornerstone of Islam. He decries the literalism behind the creation of sharia law, the rejection of free interpretation of the Qur'an (called *ijtihad*) and unfair treatment of women, but sees these behaviors as anomalies. In contrast, Sardar acknowledges Muslims' tolerance, such as their acceptance of other prophets, their flourishing book trade and societal advancements. With its manageable length and optimistic outlook, this introduction to Islam is a cut above the rest. *(Sept.)*
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From **Booklist**
Among the many sanguine introductions to Islam, Sardar's moves immediately to the front rank for its readability (despite a few grammatical stumbles) and salutary perspective. Very much a Muslim progressive, Sardar allows, without going into specifics, that Muslims have often violated and contradicted the faith's essence, which he assures us is peaceful. He exalts the classical age of Islam, from the eighth through the fourteenth centuries, with its many great thinkers and writers, stressing that its accomplishments attest to Islam's great respect for and exploitation of reason. Reason, he suggests, will bring Islam to greatness again as, having finally shed colonialism and, he foresees, Islamic Fundamentalism and puritanism, Islamic societies assimilate and Islamically adapt modern science and technology. Recent developments, such as Morocco's reformation of Shariah law, show that such modernizing is under way, he says. Sardar's progressive argument undergirds a précis of Muslim history, beliefs, sectarian divisions, religious practices, and historic effects that one would expect of any similar primer. Olson, Ray

Review
"'Ziauddin Sardar is arguably one of the best-known Muslim public intellectuals in the world today. He is an iconoclast, often a gadfly and undoubtedly one of the few Muslim intellectuals who span the proverbial Two Cultures' Muslim News"

Users Review

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