



## Ideals and Realities of Islam

*Seyyed Hossein Nasr*

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## **Ideals and Realities of Islam** Seyyed Hossein Nasr

A revised and updated edition of the best-selling introduction to Islam written by one of the foremost scholars in the field. *Ideals and Realities of Islam* seeks to answer criticism brought against Islam by presenting the point of view of Islam. In six chapters dealing with the universal and the particular aspects of Islam, the Qur'an, the Prophet and the Prophetic tradition, the Sharia, Sufism, and Shi'ism, Seyyed Hossein Nasr outlines the essential aspects of the Islamic beliefs, making frequent references to other religions in general and Christianity in particular.

Drawing mainly on the Qur'an and the *hadith*, but also on the works of some contemporary Western scholars, the author presents the Islamic spiritual and intellectual tradition in the light of contemporary modern thought. This edition includes a new introduction by the author and an updated annotated bibliography.

## **Ideals and Realities of Islam Details**

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Author : Seyyed Hossein Nasr

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### Ahmad Abdul Rahim says

Its a suprisingly good book

Gaya penulisan Prof sayyed hossein nasr sedikit berlainan dgn buku2 sebelum ini yg aku baca. Penulisan yg aku dapati dlm buku "ideas and realities in islam" ini bukan sangat encyclopaedic, tetapi sebaliknya lebih kepada discursive, di mana setiap poin disyarah dengan padat.

Apa yg disentuh dalam buku ini adalah asas2 Islam: Islam, Tawhid, Quran, Nabi, syariat.

Nampak tajuk2 yg biasa, tetapi usai bacaan korang akan sedar byk sebenarnya input2 yg telah diperolehi dari buku ini.

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### Erik Graff says

I graduated with the first group of Religious Studies majors from Grinnell College. A new department with only three full-time professors--Howard Burkle, Dennis Haas and Harold Kasimow--there was concern about rigor and more attention was paid us than students in other departments. In addition to requiring a substantial thesis, we also had to enroll in RELST 431, a Senior Seminar attended by all graduating seniors as well as by all full and part-time instructors. In addition to the senior faculty there were, as I recall, two adjuncts, both humanist psychotherapists. Consequently, there were as many professors in the seminar as there were students--leading to great discussions.

One of the books read for the class was Nasr's Ideals and Realities of Islam, the first book I'd ever read entirely devoted to Islam. I suspect the department had us read it on the correct assumption that most of the students, like myself, were pretty ignorant of this, one of the two greatest religions "of the book." It was, in any case, a very good choice.

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### Tim says

"The sacred/profane dichotomy may be required as an expedient in times and places, but it can never, from the religious point of view, be considered as normative...". Understanding this sentence is key to not only understanding this book, but to understanding Islam as a faith tradition. Nasr is heavily inspired in this work by Frithjof Schuon's "Understanding Islam", which is heavier on the metaphysical. Nasr is not attempting to write an apologetic for Islam (nor is Schuon), rather he is trying to present the faith in its truest, most fundamental, most balanced way. Using the foundational Islamic principle of Tawhid or "Unity" in relation to the One and everything that emanates from the One, Nasr lays out his vision of the sacred. For Nasr, and for many of us, the sacred is manifested in our lives through Islam. Yet Nasr's idea of the sacred stems directly from Tawhid - and the Qur'an - in that he does not neglect other traditions in showing the truth of Tawhid.

The concept of universality is key to the book, which is comprised of a collection of lectures that Nasr gave at the American University in Beirut during the 1960s. It was designed to present Islam to a Western audience, and to an audience of Muslims who may have been heavily influenced by Western thought. It is a

seminal work in Western Islamic scholarship. Nasr presents lectures covering six themes:

1. Islam - The last religion, the primordial religion
2. The Qur'an - The Word of God, the source of knowledge
3. The Prophet and Prophetic Tradition - The Last Prophet and Universal Man
4. The Shariah - The Divine Law - Social and Human Norm
5. The Tariqah - The Spiritual Path and its Quranic Roots
6. Sunnism and Shi'ism - Twelve-Imam Shi'ism and Isma'ilism

As Westerners, if we can understand that there is no sacred/profane dichotomy, and that this stems from Tawhid, then we can begin to appreciate the paradigm of Islamic thought. Even after conversion to Islam, it is taking time for me to fully internalize this paradigm. It is difficult in coming from a culture that is built on Christendom - where there is such a thing as church/state separation. Muslims do not think this way, hence the misunderstandings around ideas such as Shariah and even Tawhid.

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### **Umnia says**

Changed the course of my life.

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### **Nazmul Hasan says**

Title should be corrected to "Ideals and Realities of Perennialism".

Certain chapters of the book, particularly the chapters on the Quran, the Prophet(saw) and the Shariah are eloquently delivered.

The discussion on the Tariqa was equally fascinating. However, the rest of the book poses no particular interest to an orthodox

Sunni Muslim.

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### **Adil Tobaa says**

This book presents Islam in a way that reveals intricacies and nuances that are overlooked even in most religious settings. In fact, the author's comparisons with Christianity (namely) has changed my perspective on how I view religions in general. This book is not philosophical, in the modern sense, though it is academic. I would recommend this book to any religious believers, or to spiritually inclined agnostics.

Also, a great annotated bibliography is found at the end to help find other sources.

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### **Alisha says**

A great introduction to understanding the principles/fundamentals of Islam. It's great for second and third reads too.

## **Vildan Ar?can says**

not finished yet but such a masterpiece that every eng-user should read it either as to strengten their religion or to get rid of their prejudieces against islam....

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