



Understanding Islam: A Primer

Idris Tawfiq

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Islam is studied and discussed today on a scale never before witnessed. Yet to what extent is Islam truly understood in the West? And what is driving its rapid growth? The world's second largest religion, with a faithful of some 1.4 billion, is spreading fast, with a surprisingly high rate of conversion in Western countries.

In *Understanding Islam*, Idris Tawfiq explores the Islamic faith from a unique perspective: that of Roman Catholic priest turned Muslim scholar. In an engaging style, the core tenets of this widely misunderstood religion are laid out. The author draws widely on recent cultural phenomena in the West to examine the wider role of religion in an increasingly secular region of the world—from Ridley Scott's film *Kingdom of Heaven* to the display of public grief at the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997. Tawfiq illustrates the many and various—and unexpected—prisms through which Islam can be observed.

Tawfiq argues that Islam, far from contributing to any "clash of civilizations," serves to embody spiritual enlightenment and tolerance, enabling Muslims and non-believers to live in a state of mutual understanding. *Understanding Islam* is concerned with one of the most pressing issues of our time.

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