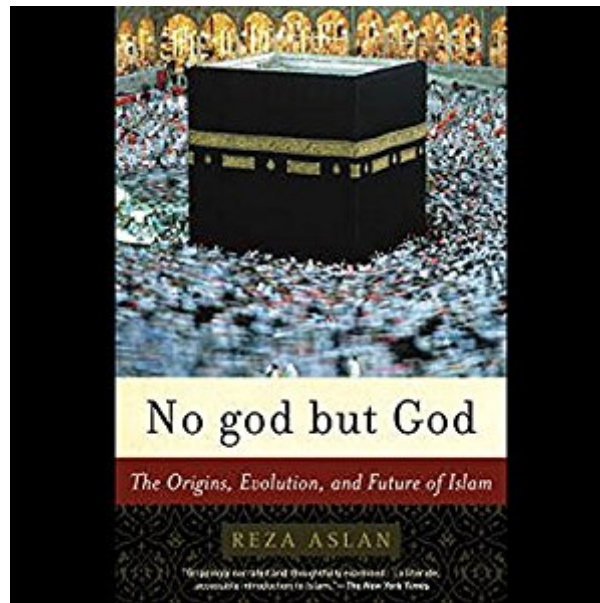




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# No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, And Future Of Islam



## Synopsis

Though it is the fastest growing religion in the world, Islam remains shrouded by ignorance and fear. What is the essence of this ancient faith? Is it a religion of peace or war? How does Allah differ from the God of Jews and Christians? Can an Islamic state be founded on democratic values such as pluralism and human rights? A writer and scholar of comparative religions, Reza Aslan has earned international acclaim for the passion and clarity he has brought to these questions. In *No god but God*, challenging the "clash of civilizations" mentality that has distorted our view of Islam, Aslan explains this critical faith in all its complexity, beauty, and compassion. Contrary to popular perception in the West, Islam is a religion firmly rooted in the prophetic traditions of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Aslan begins with a vivid account of the social and religious milieu in which the Prophet Muhammad lived. The revelations that Muhammad received in Mecca and Medina, which were recorded in the Quran, became the foundation for a radically more egalitarian community, the likes of which had never been seen before. Soon after his death, the Prophet's successors set about the overwhelming task of defining and interpreting Muhammad's message for future generations. Their efforts led to the development of a comprehensive code of conduct that was expected to regulate every aspect of the believer's life. But this attempt only widened the chasm between orthodox Islam and its two major sects, Shiism and Sufism, both of which Aslan discusses in rich detail. Finally, *No god but God* examines how, in the shadow of European colonialism, Muslims developed conflicting strategies to reconcile traditional Islamic values with the social and political realities of the modern world. With the emergence of the Islamic state in the twentieth century, this contest over the future of Islam has become a passionate, sometimes violent battle between those who seek to enforce a rigid and archaic legal code and those who struggle to harmonize the teachings of the Prophet with contemporary ideals of democracy and human rights. According to Reza Aslan, we are now living in the era of "the Islamic Reformation." *No god but God* is a persuasive and elegantly written account of the roots of this reformation and the future of Islamic faith. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is very probably the easiest and most accurate read of the Muslim Faith and Islam that I have ever seen. It will introduce you to the prophet's early life, his relationships with Mecca, the beginnings of his preaching....all the way to his death...and the issues / problems in choosing a new earthly leader for the faith. These problems continue today. The author also makes prognostications about where Islam is headed in the future. Probably the most important book I have read this year. If you are interesting in a historical and balanced view of Islam...from inception to present....this one is will be tough to beat. Enjoy.

Reza Aslan is a phenomenal author and academician. He truly captures important concepts and conveys them to the reader in an understandable and empathic manner. This book is a must for anyone wanting to better understand Islam as a religion rather than the ridiculous attitudes and comments made by political leaders.

No god but God is a rare combination of great detail and fascinating reading, two sets of words rarely found in the same sentence about any book. Prior to reading this book, for westerners like me, understanding Islam and its people seemed difficult to impossible. Separating (but relating) religion, culture, and the desires of individual people, No god but God makes clear the point that Islam (the tenets of the faith as expressed in the Koran) is no more responsible for the terrorism often inflicted in its name than Christianity and the teachings of the Bible are responsible for the holocaust. Islam and Christianity are drawn clearly to be a code of faith and the behavior of their followers does not inform the Koran, rather the faith, both Islam and Christianity (and others) often becomes corrupted for the personal ambition and gain of individuals and peoples. No god but God traces how this has happened within Islam, the conditions that have led to the rise of extremism, and leaves the reader with a deeper understanding both of Islam and of the people who claim to be its adherents. Three weeks after reading this book, I attended a local mosque open house to learn

more. The lectures and exhibits at the (moderate) mosque reflected No god but God's evidences and conclusions perfectly. Recommended reading!

This work is a very readable, comprehensive introduction to the initial development of the Islamic religion by a Muslim source. Albeit a very entertaining book, the work is simply that: an introduction. Whereas it covers details of the life of the Prophet and the development of the Muslim Community in Medina, the book does not delve into later issues of Islamic jurisprudence, nor does it mention the impact of Ottoman rule upon Islam. The Sunni/Shi'a split is also examined to a degree, as are the Pillars, but anyone seeking more than a passing knowledge of the subject should look elsewhere. The author has accomplished his goal in creating a readable, relatively neutral introduction to the Islamic faith. The author is a Shi'a, thus some passages are representative of a slight degree of bias in this respect, but the work as a whole is largely academic.

Reza "gets it." It is that simple. Western policy makers and countless pundits have failed to understand what Reza Aslan rather eloquently does understand. Any policy maker reading Reza's book would - or should - instantly understand what is really happening in the Middle East. Most of the warfare, intrigue, and terrorism in the Middle East arises from the most basic debate about which "God" and Reza Aslan has captured that fact very well.

When I bought this book I was looking for a very neutral, historical overview of Islam. This book does an amazing job of delving into the historical context that Islam developed both from and in. I found that aspect of the book to be informative while giving me the necessary historical context to better understand the religion as well as some insight into who today's Muslims are and where they stand in the world. I gave this book 4 stars (wish I could give it 4.5) instead of 5 for one specific reason. I was looking for a more neutral examination of Islam. Reza Aslan (the author) spends some page space making the case that Islam is compatible with democracy, as well as explaining what factors have created the impression in many westerners that Islam intrinsically bends towards theocracy. He makes a compelling case, in part, because this is far from the focus of the book (which is to inform the reader). Aside from the above critique (based on my expectation of the book), I found No god but God to be an enjoyable read throughout. In addition to being entertaining it was immensely informative. I would recommend this book to anybody who has a limited knowledge of the basic facts surrounding Islam and a desire to improve their understanding of the religion and its believers.

Aslan's book is over the top in information that I could never hold in my head for more than a day. If anyone wants to know how the multi tribes from the beginning of time developed, read it. He's an excellent author but I didn't expect this would be an endless list of names and tribes that all sounded alike to me. My deficiency, no doubt.

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