

## Synopsis

This book is the result of my personal disillusionment with Islam as it is manifested in the modern world. The message of the Koran is resoundingly simple. We should believe in God, which of itself would encourage us to be good, and love our neighbor. If we do, we will go to Heaven: "Those who do good to men or women and have faith (in God), we will give them life, a pure life, and their reward will be greater than their actions." This message, which is stated clearly over sixty times in the Koran, has been perverted by those who seek to promote themselves as spiritual leaders, with appalling results most shockingly, the attacks on America on September 11th, 2001.

Seven years ago, my growing cynicism about the form which contemporary Islam takes prompted me to start researching Islam, and I turned to the original text of the Koran for the first time. My sense of disillusionment with everything I had been taught to believe as true about Islam grew as I learned about the disparity between the holy book and Islam as it is practiced today. Now, more than ever, there is an urgent need for Muslims and non-Muslims alike to understand the truth about Islam, and to return to the original message of the Prophet Muhammad, and that of Jesus that humankind should strive to be good, to love God and one another and to recognize the common background of the three religious faiths that dominate the world stage today: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Only when we stand together will we be able to discard the burden of history and move towards a brighter future.

There is more than one edition of the Koran, and the numbering of the verses varies slightly from one edition to the next. People wishing to check my references against their copy of the Koran might find that there are some discrepancies, unless they are working from the same edition. For the sake of clarity, I'd like to stress that the edition I used was translated from Arabic to Persian by Mesbah Zadeh, under the patronage of Muhammad Ali Elmi, and published by Afset.

The English translation was provided by Anwar, a CD containing the Koran translated into English, from a variety of sources. Citations take the form of two sets of numbers. For example 2:17 means "chapter two, verse seventeen," with 17 appearing in the original at the beginning of the verse rather than at the end. Where the Bible is quoted, I have used the New King James version. Please note that the terms "Torah" and "Old Testament" are interchangeable, while I most commonly use the word "Bible" to refer to the New Testament. My family background is Shiite, and my greater knowledge of this religious tradition (as opposed to the Sunni, the other major Muslim group) is reflected throughout the book.