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Muhammad



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Just over a sixth of the world's population subscribes to the Muslim belief that 'there is no god but God, and Muhammad is his Messenger'. Michael Cook gives an incisive account of the man who inspired this faith, drawing on the traditional Muslim sources to describe Muhammad's life and teaching. He also attempts to stand back from this traditional picture to question how far it is historically justified.

Muhammad Details

Date : Published January 26th 1983 by Oxford University Press, USA

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Author : Michael A. Cook

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Genre : Religion, Islam, Biography, History, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review Muhammad for online ebook

Matt says

The title of the book is misleading. I was hoping for a concise construction of the life of Muhammad (to the best of our knowledge), but more than half discussed the Qu'ran and the origins of Islam. Was provided with books for further reading on the life of Muhammad.

The author described that there is no single, trustworthy narrative of Muhammad's life. We take each author with a grain of salt and we get contradictions when comparing authors.

Gives an example where an earlier author has a fuzzy recollection of when Muhammad's father dies, but a later author has very specific details on his death. There are some non-Muslim historical accounts of Muhammad that contradict some Muslim stories (Armenian and Jewish sources).

Ann Chamberlin says

The Life of Muhammad presented early in this book was disappointingly bare bones, been there, done that. I pushed on; there are only 89 pages after all. The essays on theology and sources brought into sudden focus the half a dozen (at least) books of a similar vein I have read since *Hagarism*. The other books, I suppose, are scholarly and so hedge their bets until I have to ask myself, "Is this really what he's saying?" Yep.

Muhammad lets us know: This is really what he's saying. I think the format of the Past Masters series, although an Oxford imprint, is to blame for the dearth of sources cited. All those other books on my shelves that left me uninspired because of their hedged bets will now come into play. I'm even going to list myself as a fan of Michael Cook. Can you be a fan of a Princeton don?

Liz says

A short little book on the life of Muhammad and the beginnings of Islam. I read it online, so I feel almost like I didn't read it, if that makes sense. Anyway, it was fairly informative, but I didn't really like how it was written or how it dealt with its sources.

Ryan says

This book was good for a really short introduction to Muhammad and Islam, but it wasn't very clear at times. And it seemed that the author himself wasn't entirely sure what he was saying sometimes. It's a quick read so I didn't feel like I was wasting my time, but it wasn't great.

Matthew Holliday says

I've recently read a book titled Muhammad, by Michael Cook. I found most of the book interesting. It is relatively short, only about 170 pages, but I felt it provided a good overview of the origins of the Islamic

religion and the life of its founder, Muhammad.

The book starts off with a bit of history, describing Muhammad's early life (he was born on a date which corresponds to June 8,570) and how he led a series of military expeditions to unite several warlike tribes in what is now Saudi Arabia. It explains how Muhammad came to develop his faith following a series of visits ("visions") from the Archangel Gabriel over the course of his life during which he was taught about creation, Judgment Day, etc. from which he developed the structure of Islam which has been virtually unchanged to this day and which he incorporated into the Quran.

The book clearly states the basic belief of Islam in that there is no god but God, and Muhammad is his messenger. I felt that Michael Cook was trying to give an incisive account on the man who inspired this religion. He draws a lot from traditional Muslim sources to describe Muhammad's life and teachings. The book describes the harsh life people led at this time and one can see where a lot of the strict rules of Islam come from.

At first I thought this was going to be only a biography on Muhammad, but as I got deeper into it, I later found out that this more about Islam and its history and how one man was the important behind the creation of this religion.

This book is fairly short so it's a good prime for people who want to learn about this religion. Overall I thought the book was pretty good.

Daragh Quinn says

A victim of its own concision. Barely more than the headline info and even that is so foreshortened that it actually reached the point of being difficult to follow.

Zj Al-khayat says

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I really do not recommend this book for non Muslims as it does not explain the Quran phrases accurately also I can't see any respect to this prophet I can't understand what is exactly the message the writer needs to convey ...

Doug says

Accessible work from a good scholar. Much to learn from less than 100 pages. Especially interesting is the author's contrasting of the cultural effects of Judaism and Christianity's "self-pity" with Islam's lack of such in its "bleak" monotheistic outlook on the universe.

Mckinley says

Short. Good overview and description of the religion of "Only one God."

Starts off with history - Muhammad successfully lead several military expeditions. Brought together tribal groups in area. His religion was closely associated with his military success. Together lead to Muslim conquest of Middle East within a generation of his death. The religion was revealed to him over the course of his life through the angel Gabriel. (One) God created and rules the universe in 6 devine days (each lasting 1000 years). Humans get large share of God's attention, starting with Adam and have sinned in failing to accord Him exclusive worship. When the world ends, God will judge men according to their deeds; the saved go to paradise while the rest go to hell.

Basic principles: washing, prayer, alms-giving, fasting, and pilgrimage along with prescriptions of religious law.

In regards to Christianity - fundamental error that Jesus is son of God. For Judaism - to fulfill their covenant with God by accepting Muhammad's message of revelation.

Miriam Jacobs says

A disciplined, thorough-enough (it picks and chooses from what is known about the subject in wise ways) account of the Prophet's life and impact. It also suggests possible redactions, alternate points of view, and thoughts on how Muhammad himself would respond to Islam as it has been practiced since his death.

Michael Alan Cook never slips into self-indulgence; his spare humor is achieved subtly, with word order - but I found myself laughing aloud. Moreover he brings Muhammad's world of nearly endless tribal conflict and negotiation to vivid life - like a movie. Without addressing directly the reader's lack of information per se, he fills in gaps and offers a genuine knowledge base. I learned much I previously had little clue about regarding Islamic, pre-Islamic and Peninsula culture. I cannot recommend this book enough.
