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Chapter 1 : The Crisis of Islam by Bernard Lewis Essay Example | Graduateway

His latest work, "The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror," is also derived from previous essays and articles, but here Lewis has ably integrated earlier pieces into a single, and very readable, book.

The Crisis of Islam: I have sometimes thought that among the things Americans export we would do well to pass along a little of our historical amnesia. A pope, Urban II, did give impetus to the Crusades, and though the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem came to an end eight hundred years ago, the evidence of a century of Crusader rule is visible in the commanding castles and European-style churches that still rise from the arid landscape, as well as the longstanding bonds between Middle Eastern and Western Christians, especially in Lebanon and the Holy Land. For many Arabs Christianity appears as a colonial religion brought by the Crusaders. Though Jerusalem sank into obscurity in early modern times, in the nineteenth century European interest, followed by Jewish immigration, awakened Muslim memories. The Crusades came to be seen as an early example of European imperialism, and inexplicably to Westerners, the state of Israel as a Crusader state. Osama bin Laden, no solitary gunman, also lives or lived with memories. In the Ottoman Empire was defeated by the Allies and its Arabic-speaking provinces were divided, organized to suit Western interests, and given new names by Britain and France. The Turks succeeded in liberating the Turkish-speaking parts of the empire, chiefly modern Turkey, and Mustafa Kemal, known to history as Ataturk, established a secular state whose laws on religion were influenced by post-revolutionary French practice. In , roughly eighty years before September , he abolished the caliphate. For Muslims the caliphate was the historic symbol of Islamic glory. Since then the West has been the source of major changes that have transformed the Islamic world. In an earlier book, *What Went Wrong* , published shortly after September 11, , Bernard Lewis outlined the gradual triumph of Western science, technology, ways of making war, learning, and culture over Islam since the naval battle of Lepanto in , when the Christian league decisively defeated the Turks. In his latest book, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Holy Terror* , Lewis takes up a similar theme, but now he focuses on the twentieth century and how recent events and historical memory nurture Islamic radicalism. What little was known in the nineteenth century came originally through French sources. The seat of its government is a town called Washington. Not until the Second World War did significant numbers of Americans take up residence in the Middle East and Arabs come to America as students, then businessmen, and finally as immigrants. The change in attitudes toward the U. The time was significant. The state of Israel had just been established, the Arab states had lost the war with the Israelis, and the magnitude of the destruction of European Jewry was first becoming known in the U. Qutub was deeply troubled by the identification of Americans with the Jewish people and U. He was also shocked by the materialism and promiscuity of American life the Kinsey report had recently appeared , as well as the shallowness and spiritual hucksterism of the American churches. Though he was executed in on charges of planning the assassination of President Gamal Abdel-Nasser, Qutub by the time of his death had seen enough of the growing influence of the American way of life on the Middle East to consider the U. The gross domestic output of Turkey, a nation of sixty-four million people, is ranked twenty-third in the world, the highest of any Muslim country. That places it between Austria and Denmark, each of which has approximately five million citizens. The entire Arab world translates a little over three hundred books a year, one-fifth the number of Greece. Even more striking, the total number of translated books since the ninth century is approximately ,, the average that Spain translates in a single year. The people of the Middle East are more keenly aware today of the deep and widening gulf between the opportunities of the free world and the privation and repression of their own societies. Then there are the consequences of national wealth being dependent on oil. Governments with vast sources of oil have no need to collect taxes or encourage representative assemblies, and can, up to a point, ignore public opinion. Hence the absence not only of political life but also of the mediating institutions that are so necessary for a healthy and stable society. The result, according to Lewis, is that religious extremism has become the most effective way to express

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dissatisfaction and discontent, not only against the West but also against secular Arab rulers. Yet it is this way of life that infiltrates the Arab societies of the Middle East. It takes little imagination to grasp why stationing American troops in Saudi Arabia, the Muslim holy land, or attacking Iraq and hence Baghdad, the seat of the ancient caliphate, is an affront to Muslims. The Crisis of Islam is a useful primer to developments over the last century that still dominate the evening news week after week. For that purpose it is an informative read. In many ways, however, the book is misnamed. It was there that Islam began and it was the Arabs who were the bearers of triumphant Islam for its first five hundred years. But today the Arabs are only a small part of the Islamic world. Al-Jazeera, the Arab television station, reaches an audience of forty-five million Arabic speakers, but the total number of Muslims in the world is now close to one billion. What worldwide Islam faces is not so much a crisis, but a series of challenges presented by quite different political and social environments. In Turkey Muslims face one set of issues, in Indonesia another, and in India yet another. In Nigeria, where there are large Muslim and Christian populations, Muslims cannot, for example, ask the government to provide Islamic law courts without being pressured to acknowledge an equal public status for Christianity. In the Western countries, including the United States, Muslims are struggling to reconcile their traditional belief that the Sharia embraces all of life, including politics, with the religious and cultural pluralism of the modern state. From the beginning Islam has been a political as well as a religious community. Muslims did not have to wait three hundred years for a Constantine; Muhammad was their Constantine, a ruler as well as religious founder. The most pressing question for Muslims in many lands is how to order the life of the community in a society that is not governed according to Muslim law and in which Muslims must conceive of their religion, at least in part, as equivalent to a voluntary association. There is no Church in Islam, and what Muslims have historically required for authentic Muslim life extends far beyond religion. As for the traditional Islamic countries, Lewis assumes that the future for the Islamic nations can only be a secular society along Western lines. Robert Louis Wilken is the William R. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.

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Chapter 2 : The Crisis of Islam by Bernard Lewis | www.nxgvision.com

The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror is a book written by Bernard Lewis. The nucleus of the book was an article published in The New Yorker in November

July 13, Bernard Lewis left fifty years ago with colleague, Dr. Holy War and Unholy Terror. Of course, I have regrettably neglected, until now, to look legitimately into the details of the religion and its concurrent culture and sphere of influence. Concise and utterly worthwhile, The Crisis of Islam offers a history, reasoning, and scriptural basis for the most-mentioned but often not discussed, controversial aspects of Islam. He does so eloquently and taps into a remarkably vast wealth of knowledge only when he deems it directly necessary. Though Lewis has come under fire for some of his political positions in recent years, namely for his support of Iraqi invasion, The Crisis of Islam toes no political periphery. Never does Lewis incite distrust in his authority about the religion. Rather, he approaches each aspect of Islam soberly and with its due respect. All the while, his erudite and admirably articulate writing never employs three words when it can get by with one. Lewis starts with a history of the Islamic World and an explanation of some unique norms thereof. For instance, he touches on the political nature of Islam and the unusual bloc and relative cooperation between Muslim leaders of 57 countries around the world to protect the religion. Such is the simple, yet oft-unheard insight that would be so very useful to blind proponents of this or that intervention in the Middle East. Here and throughout the book, Lewis foreshadows and documents the rising and changing tensions between the Muslim world and Colonial Imperialism, Soviet Socialism, and then with the West in general. He then moves forward immediately into the oft-misunderstood realm of jihad in the second chapter, citing scholars and scripture in his quest to clarify the term. Bypassing both a wholly positive or a wholly negative view of jihad, Lewis selects the wholly truthful route. The following is a translation of the Prophet Muhammed by Yusuf Ali on the armed struggle: Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit at home. Unto all in Faith Hath Allah promised good: They exist, and they are being given undue emphasis by extremists. Suicide is a ticket to Hell in Islam, and the killing of women, children, and the aged is strictly prohibited unless attacked directly. This, of course, disregards the other perverse ideas suicide bombers and other terrorists have about their religion. The author moves on to discuss another sticky issue in Islam: Law states that apostasy, the abandonment or renunciation of Islam, is punishable by death for men and by flogging and jail for women. Here, he misses an opportunity to explore in satisfying detail the sayings of Muslim jurists on the matter, which is easily the one most anathema to Western norms. Ex-Muslims in the Western World who are confident enough to speak out about their apostasy tell of death threats from their own family members as well as from around the Muslim community. He speaks often about warring interpretations of controversial verses by Muslim scholars and jurists. Some, mostly those on the Left, prefer a coddled discussion of the issues if a discussion is permitted at all. The same issue plagues America in its quest to find common ground in the political sphere. Islam is different, however, in that there are those significant factions that call for death to those people they deem to have left the religion and also those who subscribe to a different version of it. Along these lines, Lewis rightly makes note of the intolerance and terrorism existent within Islam against differing interpretations of scripture. Wahhabism is of the most widespread forms of intolerance based in Islam, and Lewis characterizes it as a great threat to the region and the religion. Included in this camp are most Western nations as well as some less-stable Arab ones. Lewis makes a claim about this environment: The result can perhaps be depicted through an imaginary parallel: Imagine that the Ku Klux Klan or some similar group obtains total control of the state of Texas, of its oil, and therefore of its oil revenues. And having done so uses this money to establish a network of well-endowed schools and colleges, all over Christendom, peddling their peculiar brand of Christianity. This parallel is somewhat less dire than the reality since most Christian countries have functioning public schools of their own. In some Muslim countries, this is not so. And the Wahhabi-sponsored schools and colleges represent, for many young Muslims, the only

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education available. The custodianship of the holy places and the revenues of oil have given worldwide impact to what would have otherwise been an extremist fringe in a marginal country. Examples are plentiful; the Arab world notably struggles in ownership of computers per hundred people, book sales, life expectancy, industrial output, comparative purchasing power, job creation, education, and technology. Lewis does well to cite the numbers but does little to explain why they exist. He mentions colonization and conflicting views on modernization within the Muslim world but fails to spend enough time dispensing valuable insight. However, I can assure you, dear reader, that this brief book will serve you well. After only pages or about four hours of listening to the audiobook, the attentive reader will have gained insight from a true and dedicated scholar of the region. Lewis crafts *The Crisis of Islam* with respect, admiration, and, above all, hope for the Muslim community. He wields his wealth of knowledge and years of insight into a concise and removed explanation of the state of Islam today. If you have an interest in learning about Islam, its history, its deviants, and its relation to the West, allow Lewis to get you up to speed. More content from Nick. I am in the process of learning about Islam, please excuse any negligent oversights on my part. I did my best to be concise and complete while the book itself was not comprehensive in its coverage of the religion and, in fact, focused mostly on the controversial aspects of the religion. I speak with little authority but great curiosity. On that note, please reach out to me or comment below if you have something worthwhile to add to this review.

Chapter 3 : The Crisis of Islam - Wikipedia

The Crisis of Islam ranges widely through thirteen centuries of history, but in particular it charts the key events of the twentieth century leading up to the violent confrontations of today: the creation of the state of Israel, the Cold War, the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, the Gulf War, and the September 11th attacks.

Chapter 4 : Roots of Jihad by Robert Louis Wilken | Articles | First Things

The Crisis of Islam has 2, ratings and reviews. booklady said: Listened to this traveling to and from St. Louis on our recent Thanksgiving trek ba.