

# RECOMMENDED READING LIST OF HRH PRINCE GHAZI BIN MUHAMMAD BIN TALAL

[compiled 4 June, 2010]

## H. R. H. Prince Ghazi

H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal (b.1966) is the first cousin of H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan, and the nephew of the late H.M. King Hussein. He attended Harrow School (UK); received a BA *Summa Cum Laude* from Princeton University; received his first PhD from Cambridge University, UK in 1993 and his second from *Al-Azhar* University, Cairo, in 2010. He has held numerous high posts in Jordan, and is currently *Personal Envoy* and *Special Advisor* to H.M. King Abdullah. He founded the *National Park for the Site of the Baptism of Jesus Christ* (1996); *Al-Belqa University* in Jordan (1996); *Altafsir.com* (the largest on-line Quranic resource (2001); and the *World Islamic Sciences and Education University* (2007). He is also (part-time) Professor of Philosophy at Jordan University. He holds a number of high decorations and awards, and has published a number of books. He was the author of the historic *A Common Word* Open Letter and Peace Initiative of 2007.

## I. General Introductions to Islam by Western Muslims who actually read Arabic:

Danner, Victor. *The Islamic Tradition: an Introduction* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2005).

Du Pasquier, Roger. *Unveiling Islam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992).  
Very short, 166pp.

Eaton, Gai. *Islam and the Destiny of Man* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1994).

Murata Sachiko, and William Chittick. *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994).

The best teaching guide in English; I recommend in particular its format:  
Islam/Iman/Ihsan format.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004).

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2000).

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

Schuon, Frithjof. *Understanding Islam* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 1998).

Very complex, but arguably the most profound introduction. Has a universalist outlook.

Smith, Huston. *Islam: a Concise Introduction* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

This is actually a chapter from the best selling modern book on religion ever (2.5 million + sold), *The World's Religions*, by Prof. Huston Smith. The whole book is a 'must read' to see how gender-friendly, inclusive, politically correct language and urbane, erudite quotations can be harnessed to spiritual ends and yet at the same time be very successful.

Winter, T. J., and John A. Williams. *Understanding Islam and the Muslims: Expanded to Include The Muslim Family and Islam and World Peace* (Louisville, Ky.: Fons Vitae, 2002).

This is a very simple, pictorial, Q and A book; essential to look at and consider as a writing format.

## **II. Other introductions to Islam, though not as good, sometimes inaccurate and over-simplified by Muslims, but still worth looking at:**

Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Message of Islam: Being a Résumé of the Teaching of the Qur'an, with Special Reference to the Spiritual and Moral Struggles of the Human Soul* (Boston: C.E. Tuttle, 1992).

Very old introduction by perhaps still the most accurate translator of the Qur'an. \*\*\*(INB In general, use only his original translation 'The Holy Qur'an' for quotations—not its recent Wahhabi abridgment 'The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an'; or use M.M. Pickthall's translation 'The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an.' No other translations in English have come close to these two in accuracy.

Haeri, Fadhlalla. *The Thoughtful Guide to Islam*. (Hants, UK: O, 2006).

Hassan, Bin Talal, and Alain Elkann. *To Be a Muslim: Islam, Peace, and Democracy* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic, 2004).

Worth looking at for facing the right questions, if not always knowing the right answers.

Hofmann, Murad Wilfried. *Islam, the Alternative* (Reading: Garnet, 1993).

A lot of misinterpretation, but engaging approach.

Shalabi, Abdul Wadud. *Islam: Religion of Life* (UK: Quilliam 1989).

An important Azhari contemporary sheikh's musings translated into English.

### III. Other essential books on Islam by Muslims:

**On the *Seera*:** (life of the Prophet, peace be upon him):

Lings, Martin. *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1983).

The definitive classic; give out in the early 1990s by yourself as a New Year gift.

**On Sufism:**

Lings, Martin. *What Is Sufism?* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993).

The best introduction to Sufism or Islamic mysticism.

Lings, Martin. *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawī; His Spiritual Heritage and Legacy* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993).

Shows Sufism in practice and not merely in theory and history.

**On Fundamentalism:**

Lumbard, Joseph. *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom, 2009).

Contains uneven essays, but four are 'must reads'—those of Dakake, Kalin, Shah-Kazemi and Akram.

Oliveti, Vincenzo. *Terror's Source: the Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and Its Consequences* (Birmingham, U.K.: Amadeus, 2002).

The only book in English that clearly shows, albeit briefly the canon of Orthodox Islam, the textual issues involved in Orthodoxy, and the aberrations of modern fundamentalism.

### IV. As for books by non-Muslims in English, the following need to be considered as well meaning, scholarly and at least free of visceral loathing (if not always free of cultural prejudice):

**Introductions to Islam:**

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000).

Cragg, Kenneth. *The Call of the Minaret* (New York: Oxford UP, 1956).

Esposito, John L. *Islam the Straight Path* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Oxford OUP, 2010).

Schimmel, Annmarie. *Islam: An Introduction* (Albany: State UP of New York).

Sells, Michael Anthony. *Approaching the Qur'an: the Early Revelations* (Ashland, Or: White Cloud, 1999).

Contains CDs and an auditive approach!

**Scholarly Histories of Islam:**

Hodgson, Marshall G. S. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974).

In three volumes.

Lapidus, Ira Martin. *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989).

**Introduction to philosophy and theology:**

Watt, W. Montgomery. *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: an Extended Survey* (Edinburgh: University, 1985).

**Islam and the West/Christianity:**

Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

An eye-opener; a must-read.

Parrinder, Edward Geoffrey. *Jesus in the Qur'an* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003).

Excellent; full of gems for those with 'eyes to see'.