

## Foreword

*"...Conjecture is no substitute for the truth." [The Quran 53:28]*

The religion of Islam today continues to be one of the most misunderstood religions in the West. But who is to blame, the Western media? Not particularly. Perhaps the major reason for this misunderstanding is the fact that for centuries this beautiful religion has been presented to the world by people, scholars and countries that do not actually follow the Islam taught in the Quran.

Terrible acts of terrorism done in the name of religion are prime examples. The attacks with hijacked planes on New York City and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001 killing thousands of innocent people were deplorable. No God-fearing people can ever condone this kind of activity. As in many other attacks in the past, the terrorists are linked to groups that abuse the name of Islam to commit crimes that are abhorred and strongly condemned by God in the Quran, the Muslims' holy book.

The religion of Islam should not be confused with what these so-called Muslims have done. They actually, by the definition of the Quran, are not Muslims any more than members of the Ku Klux Klan are Christians. The religion of Islam condemns the killing or even the persecution of people merely because they embrace a different faith. The Quran mandates absolute freedom of religion in a society. It does not allow Muslims to fight except for self-defense and to enforce peace. It does not allow restrictions on those who disagree on religious matters. It urges Muslims to treat such people kindly and equitably.

Unfortunately, terrorists are not the only ones that give Islam a bad name. It is a fact that there are numerous man-made rules which have crept into mainstream Islam that have nothing to do with the religion of Islam as laid out in the Quran. One of the major principles that has been corrupted over the years is

the equality of women in Islam. God tells us clearly in the Quran that we are equal in His eyes, whether we are male or female. Even though we each have obvious physical differences, the only difference that God considers is righteousness. Furthermore, the Quran is full of commands and laws to protect the rights of women, as well as the rights of the weak, such as orphans.

That is why Ms. Lisa Spray's work in this book is such an important undertaking. She brings forth all the issues confronting today's women who follow or want to follow the religion of Islam. She gives examples from her experience and tells us how she dealt with each issue she confronted, one step at a time.

Ms. Spray is particularly well qualified for this task as she has first hand knowledge of several faiths, including traditional Islam. Being a traditional Muslim was quite an experience for her, as it would be for any Western woman, until she came across Quranic Islam, by God's leave, and found that what she had been taught as the religion of Islam was very different from what God revealed in the Quran.

Besides her own experiences, she includes in her book many real life stories of friends who went through similar experiences on their own. They too saw the light at the end of the tunnel when they were introduced to Quranic Islam.

Furthermore, she has brought into focus the importance of a good translation of the Quran. The Quran, the Final Testament to humanity, is not only beautiful, complete and fully detailed, but also comes with a divine mathematical proof which Ms. Spray discusses and then summarizes in an appendix of her book. I hope her book will be a stepping-stone and inspiration for readers to go and get a Quran, and read God's guidance from cover to cover.

Abdullah Arik

Imam and Director, International Community of Submitters