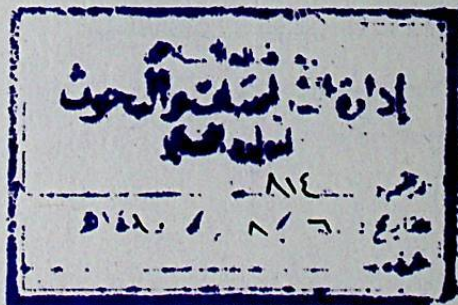


**ISLAM AND INTOLERANCE**  
**(Reply to Salman Rushdie)**

By  
**Mohammad T. Mehdi, Ph.D.**



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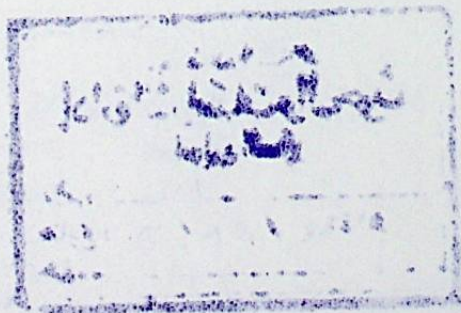
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## Foreword

This book is not about Islam. That takes volumes and volumes. Nor is it about America and the West and the question of intolerance which again needs many volumes.

The brief statement presents only some of the highlights and the essence of Islam and the broad outline of the Western and American experiment. It deals with the question of tolerance and intolerance, Western and Eastern. The book is the result of some forty years of reading, evaluating and contemplation.

I have been influenced and therefore indebted to Mohammad Hassanain Haikal and his THE LIFE OF MOHAMMAD which I read in its original Arabic in 1940. Mohammad Abdo and Jamal Al-deen Al-Afghani have been great examples.

In the process of writing this book, I have consulted with Dr. Maher Hathout, Dr. Muzammel Siddiqui, Professor Rifat Hassan, Dr. Sami Al-Arian, Dr. Kadri El-Arabi, Dr. Mahmoud Thamer, Imam Seraj Wahhaj, Dr. Syed Habib Ashraf, Al-Haaj Ghazi Khankan, Dr. Mufiz A. Chauhan, Al-Haaj Mumtaz Houssain, Dr. Muhammad J. Khan, Dr. Nasim Ashraf, Dr. Shaheer Yousaf, Imam Ali Rashid, Professor Mahmoud Ayoub, Editor Muhammad Abdul Munim, Professor Yvonne Haddad, Dr. Rafil A. Dhafir, Robert W. Thabit, Esq., Dr. Omar Ghobashy, Esq., Dr. Mohamed Mansour, Dr. Tanweer A. Sheikh, M.D. and Ayoub and Dr. Ghda Talhami and many others who have given me valuable advice and to whom I am grateful. It stands to reason that the good people who have given me their advice do not necessarily agree with every bit of analysis in this book. The author alone assumes full responsibility for that.

And as I am expressing gratitude, I must not forget David Hume, John Stuart Mill and Alexander Michaeljohn and my teachers at Berkeley, including Professors Hans Kelsen, Robert R. Schutz, Jacobus ten Broek, Eric Bellquist, Peter Odegard, Charles Aikin, Joseph Adams and others.

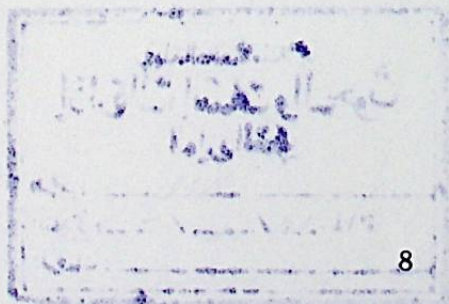


A special word of gratitude goes to Raji Daher, Editor and Publisher of *Al-Bayan*, who, as one of the leading Arab intellectuals and Islamic scholars, was kind enough to read the entire manuscript and contributed valuable suggestions.

Naturally, the Prophet is the Teacher and the Holy Quran is the Book.

December 15, 1989

(MTM)



*ISLAM AND INTOLERANCE: The Reply to Salman Rushdie* is the result of some 40 years of reading, writing, comparing religious and intellectual trends of thought and contemplation. The author is as familiar with American constitutional law as he is at home with Islamic *shari'a*.

When the news of Muslim reaction to Salman Rushdie's *SATANIC VERSES* broke out, he advised Muslim leaders in India, Pakistan, Iran and in Great Britain to "ignore" Rushdie. Any attempt at censoring or suppressing his obscene work will backfire, he warned.!

In an editorial in *ISLAM IN AMERICA*, he suggested that Islam was against censorship. The Holy Quran contains the ugly attacks by the Makkans on the Prophet and "God did not use His red pencil to cross those ugly words out!"

Dr. Mehdi is the author of some 10 books dealing with questions of constitutional law and politics. The book at hand is an attempt to present "classical Islam in modern terms." While Muslim "modernists" will find the book as an expression of their ideal appreciation of Islam, "Revivalist" Muslims will take strong issue with some of the

author's conclusions.

Intolerance is the result of ignorance, Dr. Mehdi maintains. The strong reaction of the Muslims against the Rushdie's book is the result of "ignorance of the spirit of Islam and emotionalism," while the strong Western reaction against the Muslims was the result of "ignorance, self-righteousness and arrogance" by the West.

"Tolerance" is the hallmark of Islam, the Muslim scholar maintains. Indeed, under Islam, humankind is "chosen" by God under the Jewish tradition the Jews are chosen and under Christianity the chosen are the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

As Professor Mahdi Elmandjara has pointed out, under Islam nothing in the material world is sacred. "If so," comments Neal Ascherson of the *LONDON OBSERVER*, "then the only sacred thing about art is its quality" and "the only sacred heritage, weightless as a prayer, rising from the ninth-century Mosque of ibn Tulun, is the future."

The thrust of *ISLAM AND INTOLERANCE: The Reply to Salman Rushdie* is to direct the attention of the intellectual community in the East and in the West toward that future.