



Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy

By Jonathan A.C. Brown



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"*Misquoting Muhammad* is a book I wish I had the money to buy for all my friends and colleagues, because it presents readers with a guide to Islamic thought that portrays it not as a fixed entity but as a complex product of utterly human machinations... Ultimately, Brown teaches a simple, if vital, lesson: Authenticity is elusive in religion, and those who claim it tend not to be searching for the truth but grasping for power."

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Sometimes rumor, sometimes based on fact and often misunderstood, the tenets of Islamic law and dogma were not set in the religion's founding moments. They were developed, like in other world religions, over centuries by the clerical class of Muslim scholars.

Misquoting Muhammad takes the reader back in time through Islamic civilization and traces how and why such controversies developed, offering an inside view into how key and controversial aspects of Islam took shape. *Misquoting Muhammad* lays out how Muslim intellectuals have sought to balance reason and revelation, weigh science and religion, and negotiate the eternal truths of scripture amid shifting values.



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Review

"Brown possesses formidable knowledge of premodern Muslim scholars who sought to preserve accounts of Muhammad's teachings and practices ... MISQUOTING MUHAMMAD sheds light on the considerable dynamism and sophistication within the Sunni tradition."

— *The Washington Post*

"Lucid, learned and engaging."

— *Karen Armstrong, The Sunday Times*

"Superb... an essential read for anyone seeking to understand Islam and the Muslim world... fascinating."

— *The Tribune*

"Misquoting Muhammad identifies and contextualizes the larger interpretive issues at stake in the global competition between diverse traditional and Salafi Sunni voices, and is written in such an engaging manner that the reader may find it difficult to put it down."

—*Scott Lucas, Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies*

"Brown ably navigates the cutting edge of Hadith studies while offering his able insight, encyclopedic knowledge of Muslim textual traditions, and awareness of the political contentiousness of scholarship in Islamic studies... highly recommended."

— *ALA CHOICE Magazine*

"Exhilarating ... Brown is among the most talented and productive scholars in the field of Islamic Studies today ... He is also a practicing Muslim who has the rare ability to sit at the feet of traditional scholars from Egypt to Malaysia for hours on end and translate that knowledge into something beneficial for his American audiences."

—*Los Angeles Review of Books*

"Misquoting Muhammad makes the important point that what many Muslims believe to be essential tenets of their faith are often nothing of the sort."

— *The Independent, which named Misquoting Muhammad one of the best books of the year*

"An inside view into how key controversial aspects of how Islam took shape."

—*Asian Art Newspaper*

"Erudite and provocative... compelling."

— *Literary Review*

"Eminently qualified... Brown eloquently parses Islam's rich interpretive tradition."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"There aren't many books on Islam where the Prophet Muhammad and Martin Scorsese appear together..."

helpful for the lay reader."

— *The Independent*

About the Author

Jonathan A.C. Brown is an associate professor of Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. His books include *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction* and *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. He lives in Washington, D.C.

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