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The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror (Modern Library Chronicles)

Bernard Lewis

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In his first book since *What Went Wrong?* Bernard Lewis examines the historical roots of the resentments that dominate the Islamic world today and that are increasingly being expressed in acts of terrorism. He looks at the theological origins of political Islam and takes us through the rise of militant Islam in Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, examining the impact of radical Wahhabi proselytizing, and Saudi oil money, on the rest of the Islamic world.

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 on the United States.

While hostility toward the West has a long and varied history in the lands of Islam, its current concentration on America is new. So too is the cult of the suicide bomber. Brilliantly disentangling the crosscurrents of Middle Eastern history from the rhetoric of its manipulators, Bernard Lewis helps us understand the reasons for the increasingly dogmatic rejection of modernity by many in the Muslim world in favor of a return to a sacred past. Based on his George Polk Award–winning article for *The New Yorker*, *The Crisis of Islam* is essential reading for anyone who wants to know what Usama bin Ladin represents and why his murderous message resonates so widely in the Islamic world.

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