

# Understanding islam assignment

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Understanding Islam BY Greg “ Understanding Islam” by Kenneth Jots, peg. 172 - 176 Islam is an ill-perceived religion throughout most of the Western world. Once known as a quiet and peaceful religion, the general perception of people from other religions and most of the world upon Islam is quite distorted. Ever since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, an influx of discrimination and prejudice towards Islam and Muslims has spread throughout the world.

In “ Understanding Islam,” by Kenneth Jots, an article about several accounts of how Muslims are mistreated and torpedoed throughout the world, brings up a recent poll within the United States says that 45 percent of those surveyed has an unfavorable view of Islam. The article also states that a CBS poll in April 2006 found that 46 percent of those surveyed believe Islam encourages violence more than other religions. Westerners must recognize the need to combat the backlash of stereotypes and negativity towards Islam within the 21st century.

In order to do so, we must first truly understand Islam by comprehending this unique faith and culture. In summation, the “ Understanding Islam” article by Kenneth Jots, states various counts of how Muslims and Islam has been misunderstood within the world today. The article starts off with an example of culture of Islam within the Western world. Aisha Zamia, a bilingual teaching assistant in Leeds, England, was suspended for not removing her veil that only reveals her eyes. School officials said this interfered with her ability to communicate with students.

Most testimonials from Muslims advocated Zamia; Although England where Christianity is the predominant religion and her customs are seemed to be alien to most, it is “ a Muslim woman’s right to dress as she feels appropriate, given her religious views,” says Abraham Hooper, director of communications for the Council on American Islamic relations in Washington. Kenneth Jots explains as the face-veil debate illustrates, the distrust stems in part from an array of differences between today’s Christianity and Islam as variously practiced in the so-called Muslim world, including the growing Muslim Diaspora in Europe and North America.

The article continues to back up the aforementioned argument on how Muslims and Islam should be seen in a better light by margining general views and behavior towards Islam in the 21st century - “ Those theological and cultural differences are reflected... In Westerners’ widespread view of Muslims as narrow minded and extremist. Many Muslims correspondingly view Westerners as decadent and immoral.

The differences also can be seen in the debates over the role Islam plays in motivating terrorist violence by Islamic extremist groups such as al Qaeda and the objections raised by Muslims to what they consider unflattering and unfair description of Islam in the West Cost, 173). ” This statement by the author reflects upon Westerners’ views on Muslims and their reciprocal views towards us. Muslims view Westerners as greedy and overbearing as presents. Since 9/1 1, the religion and subsequent culture as a whole has been stereotyped as a religion that is rooted in violence and evil. Islam, like all religions, has its historical share of violence,” states Stephen Schwartz, an adult convert to Islam and executive director of the Center for Islamic <https://assignbuster.com/understanding-islam-assignment/>

Pluralism in Washington. " But there's no reason to single out Islam. " Amid Safe, an associate professor of Islamic studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill states, " Muslims must come to terms with our demons. And one of those demons is violence. " Most of the world does not understand the religion of Islam simply because society acts as a whole when they do not understand an outside culture. This lack of understanding induces a great amount of prejudice.

With this prejudice, perceptions are exacerbated often times by religious and evangelical leaders. For example, Jerry Vines, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called Salami's founder and Prophet Muhammad, " demon-possessed pedophilia. " Another religious leader, Franklin Graham, called Islam, " a very evil and wicked religion. " Even Pope Benedict VI drew sharp criticism for his remarks for quoting a medieval Christian emperor's description of Islam as " evil and inhuman. " Remarks such as these can go such a long way especially with radical leaders making these insensitive comments.

These comments support the aforesaid notions on how society acts as a whole when viewing an outside culture. Being part of the Jewish religion and all that its culture entails, I can relate to the Muslims' struggle against prejudice. In the United States, 78.6 percent of the nation is Christian (" Religious Landscape Survey" August 2007). As typical Christians are English-speaking Caucasians, it is often unusual to find someone who looks different and believes in a different faith. Unfortunately, this prejudice that is faced from most Christians towards Muslims in the United States is all too real.

Most Americans feel uncomfortable or ambivalent towards Muslims Judging by the aforementioned poll in the article stating that almost half of the population of Americans believes Islam encourages violence more than any other religions. The view of much of the Western world that the followers of Islam are evil and malevolent is unfair as these prejudices were most likely stemmed from the notable terrorist attacks in New York, Istanbul, Madrid, and London – all due to al Qaeda and other extremists who claim to be devout Muslims. Although Islam is the second largest religion in the world, it has the most devout followers.

I went to high school in a very culturally diverse town with a mixed array of students; many of those were Muslim. I was fortunate to make friends with a devout Muslim, as he would often times tell me how he and his family would pray five times a day, when they could. This seemed unusual to me, as I asked him more about it as he told me that he's probably on the reform spectrum of followers as opposed to the very orthodox Muslims. Recalling this experience and my relationship with my Muslim friend, Westerners should get to know someone who practices Islam so that they can truly understand their religion, culture, and behavior.

Reflecting upon this experience and relating it to the excerpt Basic Tenets of Islam which is stated within the article, the five daily prayers is paralleled by the five basic pillars of Islam; creed, alimending, fasting, prayer, and pilgrimage. This, to me, seems like a very strict and sacred procedure that must be carried out every day. In Judaism, the orthodox Jews do not even pray as frequently or have as stringent of customs that devout Muslims as

they only wish to be perceived as peaceful, rather than being seen as ill-natured. Throughout the world today, prejudice is becoming more common.

Whether preconception is taught to Judge a human by their character ether than Judging them for their beliefs, it is a notable flaw within our society.

Reflecting upon the article " Understanding Islam" has bettered my perception towards Muslims and how they struggle to make a good name for themselves all while retaining their faith. With the stereotypes and negativity towards Islam in today's world, Westerners should first comprehend Muslims' faith, culture, and religion rather than having their perceptions be tainted from the post 9/1 1 era.

As a nation, we must put ourselves into Islamic adherents' shoes and see the world wrought their eyes. The grudges that we hold for 9/1 1 and other terrorist attacks by Muslim radicals against Islam must be dropped.

Westerners must develop a sense to be more understanding and complacent of those who seem to be ostracizes. In order to do so, we must truly comprehend their background and the content of their character. Citations Kenneth Jots, Understanding Islam, (London, I-J: McGraw Hill, 2005), 5 Preachers, " Religious landscape Survey. " Last modified August 2007. Accessed September 20, 2013. [Http://religions.Perform.Org/reports](http://religions.Perform.Org/reports).