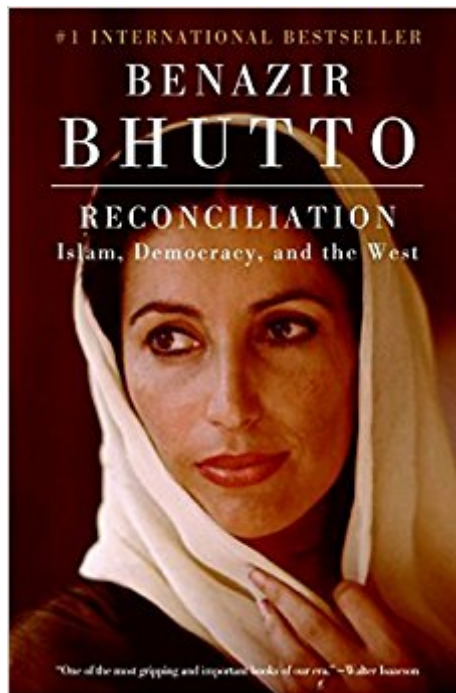


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Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, And The West



Synopsis

Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan in October 2007, after eight years of exile, hopeful that she could be a catalyst for change. Upon a tumultuous reception, she survived a suicide-bomb attack that killed nearly two hundred of her compatriots. But she continued to forge ahead, with more courage and conviction than ever, since she knew that time was running out— for the future of her nation and for her life. In *Reconciliation*, Bhutto recounts in gripping detail her final months in Pakistan and offers a bold new agenda for how to stem the tide of Islamic radicalism and to rediscover the values of tolerance and justice that lie at the heart of her religion. She speaks out not just to the West but also to the Muslims across the globe. Bhutto presents an image of modern Islam that defies the negative caricatures often seen in the West. After reading this book, it will become even clearer what the world has lost by her assassination.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Just days prior to her assassination, the late former prime minister of troubled Pakistan completed the manuscript of this book, which held great personal importance to her. Its importance extends beyond the writer's own sense of purpose and accomplishment, however, because it is a vastly significant document for anyone seeking to understand the nature of past and contemporary Islam and its current interface with the West. The reconciliation to which the book's title refers is Bhutto's chief thesis: "two critical tensions . . . must be reconciled to prevent the clash of civilizations—the first of

these tensions is internal to Islam (extremism vs. moderation) and the second involves Islam's relations with the non-Islamic world (confrontation or cooperation). Her intense, learned discussion of the concept of jihad, her careful explication of the Quran's true position on women's equality, and her helpful pointing out of the theological differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims, among other relevant and eloquent analyses, lead her to insist that "democracy and Islam are not only compatible but mutually sustaining." Within a chapter on the history of the relatively new country of Pakistan lies an autobiographical section in which the author details her terms in office as prime minister and the difficulties she was personally and purposefully handed by her adversaries. This book is an eloquent plea, a passionate admonition, that reconciliation as she has outlined it must indeed occur. --Brad Hooper --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"It is impossible to understand today's world without knowing Pakistan; and impossible to understand Pakistan without reading this book. A courageous woman tragically killed speaks to us of reconciliation. We owe it to her and to ourselves to listen, comprehend, and act." (Madeleine Albright) "This is one of the most gripping and important books of our era. It's a brilliant manifesto for challenging radical Islam. Benazir Bhutto was an intense but charming woman driven by a crucial mission. Her death makes this beautiful book all the more poignant, and also more necessary." (Walter Isaacson) "This is a courageous and powerful answer to hatred and intolerance, written by an extraordinary woman. Reading Benazir Bhutto's Reconciliation shows just how much we lost with her death. You'll finish it and mourn for what might have been." (Arianna Huffington) "Benazir Bhutto will go down in history as a courageous leader who risked and lost her life in the service not only of her nation, but of values shared by us all. Anyone interested in Pakistan, democracy, or Islam should read this fascinating and important book." (Joe Biden) "Benazir Bhutto's book is a powerful and insightful analysis of the formidable challenges that confronted an extraordinary woman who paid the ultimate price for daring to attempt to bring democracy to Pakistan. President Kennedy would have called her a Profile in Courage." (Ted Kennedy) "Pakistan has become the critical battlefield in the so-called war on terror. Reconciliation is the story of a courageous woman and her struggle for democracy and moderation in Islam. Benazir Bhutto, not the extremists who killed her, represented the vast majority of Pakistani Muslims." (Peter Galbraith) "This book is an eloquent reflection of traits which

defined the life of Benazir Bhutto – an unshakable optimism about the future, a firm belief in the power of dialogue, and a commitment to democracy. The strength of her message of hope underscores how much was lost in her tragic death. (Nancy Pelosi)

This book is an excellent expression of "liberal Islam", a view of the Muslim religion that is essentially democratic, tolerant, and compatible with most other values cherished in the West. Bhutto points out that democracy (or the desire for it) is a more universal desire, not owned by either East or West. Her tolerant, hopeful expression is a most welcome and refreshing change from the predominantly negative image of radical Islamism. Bhutto points out that the radicals have subverted and perverted the mainstream Muslim view, and offers arguments from the Quran and from modern scholarly research to show that Islam can thrive in a modern, democratic world, if Muslims make the right choices and the West helps (rather than thwarts) those efforts. She convincingly confronts and refutes the "Clash of Civilization" hypothesis of Samuel Hunting, and offers a more positive track towards reconciliation. Her argument about women's equality dodges a few critical verses of the Quran, but overall her view is compelling and engaging. It is a great tragedy for all that her voice was silenced by radicals, but as the afterword indicates her hope and vision still lives on in the hearts of others. I strongly recommend this book. (and incidentally, the other reviewer's claim that her father was the corrupt architect of two wars is patently false. Her father was not in office when those wars were fought. Yahya Khan was still in power during the Bangladesh separation, how can Zulfikar be blamed? Zulfikar was put to death by Zia al-Haq. Apparently some have no command of historical facts.)

This book that she finished days before she was killed, quotes the Koran to show that Islam is an open, pluralistic, and tolerant religion. It has been hijacked by extremists like Osama bin Laden who "exploit, manipulate and militarize Islam." More importantly she argues that Islam and the West do not need to be headed on a collision course toward a "clash of civilizations." People of the region do want democracy, yet the United State's role in helping to overthrow the democratically elected government of Iran in 1953, and many other short-sighted interventions, made generations of Muslims suspicious and cynical about Western motivations. However, she doesn't place all the blame on the legacy of Western colonialization in the Middle East. She asks Islam to heal the Shia-Sunni schism, encourage and provide support for emerging democracies, and get the religious extremists out of power.

As our nation continues to become engaged in the unending conflicts of Muslim countries, this book presents some hope that these conflicts are not totally a bottomless pit. There are hundreds of millions of moderate-thinking Muslims. But it only takes the 5% lunatic fringe to push us toward a possible nuclear disaster. Benazir Bhutto was one of the few moderates who had the guts to speak out against these radicals. But they also silenced her by assassination, which is their traditional method of pushing their extreme agenda.

What an amazing story. Benazir Bhutto lived a life unlike anything most Americans could imagine. But this is not just about her life. She explains so much about Islam, democracy, and the West. Her insight is eye opening and optimistic. The sad thing is that she was assassinated before she could do more to further the cause of reconciliation between Islamic cultures and Western cultures. Read this if you have any interest in understanding what is going on in Islamic cultures and how it all relates to cultures that you are probably more familiar with. Truly fascinating.

I enjoyed the read. I have asked several Palestinian friends about their take on the Bhutto and they were not entirely in favor of her. She is too idealistic, without any real action they were saying. This book might convince them otherwise. The pressures of society and the military regime against one woman's dream for a democracy were huge. She was very brave!

The author's message is that the way to defeat terrorism in the Middle East is through support of education and, until the populace is educated, welfare as well. She dismisses the West's policy of defining how other culture's should govern themselves as woefully dysfunctional and certain to fail in both the short and long run. An Ivy League graduate, her message is convincing.

Enlighten yourself. With each passing day this book becomes more and more timely and prescient. Should be required reading for all media and government employees the world over. Also should be required reading for all highschool history students.

Benazir Bhutto wrote this book with a very unique outlook on life. She notes in the book that she was brought up knowing it was her duty as a human to give back to humanity, and she lived up to that through her documentation on Islamic and democratic life. I bought the book to increase my knowledge of Pakistan and their peoples, however this book was far more than that. In fact, don't buy this book if you're looking for a book about Bhutto or Pakistan. DO buy this book if you want to

learn more about the Islamic world, with many Quranic quotes. This book is a MUST READ for any person researching the female role in foreign relations, or counter terrorism.

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