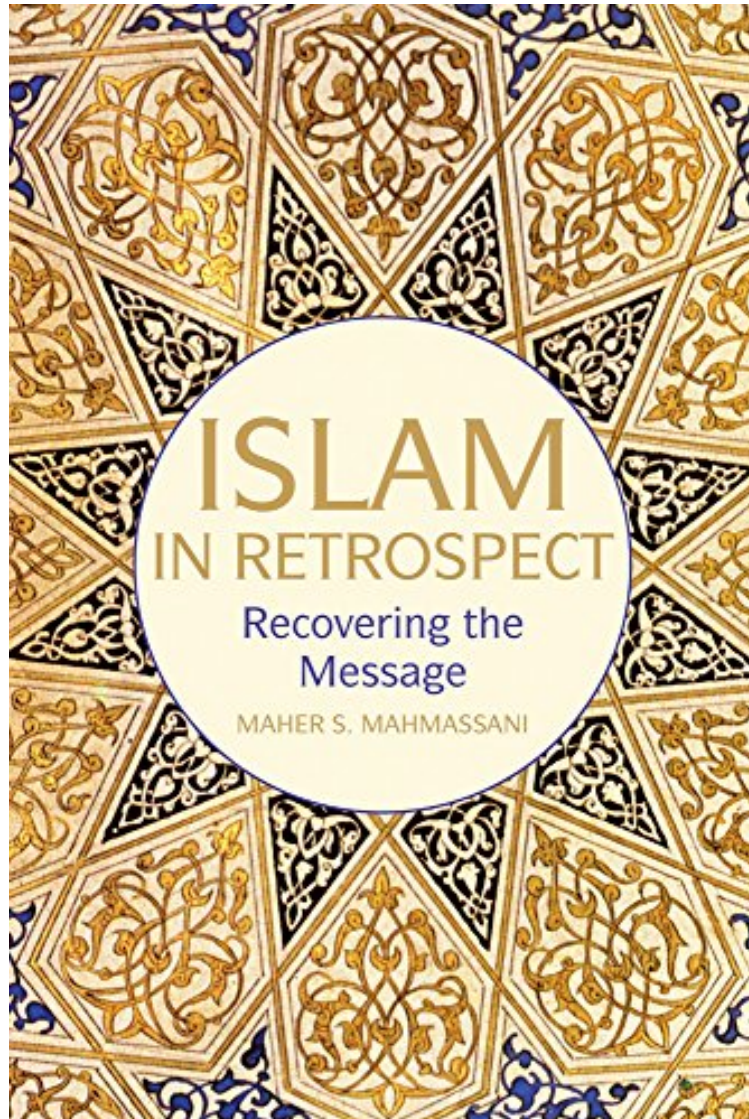


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Islam in Retrospect: Recovering the Message

Maher S. Mahmassani
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RENEWING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM IN TODAY S WORLD Islam, in many of its current guises, no longer resembles its original Message. In a world of intractable conflicts plagued by political Islam and Islamophobia and where other forms of fundamentalism within the major religious creeds are on the rise, as well this book serves as a reminder. It aims to recover and reaffirm Islam s underlying and guiding principles. Setting out to distinguish the divine from the human in order to elucidate the pristine nature of the divine Message, Mahmassani reasserts Islam s universal, secular, and progressive character. In Part One of this comprehensive and meticulously researched volume, the author places the Message of Islam within its historic, geographic, and cultural contexts. Focusing on the primacy of the Holy Qur'an among the sources of Islam, he examines the controversies which have surrounded the Prophetic Tradition Sunna and Hadith as a source of Islam, demonstrating the full scope of Islam s universality. In Part Two he goes on to clarify Islam s secular nature by reconsidering inherited beliefs about the relationship between Islam and the state, and Islam and Sharia a law, revealing Islam s inherent humanism. This leads, in Part Three, to reflections on the progressive nature of Islam, and on the importance of the role of the mind in understanding and taking full benefit of religion as an engine of progress. In particular, the author focuses on human rights, including issues of human dignity, freedom of faith, and gender equality. *Islam in Retrospect: Recovering the Message* is a rich contribution to continuing efforts to reform perceptions of Islam. Scholars and students in the fields of Islamic studies, religion, and the humanities, teachers, policy makers, and general readers will find this carefully constructed sourcebook invaluable for its fresh outlook and approach to understanding Islam and Muslim Scriptures in the light of today s world. As Mahmassani affirms, Islam, as a divine message, has been and continuously remains perfect."

About the Author Maher S. Mahmassani has written two books and numerous articles in anthologies and law journals, in Arabic, English and French, on matters ranging from Islamic law to finance, investment and family law. He earned his doctorate in 1972 and taught law in Beirut at the Lebanese University Law School and the Arab University Law School. For over two decades, he was Chief Counsel for the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia at the International Finance Corporation. He also served as General Counsel of Middle East Airlines, The Arab Investment Company and Solidere, the private sector company in charge of rebuilding the downtown area of Beirut, which was totally destroyed in the 17-year civil war. He now resides in McLean, Virginia.