

What Went Wrong?

Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response

BERNARD LEWIS



PHOENIX

By Bernard Lewis

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Preface

This book was already in page proof when the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington took place on September 11, 2001. It does not therefore deal with them, nor with their immediate causes and after-effects. It is however related to these attacks, examining not what happened and what followed, but what went before – the longer sequence and larger pattern of events, ideas, and attitudes that preceded and in some measure produced them.

B.L.
Princeton, N.J.
October 15, 2001



For many centuries Islam was the world's greatest, most open, most enlightened, most creative, most powerful civilisation. And then everything changed, as the previously despised West won victory after victory, first on the battlefield and in the marketplace, then in almost every aspect of public and even private life. Bernard Lewis examines the anguished reaction of the Islamic world as it tried to understand why things had changed, and he provides a fascinating portrait of a culture in turmoil. Some Middle Easterners asked not 'who did this to us?' but 'where did we go wrong?'; while others fastened blame on a series of scapegoats, both internal and external. The results are very much with us today.

'His slim volume is replete with the exceptional historical insight that one has come to expect from the world's foremost Islamic scholar'

Wall Street Journal

'Lewis has done us all a remarkable service'

New York Times Book Review

'No one writes about Muslim history with greater authority, or intelligence, or literary charm than Professor Bernard Lewis'

Sunday Times



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