

I Am Muslim

Dina Zaman

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I am Muslim is a selfish journey of faith. Dina meets shamans, nationalists, moderates and gets into all sorts of scrapes, to discover what Islam means to Muslims in Malaysia. Heartbreaking, angry and downright funny.

Dina Zaman's articles about being Muslim in Malaysia today capture the multifaceted aspects of difference and alterity in normative religious life better than many academic studies - Dr Farish A Noor

I Am Muslim Details

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From Reader Review I Am Muslim for online ebook

Nessreen says

A collection of essays first published as a column in a popular Malaysian news site – my first Malaysian book and I loved it. It's about Malaysia's version of Islam and the politics of its implementation, and I drew similarities and differences from my own background. It's funny, insightful, clean writing. I recommend!

Angelina Soon says

Collection of writings in one book! Dina Zaman and her observation of Islam and Malaysia in a liberal way. I enjoyed reading this, and growing up witnessing different backgrounds I had similar questions and Dina definitely wrote them down. I definitely recommend this book to people! It's funny in a whole new level of perspective.

Nur Fatin Atiqah says

14 June 2013.

Actually I have written a review on this book upon finishing the book but the internet connection was effing slow that day so I couldn't submit the review, hence I am writing this review again, today.

First of all, I DO ENJOY READING THIS BOOK! YAY!

Aunty Dina Zaman was so hilarious, funny and witty in her own way. I like her arguments. I like the way she puts her points and elaborates them in her own way. Even though most of the articles was written around 5-6 years ago, but I still found it relevance up until now. Makes me thinking that we never really change, don't we?

However, in my very own opinion, I would rather say that the book needs a rebranding in its title because honestly, this book really do not tells stories about those Muslim who are really really really devoted to God and this faith. However, the book mostly tells stories about people who still claim they are Muslim but not really practicing Islam as the way of life. Yeah, they do pray (sometimes), fast during the Holy Ramadhan (like a celebration, really) but do they ever think of Islam more deeply? Sometimes, whenever there's someone who had passed away or during solemnization. But apart from that, they are back to normal. Normal means that they don't really care about Islam. All they care is the world.

So I think the book should be called, "Hey, I Am Muslim Too" because thats was all its about. Telling stories about people who have little belief in their faith. Stories about people misunderstanding what Islam is. Thinking that Islam is easy but why do they felt that the religion was suffocating him, banning them from doing what they love to do (clubbing, free sex and all that matters)? Although I won't deny that these people exists, they live with us but to actually represent them with a title of a book "I Am Muslim" would not be that appropriate. So yeah, "I Am Muslim Too" would sound nice ;)

Lastly, upon finishing this book, I've just realized that how divided we are. And it would take a miracle for us to unite. For the time being, let's just hope for the best ^^

Thank you!

Putri says

This is the book about Malay muslims from the perspective of Malay Muslim woman.

The author described about many issues as a muslim in Malaysia as an Islam country boldly.

That there are lots of muslim types out there, range from the conservative muslim, liberal muslim, gay and lesbian muslim, the non practice muslim, etc.

A cynical but quite funny book eventhough not necessarily well written but for me it gave me different view to see Muslim lives in Malaysia that I have had thought.

But Anyhow at the end of the day, nobody's perfect. And definitely you cant judge a book by its cover, really!

lynne naranek says

Certainly not claiming to be an authority on Islam, "I am Muslim" is an admittedly selfish journey by Dina to explore what it means to be Malay and Muslim in Malaysia, and how they often seem contradictory.

Her tale about accompanying a friend to visit Uncle Din, a supposedly 100-year old bomoh well-versed in Siam, Muslim, Malay and shamanistic knowledge, was rather cool, I'd heard about this person, and have had brushes with "that" side of things...

... in general, though, Dina just goes off in a few tangents in each piece, each time providing charming glimpses into her life and that of her friends - whether Malay, Chinese, Indian, Muslim or non-Muslim.

I would recommend this to anyone who wants to know more about Islam as it is really practiced, or not, in Malaysia.

Rita says

Great insight to the lives of Malaysian Muslim. Some stories caught me by surprise and scared the hell out of me. I thought as a person I was pretty open-minded. But I guess I'm still a bit naive when it comes to what people do behind closed doors.

This book is really honest. Easy to read. And offers mind-boggling facts.

Anouk says

Excellent book! It is very fresh and funny, but factual and cynical at the same time. I love the way she thinks (well as she is a columnist, it is hard not to be subjective). It shows the world that being a muslim does not necessarily makes a person different than the rest of the world. There are gay muslims, lesbian muslims, muslims who have affairs, and muslims who go to witch doctors. At the end of the day, what you see isnt always what you get!

What a hypocrite world that i live in..

Cik Aini says

This book revolves around the writer's self journey in discovering Islam & strengthening her faith. As she struggles with herself, and her soul searching, Dina wrote about reflections of Malay Muslims' community. She started her writings with thought provoking writings but she hit the nail right, and her writings seemed like true reflections of our daily life.

There are many issues that Dina dealt with, for example, some Muslims who don headscarf, just out of custom or tradition, but if asked, they don't know the true reason why God give directives for woman to don headscarf and properly attire themselves. Other issues include taboo ones, such as sex out of wedlock, a story about a girl who tries her best to become a good Muslimah despite the fact that she felt confused indeed cause she has inclination towards other women and about Muslims who live oversea, who couldn't care less about reciting al-Fatihah

In this book, Dina even quote Quranic verses & Hadith. She didn't manipulate the verses, in fact she left it as it is, with some explanation, I think much more for non-Muslims to understand what Islam is all about. Dina also became sort of missionaries by explaining the five pillars of Islam, Rukun Iman, even stories such as Israk Mikraj experienced by our beloved Prophet, Nabi Muhammad SAW.

In her quest, she also had written regarding some women who wanted to don headscarf very much, but still have their doubts, as they are afraid to become someone, who wear head scarves, but do not practice Islam's way of life. Dina even told stories about Muslims who believe in others than God, and rediscovering Islam in one of the best way, in Jakarta, instead in KL/Malaysia.

She writes with a dose of humour, which made it entertaining enough to read. In fact, I was unable to put it down when I first read it. I am familiar to Dina's writings when I was still in school, and I expected her book to be as much as entertaining as her usual pursuit, and she had proven herself that she's an excellent writer.

I think the writings are true view of Malays' life. Yes, Islam is perfect, syumul, but we the ummah, always have our own interpretations. A good read, but you need an open mind to read her book.

Shafira Noh says

I read it, to know what Malaysian thinks about Islam, even who ever she is.

"Talk to us". Excerpt from one of her written post there. Sometimes, we really like to label other else, without seeking first why they did one thing.

I really hope, to mingle with anyone. Not to be influenced but to understand.

syafiqah says

Ada sesetengah yang boleh diambil dari buku ini.walaupun pedih tapi itulah realiti kadang kadang apa yang terjadi sebenar di malaysia.ada perkara yang perlu diteliti dengan lebih mendalam dan tidak boleh diguna pakai membuta tuli.Ambil yang baik dari buku ini dan apa yang rasa tidak patut diambil jadikan sebagai kayu pengukur untuk masa depan.thanks to dina zaman sebab berani menulis lain dari yang lain.

Tomoko says

This is her collection of writings on Islam and Muslims in Malaysia. I find it to be a quasi-autobiographical view on her experiences and others whom she had encountered.

Growing up in Malaysia (big bad city of KL), I accept things as they are. I believe that we were a liberal and secular society amidst religious practices around us. It wasn't until I had a road trip around Semenanjung and visited smaller kampungs and observed the majority of Malaysians and that changed my views.

I'm only halfway through the book, but I cannot help to reflect on the parallels of what I've seen and experienced. Klang valley-ites are the minority and our collective views as a nation are so much at odd with one another. Reading on what everyday Muslims face everyday, the constant need of 'pious-dom' and fear of erring has really confounded me.

Great bedside read btw!

Emilade says

It was enjoyable. I was particularly interested in the essays concerning identifying as both homosexual and Muslim. Also, the blending of traditional Malay customs with Islam.
Its a good book, you should read it.

Suraya Nordin says

It took me a long long long time to finish this book because I put it on hangover rack. Actually, I bought this book because my lecturer asked me to read more on Malaysian writer. As I read this book and I adore Dina Zaman for her courage to tell her opinion about Muslim, to be specified, Malay, openly. She might be condemned by others but I think what she wrote is what are actually happening nowadays. However, I do not recommend this book to others or my friend. I am afraid, those who already in their improper way of life, refuse to follow the right path.

She is very cynical in her writing and she admits it herself. I like the cynical jokes in this book. No matter what, we have our own opinion while she has hers. Either way, we both Malay and Muslims. May god bless us untill Jannah.

Mas says

Liberal piece of writing.

I think it's alright -- not exactly an inspiring piece I was expecting.

A tad too liberal for older generations who have trouble accepting different ways than theirs.

I didn't take this book too seriously. I accept the author's view and some might contradict mine, but I can live with it. It's not like I'm gonna fatally stone her, although I must say, in some places, she would be, just sayin'.

The author described the book as stories from her selfish journey understanding Islam and herself as a Muslim. As soon as I finished reading the book, the thing that kept coming to my mind was the hope that readers would not use her writing as a representative of a Muslim woman's perspective.

Honestly, I do not believe so. Her mindset is more liberal than general Malaysian Muslim woman. Her experience living in foreign countries could contribute to that.

The questions she proposed in the book had crossed my mind at one point, too. But I have my own ways of finding the answers.

However, I'd like to give credit to her boldness in this piece. She thinks and she speaks it out. Cool, by all means.

Sharifah Syakila says

It took me a few days to finish this book because I'm always slow when reading non fiction books. Dina has a unique way of writing, I love how she's funny and witty and how she writes excites me. The down part of it is that, the book is written in a messy manner I think. All the topics were jumbled up and she jumped from one topic to another too fast. I find it frustrating and confusing at times. I feel like she was rushing to get the book done. I liked two chapters in this book, one was about polygamy and the other was how gay are you. Both were really well written. Overall it was a good read and hopefully she'll write more.
