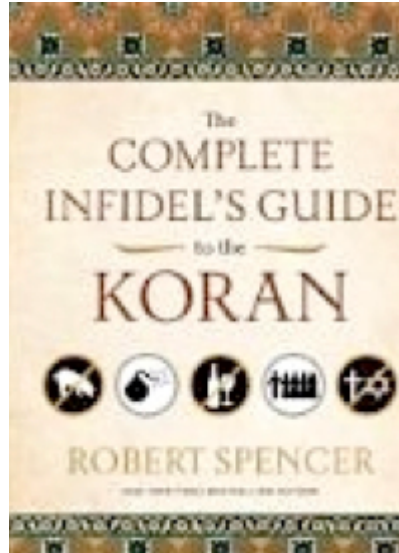




A Review of Spencer's "Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran"

Despite its cheeky title, Spencer's recent book on the source of Islamic doctrine — *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran* — is a valuable compendium of information about the Koran and its literally illiterate "author," Mohammed. Spencer's first chapter, "Why Every American Needs to Know What's in the Koran," offers an engaging introduction to the entire work, and immediately dispenses with many of the silly arguments which Islamists, and their apologists, often throw out during a debate to distract or confuse their opponents. For example, Spencer shoots down the familiar argument that a statement from the Koran has been "taken out of context":



Critics of jihad violence and Islamic supremacism are often accused of taking quotes from the Koran "out of context." This is a bitterly ironic charge given that much of the Koran has no context in the first place. For long stretches there is little or no narrative unity. The text move[s] from topic to topic with scant regard for any conventional notion of continuity. Many verses appear as abstract maxims, related without regard to any particular situation; to demand that they be quoted "in context" is to demand something that was never possible in the first place. (17)

Spencer's book is a powerful argument against Islam precisely because it sets forth the actual teachings of the Koran and the Hadith (the voluminous record of supposed sayings of Mohammed, which are of tremendous importance for *sharia* law). Reading the Koran matters, Spencer maintains, "because, contrary to what many would have us believe, sacred texts are *not* entirely determined by what the faithful wish to see in them." (9)

Unlike the apparent lack on context in the Koran, *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran* gathers the teachings of the Koran and Hadith topically, with chapters on Mohammed's self-glorification, Islam's vilification of Jews and Christians, the appalling teachings of Islam regarding women, and the glorification of violence against non-Muslims. In regard to this last subject, Spencer makes the point that many Islamic scholars believe that the "Verse of the Sword" ("slay the idolaters wherever you find them" [9:5]) is the "last word" for Muslims regarding non-Muslims:

One Koranic scholar, Ibn Juzayy, notes that 9:5 abrogates "every peace treaty in the Qur'an," and specifically abrogates the directive in 47:4 to "set free or ransom" captive unbelievers. According to as-Suyuti, this verse "abrogates pardon, truce and overlooking" — that is, the overlooking of pagans' offenses. The *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* is particularly belligerent, saying that the Muslims must "kill the idolaters wherever you find them — whether they be in the Haram [the sacred precincts of Mecca] or outside it — and seize them by capture and besiege them in citadels and fortresses until they either fight or become Muslim and lie in wait for them on every road on which they



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travel. If they repent of their unbelief and establish the prayer and pay zakat, let them go on their way and do not interfere with them.” (201)

Spencer also observes that it is not enough for a Muslim to claim he rejects such teachings, because “Islam is the only major religion with a developed doctrine of deception. Many believe this doctrine, called *taqiyya*, is exclusively Shi’ite, but actually it is founded upon Koranic passages.” (202)

Chapter eleven (“‘Love Your Enemies’ and Other Things the Koran Doesn’t Say”) offers a number of striking contrasts between what those who have been raised in a nominally Christian country take for granted as basic teachings of a religion, and demonstrates that such things are quite notably missing from Islam. As Spencer writes,

And indeed, the reader of the Koran will search in vain for even a single verse that specifically tells Muslims to be kind to Infidels or to befriend them, unless it be “by way of precaution, that ye may guard yourselves from them” (3:28) — a verse that, as we have seen, Islamic theologians explain as mandating a false solicitude toward unbelievers for self-protection and/or the protection of Islam.

The Koran also lacks any admonition that all human beings are equal in dignity before God, or the corresponding conviction that all people should have legal equality. And that absence of these principles makes itself felt all through Islamic cultures and societies. (212-3)

Throughout *The Complete Infidel’s Guide to the Koran*, readers encounter numerous boxes where quotations from the Bible and the Koran are set together so one may compare and contrast the teachings of Christianity and Islam. A certain mix of comedic value and horror is also provided by a series of similar boxes entitled, “The Hadith illuminates the Koran.” One such passage from the Hadith, for example, offers a fascinating insight into human anatomy provided by Mohammed: “Ibn ‘Umar reported Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying that a non-Muslim eats in seven intestines whereas a Muslim eats in one intestine.” (100) Another, however, explains why slavery is good for non-Muslims: “The Verse: ‘You [true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his *Sunna*] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind...’ means, the best for the people, as you bring them with chains on their necks till they embrace Islam (thereby saving them from the eternal punishment in Hell-fire and make them enter Paradise in the Hereafter).” (104)

The final chapter of Spencer’s book seems particularly apropos in the context of the recent controversy over one pastor’s professed intention to [burn the Koran](#). Chapter twelve (“Ban This Fascist Book?”) discusses efforts in India and the Netherlands to specifically ban the Koran. Though Spencer does not advocate such a course of action, he does observe that “It is futile to pretend the problem doesn’t exist and hope that it will go away.” Instead of what he terms “naïveté and appeasement,” Spencer recommends:

First, we must recognize that the contents of the Koran have implications for public policy. The fact that significant numbers of Muslims worldwide consider the book to be a mandate for violence should concern government and law enforcement authorities, who should act to prevent Koran-inspired violence. Officials should refuse to accept the deceptions and half-truths that U.S.-based Islamic groups routinely offer regarding the Koran’s violent teachings. (226)

How likely Spencer considers such a course of action to be is another matter. The arguments of moral equivalence — honed to virtual perfection during the days of the Cold War — are now applied to



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Christianity and Islam, instead of the West and the Communist bloc. Still, not all of the public is prepared to repeat the lie of moral equivalence, as was recently demonstrated by a [Washington Post-ABC News poll](#):

The new results come alongside increasingly critical public views of Islam: 49 percent of all Americans say they have generally unfavorable opinions of Islam, compared with 37 percent who say they have favorable ones. That's the most negative split on the question in Post-ABC polls dating to October 2001.

Nearly a third of all Americans see mainstream Islam as encouraging violence, little changed from recent years. More, a slim majority, say it's a peaceful religion. "Whatever faith or God they believe in, I think most people are decent," Susan Deal, 45, of Walbridge, Ohio said in a follow-up interview.

The answer to such naïveté is found in careful examination of the actual teachings of Islam, and not the bumpersticker clichés dished out by Islamist apologists on cable news channels and the Internet. Spencer's book can be of great service in dispersing the fog of such shallow thinking.

Robert Spencer, *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2009), paperback, \$19.95



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