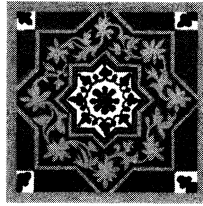


The
COMPLETE
INFIDEL'S GUIDE
— to the —
KORAN



ROBERT SPENCER



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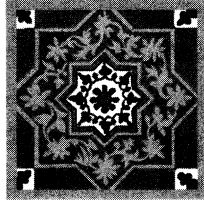
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Chapter One



WHY EVERY AMERICAN NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THE KORAN

IT IS THE MOST REVERED and reviled of books. It is the primary religious text of one of the world's most prominent and influential religions—one that attracts a steady stream of converts in non-Muslim countries today.

For more than a billion Muslims, the Koran is the unadulterated, pure word of Allah, eternal and perfect, delivered through the angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad.¹ In many Muslim countries, boys memorize large sections of it before they can even read.

The book is to be treated with the deepest reverence. Muslims consider it so holy that they are not to touch a Koran unless they are in a state of ritual purity; non-Muslims, according to Islamic law, are not supposed to touch it at all except under strictly defined circumstances.² And the failure to show proper respect for a Koran, anywhere in the world, can be

fatal—a false report in *Newsweek* magazine in 2005 that U.S. military interrogators at Guantanamo Bay had flushed a Koran down a toilet sparked rioting in Muslim countries, resulting in at least fifteen deaths.³

This reverence for the Koran is even expressed by non-Muslims. Michael Potemra, deputy managing editor of *National Review* magazine, asserts, “The Koran is one of the loveliest books ever written, a distillation of monotheism that is full of spiritual wisdom, and I never fail to profit from my reading of it.”⁴ And at Guantanamo Bay, contrary to *Newsweek*'s false account, U.S. military procedures require guards to don gloves before touching a prisoner's Koran, which must be handled “as if it were a fragile piece of delicate art.”⁵

So what exactly does the Koran say? The U.S.-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) claims that the book reveals the true, peaceful nature of Islam and promotes interfaith harmony. As CAIR's “Explore the Quran” campaign urges, “In today's climate of heightened religious sensitivities and apparent cultural clashes, now is the time for people of all faiths to better acquaint themselves with Islam's sacred text, the Holy Quran.” CAIR indicates that this campaign is a response to those who dare to claim that Islam has something to do with terrorism:

This campaign, titled Explore the Qur'an, serves as a response to those who would defame and desecrate the holy book of Muslims without full knowledge of its teachings. False and uninformed accusations have been leveled against the Qur'an for some time. But now, this initiative places the sacred text directly in the hands of people of other faiths in the American public and encourages people of conscience to discover the truth about Islam. Explore the Qur'an allows the holy book to speak for itself and educate people of other faith traditions about the universal teachings of Islam.⁶

Muslims often insist vociferously that the Koran teaches peace. Adil Salahi, the Muslim author of a biography of Muhammad, maintains, “You only need to open the Koran and read to realize that what it calls for is peace, not war.”⁷ Likewise, Spc. David Burgos, a Muslim operations clerk for the 492nd Harbormaster Detachment, Fort Eustis, Virginia, has said, “I have read the Koran several times. . . . Islam teaches its followers to be peaceful. Islam is all about giving life, not taking it.”⁸

Not only is the Koran’s message ostensibly peaceful, but the book also seems to contain timeless wisdom that is hailed by leaders across the world. Former British prime minister Tony Blair insists that “the authentic basis of Islam, as laid down in the Koran, is progressive, humanitarian, [and] sees knowledge and scientific advance as a duty, which is why for centuries Islam was the fount of so much invention and innovation. Fundamental Islam is actually the opposite of what the extremists preach.”⁹

Blair’s genuflection was perhaps exceeded by former U.S. president George W. Bush’s second Inaugural Address, which classed the Koran with the formative texts of Western civilization: “Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self. That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people.”¹⁰

On the other hand. . .

Yet many non-Muslims, believing the Koran preaches intolerance and warfare, regard the book as about as holy as *Mein Kampf*. In fact, the direct comparison has been made more than once. Speaking of the Koran, Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders called upon the Netherlands to “ban this wretched book like *Mein Kampf* is banned!”¹¹ Wilders’ view was shared by the late, world-renowned Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, who said in 2005 that “the Koran is the *Mein Kampf* of a religion which has always

aimed to eliminate the others.”¹² Even the great Winston Churchill, in denigrating *Mein Kampf*, called it “the new Koran of faith and war: turgid, verbose, shapeless, but pregnant with its message.”¹³ And it’s not only Westerners who discern hateful messages in the Koran; Hindus in Calcutta petitioned the government to ban the book as hate speech.¹⁴

What exactly do these critics find in the Koran that is so objectionable? Wilders asserts that the Muslim holy book “calls on Muslims to oppress, persecute or kill Christians, Jews, dissidents and non-believers, to beat and rape women and to establish an Islamic state by force.”¹⁵ Fallaci likewise

found the roots of Islamic violence in the book Muslims venerate most of all: “Read it over, that *Mein Kampf*,” she declared. “Whatever the version, you will find that all the evil which the sons of Allah commit against us and against themselves comes from that book.”¹⁶

Does the Koran really incite people to commit violence? Most Western analysts dogmatically deny it, characterizing jihadists as an infinitesimally small group of extremists who misunderstand the Koran’s peaceful message. In fact, for contradicting these assumptions, Wilders is denounced as a hatemonger by much of the European political establishment. Although he’s become one of the most popular political leaders in the Netherlands, Wilders has paid the price for contravening conventional wisdom about the Koran: he was recently denied entry to Britain, he faces prosecution for “incitement” by Dutch courts, and constant death threats have forced him to

How's that again?

Allah's words don't change:

“The word of thy Lord doth find its fulfilment in truth and in justice: None can change His words: for He is the one who heareth and knoweth all” (6:115).

But then again, maybe they do: “Whatever communications We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?” (2:106)

adopt a permanent security detail. Fallaci faced something similar; shortly before her death, she was put on trial in absentia in Italy in 2006 on the charge of “defaming Islam.”¹⁷

Of course, what is more consequential than the views of Wilders and Fallaci is that many Muslims themselves find calls to warfare in the Koran. And this group of “misunderstanders” is not as insignificant as Western analysts contend. To the contrary, they comprise a global movement, active from Indonesia to Nigeria and extending into Europe and North America, that is dedicated to waging war against “unbelievers”—that is, non-Muslims—and subjugating them as inferiors under the rule of Islamic law. This movement sees in the Koran its divine mandate to wage that war.

For example, in March 2009, five Muslims accused of helping plot the September 11 attacks, including the notorious Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, wrote an “Islamic Response to the Government’s Nine Accusations.” In it they quote the Koran to justify their jihad war against the American Infidels. “In God’s book,” asserts the letter, “he ordered us to fight you everywhere we find you, even if you were inside the holiest of all holy cities, The Mosque in Mecca, and the holy city of Mecca, and even during sacred months. In God’s book, verse 9 [actually verse 5], Al-Tawbah [the Koran’s ninth chapter]: *Then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush.*”¹⁸

Osama bin Laden’s communiqués have also quoted the Koran copiously. In his 1996 “Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” he quotes seven Koran verses: 3:145; 47:4–6; 2:154; 9:14; 47:19; 8:72; and the notorious “Verse of the Sword,” 9:5.¹⁹ Bin Laden began his October 6, 2002, letter to the American people with two Koran quotations, both of a martial bent: “Permission to fight (against disbelievers) is given to those (believers) who are fought against, because they have been wronged and surely, Allah is Able to give them (believers) victory” (22:39); and “Those who believe, fight in the Cause of Allah, and those who

disbelieve, fight in the cause of Taghut (anything worshipped other than Allah, e.g. Satan). So fight you against the friends of Satan; ever feeble is indeed the plot of Satan" (4:76).²⁰

In a sermon broadcast in 2003, bin Laden rejoiced in a Koranic exhortation to violence as being a means to establish the truth: "Praise be to Allah who revealed the verse of the Sword to his servant and messenger [the Islamic Prophet Muhammad], in order to establish truth and abolish falsehood."²¹ The "Verse of the Sword" is Koran 9:5: "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

The idea that the Koran commands them to do violence to unbelievers runs from the very top of the international jihadist movement—Osama bin Laden—down to the rank and file. In January 2004, Reem Raiyishi, a Gazan mother of two children aged one and three, blew herself up at an Israeli checkpoint, murdering four Israelis. Before she did that, she posed for pictures holding a rifle in one hand and the Koran in the other. In a videotaped recording she declared, "It was always my wish to turn my body into deadly shrapnel against the Zionists and to knock on the doors of heaven with the skulls of Zionists."²²

Apparently nothing she read in her holy Koran dissuaded her from pursuing that wish.

Nor was Raiyishi by any means the only jihad terrorist, or even the only suicide bomber, to invoke the Koran as justification for violence against non-Muslims. In January 2006, a gang of Muslims in Paris kidnapped Ilan Halimi, a 23-year-old Jew, who was tortured, mutilated, and ultimately murdered. During Halimi's weeks-long ordeal, his captors called his family, demanding half a million euros in ransom money and reciting verses of the Koran.²³

On March 3, 2006, 22-year-old Iranian student Mohammed Reza Taheri-azar drove an SUV into a crowd of students on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, injuring nine. In a letter written soon afterward, Taheri-azar declared that “in the Koran, Allah states that the believing men and women have permission to murder anyone responsible for the killing of other believing men and women.” In another letter he asserted,

I live with the holy Koran as my constitution for right and wrong and definition of justice. . . . Allah gives permission in the Koran for the followers of Allah to attack those who have raged [sic] war against them, with the expectation of eternal paradise in case of martyrdom and/or living one's life in obedience of all of Allah's commandments found throughout the Koran's 114 chapters. I've read all 114 chapters approximately 15 times since June of 2003 when I started reading the Koran. . . . I live only to serve Allah, by obeying all of Allah's commandments of which I am aware by reading and learning the contents of the Koran.²⁴

Later he sent a detailed exposition of the Koran's teachings on warfare to the Carolina campus newspaper.²⁵ The campus chapter of the Muslim Students Association disavowed Taheri-azar's interpretation of the Koran, but did not offer an alternative understanding of the verses he cited.

Overall, it is extremely rare—if not impossible—to find a jihadist who does not cite the Koran to justify his actions. Britain-based jihadist preacher, Abu Yahya, asserts simply, “It says in the Koran that we must try as much as we can to terrorise the enemy.”²⁶ And Pakistani jihad leader Beitullah Mehsud claims that “Allah on 480 occasions in the Holy Koran extols Muslims to wage jihad. We only fulfill God's orders. Only jihad can bring peace to the world.” He specified that his jihad—*struggle* in Arabic—is an offensive military operation: “We will continue our struggle until foreign troops

are thrown out. Then we will attack them in the US and Britain until they either accept Islam or agree to pay jazia.”²⁷ The “jazia,” or jizya, is a tax that the Koran (9:29) specifies must be levied on Jews, Christians, and some other non-Muslim faiths as a sign of their subjugation under the Islamic social order.

One pro-Osama website put it this way: “The truth is that a Muslim who reads the Koran with devotion is determined to reach the battlefield in order to attain the reality of Jihad. It is solely for this reason that the Kufaar [unbelievers] conspire to keep the Muslims far away from understanding the Koran, knowing that Muslims who understand the Koran will not distance themselves from Jihad.”²⁸

It is noteworthy that the leaders of the global jihad insist that they are scrupulously reading and interpreting the Koran correctly, and they are consistently unimpressed by Westerners who insist that the Koran is a book of peace. The Ayatollah Khomeini, who brought the rule of Islamic law to Iran, once thundered, “There are hundreds of other [Koranic] psalms and Hadiths [sayings of Muhammad] urging Muslims to value war and to fight. Does all this mean that Islam is a religion that prevents men from waging war? I spit upon those foolish souls who make such a claim.”²⁹

And indeed, there are scores of Koranic psalms and Hadiths commanding Muslims to engage in violent jihad. Yet even after the September 11 attacks, and the 2005 London bombings, and the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, and countless other bloody jihadist operations all over the world, the media, academia, and even our government continue to insist that the Koran contains no such imperative.

Why read the Koran?

It's hard to imagine that Blair, Bush, and Potemra are reading the same book as that read by Wilders, Fallaci, and Khomeini. Can the Koran really preach peace and love if it encourages believers to knock on heaven's door with the skulls of the enemies of Allah?

It is imperative for Americans to read the Koran and discover the answer. A huge number of policy decisions are predicated upon the assumption that the Koran teaches peace, and that those who brandish Korans and commit violence are misunderstanding their own religion and perverting the teachings of their own holy book. These include U.S. government postures toward Pakistan and Egypt; immigration matters; airport security procedures; military strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan; domestic anti-terror policies; and our acquiescence to Saudi Arabia's Islamic proselytizing campaign in America and many other countries.

But most government and media analysts dare not even question the assumption that the Koran is peaceful, for they believe that any insinuation to the contrary is racist, bigoted, and effectively brands all Muslims as terrorists. In other words, they think the implications of the possibility that the Koran teaches warfare against unbelievers are too terrible even to contemplate. Thus, many policymakers simply assume the Koran teaches peace without bothering to study the text, an act which might raise some uncomfortable questions.

Others don't read the Koran because they believe its contents simply don't matter. Fourteen centuries have passed since it was written, the argument goes. The world has changed, and surely Islam has changed, too. And besides, anyone can see whatever he wants to see in a sacred text, right?

In fact, no. The contents of the Koran matter because, contrary to what many would have us believe, sacred texts are *not* entirely determined by what the faithful wish to see in them. The fashionable philosophy of deconstructionism teaches that written words have no meaning other than that given to them by the reader, but in reality, the words of sacred texts are not infinitely malleable; "slay the idolaters wherever you find them" cannot easily be transformed into "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." For the believer, the actual words of the Koran are generally not difficult to understand, as hard as they may be to put into practice.

Miracles of the Koran

TAKE THE KORANIC CHALLENGE!



The Koran in Arabic is renowned for the sublimity of its poetry—and presents that sublimity as miraculous evidence of its divine origin. When asked for a miracle, Muhammad pointed to the Koran itself, claiming that it confirmed earlier divine revelations: “And they say: If only he would bring us a miracle from his Lord! Hath there not come unto them the proof of what is in the former scriptures?” (20:133) Allah even addresses unbelievers and fence-sitters with a challenge: “And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura [chapter] like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true” (2:23).

This is a challenge many have taken up over the centuries, but of course it is based on wholly subjective criteria, and as such can never be successfully met in the eyes of those who issue it. Many have imitated the syntax and rhythm and language of the Koran, but no pious Muslim would ever acknowledge that any of these approximated the Koran itself, no matter how close they got: in short, the challenge can never be won. Allah himself acknowledges this, when elsewhere in the Koran he declares that those who take up the challenge will never succeed: “They could not produce the like thereof” (17:88).

Finally, there are those who argue that the Koran's violent commandments are largely meaningless since similar ones are found in the Bible. This lazy moral equivalency overlooks the glaring fact that there is hardly a single organization today that commits violent acts and justifies them by quoting the Bible and invoking Christianity. The media frequently warns

us of the danger of “Christian terrorism,” citing examples like Timothy McVeigh (who, in fact, was agnostic when he committed the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing)³⁰ and Scott Roeder, the alleged killer of late-term abortionist George Tiller. Such examples, of course, are extremely rare, especially compared to the daily attacks by Islamic fundamentalists throughout the world, which are so common that the mainstream press only bothers to report the biggest outrages anymore. What’s more, Tiller’s killing was condemned by the Catholic Church and every major pro-life group. This is unsurprising, since there is no school of Christian thought that cites the Bible as justification for committing terrorism. In contrast, Islamic jihadists around the world point to the Koran to explain what they are doing and why—and heap contempt upon those Muslims who deny the Koran’s martial contents.

The Koran’s presidential whitewashing

For a lesson in the hazards of not understanding the Koran, let’s look at President Obama’s June 4, 2009, Cairo address to the Muslim world. Filled with reverential references to the supposedly compassionate teachings of the “holy Koran,” the speech serves as an abject lesson in the wishful thinking, self-delusion, and political correctness that pervades Western assumptions about Islamic scripture.

In praising the Koran’s ostensibly peaceful teachings, Obama cited verse 5:32: “The Holy Koran,” said the President, “teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind.”³¹ This sounds peaceful enough, but Obama studiously ignored the next verse (5:33), which mandates punishment for those whom Muslims do not regard as “innocent”—punishments including crucifixion or amputation of a hand and a foot for those who fight against Allah and Muhammad. The axiom against killing innocents, as we will see in chapter three, came from the Jewish tradition; in the

Koranic passage, however, it becomes a warning of dire earthly punishment for those Jews who resist Muhammad and his religion.

Obama also quoted a Koranic verse (9:119) that supposedly supports his call for inter-religious tolerance:

As the Holy Koran tells us, “Be conscious of God and speak always the truth.” That is what I will try to do—to speak the truth as best I can, humbled by the task before us, and firm in my belief that the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart.³²

Once again, this Koranic passage is actually about fighting unbelievers, and doesn't remotely advocate peaceful coexistence. One principal English translation, that of Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, renders the verse this way: “O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful.” The passage continues:

It is not for the townsfolk of Al-Madinah and for those around them of the wandering Arabs to stay behind the messenger of Allah and prefer their lives to his life. That is because neither thirst nor toil nor hunger afflicteth them in the way of Allah, nor step they any step that angereth the disbelievers, nor gain they from the enemy a gain, but a good deed is recorded for them therefor. Lo! Allah loseth not the wages of the good. Nor spend they any spending, small or great, nor do they cross a valley, but it is recorded for them, that Allah may repay them the best of what they used to do. And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they

return to them, so that they may beware. O ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who keep their duty (unto Him). (9:120–23)

In this passage, the Koran is scolding Muslims who refused to accompany Muhammad on his expedition to Tabouk in northern Arabia, where he wanted to fight a Byzantine garrison. The Byzantines weren't there when he arrived, and so there was no battle, but he was considerably angered that some Muslims in Medina and among the Bedouins had refused to make the trip—they “pre-fer[red] their lives to his life.” The Koran promises that if they do anything that “angereth the disbelievers,” they will be credited with having done a good deed, and Allah will repay them for such good deeds. The message here is simple and stark: Muslims should fight the unbelievers and be harsh with them.

Out of this command to wage jihad warfare against unbelievers, Obama cherry-picked one sentence that made it appear as if the Koran were simply counseling one to speak the truth, mindful of the divine presence. He took a passage about warfare and division and passed it off as a call for us all to come together and sing “Kumbaya.”

This brings up an important question: if one doesn't even know what the Koran says, is it wise to make policy based upon what one assumes it says?

Bible vs. Koran

“We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood doth perish!”

—Koran 21:18

“Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

—Ephesians 4:15

Based on the erroneous assumption that jihad violence is a reaction to American actions, Obama has announced numerous new aid programs for the Islamic world. He doesn't seem to have considered that if the Koran mandates jihad against non-Muslims, displays of U.S. goodwill are unlikely to have much effect. As South African Mufti Ebrahim Desai said, "In simple the Kuffaar [unbelievers] can never be trusted for any possible good they do. They have their own interest at heart."³³

One man's opinion? Sure. But it is an opinion with deep roots in Islamic tradition, and it would therefore be naïve to dismiss it as simply Desai's own mean-spiritedness. Why? Because the Koran contains a warning against those who turn "in friendship to the Unbelievers. . . . If only they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet, and in what hath been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors, but most of them are rebellious wrong-doers" (5:80–81). It also tells Muslims that "never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion" (2:120).

These are words that Obama should consider carefully.

Why an Infidel's Guide?

Muslims, of course, know what's in their own holy book, and they know when someone like Obama gets it wrong. But these misinterpretations will slip right by most non-Muslims. That's why there's a need for this book, *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran*.

What is an Infidel? Well, if you are reading this book, *you* are probably an Infidel—at least in the Koran's eyes.

An Infidel, as far as the Koran is concerned, is anyone who refuses to submit to Allah as the one true god and to recognize Muhammad as his prophet. While Islamic apologists commonly claim that the Koran does not refer to Jews or Christians as Infidels, in fact it asserts that "they indeed have disbelieved who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary" (5:17)—

in other words, if you believe in the traditional Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ, you're an Infidel. And the Koran asserts, oddly, that the Jews claim that the prophet Ezra is the Son of God—a claim which earns them Allah's curse (9:30). So they're Infidels, too.

Those whom the Koran asserts are Infidels need to know what the Koran is saying about them and what must be done about them, because Muslims around the world today are acting upon these teachings.

This can be hard to believe, especially when one is acquainted with Muslims who have anything but warfare against Infidels on their minds. Friendship with kind and loving Muslims can give non-Muslims the impression that the Koran cannot possibly teach warfare and hatred, and that anyone who says otherwise must harbor some kind of anti-Muslim animus.

Yet if the Koran does indeed, as Khomeini insisted, urge Muslims "to value war and to fight," then it is not an act of hatred toward Muslims to point that out. It is simply a fact. Different people will react to this fact in different ways: non-Muslims will of course look at it negatively, but Osama bin Laden and others like him revel in this fact and promote it far and wide.

That's why it is imperative for Infidels to know what is in the Koran. It's a simple matter of knowing who those who have vowed to destroy us think they are, and what they think they're doing, and what they hope to accomplish. They themselves tell us the answers to these questions are found in the Koran.

And that's why an Infidel's guide to this strange and little-understood book is so urgently needed.

It's a question of self-protection.

Why is a guide to the Koran needed at all?

Why not just read the Koran on your own? Why does any self-respecting Infidel need a guide?

Primarily because reading the Islamic holy book isn't easy for non-Muslims. The book is hard to follow because it's not arranged chronologically or by subject matter, but by the length of the chapters, called "*suras*." With the exception of the brief first chapter, its 114 *suras* are arranged more or less from the longest to the shortest. This organization was completed long after Muhammad's death. Chronologically (according to Islamic tradition), the first revelation that Muhammad received can be found in the Koran not as *sura* 1, but as *sura* 96. The last revelation Muhammad received, which came to him while he was on his deathbed, is *sura* 110, not *sura* 114 (the last chapter in the book).

The Koran is less a collection of historical narratives, as is much of the Bible, as it is a collection of sermons in which the historical material is not told for its own sake, but is used to illustrate various points. It makes no attempt at linear history, either as a whole or, generally, within the individual chapters. While the Bible contains historical books that are more or less in chronological order, and in broad outline follows a coherent historical trajectory, the focus of the Koran's *suras* often moves from subject to subject, with various historical incidents recounted only in fragments.

The chapter titles can cause further confusion to the novice Koran reader, as they generally bear no connection to the subject matter of the chapter itself. Most of the chapters—"The Cow" (*sura* 2), "The Spider" (*sura* 29), "Smoke" (*sura* 44)—take their name from an apparently randomly chosen element of the chapter itself, one that does not necessarily have any particular importance. Only a few chapters, such as "The Spoils of War" or "Booty" (*sura* 8), bear titles that actually summarize their contents.

In the longer *suras*, stories are told, laws are given, and warnings to unbelievers are issued with no evident regard for logical sequence. The shorter *suras*, meanwhile, particularly those that run only a few lines near the end of the book, are poetic and arresting warnings of the impending

divine judgment. Although the Koran is shorter than the New Testament, in keeping with its character as a collection of sermons designed to inculcate various ideas and attitudes, a surprisingly large amount of what it says is said more than once.

In the original Arabic, the repetitions are accompanied by rhymes and rhythms that create a kind of incantatory effect; shorn of these musical effects, however, when translated, the printed Koran risks becoming “wrist-slittingly boring,” in the words of John Derbyshire.³⁴ And Derbyshire isn’t alone: the great eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon called the Koran an “endless incoherent rhapsody of fable and precept,” and nineteenth-century writer Thomas Carlyle complained that it was “as toilsome reading as I ever undertook; a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite.”³⁵

But never fear. I read the Koran so you don’t have to.

This guide eliminates the repetitions and dry passages, and gives you the book’s message without the long trudge through yet another denunciation of unbelievers, yet another description of the tortures of the damned, yet another retelling of Moses’ confrontation with Pharaoh.

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 moves 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.

To be sure, much of the Koran is perfectly clear, but there are numerous passages that refer to incidents in Muhammad’s life or an event in early Islamic history without providing key elements of the story—as if taking for granted that everyone who hears the Koranic account will know the

omitted details. That makes reading some passages of the Koran rather like listening in on a conversation between two people you don't know, who are discussing events in which you were not involved—and they are not bothering to stop and explain to you the details of what they are discussing. To fill in the gaps, Muslims turn to commentaries on the Koran and to Hadith (traditions of the words and deeds of Muhammad), and we will have recourse to the same material here in order to illustrate how Muslims themselves understand their holy book.

THE HADITH ILLUMINATES THE KORAN

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The Koran is not the mainstream Muslim's only guide. A Muslim scholar, Abu Abdir Rahman, says Satan has suggested "to the hearts of some of the Muslims that the Qur'an, as Glorious as it is, is sufficient enough alone as guidance for Mankind. Meaning that the Sunnah, or way of the Messenger of Allah... is something that can be left off, or abandoned. Without a doubt this is a growing disease that has no place in this wonderful way of life of ours."³⁶

The Islamic scholar Mohammed Nasir-ul-Deen al-Albani declares, "There is no way to understand the

Qur'an correctly except in association with the interpretation of the Sunnah."³⁷ Scholar Wael B. Hallaq concurs, observing "that the Sunna is binding on Muslims" and has been established "on the basis of the Quran which enjoins Muslims to obey the Prophet and not to swerve from his ranks."³⁸

And the Sunnah, the words and deeds of Muhammad, is largely made up of the Hadith: voluminous collections of accounts of the Islamic prophet's sayings and activities, as recounted by his followers. There were many opportunistic forgeries



Which Koran?

There are numerous helpful translations of the Koran. N. J. Dawood's translation is the most smoothly readable English translation. However, it can be difficult to use for reference since most versions do not mark the verse numbers precisely. Also, some people—both Muslim and non-Muslim—dislike it because Dawood uses “God” for Allah—although since Arabic-speaking Christians use “Allah” for the God of the Bible, and have for over a millennium, this is not really a serious objection to anyone who

among the hadith, however, giving rise to a veritable science within Islam: the science of determining the authenticity of various traditions. Early in the history of Islam several Muslims assembled collections of accounts of Muhammad's words and deeds that were considered more or less definitive and free from fabricated stories. Six collections were almost universally recognized early on, and continue to be regarded today, as reliable—generally free of forgeries and inaccuracies—and two of these were deemed *sahih*: the most “sound” or “reliable.”³⁹

Nearly all the hadiths that will appear in boxes throughout this book are taken from the *sahih*.⁴⁰ They range from ludicrous to alarm-

ing, and are included so that Infidels may be fully informed as to the nature of the belief system from which has sprung today's comprehensive threat to the West—including the superstition and bellicosity that runs through it.

Are these merely long-forgotten rulings dug up for the purpose of ridicule out of dusty books that no Muslim reads anymore? Hardly. These are selections from the most authoritative hadith collections. In fact, Muslim schools in Britain forbid music and chess in accord with hadiths quoted in this book⁴¹—indicating that these statements are taken very seriously in Muslim communities even in the West today.



knows both languages. Many Muslims dislike this translation simply because Dawood was not a Muslim, but Infidels may find it more helpful than translations produced by Muslims, since Dawood generally doesn't whitewash the Koran's more jarring passages.

Two translations by Muslims, those by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, are generally reliable, although both write in a stilted, practically unreadable pseudo-King James Bible English. Of the two, Ali's contains more liberties with the text—such as adding “(lightly)” to sura 4:34 after the directive to husbands to beat their disobedient wives. The Arabic doesn't say to beat them lightly, it just says to beat them. Pickthall's version, while sharing the dense archaism of Ali's, is generally accurate.

Despite their infelicities, because they are two common translations, I have generally used these throughout this book. There are other good translations, and more are being produced all the time. It is best to have more than one on hand for comparison.

But wait: Isn't this book anti-Islam?

This is not a general guide to the Koran. You will find nothing in this book about Islamic ritual practices or prayers. This is an Infidel's guide, focusing on where the Koran came from and its specific portions that are—or should be—of concern to Infidels.

Many Muslims, however, would prefer Infidels remain in the dark about these elements of their holy book. Protesting against the FBI's use of informants to ferret out jihad terrorist activity in mosques in the United States, Hussam Ayloush, executive director of CAIR for greater Los Angeles, said to a Muslim audience at a mosque in April 2009, “We're here today to say our mosques are off limits. Our Koran is off limits.”⁴²

“Our Koran is off limits.” Of course, Ayloush is not trying to dissuade Infidels from reading the Koran, which after all, is something that CAIR

encourages. It's just that Ayloush doesn't want Infidel FBI agents to draw the "wrong" conclusions from their own readings—conclusions that might contradict CAIR's insistence that the Koran teaches peace.

Such an investigation is imperative for America's defense against the global jihad. Nevertheless, *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran* will inevitably be branded as "anti-Islamic," as well as "bigoted," "hateful," and "Islamophobic."

But is it, really? Is the point of this book to spread hatred of the Koran, Islam, and Muslims?

Of course not.

Certainly this book is not written from the standpoint of Islamic faith. It is, in fact, a guide designed for those who do not believe in Islam, to help them understand why Islamic terrorism and supremacism continue to threaten the United States and so many other countries around the world today. But while it is not a believer's guide, it is a trustworthy guide. This book is designed to present a 100 percent accurate view of the Koran, so that Infidels can know what they should expect from a devout Muslim who reads his Koran and takes it seriously as the word of the one true God.

Whether the Koran really says what this guide claims it says can easily be verified. And if this guide reports its contents accurately, that couldn't possibly be an act of "hatred" or "bigotry." **If the Koran really curses Jews and Christians (9:30) and calls for warfare against them in order to bring about their subjugation (9:29), it is not "Islamophobic" to forewarn Infidels by pointing this out. It is simply a fact. And it should go without saying that it is not a fact that should move any reader of this book to hate anyone. The fact that the Koran counsels warfare against unbelievers should move readers to act in defense of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the legal equality of all people, before it is too late.**

Jihadist activity will continue as long as there are Muslims who believe that the Koran commands it. And that's why Infidels have a responsibility to themselves and to their children to know exactly what is in the Koran, and to act accordingly.

It's not a matter of "hate." It's a matter of survival.