



A REBUTTAL OF  
ROBERT SPENCER'S:

*“Not Peace  
But a Sword”*

*The Great Chasm Between  
Christianity and Islam*

– [ INCLUDING HIS ‘FALSE PROPAGANDA’ ] –

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*A Rebuttal of: Not Peace But A Sword: The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam*  
by the bigoted Islamophobe, Robert Spencer

### **About the author of the original book:**

Robert Spencer was born in 1962 and is of Greek heritage. His grandparents came from what is present day Turkey. It is said that He received his M.A. in the field of early Christian studies, and is a self-proclaimed devout Catholic. Robert Spencer claims that his interest in Islam began with him learning about the roots of his family history in Turkey.

The bloody and confrontational circumstances surrounding the purported personal history of Spencer's family provide a logical explanation for the animus towards Islam and Muslims in much of the polemical work that Spencer has produced since achieving a public profile through his website, 'JihadWatch'. It also explains his hostility towards Turkey, and the reason he would join a genocidal Facebook group that called for Turkey to be "ethnically cleansed" of Turkish Muslims.

JihadWatch, the website that is administered by Robert Spencer, was founded in 2003. Since then, Spencer has published thousands of articles and blog posts, has had numerous speaking engagements (mostly at Conservative gatherings), and has many books on the "threat" of Islam.

Spencer's attack against Islam can be broken down into two categories: polemical and activist:

Spencer's polemical attack is based solely on his personal study of Islam since he has no formal training or education in Islamic studies. Spencer employs a number of arguments and tactics in his polemics.

### **From Spencer's tactics:**

1. Projecting the actions of an individual as an inherent trait of the entire group
2. Taking the most extreme opinions and interpretations of Islam and asserting them as correct, normative and mainstream
3. Conflating culture with religion
4. Guilt by association
5. Reviving old Orientalist ideas
6. Forging history to suit his arguments.
7. Using references that are not reliable or dependable

Spencer's activist attack against Islam and Muslims initially took the form of speaking at Conservative conferences, Churches and Synagogues, on college campuses for David Horowitz's sponsored "Islamofascism Week," on Christian TV Networks such as Pat Robertson's CBN, giving classes on Islam to the FBI, and engaging in debates with the likes of Dinesh D'Souza who dubbed him an "Islamophobe."

### **Spencer is an Anti-Muslim Activist and Islamophobe:**

However, since the cementing of his friendship and alliances with Pamela Geller, European

anti-Muslim activist Anders Gravers (leader of SIOE) and radical Dutch Euro-supremacist politician Geert Wilders, Robert Spencer has embarked on a course of institutionalizing and organizing against Islam and Muslims under the rubric of “fighting the Jihad.” He is now co-founder and leader of two new anti-Muslim organizations, Freedom Defense Initiative (FDI) and Stop the Islamization of America (SIOA).

The creation of these two groups by Spencer must be read in the larger context of a growing movement of anti-Muslim/Islam organizations across the country. They are part of what Homeland Security has dubbed the “rise in right-wing extremism” since the election of Barack Obama to the presidency. For Robert Spencer this all boils down to a “Crusade against Islam,” a religion that he views as the “chief rival” to Catholicism, that is “incomplete,” “misleading” “downright false,” and a “threat to the peace and well-being of the Western world.”

Spencer has this specific talent to put things out of context and make-believe, and by using the word “humiliation” he creates a subliminal sense in the reader that the perpetrator is utterly evil-minded.

Spencer and his counterparts focus on the so called ‘evilness’ of Islam, and do so with deep hatred. According to Spencer, there is nothing good about Islam. In the chapter, “Islam and Christianity: Equivalent Tradition?”, from his book, “Political Incorrect Guide to Islam”, Spencer gives ample evidence of the crookedness of Islam and its proponents. He even quotes Bertrand Russel saying, *“Bolshevism combines the characteristics of the French Revolution with those of the rise of Islam... Among religions, Bolshevism is to be reckoned with Mohammedanism rather than with Christianity and Buddhism. Christianity and Buddhism are primarily personal religions, with mystical doctrines and a love of contemplation. Mohammedanism and Bolshevism are practical, social, unspiritual, concerned to win the empire of this world.”*

Spencer, however, does not mention the good things Russel had to say about Islam and its effects. This is an example of his tactics in how he misleads his audience and readers.

Spencer is not a scholar of any sort – especially not on anything related to Islam. He simply does not have the academic qualifications to claim this. He only has a one-year master’s degree in “the field of early Christianity”. How does that make him an “acclaimed scholar of Islam”?

Another major problem with Spencer’s claim to scholarship is that he simply does not speak or understand Arabic. I don’t think Spencer needs to know Arabic to criticize Islam but I do think he needs to know it in order to be considered a “scholar of Islam” (a title he claims) – let alone “the acclaimed scholar of Islam.”

**Rebuttal of Robert Spencer’s book, ‘Not Peace But A Sword... The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam’:**

The title of his book is taken from a biblical verse in the book of Matthew (10:34) that is attributed to Jesus as saying: *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”*

The first question I ask Spencer is: ‘Is your book promoting the idea that Jesus spread Christianity by the sword?’ The title of the book is taken from a verse in the Bible. So let us embark upon a journey to try and find answers to this question. Does the bible promote violence, killing, ‘jihad’, terrorism? Was Christianity spread by the sword?

If this verse is to be interpreted literally, then basically Robert Spencer is claiming that Jesus – may peace be upon him – spread Christianity by the sword, by terrorism, or by ‘Jihad’, and that Jesus was a ‘war monger’ and extremist.

When observing and studying the history of Christianity, one could conclude that many Christians understood this verse literally. This very well could be the reason behind the Christian Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the Papal Holy Wars, the Albigensian Papal Crusades, the War of Eight Saints, the Bohemian Palatine War, the Thirty Years’ War between the Churches between 1618-1648...

What actually took place during the Christian Crusades? Undoubtedly the Christians’ Crusades, their morals, their ethics in the treatment of people of their own faith as well as non-Christians were taken directly from their Holy Bibles, the teachings of their priests and rabbis, their saints and their religious leaders.

Solomon bar Samson gave a Hebrew historical account as to what happened when the Christians entered Jerusalem: *“In the year 1095, the Catholic Church aroused by the Muslim encroachments in Palestine, proclaimed a crusade against the Saracens (Arabs and Muslims) to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulcher. The following year, in the spring of 1096, bands of zealous crusaders set out for the Holy Land... In May 1096, a band of crusaders led by Emico, a German noble, forced its way into the city of Mayence and finally into the archiepiscopal palace where the Jews had taken refuge. The slaughter and suicide of the Jews in this palace with all the attendant horror and hysteria... Now that our men had possession of the walls and towers, wonderful sights were to be seen. Some of our men cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one’s way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared with what happened in the Temple of Solomon, a place where religious services are normally chanted. What happened there? If I tell the truth, you would not believe it. Suffice to say that, in the Temple and Porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God, that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies. The city was filled with corpses and blood.”*<sup>1</sup>

Describing the fall of Jerusalem: *“There now began an orgy of killing. The Crusaders went on a rampage, killing everyone they met. They went into houses and dragged out the inhabitants to kill them. They stole everything they found. The princes lost all control. Muslim refugees had taken refuge in the Dome of the Rock, the Mosque of al-Aqsa, the one Tancred had taken. Despite his banner flying above, on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup>, a group of crusaders broke in and slaughtered everyone inside. Similarly, the Jews of the city fled to their synagogue, only to have the crusaders set it on fire, killing everyone.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Jacob Marcus, “The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook. 315-1791 and Raymond d’Aguilers, *Historia francorum qui cepit Jerusalem*, copyright 1999 Dr. Tom J Rees.



*Order returned on July 17<sup>th</sup> not so much because the commanders regained control as there was simply no one left to kill. All the Jews of Jerusalem were dead. All the Muslims were dead. The Christians had been expelled before the siege began. The city was empty save its conquerors. Jerusalem was a holy city to the Muslims as much as it was to the Christians. The looting of sacred shrines and the slaughter of innocents confirmed the general Muslim opinion that the Westerners were savage barbarians with no faith at all save in blood and wealth.”*<sup>2</sup>

What does the Bible teach regarding the types of manners and ethics of the Jews and Christians towards combatants and even non-combatants during times of war?

In Deuteronomy 20:1-20:

*“When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say: ‘Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.’ The officers shall say to the army: ‘Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it. Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her.’ Then the officers shall add, ‘Is anyone afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too.’ When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it. When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies. This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby. However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them — the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites — as the LORD your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their Gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God. When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees people, that you should besiege them? However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls.”* (New International Version)

Let’s look in the book of Ezekiel 9:1-11:

*"Then I heard him call out in a loud voice, 'Bring near those who are appointed to execute judgment on the city, each with a weapon in his hand.' And I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand. With them was a man clothed in linen who had a writing kit at his side. They came in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple. Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side and said to him, 'Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.' As I listened, he said to the others, 'Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter the old men, the young men and women, the mothers and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary.' So they began with the old men who were in front of the temple. Then he said to them, 'Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go!' So they went out and began killing throughout the city. While they were killing and I was left alone, I fell face-down, crying out, 'Alas, Sovereign LORD! Are you going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel in this outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?' He answered me, 'The sin of the people of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of injustice. They say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land; the LORD does not see.' So I will not look on them with pity or spare them, but I will bring down on their own heads what they have done.' Then the man in linen with the writing kit at his side brought back word, saying, 'I have done as you commanded'." (New International Version)*

Another scripture in the Book of Ezekiel 23:45-47:

*"And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands. For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled. And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire."*

We find in the book of Hosea 13:16 or 14:1:

*"The people of Samaria must bear their guilt, because they have rebelled against their God. They will fall by the sword; their little ones will be dashed to the ground, their pregnant women ripped open." (New International Version)*

In the Old Testament, Numbers 31:17-18:

*"Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man."*

Let's look in the book of 1 Samuel 15:2-3:

*"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"*

What does it say in the New Testament in Luke 19:27 as is attributed to Jesus saying:

***“Now as for those enemies of mine who did not want me as their king, bring them here and slay them before me.”***

These are commandments from the Old Testament and New Testament legislating genocide, terrorism, ‘jihad’, the outright killing of women, children and the elderly. Are these the teachings of the Bible and those that Jesus was promoting, Robert? There is more mention of killing in the Bible than there is in the Qur'an, so what religion was ‘really’ spread by the sword? Christianity or Islam?

Tom Anderson, a software engineer processed the text of the Holy books to find which contained the most violence and concluded: *“Killing and destruction are referenced slightly more often in the New Testament (2.8%) than in the Qur'an (2.1%), but the Old Testament clearly leads — more than twice that of the Qur'an — in mentions of destruction and killing (5.3%).”*<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the Bible overflows with mention of killing, terror, and murder. The Bible contains far more verses praising or urging bloodshed than Qur'an. Biblical violence is often far more extreme, and marked by more indiscriminate savagery. The Qur'an often urges believers to fight, yet it also commands that enemies be shown mercy when they surrender. Some frightful portions of the Bible, by contrast, go much further in ordering the total extermination of enemies, of whole families and races — of men, women, and children, and even their livestock, with no quarter granted.

If Christians or Jews want to point to violent parts of the Qur'an and suggest that those elements taint the whole religion, they open themselves to the obvious question: what about their own faiths? If the founding text shapes the whole religion, then shouldn't Judaism and Christianity deserve the utmost condemnation as religions of savagery, terrorism, ‘jihad’, extremism, and fundamentalism?

Question: How were these Biblical commandments implemented by the Christians? This can be explained and observed by what Rev. Fr James Scully said in an article titled ‘Christianity and War – An Orthodox Christian's Response’:

*“The fiercest persecution had been conducted by the Emperor immediately before Constantine, where it is said 80,000 Christians were martyred in Egypt alone. Constantine released all Christian prisoners and personally met with a number of ‘confessors’ (those tortured for not denying their faith) and offered to them his honor...”*

*451AD – 1054AC: Christianity in Turmoil. Why have I named this period ‘Christianity in Turmoil’ rather than extol the virtues of the spread of Christianity into a ‘Holy Roman Empire’? For many reasons, but mainly one that relates directly to this topic. For the first time in the history of Christianity, Christians took up armed warfare against other Christians of different race/ culture or country. Students of history will note that the times I have selected*



*above commence with the Council of Chalcedon in 451AC and finish at 1054AC the date of the split between the Eastern and Western Christian churches (Constantinople and Rome).*

*After 451AC: the complete Oriental Orthodox (Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Ethiopian, Indian) were shunned by the Eastern and Western hierarchs and replacement Bishops were instituted in the major cities of the empire where the historical Oriental Orthodox bishops had existed. Naturally the Oriental peoples did not accept the new Bishops and very often riots resulted in the said cities. Civil law was then enforced by the soldiers of Byzantium upon the Orientals which included killing, imprisonment, torture and banishment. Note this killing was 'legal' according to the ruling authority (Byzantium). During this time warfare was seen as a legitimate tool of the Christian Empire as can be seen by the rise of Christian Emperors in the West (EG: Charlgemayne)... a German monk by the name of Martin Luther who in 1517 nailed his '95 Theses' to the Church door at Wittenberg. Christian expansion had reached into countries during this era which had not (apparently) seen a Christian faith. These included South America, Japan and Pacific and Asian continents. Whilst it is true to say that British and Spanish interests were at the head of these expansions and that very often, conversion was accompanied by the sword of the Conquistadors, again riding on the belief that the sword may be used in legitimate government.*

*1517AC – 1800AC: Unreforming Reformation. With respect to war and its legitimate use as a tool by Christians we may say that the Reformation was indeed unreforming. The effects of the Reformation was to plunge the Holy Roman Empire into open warfare with open battles occurring in countries like England, Scotland, Germany, Northern Italy, Northern Ireland, etc. Here, again, Christian fought Christian, but now Catholic against Protestant. Both sides justified warfare and utilized it to great effect. Catholics persecuted Anglicans, Anglicans persecuted Baptists, whilst the Orthodox were under the yoke of Islam. During this period, the pacifist groups who were able, fled Europe and England and settled in the New World of America. These groups included small pacifist groups such as the Quakers, Amish and some Baptists who would not fight or go to war under any circumstances. However, it is also noted these people lived under the 'protection of the sword' or gun under both British and later Colonial colonies in the new world of America.*

*1948AC – 2001AC: Napoleon Bonaparte re-captured much of Islamic territory during this era and by use of the sword. Later, British forces took control of these areas also by use of the sword... Christians from both sides wielded the sword against fellow Christian, with, of course, both believing God was on their side. One million men would fall before America was purged by blood for the sins of its slavery and demand for freedom. The two world wars were seen as fights against global tyranny (which they surely were), however, again saw Christian nation and Christians from all sides waging war on their brothers. During this era, the pacifist groups were allowed their conscientious objections based on religion in many countries, however, were persecuted severely in others (Germany for example). For the first time in history, weapons able to destroy whole cities and their populations were developed and used.*

*The differences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century wars amongst Christians now seemed to be that civilians were openly targeted and used as means of manipulation. Prior to these centuries by and large armies met in fields of battles, but now civilians became 'legitimate' targets..." (End of Quote)*

The Christians killed each other, not even taking into consideration that they all believed in One Lord, Jesus and the Virgin Mary. This is the result of altering and changing their holy scriptures to suit the desires and whims of their political leaders. So they added teachings and statements from human beings and mixed it with divine revelation; now the divine revelations were mixed with the politics of their weak human intellects, opinions and understanding which led to killing, oppression, tyranny, and all evil.

The evil results of the literal interpretation and implementation of this verse: *"not peace but a sword"* could also be explained by looking at World History and what the Christians did in the past and what some Christian nations are doing currently.

What happened during the many Christian wars that ravaged Europe in the middle ages, such as: the Papal Holy Wars (1081-1250), Albigensian Papal Crusades (1208-1229), War of Eight Saints (1375-1378), Bohemian-Palatine War (1618-1623), Thirty Years' War between the Churches (1618-1648) and more? (Read about these subjects to find out the truth.)

What happened when the Christians entered Jerusalem?

Was there a difference between when the Christians entered Palestine and when the Muslims entered?

What happened in Spain when Christians fought the Muslims?

Unfortunately, critics (Jews and Christians) tend to ignore these historical and modern facts without justification. These facts prove contrary to their claims that Islam was spread by the sword and it is an extremist or terrorist religion.

The question now to Robert Spencer and the critics of Islam is: how was Christianity spread?

Another fact in the present time is that Indonesia is the largest Muslim populated country, comprising one-fifth of the world's total number of Muslims. It is also a historical fact that no Muslim army has ever set foot on any Indonesian island.

Did all of these people enter Islam by coercion, force, or under the influence of the sword.....? Of course not!

Islam was spread by people reasoning, being convinced of the truth, being attracted to a superior type of creed, high moral standards and ethics, beauty and full freedom to embrace its creed and system of beliefs. This should be sufficient to keep the tongues of the doubters that claim Islam was spread by the sword!

Similarly, Islam spread rapidly on the East Coast of Africa although no Muslim army was

ever dispatched to East Africa!

Muslims ruled India for over 800 years in which they possessed enough power and authority to force all of the people to convert to Islam. But they did not do so, and thus, more than 80 percent of the population remains non-Muslim.

Furthermore, statistics for the period from 1934 to 1984 show that adherents to Islam had increased by 235 percent, while adherents to Christianity had increased by 47 percent. Within this fifty year period there were no Islamic conquests!

Muslims ruled Spain as well for over 800 years. It is a known fact that during this period the Christians and Jews enjoyed freedom to practice their religions. But thereafter, under Christian Spain, Muslims as well as Jews were subjected to inquisition and torture.

Despite the disappearance of Islamic rule from many regions of Asia and Africa, many people have remained Muslims. This is clear proof that the effect of Islam is one of approval and moral conviction. As it is well known that the fastest growing religion in America and Europe today is Islam in spite of the fact that the Muslims in these lands are still small minorities.

The only sword they have in their possession is the sword of truth. This is the sword which is converting people to Islam!!!

In addition, many critics of Islam, and specifically Robert Spencer, lack understanding of the Arabic language which the Islamic resources are written in. How can Spencer talk or try to criticize a religion that he doesn't even understand the language of the main sources of?

I ask Spencer and the critics of Islam: If you wanted to fix your car, would you take it to the dentist or the surgeon? No doubt, you would search for the best mechanic, with the best prices and reputation. You would exert all of your efforts and do your best to fix the car properly. So what about your beliefs, principles and articles of faith. Aren't these more important than these material things?

The true Muslim believes that correct religious beliefs and articles of faith are the most important affairs in the human beings life. To know who created him, why he was created, what's the purpose of life, how to live on this earth, what is his final destination. So we advise the critics to exert their efforts into finding the answers to these questions and only depend upon reliable resources. Furthermore, know that the most reliable and dependable resources for information about these issues are the Islamic resources.

Likewise, if you want to know about Islam you need to return back to the authentic sources, in the Arabic language and ask the specialists about the meanings of these texts after gathering all the texts related to a particular subject. Don't just take one text and make a blanket statement; this is deficient, oppression and injustice and will not give one a complete understanding of the issue at hand. Be reminded that Islam, according to its authentic foundation, is complete and perfect, applicable at all times in all places, free from mistakes and contradictions. Unlike the Muslims who may make mistakes and may do things out of ignorance.



Many critics also ignore the Qur'anic Texts and the Prophet Muhammad's statements regarding the fighting and treatment of non-Muslims and non-combatants and civilians during wartime and insist on describing Islam as being violent and indiscriminate in its fighting or killing.

Fighting for the sake of Allah/God is mentioned in the Qur'an, the Torah and the Bible extensively as previously observed. It is referred to as 'Holy Wars', 'Crusades', and also 'Jihad'. But, ironically, only the word 'Jihad' has been linked with terrorism, killing, torturing, etc... So be informed that Jihad is not terrorism; actually it is something which Allah loves and is pleased with and has been legislated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. If Jihad (with weapons) is considered terrorism, then, first and foremost, the Holy Wars and Christian Crusades should be considered terrorism, genocide, rape, destruction, lack of humanity, oppression, injustice, etc...! As we find the texts in the Old Testament, Talmud, and New Testament could be considered far more harsh, gruesome and immoral than the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. Keeping in mind that all of these texts prove the existence of Jihad or 'religious fighting' in all of the previous divine revelations except for the fact that the Biblical texts have been altered and changed and not preserved.

It is only the enemies of Islam who have changed the real meaning of 'Jihad' and joined it with fear, hate, negativity, and unreal meanings. Islam and the Muslims are one-hundred percent against terrorism and at the same time, the Muslims will do everything in their power to protect Islam, the Muslims, their lands, their holy sites, just as the Christians will protect Christianity and the Jews will protect Judaism. The only difference is that the Muslims are defending the truth and the others are defending falsehood!

This may be considered one of the reasons why Holy Wars and Crusades have been legislated in the Torah and the Bible and throughout the world's religions. So don't be deceived or frightened by the word 'Jihad' as it is something which will remain until the day of resurrection, as long as there remains truth and falsehood upon the earth.

Jihad is of many types, it is done with the tongue by speaking the truth, it is done with the hands by stopping oppression and fighting if necessary, it is also done by writing and publishing books clarifying the truth and refuting the false doubts of the ignorant.

To all you readers with sound intellects and the ability to perform basic logical reasoning, please don't be fooled by the media who spread doubts and false ideas about Jihad who always couple the word 'jihad' with 'terrorism'. JIHAD IS NOT TERRORISM!

Most importantly, it must be made clear that Jihad serves as a means to protect and preserve Allah's true religion and the followers of Allah's religion (Muslims). Just as the non-Muslims may claim that Holy Wars and Crusades served as protection for their religions. Preservation of Islam and the Muslims and keeping them safe and away from harmful ideas, methodologies, people and things is from the most important principles of Islam.

Jihad is done for the sake of Allah alone, the One and only creator of mankind, to make the religion of truth superior upon the earth (Islam – submission to Allah alone) and to destroy the falsehood, and most importantly to prevent oppression. And the worst type of oppression is polytheism this occurs when one associates a partner with his creator; the creator of everything in existence.

Be reminded that whenever the Muslims engaged in Jihad (with weapons) it was to establish the sincere worship of Allah alone upon the earth and stop the people from worshipping the creation and oppressing themselves. Jihad was done as a mercy upon the people to take them out of the darkness of polytheism into the light of Islamic monotheism. Contrary to the reasons why the non-Muslims fight their so called 'holy wars' or 'war on terrorism' for, such as:

1. Preventing the people from worshipping Allah alone and calling the people to the worship of the creation (Jesus, Virgin Mary, Buddha, Cow, etc.).
2. Indiscriminate plundering, looting and pillaging the resources and treasures of the countries they invade and spreading their tyranny and oppression wherever they go.
3. Coercing and forcing people to surrender and submit to their oppression and tyranny by spreading their vile and base manners, customs and traditions amongst the Muslims. All of this in the name of 'civilization, human development, liberation, and freedom'!

The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said: *"Jihad is of many types: striving against one's own self, jihad against the Satan and his temptations, jihad against infidels and hypocrites, and jihad against the unjust, innovators and the sinners."*

The Prophet Muhammad said that the 'Mujaahid' (the one who performs Jihad) is the ***"one who performs jihad against his own self"***.

Jihad is of many types and the ones who restrict it to only fighting with the hands (weapons), then verily this person's understanding is deficient. And we advise them to do some extensive research about the subject from the authentic sources of Islam.

The most peculiar thing is that Christianity and Judaism are never described as being violent and terroristic even though the previous texts mentioned from the Old and New Testament clearly illustrate this. Ironical, isn't it?

In all actuality, we find the Islamic texts being contrary to many of the critics' false claims.

Let's look at some of the Qur'anic texts which refute their claims:

***"Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity."*** (Qur'an, 60:8)

This verse states that Allah does not forbid the Muslims from being kind to the disbelievers who do not fight you on account of your religion (Islam), such as women and the weak among them and be generous with them and be equitable with them.

Allah says in the proceeding verse:

***“It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, that Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then such are the Zalimoon (wrong-doers those who disobey Allah).”***  
(Qur'an, 60:9)

In this verse, Allah forbids the Muslims to be kind with the disbelievers who are openly hostile to them, those who fought against them, expelled them and helped to expel them. Allah forbids the Muslims from being their friends and orders you to be their enemy.

And Allah the Most High says:

***“Because of that, We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs; even then, after that, many of them continued to exceed the limits (e.g. by doing oppression unjustly and exceeding beyond the limits set by Allah by committing the major sins) in the land!”*** (Qur'an, 5:32)

In this verse, Allah honors the innocent souls which He created. Killing an innocent soul is a major crime and wrongdoing; it is something which Allah, Islam and the true Muslims dislike.

And Allah says:

***“And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors. [This verse is the first one that was revealed in connection with Jihad, but it was supplemented by another (at-Tawbah, 9:36)].”*** (Qur'an, 2:190)

Allah ordered the Muslims to fight those who fight them and at the same time not to transgress the limits, contrary to the Biblical texts. This verse indicates that only those involved in combat are to be fought, which excludes non-combatants such as women, children and civilians; a regulation detailed further by narrations from the Prophet Muhammad. This shows the superior and high morals and ethics of Islam and the Muslims.

As the Prophet Muhammad said: ***“Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make war, but do not embezzle the spoils, do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (dead) bodies; and do not kill children. When you meet your polytheistic enemies, invite them to three courses of action, if they respond accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to accept Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them... If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the Jizyah tax. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them.”***

It is also narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that a woman was found killed in one of these battles; so the Messenger of Allah forbade the killing of women and children.



The Prophet also said: ***“You are neither hard-hearted nor of fierce character, nor one who shouts in the markets. You do not return evil for evil, but excuse and forgive.”***

Another narration contains, ***“...Do not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an old, aged man...”***

Another contains, ***“Do not kill a child, nor a woman, nor an old man, nor obliterate a stream, nor cut a tree...”***

The above teachings of the Prophet are clearly reflected in the practice of his immediate successor, the first Caliph, Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq. Abu Bakr gave directions to Yazeed ibn Abi Sufyaan, in the form of ten rules for the Muslim army:

*“O people! I charge you with ten rules; learn them well!:*

*Do not betray or misappropriate any part of the booty; do not practice treachery or mutilation. Do not kill a young child, an old man, or a woman. Do not uproot or burn palms or cut down fruitful trees. Do not slaughter a sheep or a cow or a camel, except for food. You will meet people who have set themselves apart in hermitages; leave them to accomplish the purpose for which they have done this. You will come upon people who will bring you dishes with various kinds of foods. If you partake of them, pronounce Allah’s name over what you eat. You will meet people who have shaved the crown of their heads, leaving a band of hair around it (monks). Go in Allah’s name, and may Allah protect you from sword and pestilence.”*

Indeed, these Prophetic narrations are clear evidences supporting the fact that Islam forbids Muslims to kill children, women, old men, young infants. The Muslim is even forbidden to cut down a tree, destroy a stream, kill an animal or even take from the spoils of war unjustly. There should be no doubt in your mind now, Robert, that Islam is the most merciful religion, with the best moral and ethical standards, and its teachings contain the best manners and most comprehensive and complete ways of life that mankind and all of creation have ever known.

The Muslims are also forbidden from torturing their enemies and burning the combatants alive is strictly prohibited. They are also forbidden from harming civilian areas and pillaging residential areas by destroying trees, crops, livestock and farmlands. The Muslim forces may not loot travelers. Nor do they have the right to use the local facilities of the native people without their consent... Also, prisoners of war may be taken but they cannot be killed under any circumstances, regardless of their religious convictions, they may be freed or ransomed.

These are some of the high moral standards and ethics of Islam at all times and places, and specifically during times of war. Look into the history of Islam and the Muslims and you will not find anything in comparison to what the Christian, Jewish and Western nations have done to the world. Nothing can be found in the history of Islam about the gross expenditure and production of weapons of mass destruction, genocide, terrorism, torture; contrary to what we find within the history of other nations throughout the world.

Compare Islamic history and the battles which took place from the beginning of Islam to what has happened in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Holocaust, the Algerian war (1954-1962) or Iraq in the Abu Ghuraib prison camps (read the Taquba Report), or Guantanamo Bay! You will never find anything in Islam as gruesome and devastating as what happened in these places. More people were killed in one day (Hiroshima) alone than all of the Islamic battles combined!

Marcel Junod a representative of the Red Cross interviewed one of the Japanese who spoke about the first atomic bomb, stating: *"....and suddenly there appeared these intense, muddy pinkish lights, accompanied by an unnatural tremor. This was immediately followed by an asphyxiating wave of heat and violent winds that ravaged everything in their path. Within only a few seconds, thousands of people who walked the roads or sat in the city's main streets were burned alive. A great number were then killed by the intense heat that spread all over. Others were left lying on the ground screaming in pain with deadly burns all over their bodies. Anything that had been at the point of impact – walls, homes, factories, and other buildings – was completely and totally annihilated, with all the traces of these things sent hurling into the sky in a ghastly whirlwind. Trams were plucked from their steel tracks and flung as they had lost their weight and substance. Trains were lifted off the ground along with their tracks as if they were mere toys. Horses, dogs, and livestock were all befallen with what befell the people. Every living thing had lost its life in one painful turn of events too difficult to describe. Trees were engulfed in blazing fires, rice fields lost their color, and farms crackled and burned away like dry straw. As for the surrounding areas that escaped instant death: Homes were crumbled and only piles of wooden boards remained amongst bricks and stone foundations. Everything was crushed as if they were cardboard houses in a zone of destruction 10 kilometers in diameter. Those who survived found themselves totally surrounded by raging fires. The few people who managed to get to any type of shelter in time died painful deaths from gamma radiation within 20 to 30 days. By nightfall of the day of the blast, the blaze slowed down and then died out, finding nothing left to fuel it. Hiroshima passed away into nothingness."*

These are just some of the gruesome landmarks of what the Christians and many non-Muslims have done to the world. Outright destruction and lack of consideration for human life, land, houses, animals, and the torture of innocent people with fire and radiation. An evil incident which the history of humanity has never witnessed anything similar to it!

In light of this, one will undoubtedly observe how Islam taught the Muslims to deal with prisoners of war and innocent bystanders with justice, equality, good manners, and fair treatment. When they fought their enemies they didn't destroy cities, homes, land nor did they kill the innocent people, and they never tortured anyone, not even an animal. When the Muslims took prisoners they didn't torture them nor did they humiliate them, rather they taught them about Islam and what will benefit them in this world and the hereafter. After these observations and pondering over the results one will realize that Islam is the most merciful religion that mankind has ever known. Also that Islam's teachings and laws are the most just, equal with high moral and ethical standards. The only religion and way of life which deals with all people justly, equally and with fair treatment, granting every human being their human rights and giving them what they deserve.

I challenge Spencer and the critics to do some research and answer the following questions:

- How were the Native American people treated when the Europeans came to America? Who treated them in that way? Muslims or non-Muslims?
- What happened in the Philippines 1899-1902, WWI, WWII, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Dresden, Korea 1945-1953, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos 1950-1974, Laos 1957-1973, Panama 1989, Nicaragua 1981-1990, Somalia 1993, East Timor 1975-1999, El Salvador 1980-present, Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Krajina 1992-1995, Iraq 1991-Present, Palestine 1948-Present, etc... Were these people treated with justice, equality and fair treatment?? Were the invaders Muslims or non-Muslims?
- Which countries are spending millions of dollars yearly on nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, stealth aircrafts, tanks, submarines, etc...? Muslim countries or non-Muslim countries?
- Which countries possess the most factories for the production of weapons of mass destruction? Muslim countries or non-Muslim countries?

The noble scholar Dr. Rabee' ibn Haadee al-Madkhalee said:

*“Let it be known that never did Muhammad nor his righteous predecessors or any of his companions, ever establish factories for even the most primitive of weapons, like swords and spears, let alone atomic bombs, long-range missiles, or any other weapons of mass destruction.*

*Never did the Prophet Muhammad build a single weapon factory. Rather he was sent as a mercy for the entire creation, to guide all mankind to happiness in their worldly lives and the hereafter, such that they fulfill their Creator's right upon them, for it is He who created them to worship Him alone.*

*For example, the number of fatalities in the First World War in Europe reached more than ten million, and they were the elite of their nation's youth. And more than twice this number had incurred serious injuries disabling them for the rest of their lives.”*

(End of Quote)

The number of soldiers killed in the Second World War reached: *“17 million, along with another 18 million civilian fatalities — all of them killed within a period of only five and a half years. Experts have estimated that the military expenses alone reached \$1.1 trillion, and that losses caused by the war reached the value of \$2.1 trillion. Added to this are the number of entire cities destroyed, the amount of earth scorched, the agriculture that was flooded, and the factories and plantations that stopped production, not to mention the number of livestock that were destroyed or lost.”*

Let's ask again: Why don't the critics of Islam and the media describe Judaism or Christianity as being violent or indiscriminate, even though, contrary to Islamic texts, Biblical texts clearly legislate acts of violence against elderly, women, pregnant women and children even during times of peace!?

Why didn't western media attack Christianity or ridicule the attire of Christian nuns in the aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing? Wasn't Timothy McVeigh a Christian?

According to the FBI, 94% of terrorist attacks carried out in the United States from 1980 to 2005 have been by non-Muslims. This means that an American terrorist suspect is over nine times more likely to be a non-Muslim than a Muslim. According to this same report, there were more Jewish acts of terrorism in the United States than Islamic, yet when was the last time we heard about the threat of Jewish terrorism in the media?<sup>4</sup>

In fact, between 2001 and 2015, more Americans were killed by homegrown right-wing extremists than by Islamist terrorists, according to a study by New America.

Maybe David Boylan's statement can explain as to why only Muslims are portrayed as terrorists in the media:

*"We paid 3 billion dollars for the television stations. We will decide what the news is. The news is what we tell you it is."*

Or maybe what Israel Shamir said:

*"There are no important media outlets in the U.S. that are not owned or controlled by Jews."*

What about what Ralph McGhee said:

*"Disinformation is a large part of its covert action responsibility, and the American people are the primary target of its lies."*

What about what Ariel Sharon said:

*"Every time we do something, you (Shimon Peres) tell me America will do this and will do that... I want to tell you something very clear; don't worry about American pressure on Israel. We, the Jewish people, control America, and the Americans know it."*

Simon Wolf said:

*"We all know that the first bankers of the world – Rothschilds – are Jews; we know they control not only the money market, but also the political destiny of the European world... The Press of Europe is mostly controlled by Jews; the leading editors are Jews."*

Maybe John Swinton summed it up when he said:

*"There is no such thing, at this date of the world's history, as an independent press. You know it and I know it. There is not one of you who dares to write your honest opinions, and if you did, you know beforehand that it would never appear in print. I am paid weekly for keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with. Others of you are paid similar salaries for similar things, and any of you would be so foolish as to write honest opinions would be out on the streets looking for another job. If I*

<sup>4</sup>

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/omar-alnatour/muslims-are-not-terrorist\\_b\\_8718000.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/omar-alnatour/muslims-are-not-terrorist_b_8718000.html)RT

*allowed my honest opinions to appear in one issue of my paper, before twenty-four hours my occupation would be gone. The business of journalists is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell the country for his daily bread. You know it and I know it, and what folly is this toasting an independent press. We are the tools and vassals of the rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks, they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities and our lives are all the property of other men. We are intellectual prostitutes."*

Hypothetically speaking, how can one be sure that Jesus actually said that he was ***"not sent with peace but a sword"***? Is the bible the pure unaltered word of God, or has it been altered and changed over time? Even some early manuscripts of the Bible have been found with the meaning changed.

The Book of Kells, a seventh-century Celtic illuminated manuscript copy of the Gospels in Latin, altered the text from gladium, which means a sword, to gaudium, meaning joy. The resulting verse in translation was ***"I came not [only] to bring peace, but joy"***.

Encyclopedia Britannica says about the Bible: *"Important intentional changes, such as the insertion and addition of whole paragraphs took place."*  
(Vol. 2 pp. 519-522)

The introduction to the Catholic Bible mentions: *"copyists had clearly inserted things over the centuries that were not part of the Scriptures..."*

In the Preface of RSV, produced by 32 Christian scholars and backed by 50 consultative bodies, it says: *"Yet, the King James Version has grave defects... and these defects are so many and so serious..."*

So if the verse is truly ascribed to Jesus and is to be understood literally, then should this text be used as evidence to prove that the Prophets and Messengers before the time of the Prophet Muhammad also engaged in Jihad, Holy Wars and Crusades.

From an Islamic perspective, Muslims would consider these Biblical texts as partly contrary to Islamic texts contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and are highly likely to have been altered and changed by the rulers, priests, or rabbis of their time. As Muslims believe that no Prophet or Messenger would ever kill, slaughter, and fight people unjustly; murder innocent women, children and the elderly; nor promote the destroying of cities or towns such as by burning houses down. Nor do Muslims believe that a great Prophet such as Jesus would teach people to turn away from and abandon their parents or family members. However, if this verse is to be understood metaphorically, meaning that Jesus was sent with the sword of truth to distinguish between truth and falsehood, good and evil, promoting the worship of Allah alone and warning from worshiping other than Allah, then this is something that Muslims would agree with.

In fact, according to the Bible, when Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, took up a sword to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked him and told him to put away his sword by saying, ***"for all who draw the sword will die by the sword"*** (Matthew 26:52). Why then, did Jesus say, ***"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."*** What kind of sword did Jesus come to bring?



Charles Swindoll mentions in *‘Jesus: The Greatest Life of All’*: “Among the names of Jesus Christ is that of Prince of Peace. Such verses as Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:14, and John 14:27 make it clear that Jesus came to bring peace, but that peace is between the man and God. Those who reject God and the only way of salvation through Jesus (John 14:6) will find themselves perpetually at war with God. But those who come to Him in repentance will find themselves at peace with God. Still, it is inevitable that there will be conflict between good and evil, the Christ and the antichrist, the light and the darkness, the children of God (believers) and the children of the devil (those who refuse Christ). Conflict must arise between the two groups, and this can and does happen within a family in which some are believers and others are not. We should seek to be at peace with all men but should never forget that Jesus warned we will be hated for His sake. Because those who reject Him hate Him, they will hate His followers as well (John 15:18).

*In Matthew 10:34–36, Jesus said he had come at this time not to bring peace to the earth, but a sword; a weapon which divides and severs. As a result of his visit to the earth, some children would be set against parents and a man’s enemies might be those within his own household. This is because many who choose to follow Christ are hated by their family members. This may be part of the cost of discipleship, for love of family should not be greater than love for the Lord. A true disciple must take up his cross and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24). He must be willing to face not only family hatred, but also death, like a criminal carrying his cross to his own execution. True followers of Christ must be willing to give up, even to the point of “hating” all that is in our lives, even our own families, if we are to be worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37–39). In so doing, we find our lives in return for having given them up to Jesus Christ.”*

According to the most common Christian interpretation, the “sword” is a metaphor for an ideological conflict brought by Jesus.

R.T. France explains the verse in context as follows: “*The sword Jesus brings is not here military conflict, but, as vv. 35–36 show, a sharp social division which even severs the closest family ties... Jesus speaks here, as in the preceding and following verses, more of a division in men’s personal response to him.*”<sup>5</sup>

So if the title of the book taken from the verse in Matthew is to have a metaphorical meaning, understanding that there is an ideological division that Jesus Christ came with to distinguish between the people who are obedient and submissive to the Lord – the Creator – and those who are not submissive and obedient to the creator – then this is the same ideological message that all of God’s prophets and messengers brought to their people; (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jacob, Jesus, and Muhammad...) worship God alone and don’t associate any partners with Him in worship... This in itself debunks and disproves Robert Spencer’s title of the book as well as the subtitle in which he mentioned: “*the great chasm between Christianity and Islam*”... Certainly, there are differences between the two religions nowadays, but there are no differences in the original ideological messages of our beloved Jesus and our beloved Prophet Muhammad, they were one and the same... It is important to know that the differences that were introduced and attributed to Jesus emerged many years after Jesus’ departure from the earth after the council of Nicea (whereas before that, many of the Christians were differing in regards to the status of

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Matthew\\_10](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Matthew_10)

Jesus) such as the trinity, the worship of Jesus, the considering of Jesus as the son of God, the concept of original sin, and the crucifixion, and many other beliefs that were added on to Jesus' original teachings many years after his departure... but in all actuality, Jesus' teachings were the same as Moses'. Jesus came to fulfill the covenant and the law, and not to abolish the law... the same reason why Muhammad came as well; to fulfill and complete the law... so the cause of these differences that emerged in Christianity and were attributed to Jesus mainly revolve around the lack of preservation and the alteration of the original divine revelation that was revealed to God's beloved Messenger... Jesus...

One of the false claims that Spencer mentions numerous times in his book is that *"reason, freedom, discernment and free will are denied in Islam"* ... and that human beings are just *"slaves of God"* without the choice to do as they please, and that Islam teaches it's followers to not use their intellects.

This is an issue in which the world's greatest minds have applied themselves, and on account of which many people have lost their way. The Prophet Muhammad's disciples did not speak about questions of free will and determinism. They did not need to, because their faith was so strong and left no room for these types of doubts to take root which instigate this way of thinking.

At the same time, we say that the pillars of faith are six. They are to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and finally divine decree – both the good and the bad that befalls of it.

#### **Faith in divine decree has four dimensions:**

1. **Knowledge:** We believe that God knows all things. He knows what has taken place and what will take place with His eternal and constant knowledge. He does not come to know these things after having not known them, nor is He subjected to forgetfulness.
2. **The Record:** We believe that God has written in the Preserved Tablet everything that will ever exist until the Day of Resurrection. God says: *"Do you not know that God knows what is in the heaven and the Earth? Surely this is in a Record; surely this is easy to God."* (Qur'an, 22:70)
3. **God's Will:** We believe that God has willed everything that takes place in the heavens and on Earth. Whatever He wills to happen must come to pass. Whatever He does not will to happen will never take place.
4. **Creation:** We believe that *"God is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs. To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the Earth."* (Qur'an, 39:62-63)

These four dimensions of faith are everything we believe about God regarding the questions of divine decree and divine will, and they also clarify to us what agency and ability remains for His creatures. In other words, everything that human beings say, do, or refrain from, all of it is known to God, recorded in the Tablet, willed by God and created by Him.

God says: *“For whoever wills among you to take a right course. And you do not will except that God wills, the Lord of the worlds.”* (Qur'an, 81:28-29)

God says: *“God created you and what you do.”* (Qur'an, 37:96)

Muslims believe in these aspects of God's decree. We also believe that God has given us free will, and we freely choose our actions. This is clearly established in the Qur'an, as follows:

1. **God attests to our will.** For instance, He says: *“Go to your tillage how you will.”* (Qur'an 2:223) He also says: *“If they had willed to go forth, they would have prepared provisions for it.”* (Qur'an, 37:46)
2. **God commands us.** The clear fact that God directs commands and prohibitions towards us makes sense only if we are free to comply. Otherwise, we would be commanded to do that which is outside of our capacity, since our compliance or non-compliance would be predetermined. Therefore, it makes no sense to make demands of entities that have no ability to comply with those commands. Furthermore, God says: *“God burdens no soul except with that which it can do.”* (Qur'an, 2:286)
3. **God praises and censures.** He praises those who do good for the good that they do and censures evildoers for the bad things that they do. He also gives recompense to us on account of our deeds, in this life as well as in the hereafter. This only makes sense if we carried out those deeds of our own volition, free will and choice. Otherwise there would be nothing to reward or punish.
4. **God sent messengers to establish His proof upon creation.** The Messengers are: *“...givers of glad tidings and warners, so that humanity would have no argument against God after the messengers.”* (Qur'an, 4:165) If people were not free in their choices, their argument against God – that they had no guidance – would not become invalid after God sent the messengers, since if they were compelled in their actions, it would make no difference whether or not they received guidance.

Finally, we have practical, a prior type of knowledge that we carry out actions by our own will and choice. We decide what to do and what to abstain from, without any sense of being compelled in our decisions. This applies to even the smallest of willful actions, like sitting and standing, entering our homes and departing, as well as more substantial decisions like marriage and divorce or deciding to relocate to another city. This is why we feel it most acutely if someone else tries to force us to do something we do not want to do. And this is also why God does not hold us legally accountable for what we do under compulsion.

### **Responsibility for our deeds:**

A sinner cannot argue that he or she was “fated” to commit a sin, since that sin was carried out by the sinner's free choice. Yes, God knew in His eternal knowledge that the sinner was going to perpetrate that particular sin at that particular time and willed to allow it to happen, but He did not force the sinner to make that choice. Moreover, we only come to know that it was written for the sinner to commit the sin afterwards. This is why God says: *“No soul*

***know what it will earn tomorrow.***" (Qur'an, 31:34)

How can we make excuses for our actions with that which he had no knowledge beforehand? This is why God says: ***"Those who are idolaters will say: 'Had God willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners neither would have our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything.' Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say: 'Do you have any knowledge that you can produce for us? Lo! you follow naught but conjecture. Lo! you do but lie.'"*** (Qur'an, 6:148)

In our actions, we are both free and under God's determination at the same time. Since God creates our actions and wills that we act, to that extent our actions are under His determination. But since we choose on our own which actions we wish to carry out – a choice which God has willed to give us – then we are free in our choices and earn the good or bad thereof. So to summarize:

- a. All of the verses which relate to commanding to virtue and preventing vice are all proof of the free will of human beings because if a person was obliged to do so, doing so would make no sense.
- b. All of the verses which speak of blame and reproach against the evil doers and praise for the good doers are proof of free will because if one was obliged to do whatever one did, blame or praise would make no sense.
- c. All of the verses which speak about the questioning on the Day of Judgment and the Judgment in that Court and then the rewards and punishments and heaven and hell are proof of free will because if one was to assume that everything was predestined then questioning, judging, rewards and punishments would all be oppressive.
- d. All of the verses which say that a human being is responsible for his or her deeds:

***"Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds."*** (Qur'an, 74:38)

***"(Yet) in each individual in pledge for his deeds."*** (Qur'an, 52:21)

- e. Verses like:

***"We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)."*** (Qur'an, 76:3)

***"But you will not except as God Wills..."*** (Qur'an, 76:30)

As for what Spencer claims in his chapter heading: *"The punishment for exercising freedom of conscience... death..."*

Then anyone who reads and understands the Qur'an will see that conscience-intellect is a quality, power or ability given to human beings by Allah. If it were not necessary for human beings, Allah would not have given it to them.

Throughout the Qur'an Allah swears in the name of conscience-intellect 'al-'Aql'. So the thing by which Allah swears is of utmost importance.

In the Qur'an, conscience-intellect has been called عَقْل. Allah has mentioned the word عَقْل in al-Qur'an 49 times. Of them, in 22 places, Allah has scolded man for not recognizing the Qur'an and other Islamic teachings without using conscience-intellect. In the other 27 places, He instructed man to understand the Qur'an and other Islamic statements by using his conscience-intellect or spoke about conscience-intellect in other forms. As conscience-intellect is mentioned for 49 times in al-Qur'an in different forms, it is an indirect proof that in Islam and amongst the Muslims that it has great significance.

Allah mentions in many verses in the Qur'an that human beings will be responsible and asked about their conscience choices:

***"Later on that day you will be asked about my bounties."*** (Qur'an, 102:8)

Allah has informed here that a man will be asked on the day of final judgment whether he had properly utilized the bounties that He gave him in this world. That means man will be accountable to Allah on the day of final judgment for His bounties. Conscience-intellect is one of the greatest gifts of Allah. Its place is just after the Qur'an and Sunnah. So on the day of final judgment, man will be asked whether he utilized the Qur'an and Sunnah and conscience-intellect properly.

***"Certainly one will have to be accountable for eyes, ears and conscience."*** (Qur'an, 9:36)

Here Allah has categorically said that man will be accountable for his visual power, hearing power and power of conscience in the hereafter. It means that man will be asked in the world hereafter whether he had utilized properly the power of his eyes, ears and conscience.

One of the aspects of proper use of ears, eyes and conscience is that whether it was heard which was forbidden to listen, whether it was seen which was forbidden to see and whether the conscience-intellect was utilized for things which were forbidden. These three aspects of accountability have been discussed extensively. But another important aspect of the use of eyes, ears and conscience does not come to discussion at all. And that is the unconditional acceptance of the opposite remark of an important person about what a man heard by his own ears, saw by his own eyes or understood by his own conscience. Such behavior is tantamount to refusal of Allah's three gifts. The prophet forbade such behavior. Thus Allah has informed man that he will have to be accountable that is liable to be punished for use of his ears, eyes and conscience in both the above mentioned ways.

In the verse 22 of Surah al-Anfal, Allah says:

***"To Him certainly, the worst creatures are those deaf and dumb people who do not utilize their conscience-intellect."***

Explanation: Here Allah has termed those people as worst beasts those who do not utilize their conscience-intellect especially to learn Islam and understand the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is not at all difficult to understand that his life is a total failure whom Allah has called the worst of beasts. This is because if conscience-intellect is not used properly to understand



Qur'an and Sunnah, then wrong knowledge will be acquired about many basic aspects of Islam. And if one acts according to this basic wrong information, his life will be doomed to failure. Because one natural law is that if there is one fundamental (basic) mistake in anything then that thing will fail totally, not partly.

In the verse 100 of Surah Yunus, Allah says:

***“Mishaps and disgrace is imposed on those people who do not utilize their conscience-intellect.”***

Here Allah says mishaps, miseries and dangers prevail upon the people who do not work or lead their life by utilizing their conscience-intellect. This is because there must be mistake in a work if it's knowledge is acquired and implemented without proper use of conscience-intellect. As a result it will not bring any welfare.

In verse 10 of Surah al-Mulk, Allah says:

***“The inhabitants of the hell will further say we could have avoided the hell if we would have listened to the prophet attentively and take lessons from them by utilizing our conscience-intellect.”***

The verse has mentioned what the inhabitants of the hell will utter out of their repentance in the hereafter. They will say we would not have come to hell if we had listened to the Prophets (peace be upon them) attentively and taken lessons thereof by utilizing our conscience-intellect. Because, if they had utilized their conscience-intellect properly alongside the Qur'an and Hadeeth, they could acquire correct knowledge of Islam, that is life and could implement those knowledge with peace in mind. So it is understood from this verse that the lack of proper use of conscience-intellect alongside the Qur'an and Hadeeth for acquiring knowledge of Islam, will be a primary cause for going to hell.

From the above information of the Qur'an, Hadeeth and general knowledge, it is easily understood that Islam put great emphasis on conscience-intellect.

Spencer also tries throughout his book to present isolated acts of violence or terror and try to make them seem as though this is what 'Islam' promotes and this is what the 'majority of Muslims' do. He frequently uses this tactic by trying to make the minority opinion or odd and rejected view, that has been disproved and refuted by the mainstream Muslims to be the majority view, and the mainstream opinions adopted by Muslims for over a thousand years, to be the opposition and odd or minority opinion.

He does this especially when mentioning some incidents that were perpetrated by terrorists, or those perpetrating and claiming to be practicing Muslims, and he makes it seem as though killing of innocent people is justified and supported by Islam and the mainstream Muslims. The majority of the perpetrators of these acts of violence are not practicing Muslims, not in faith, nor in their actions and behaviors. He mentions, on pg. 71, that the *Qadariyyah* tried to advance the concept of individual free will, where in all actuality they had gone to extremes in belief in individual free will and choice.

Generally, when the *Qadariyyah* are mentioned, then what is intended by this are those

who negate the Divine Decree of Allah, and they are the followers of Ma'bad al-Juhani. But sometimes this word maybe used for those who are excessive in affirming the Divine Decree (qadar) and those who went to such extremes regarding the Divine Decree (qadar) that it led them to say that the servant is compelled to do certain actions. So he acts without choice. Rather, he has no power over his actions. These people are known as the *Jabariyyah*, who also fall under the general name of *al-Qadariyyah*.

An individual named Ma'bad al-Juhani called to the creed of the Qadariyyah for the first time in Basrah at the end of the time of the Companions. He generally rejected that Allah has prior knowledge, a book wherein the fate of everything is written as well as the Will of Allah. He even went so far as to explicitly state that Allah does not know what fate will take place except after its occurrence, not to mention record it in a book or will it into existence. Rather, the servants initiate their actions themselves, so they do their actions without Allah's knowledge until after the servant has completed the action. They do not consider the actions of the servant to be from what is decreed by Allah. And in light of this, they differ amongst themselves regarding whether Allah is capable of producing the like of the servants' actions or not.

And this is the extent to which they exaggerated in their negation of the Divine Decree (*qadar*) just as they went to similar extremes affirming the abilities of the servant, to the extent they made the servant a creator along with Allah, since according to their belief, every servant creates his own actions without being affected by the ability of Allah, and its influence over his chosen actions.

This is a deviant belief which is rejected by the intellect, Islamic legislation and sound logic. It is a foreign ideology because the man who began spreading this creed, Ma'bad al-Juhani, took it from an unknown person, who was said to be called Abū Yunus al-Asawari. He didn't learn it from the Qur'an nor the Sunnah, nor the Prophet Muhammad or any of his companions. So then Ma'bad adopted it and it became a great trial in Basrah and the neighboring areas because of him.

Hajjaaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi punished him by the order of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan al-Umawi and this occurred in the eightieth year after the Prophet's migration.

When the innovation of the Qadariyyah appeared, the scholars from the Companions and their students rushed to condemn the innovation of the Qadariyyah, warn against it, and to free themselves from it and its people. They also criticized it and made clear to the people the dangers it posed to a person's belief in Allah because the belief in the Divine Decree (*qadar*) is a system based upon Islamic monotheism (*at-tawheed*) and whoever disbelieves in the Divine Decree (*qadar*) has invalidated his monotheism (*at-tawheed*).

Also, some of the books of history and biographies mention that when the statement of Ma'bad al-Juhani reached 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, he freed himself from him and his deviant speech and he made his position known to the people. The same has also been narrated regarding 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbaas. In fact, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbaas, wished that this person's neck could be placed within his hands so that he may squeeze it until he dies, or at least cut off his nose, and by this time he had become blind. All of this was due to his protectiveness of Allah's Religion and the Muslim creed which for the first time had been exposed to deviant ideologies.

Also, there have been narrations of the Prophet and the Pious Predecessors regarding the dispraise and condemnation of the Qadariyyah and how they are the Magian's of this nation. Rather, they are worse and more evil since they affirm many creators, since they believe every servant from the jinn, mankind and the angels creates his own actions according to their corrupt claim. In addition to this, the Qadariyyah are the opposite of the Jabariyyah who claim the servant is compelled and driven towards his actions of good or evil, and is then rewarded with good or bad which is another deviation. But what is correct, is the middle path between these two extremes. It is what the people of the Sunnah and the community of the believers are upon; that there is no creator but Allah. Therefore, the servant and his actions are from the creation of Allah and the servant performs actions due to his choice, just as he also abandons them by his own choice and this is the secret of the responsibilities placed upon the servants by Allah, and the place where good or bad are rewarded and the knowledge of this is with Allah and this issue has been expanded upon elsewhere.

So Spencer tried to make the view of the Qadariyyah and the Jabriyyah to be the mainstream view of the Muslims, and then went on to say that: *"Ultimately, Muslim authorities declared the concept of human free will to be heretical..."* where in all actuality it was the opposite of his claim...it was those who went astray from the mainstream teachings of Islam and the earlier generations of Muslims, that believed the concept of human free will to be heretical, not the Prophet Muhammad nor his companions who actually refuted this ideology and debunked it, and warned people from it.

Also all throughout his book pg. 17, 18, in his chapter headings '*Jihad against modern day Christians*, and '*A tradition of Persecution*' pgs 53, 59, (Without specific examples or names)...he tries to make it seem as though Islam and the prophet Muhammad have a long standing reputation of persecution of people of other faiths, and the early Muslims persecuted Christians, and made war against them, and that the Prophet Muhammad set a pattern for all of this, and mentions the conquering of the Byzantine empire...and then says the Islamic Jihadists conquered and Islamicized the Christian lands of the Middle East, North Africa and Spain.

Every isolated incident of violence by extremist groups he automatically labels the perpetrators as 'Islamic Jihadists, Islamic Suicide bombers, Islamic supremacist groups, pro sharia party', anything negative or violent is immediately attributed to Islam, but when he speaks about Christianity he never mentions it or the acts perpetrated by Christians as 'extremists, supremacist groups, murderers, etc...'

He mentions all these incidents of violence directed towards non-Muslims at the hands of extremists and makes it seem as though this is the mainstream Muslim view and belief, that all Muslims support the killing of innocent bystanders. Where in all actuality, the mainstream Muslims and the real Islamic scholars denounce all of these types of acts and all types of terrorism, why didn't you mention this, Robert...???

For example on pg 20, he says: *"an Islamic suicide bomber murdered twenty two people and wounded eight more at the Coptic Christian Church of the Saints in Alexandria..."* he doesn't even mention the perpetrators name...and when you refer back to his reference for this quote in the endnotes, you find that he's quoting it from the press trust of India... why

don't you mention the perpetrator's name, and why don't you use local references from Egypt Mr. Spencer??? Also a couple lines down after that on page 20, he mentions 'An Islamic website'... without mentioning the name of the website... typical to Robert Spencer's style. Then when you look to the endnotes he references...BBC News... really Bob, you can do better than that! This is just one example of your lack of academic scholarship and qualifications in your writings, you can't even bring correct references for your points and claims...

On page 29, here we go again with his 'Islamic Jihadists' and Sharia supremacists... his pattern of constantly joining these words together to create a sense of fear within the reader... saying that they continue to prey on Christians in their midst... where Robert... these embattled communities are now on the verge of extinction, with no one to speak up for them... what about the Palestinians, the Afghanis, the Syrians, the Iraqis, the Burmese Muslims living there, who is preying on them, who is speaking up for them? This is a completely false claim Robert, actually those Christians living in Muslim lands have experienced nothing but fair and good treatment.

Also on page 31, Bob Spencer starts talking about Saladin (Salaah ad-Deen) and his victory and mentions he was bloodthirsty and the likes, where this is also a false claim, because eyewitness reports from Christians themselves said that he dealt with them the most fairest and just of ways, nothing the way you described him, and this is because of your depending on unreliable references for your quotations about Saladin, such as *'The New Concise History of the Crusades'* by Thomas Madden, why don't you refer back to eyewitness accounts in the Arabic Language, instead of depending upon biased books of history that portray Saladin as a misfit...?

On page 33, he says... *"the similarities between the bible and the Qur'an are a staple of the presentations of Muslim apologists... there we go again Robert, good try though... this is the mainstream view of the majority of the Muslims, not the apologists who are the minority..."*

This is another false claim by Spencer, as all those who study history know that for centuries, during which Islam dominated the area, conflict between Jews, Christians and Muslims was the exception, not the norm. The norm was peace, harmony, coexistence and cooperation among those of the three religions. Christians and Jews lived in peace within Muslim lands, and were free to practice their religion, as long as they obeyed by the laws and paid their taxes.

Islam arose in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, in Mecca, early in the seventh century CE. Until this time the Arabs were still predominately polytheistic, with Mecca being the chief center of pagan worship. There were scattered Christian and Jewish tribes around but neither Christianity nor Judaism had made any significant success in converting the pagan Arabs to either religion. It was in this pagan context that Muhammad was born about 570–71 CE. As he grew up in Mecca and Meccan society at the time was very materialistic. Mecca was the chief business center in Arabia and well-known for its business connections with Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Iran and India. The prophet Muhammad, used to spend time alone and ponder the spiritual impoverishment of his tribesman and the residents of Makkah. In 610, when he was about forty years old, he had his first revelation and began his call to Islam. This call at first elicited mockery, opposition, threats and persecution.

Muhammad persisted nonetheless. By 632 AD, the year of his death, he had united virtually all or most of the Arabian Peninsula for the first time in history. He created out of hitherto feuding Arab tribes a mighty united community under the banner of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad's successors, the caliphs, expanded the Muslim state outside Arabia to the northeast and northwest. Between 634 and 642, Muslims occupied Iraq, Iran, Syria and Egypt. In the following half-century or so, Muslims were in control of a territory stretching from central Asia and the Indus River in the east to Spain in the west. Wherever the Muslim went, they took with them their language and their religion.

So how did the Prophet Muhammad deal with the Christians and Jews he encountered in the Arabian Peninsula? As Islam spread, Muslims came in contact with Jewish tribes at the Khaibar Oasis northwest of Madina, Christians at-Tabuk in northwest Arabia, the Christian tribe of Banu Taghlib in northeast Arabia, and Christians and Jews at Najran, Yemen. At first, Prophet Muhammad considered Christians and Jews as allies and potential converts to Islam, since his message was similar to theirs. They, however, rejected him and did not recognize him as a prophet of the stature of Moses and Jesus. Despite being rejected by Jews and Christian, the Prophet Muhammad considered Christians and Jews possessors of divine revelations, Ahlul-Kitaab, "people of the Book," entitled to protection in return for living in the Muslim lands under peace and harmony. The Qur'an addresses Muslims saying: ***"Be courteous when you argue with the People of the Book, except with those among them who do evil. Say: 'We believe in that which is revealed to us and which was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one. To Him we surrender ourselves.'"*** Accordingly, it has been said that the Prophet Muhammad concluded treaties with both communities assuring them peace, toleration and freedom of work and worship. Observing the way the Prophet Muhammad and His companions dealt with Jews and Christians, and their behavior towards them shows us a superb model of how the early Muslims felt towards the people of the book. And their behavior was practical implementation of what they learned from the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad.

As Islam teaches Muslims to deal with Jews and Christians with the best of manners and etiquettes, with justice and fairness, better than their dealings with others. Muslims eat their food, and marry their women and the Prophet Muhammad encouraged the Muslims to respect them and deal with them justly and kindly, as long as they do not fight you because of your religion or try to expel you from your homes.

Islam is a peaceful religion because it forbids mischief on earth. Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

***"and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsidoon (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupt)"*** (Qur'an, 28:77)

***"Verily, Allah enjoins al-'Adl (i.e. justice and worshiping none but Allah Alone - Islamic Monotheism) and al-Ihsaan (i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet SAW in a perfect manner), and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help, etc.): and forbids al-Fahshaa (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents,***



*polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right, etc.), and al-Munkar (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds, etc.), and al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed.”* (Qur'an, 16:90)

The life of the peaceful individual who is living under Muslim rule or who has been granted the protection of the Muslim state is regarded as sacred to such an extent that transgression against a single individual with no justification is regarded as equal to transgression against all of humanity. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits (e.g. by doing oppression unjustly and exceeding beyond the limits set by Allah by committing the major sins) in the land.”* (Qur'an, 5:32)

Islam allows followers of other religions to live in the Islamic state and practice their religion without putting any pressure on them. They are granted complete rights that are not granted to them by the most democratic countries nowadays.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) ruled Madinah when there were many Jewish tribes living there, and he established a constitution between him and them which required all citizens to defend the state and strive together for its wellbeing, and granted security to them, their property and their children, with freedom of worship, trade and travel. They mixed with the Muslims to such an extent that they used to invite the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to meals in their homes, and he would accept their invitations. He (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) also gave them the right to judge matters amongst themselves according to their own laws.

This is how the Rightly Guided Caliphs who succeeded him also acted; they did not shed anyone's blood on the basis of identity, ethnicity or religion. Rather they resisted the aggression of hostile parties, supported those who were weak and oppressed in the land, and strove to spread the religion of Allah, call people to Him and tell them about Him: *“so that those who were to be destroyed (for their rejecting the Faith) might be destroyed after a clear evidence, and those who were to live (i.e. believers) might live after a clear evidence.”* (Qur'an, 8:42)

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: *“If anyone wrongs a non-Muslim living under Muslim rule, detracts from his rights, burdens him with more work than he is able to do or takes something from him without his consent, I will plead for him on the Day of Resurrection.”*

[Narrated by Abu Dawood (3052); classed as hasan by Ibn Hajar in Muwaafaqat al-Khabr, 2/184; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood]

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: *“Whoever kills a non-Muslim living in Muslim lands will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, although its fragrance may be detected from a distance of forty years.”*

[Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3166)]

The basis for all of that is the verse in Surah al-Mumtahanah in which Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

***“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who do not fight against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity. It is only as regards those who fight against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, that Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then such are the Zaalimoon (wrong-doers those who disobey Allah).”*** (Qur'an, 60:8-9)

Justice (or fairness) is obligatory upon everyone towards everyone in all circumstances, and injustice (or unfairness) is not permissible under any circumstances, to such an extent that Allah, may He be exalted, has enjoined the believers to treat the disbelievers with justice, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

***“Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.”*** (Qur'an, 5:8)

This is the “code of conduct” that governs Muslim practices and highlights the peace, justice and security that Islam brought to the inhabitants of earth.

So when looking back at the earlier Muslims and the successors of the Prophet Muhammad, It was not until the conquest of Iraq, Syria and Egypt that the Muslims came into contact with large numbers of Christians and Jews. Damascus surrendered in 635, Iraq in 637, Jerusalem in 638, and Alexandria in 641. Iraq, Syria and Egypt were predominantly Christian at the time of the conquest. In dealing with an overwhelmingly Christian population, Muslim commanders and Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab followed the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, Khalid ibn al-Walid, the Arab commander to whom Damascus fell, issued the following declaration to the people of Damascus:

***“In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful. This is what Khalid ibn al-Walid would grant to the inhabitants of Damascus if he enters therein: he promises to give them security for their lives, property, and churches. Their city shall not be demolished, neither shall any Muslim be quartered in their houses. Thereunto we give them the pact of Allah and the protection of his Prophet, the caliphs, and the believers. So long as they pay the poll tax, nothing but good shall befall them.”***

The fall of Jerusalem was not substantially different. Jerusalem has had a special place in Islam. Following the retreat of the Byzantine army northward, the city came under the control of Patriarch Sophronius, who refused to surrender the city except to Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab himself, because he knew that Umar was just, kind and wouldn't oppress the residents, not matter what religion they followed. Accordingly, Umar came especially from Medina to receive Jerusalem. Patriarch Sophronius took the Caliph on a tour of the holy places. While touring the Church of the Holy Sepulcher about noontime, Umar went outside to perform the noon prayer. Having finished, the patriarch asked why he didn't pray in the church. Umar responded saying, *“I fear that after I am gone, my followers will come and say ‘Umar prayed here.’ You might lose your church.”* Umar reinforced the Prophet

Muhammad's policy towards the people of the Book—namely Jews and Christians.

Under the Byzantines, Jews were barred from Jerusalem. The Muslims allowed them in again.<sup>13</sup> Michael Penn, a professor of early Christian-Muslim relations at Mount Holyoke College, is a student of early Syriac manuscripts. He came across letters written by Christians who were hostile to Islam, but he also found a document written by a Christian bishop in the middle of the seventh century that says, *“Muslims aren’t opposed to Christianity, they respect our religion, honor priests and holy men. We have records of Muslim rulers helping found Christian monasteries.”*

Professor Penn also found an extended prayer by a Christian on behalf of a Muslim ruler. The highlight of his research, however, was a seventh-century canon law permitting Christian priests to administer last rites to Muslims as well as perform exorcisms to heal Muslims using Christian relics.

Thus, in return for submission and the payment of taxes, Islam guaranteed the people of the Book security of life, property and protection in the exercise of their religions. Non-Muslims living in Muslim lands had full autonomy under the leadership of their religious chiefs. Each community exercised jurisdiction over matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce and inheritance. So long as they obeyed the Muslim laws and paid taxes, Christians and Jews were left alone to run their own lives without interference.

Positions in government administration and the economy were open to non-Muslims as well. In fact, from the Muslim conquest to the beginning of the eighth century, the language of the administration remained Persian in Iraq and Greek in Egypt and Syria. Only Non-Muslims, especially Christians, had the linguistic and administrative skills to keep the government functioning.<sup>18</sup> Even after Arabization started under Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik in the late seventh century, non-Muslims continued to fill important positions in government.

The well-known St. John of Damascus, his father and grandfather, served the Umayyad state in high office in Damascus. St. John, whose Arabic name was Mansur, and the Christian poet al-Akhtal, befriended Yazid, the future Caliph.<sup>19</sup> St. John was also noted for his theological dialogues with Muslims regarding the divinity of Christ. Jews, of course, were not excluded from government posts and Arab courts. The Jewish physician – philosopher ibn Maimoun, or Maimonides (1135–1204), distinguished himself in the service of the Ayyubid Court in Cairo. Furthermore, Jewish and Christian merchants played significant roles in banking and the economy. In the intellectual sphere, when Caliph Ma'mun (813–33) of the Abbasid Caliphate founded Bait al-Hikma, the house of wisdom, in Baghdad, he employed Christian translators under the direction of Hunain ibn Ishaq, himself a distinguished scholar, to translate Greek works into Arabic. Between 750 and 950, over the course of two centuries, Christian translators, among others, made available to the Muslim mind virtually the whole Greek and Syriac philosophical, medical and scientific body of knowledge in Arabic.

The same policy of toleration, “live and let live,” which characterized Muslim rule in the east, was also practiced in Spain under Muslim rule. Between 711 and 718, the Muslims were in control of almost all of the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish cities usually surrendered without a fight, as the natives were assured of security of life, religion and property. Thus, Islam and the Arabic language were introduced into Spain and found a receptive population. People began to learn Arabic and convert to Islam, as happened in Syria, Iraq

and Egypt. Spain, called Andalus, became a model of toleration and religious coexistence. It flourished economically, intellectually and socially. Cordoba, capital of Muslim Spain, rivaled Baghdad and Constantinople in the tenth century as a cosmopolitan city, noted for trade, culture and learning. It was known as “the ornament of the world” and had a university and a library containing 400,000 books. The closest library to it in Europe was in Switzerland with 600 books. Christians and Jews, along with Muslims, shared in the wealth of Cordoba and occupied high positions in society and the royal court.

In the words of professor Zachary Karabell, *“Jews tended to benefit both in Spain and the Mediterranean world. In the towns and cities, Jews found themselves in unique positions as intermediaries between Muslim-dominated Spain and the rest of the world. Having suffered severe discrimination at the hands of the Visigoths, Jewish communities under the Muslims enjoyed more freedom, affluence, and social standing than any Jewish community would until the nineteenth century.”*

By the middle of the ninth century, more natives had adapted to Muslim culture, converted to Islam, and learned and spoke Arabic, which led some Christian zealots to fear for the future of Latin and Christianity in Spain. Paul Alvarus, a Spaniard, spoke for many when he wrote, *“The Christians love to read the poems and romance of the Arabs, they study Arab theologians, and philosophers, not to rebut them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. Where is the layman who now reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, or who studies the Gospels, prophets and apostles? Alas! All the talented young Christians read and study with enthusiasm the Arab books – they despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention.”*

As was the case in the Islamic state, the attitude of the Ottomans to Christians and Jews was essentially the same. So long as they obeyed the laws of the land and paid the taxes, and stayed away from seditious acts, they were left alone. Ottoman subjects were organized into three millets, or religious communities: the Muslim millet, the Greek Orthodox millet and the Jewish millet. Each millet was autonomous under its religious chiefs who served as links between the Ottoman government and their flocks. Religious chiefs were sometimes responsible for collecting Ottoman taxes from their communities. Issues of personal status were also under their control. No effort was made by the Ottomans to convert people to Islam. When conversion did occur, it was not the result of pressure. The Ottomans did not proselytize.

When Constantinople fell to Muhammad II in 1453, its population was declining. The sultan restored order and opened the city to all, Muslims, Christians and Jews, to settle in it. Those who had fled were encouraged to return. Muhammad II installed a new Patriarch, Gennadius, and invested him with more authority than a patriarch had exercised under the Byzantines. The Patriarch and his Holy Synod settled doctrinal questions, disciplined members of the Church, managed church property and levied taxes on clergy and laity. Freedom of conscience and worship was guaranteed. The Patriarch exercised considerable civil authority over his community and was considered a government official with the rank of minister. The sultan promised the Patriarch and his ecclesiastical hierarchy protection against fellow Christians, be they Roman Catholics or Serbian Orthodox rivals. In return, the Patriarch promised to guarantee Greek civil loyalty and prevent Greek intrigue with the Ottomans’ enemies. At a time when Jews were being persecuted in Europe and Catholics and Protestants were at each other’s throats during the period of the Reformation, the millet

system of the Ottoman Empire guaranteed non-Muslims a large degree of toleration and security.

No wonder then, some 100,000 Jews from Spain and other parts of Europe found refuge in the Ottoman Empire. Thirty to forty thousand settled in Istanbul and fifteen to twenty thousand in Salonika. Others settled in Izmir (Smyrna) or elsewhere. With time, they flourished economically and became skilled merchants, bankers, and artisans.

As Arab rule in Spain began to crumble in the late eleventh century, Catholic zeal began to rise against Muslims and Jews demanding their conversion or expulsion. Thus the toleration and religious diversity which was the hallmark of Andalusia began to wane. When the city of Saragosa fell in 1118, the whole Muslim population fled, leaving a ghost town behind. The population of Seville was totally expelled in 1248. But when the Christians could not get the city to function, the Muslims were asked to return. Mosques were either destroyed or turned into cathedrals. The Marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469 augured badly for Muslims and Jews. Pressure increased on both communities to convert or get out. Some converted openly but continued to practice their religion secretly. In 1478, the notorious Spanish Inquisition was founded to find those false converts and deal with them. When the city of Malaga fell to the army of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1487, most of its Muslim population was sold into slavery. The final indignity took place in 1492 as the last Muslim principality, Granada, fell to the reconquering Christians. The Muslim population was given the choice of surrendering peacefully in return for security of life, religion and property, or resist and lose all. Unwilling to resist, the Emir surrendered the keys of the city in January, 1492. But Ferdinand and Isabella did not keep their side of the bargain. Flushed with victory against the Muslims, they decreed the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, to be followed by the Muslims in 1502. We call this today ethnic cleansing. Ferdinand's and Isabella's decrees banning Muslims and Jews from Spain remained effective until 1968.

The religious and ethnic persecution of Jews by Christians in medieval and modern Europe is well known and need not occupy us here. However, the story that is still under wraps is the treatment of the Palestinians, Muslims and Christians, at the hands of the modern state of Israel.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the treatment of the Christians and Jews by Muslim states, Arab or Ottoman, was far superior to the treatment Muslims and Jews received at the hands of Christian states, or Palestinians at the hands of the Jewish state of Israel. Muslim States over the course of fourteen centuries have allowed for religious diversity and not insisted on trying to convert those who follow a different creed."

But if you want to judge Islam on the basis of the actions of some of its followers and adherents, then you must let us judge Christianity and Judaism based on the actions of some of the followers of these two religions too. How can it be said that Christianity is a religion of love when we see the killing of hundreds and thousands of Muslims in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, and Iraq by the hands of Christians and Christian nations?

What about the ku klux klan, or the armed Christian terrorist groups, or white nationalist groups in the USA of which there are more than forty-one, and more than twenty-two militias in the USA alone? What about all the terrorist groups throughout the world, which are motivated by racist or religious beliefs, all of which have emerged from the Christian



world?

What about the Muslims in Central Africa, and the massacres and atrocities to which they are being subjected to by the Christians?

What about the offenses being committed against the Muslims in Myanmar, before the eyes of the entire world?

What about the past? The pages of history that are filled with the Crusades in which the Muslim lands were occupied and their blood was shed for hundreds of years? What about what the Zionists have been doing to the Palestinian people for over 70 years?

What about the atrocities committed by European colonialists – French, British, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch – in Muslim lands?

Nevertheless, we cannot accuse the religion – Islam – that Allah sent down to the Messiah ‘Eesaa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary – peace be upon him), of being a religion of terror or aggression; rather it was a religion of peace, as were the religions of all the Prophets. Rather terrorism occurs among some of the followers who distort the divinely revealed books, or follow their own criminal agenda, or get confused and they are deceived by the Shaytaan (Satan), so they begin to shed blood, transgress sacred limits and provoke wars throughout the world.

We believe that we can find a great deal of common ground if we agree to respect treaties and covenants, and restore people’s rights all throughout the world, and other countries that have long suffered oppression and occupation, and the plunder of resources, sometimes in the name of freedom and sometimes in the name of fighting terrorism. At that point we will be able to find a way to debate calmly and wisely, for we-Muslims-are the people of this call, as Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

***“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad SAW) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.”***





# A REBUTTAL OF ROBERT SPENCER'S: “Not Peace But a Sword”

*The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam*  
– [ INCLUDING HIS ‘FALSE PROPAGANDA’ ] –

A Rebuttal of: *Not Peace But A Sword: The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam* by the bigoted Islamophobe, Robert Spencer

About the author of the original book:

Robert Spencer was born in 1962 and is of Greek heritage. His grandparents came from what is present day Turkey. It is said that He received his M.A. in the field of early Christian studies, and is a self-proclaimed devout Catholic. Robert Spencer claims that his interest in Islam began with him learning about the roots of his family history in Turkey.

The bloody and confrontational circumstances surrounding the purported personal history of Spencer's family provide a logical explanation for the animus towards Islam and Muslims in much of the polemical work that Spencer has produced since achieving a public profile through his website, 'JihadWatch'. It also explains his hostility towards Turkey, and the reason he would join a genocidal Facebook group that called for Turkey to be “ethnically cleansed” of Turkish Muslims.

JihadWatch, the website that is administered by Robert Spencer, was founded in 2003. Since then, Spencer has published thousands of articles and blog posts, has had numerous speaking engagements (mostly at Conservative gatherings), and has many books on the “threat” of Islam.

