

# Thilo Sarrazin Confounds His Critics with Common Sense (Part II)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Ulrich von Schwerin accuses Sarrazin of claiming that the Qur'an is "obsessive" about sexuality. Look at the many Qur'anic passages in [Part I](#) that are about sex. Isn't that list – which is not even exhaustive – enough to convince the fair-minded that Sarrazin's observation is true?

Von Schwerin then implicitly attacks Sarrazin for claiming that the Qur'an is "full of hatred for unbelievers and calls for violence." But isn't it? Are there not 109 verses commanding Jihad against the unbelievers? Think only of 2:190-194, 3:89, 8:12, 8:60, 9:5, 9:29, 47:4. These are just a few of the verses that tell Muslims "to kill the Unbelievers wherever they find them" (the phrases vary, the meaning does not), and in some verses – as 8:12 and 8:60 – tell them specifically to "strike terror" in the hearts of the Unbelievers. Believers are told that Unbelievers are the "most vile of creatures" (98:6) and that they should not take Christians or Jews as friends, for they are friends only with each other. Ulrich von Schwerin knows perfectly well all of these verses, but cannot bring himself to admit that yes, Sarrazin is correct, the Qur'an is "full of hatred for unbelievers and calls for violence."

*"If you take it literally, it leaves little room for misunderstanding," writes Sarrazin about the Quran. His reading does not see a separation of politics and religion in Islam as possible. "The more literally one takes the Quran, the clearer it appears that the world's governance can only*

*find its legitimacy through God," he writes. Like many other Islam critics, Sarrazin picks up one of the Islamists' core arguments; he presents their interpretation of the Quran not only as a conclusive view, but also as the exclusive one.*

It is not Sarrazin, but Muslim scholars and clerics who insist and have insisted, for 1400 years, that Islam is both a religion and a politics. One does not exclude the other; the faith guides the ruler, whose legitimacy depends on the extent to which his rule expresses the will of Allah, as set down in the Qur'an. There is no separation in Islam between the faith and the political system. Islam offers a Complete Regulation of Life.

*Sarrazin also ignores the fact that the political ideology of Islamism is a product of modernity and that its interpretation is rejected by a great majority of Muslims. He does not say a word about the moderate versions of mystical Islam prevailing in most Muslim countries.*

*It may appear contradictory that he should adopt the radical reading of the Islamists as the "true" version of Islam, but that is necessary to support Sarrazin's concept, in which he condemns Islam in its entirety as an "ideology of violence in the guise of a religion." His portrayal of Islam is a caricature that has more to do with his own prejudiced views than with the beliefs guiding the lives of the majority of Muslims.*

Does Sarrazin "ignore" the mystical schools of Islam, the Sufis? Or is he all too aware of how apologists for Islam claim, incorrectly, that the Sufis do not preach or practice jihad? Plenty of Sufis, right up to the present, have been Jihad warriors. Robert Spencer notes that "contrary to popular belief, the Sufis do not reject violent jihad. Their towering figure, al-Ghazali, taught it, and Sufis have been at the vanguard of the Chechen jihad. Hasan al-Banna, founder of the

Muslim Brotherhood, which in turn gave birth to Hamas and Al-Qaeda, was strongly influenced by Sufism. In 2009, Iraqi Sufis meant with Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and boasted of their jihad activity in Iraq. Izzat al-Douri, a Sufi leader, was instrumental in the formation of the Islamic State.”

It is Ulrich von Schwerin, not Thilo Sarrazin, who labors under the mistaken belief that the manner of worship – i.e., mystic or “Sufi” – has any effect on the doctrine of violent Jihad. The same Jihad verses are in the same Qur’an that both Sufis and mainstream Muslims read and follow. For that matter, it’s the same Qur’an that inspires members of Al-Qaeda and ISIS. There is no “radical reading” of the Qur’an but, rather, there are differences among Muslims in their willingness to act upon what the Qur’an commands. Mainstream Muslims are simply not willing to fully follow the Qur’anic commands; the so-called “extremists” – who might better be called fundamentalists – are willing. Sarrazin is presenting in his new book what the Islamic texts – Qur’an and Hadith – teach the faithful, whatever their level of fulfilling those commands.

*Beyond his study of the Quran, he tries to provide an appearance of objectivity though quotes, numbers and statistics, but the book’s goal remains clear: to confirm his preconceived ideas. His description of the history of Islamic culture as an 800-year-long decline reveals his downright malicious urge to deny Muslims anything positive.*

So Sarrazin’s “quotes, numbers, and statistics” are not rebutted by Von Schwerin, who simply derides them, most unpleasantly, as being included to “provide an appearance of objectivity.” This attribution of unacceptable motives is itself unacceptable. Are those “quotes, numbers and statistics” adduced by Sarrazin accurate and helpful? Are they relevant to his study? Those are the only questions that need to be answered. And what would Ulrich von Schwerin have

written had Sarrazin not provided “quotes, numbers, and statistics”? No doubt something like this: “Sarrazin’s so-called study is noticeably lacking in quotes, numbers and statistics, which calls into question his objectivity.”

How, looking at the history of Islamic peoples, especially during the 800 years that followed the destruction of the Abbasid Caliphate by the Mongols under Hulegu Khan in 1258, would Von Schwerin describe Islamic culture? Does he think Sarrazin’s description of an 800-year-long decline unfair? If so, what great Muslim figures can he point to after that date? What great achievements in high culture (art, architecture, literature, music, philosophy, etc.) or in statecraft can he claim for Islam? It is not a “downright malicious urge” of Sarrazin to “deny Muslims anything positive,” but his stronger urge to be faithful to the historical record, however dismal that may be. If Von Schwerin thinks that Sarrazin has left out some marvelous aspects of high Islamic civilization since 1258, he ought to have mentioned them. His failure to do so suggests there is nothing impressive to report.

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