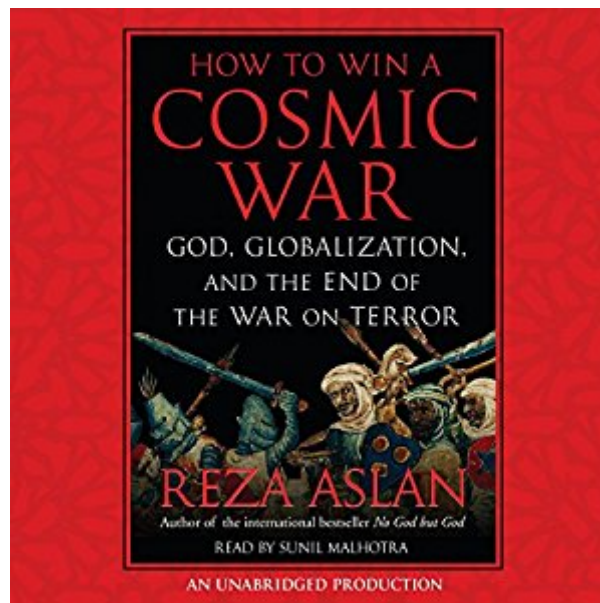




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How To Win A Cosmic War: God, Globalization, And The End Of The War On Terror



Synopsis

A cosmic war is a religious war. It is a battle not between armies or nations, but between the forces of good and evil, a war in which God is believed to be directly engaged on behalf of one side against the other. The hijackers who attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, thought they were fighting a cosmic war. According to award-winning writer and scholar of religions Reza Aslan, by infusing the United States War on Terror with the same kind of religiously polarizing rhetoric and Manichean worldview, is also fighting a cosmic war. It is a war that cannot be won. How to Win a Cosmic War is both an in-depth study of the ideology fueling al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and like-minded militants throughout the Muslim world, and an exploration of religious violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Surveying the global scene from Israel to Iraq and from New York to the Netherlands, Aslan argues that religion is a stronger force today than it has been in a century. At a time when religion and politics are increasingly sharing the same vocabulary and functioning in the same sphere, Aslan writes that we must strip the conflicts of our world of their religious connotations and address the earthly grievances that always lie behind the cosmic impulse. How do you win a cosmic war? By refusing to fight in one.

From the Hardcover edition. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

This book continues where "No god but God" left off, providing a detailed analysis of political Islam, and showing how it differs from orthodox forms of the religion. The parts I found most interesting

were the discussions of the impact of colonialism on both Islamic cultures and the psyche of individual Muslims. A must read for anyone hoping to understand the roots of both violent and non-violent forms of extremism.

A very interesting but now somewhat dated book about religious fundamentalism and what motivates the people who join these movements. The book was completed just as Barack Obama was beginning his presidency. I'd like to see an updated version of these ideas Reza Aslan writes about. Essentially the author contends that radical religious fundamentalists of all stripes are not interested in defeating and ending their fight, but continuing an unending war of good versus evil. They have no plan for after the war. Although his observations seem to fit the Al Qaida model, I'm not sure whether it fits the ISIS model. Author Aslan is a keen and knowledgeable observer of religious extremism. His thoughts and writings are well worth reading and pondering.

This is an excellent book highly recommended as it clarifies many issues surrounding misunderstood terms like Islamists versus for instance jihadists or ISIL. The author has good historical and objectively written accounts of the formation of the state of Israel and the correspondingly complex issues which revolve around its survival as a nation amidst very conflicting Arab sentiments.

Aslan presents a picture of the fundamentalist's worldview, and demonstrates how it is common in every fundamentalist group, regardless of belief system. He describes the origins of mistrust and hatred that lead to fundamentalism, and offers actions that can defuse the destructive results of it. More than ever, it is important to bring people with disparate belief systems into the public arena, to empower them as part of the governing process. Where the radical minorities have been made part of the decision making process, participation in violent, underground movements has decreased. A book worth reading.

This is a powerful book that helps make sense out of a troubling region. I travelled extensively in the Middle East when I was young and was invited into the Madrassas and mosques by the Imams. I had (at that time) open and stimulating conversations with one and all in the Islamic community. Thus I was puzzled by the complete volte face of the culture during later travels there while I was with the United Nations. Reza Aslan has put together an argument that I think finally makes sense out of what has seemed so incomprehensible.

Having read and enjoyed "No God but God" I decided to read this book and Zealot also (separate review) - Kindle editions. I found this to be informative and well thought out, although possibly slightly out of date now given the IS issue in Syria and Iraq. Still, this is a worthwhile read. My one problem is that approximately 25% of the book is taken up with references.

Reza Aslan's *Beyond Fundamentalism* is an incredibly interesting read that reminds us that the current "War on Terror" that the United States is involved in is by no means an isolated or completely unusual event and in fact could be described as a "cosmic war." Cosmic war, which he defines as a religious conflict fought on a higher plane as well as on earth where one side (or both) truly believes that they are acting on behalf of God, is un-winnable as only faith can conquer by defeating evil, and with faith there is no compromise. Aslan presents an argument that Jihadism is a social, not religious, movement, and that it has sociopolitical causes such as the shifts from secular nationalism to globalization to ultra-nationalism as a fear reaction to globalization of today. Aslan offers a reminder that from the Jews of the Old Testament to the Crusades, cosmic wars have always been fought, but he also provides us with a compelling solution: just don't participate. In a war you can't win the only answer is to make sure it never starts through mutual respect (easier said than done...). I highly recommend this book for anyone who is interested in actually understanding the root causes of the political situation between the western world and the Middle East. My only critique is I wish he'd said a little more about the differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, but I'm sure that is included in his other book, *No god but God*, which I am looking forward to reading soon.

Big fan of Aslan's work. He works hard to put forth some definitions on terms that help give vocabulary to a discussion that often fails to pick up on nuance. I know a lot of people will disagree with his stance, but I think this book is a great representation of the intellectual side of this argument - beyond the PC nonsense that's so easy to dismiss, Aslan's work creates a much more substantial case for understanding and tolerance.

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