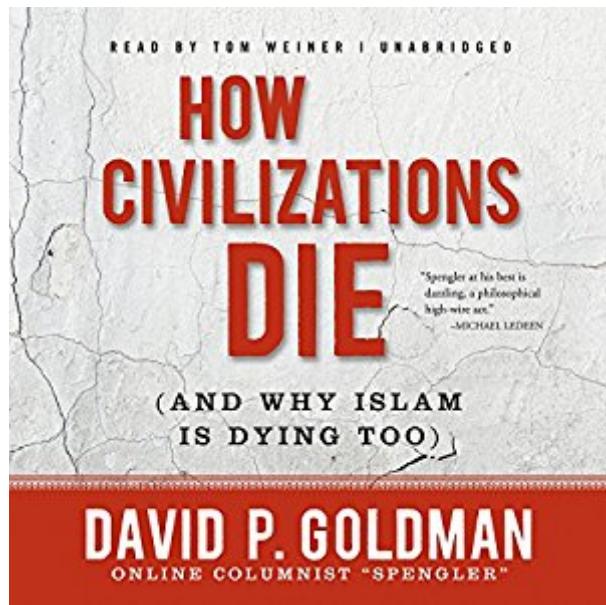


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How Civilizations Die (and Why Islam Is Dying Too)



Synopsis

Past and present civilizations failed and fail for many reasons, but the number-one predictor of a civilization's survival is its sense of religion-or lack thereof. So argues First Things columnist David Goldman in *How Civilizations Die (and Why Islam Is Dying Too)*. The strength of a civilization's religion affects its purpose, its fertility rate, and ultimately, its fate, says Goldman-who then argues that, contrary to popular belief, Islamic countries are in the last throes of death while Christian America is in a position to flourish. Goldman goes on to say that America must embrace our exceptionalism and stop trying to save Muslim countries that are determined to destroy themselves. Original, stunning, and provocative, *How Civilizations Die* shows the power of religion to save-or doom-a society and why, if we stick to our principles, we will emerge as leader of another American century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The most important development of the twenty-first century is likely to be the great extinction of peoples and cultures. Like Greece and Rome, Europe has lost faith in itself; though incomparably richer than the peasants who built the Cathedrals, the denizens of what used to be Christendom spend only on themselves, with no thought for the morrow. They have failed to attend to the most elementary task of a successful civilization: raising children. In no European country is the birthrate at replacement level. As David P. Goldman, Spengler of Asia Times Online, tells it, not only is the old world dying, it has reached the demographic point of no return. The title of Goldman's book is *How Civilizations Die*, but the addendum, *And Why Islam is Dying Too*, may be more important. For

there is almost no awareness that the Muslim world is following in the footsteps of western civilization. Indeed, a popular narrative among those who seek to revive Europe has it that Muslims will soon rule the continent. But while European Christianity eventually lost the fight with modernity, Islam has fared worse. Iran proves illustrative. "An educated twenty-five year old Iranian woman today probably grew up in a family of six or seven children, but will bear only one child." As of 2010, Iran's fertility rate stands at 1.7 children per woman. Decadence has enveloped the nation; drug use is rampant, and a sizable portion of the women work willingly as prostitutes. Paradoxically, this makes the Islamic world more dangerous, at least in the short term: "For in their despair, radical Muslims who can already taste the ruin of their culture believe that they have nothing to lose.

David P. Goldman, aka Asia Times Online's 'Spengler' columnist, is the single most insightful writer in America today. Goldman's new book 'How Civilizations Die' is an absolute gem as he dispenses with conventional wisdom and gives the reader unique geopolitical insight in a cultural and historical tour de force. Goldman may as well be the originator of the phrase "Demographics is Destiny" because he has argued for years (and in this book) that demographics can go a long way into explaining nations' economic and cultural rise and fall. But then what explains demographics? In the introductory part of the book, Goldman explores why people in the developed world choose to have children and why they don't. His answer seems to be that having children is often an act of religious faith, or at least an article of faith in the future. Those developed societies (read: Europe) that fail to reproduce at replacement rate have lost faith. Not surprisingly, only two developed countries, Jewish Israel, and Judeo-Christian America, currently have birth rates above the 2.1 replacement rate. The next part of Goldman's book takes the reader deep in the heart of Islam and explores how and why Islam is literally convulsing before our eyes despite its religious facade. Who knew that the world had never before seen a drop in birthrates as it sees in Iran today? Who knew that Turkey too faces a demographic crisis in the near future and that native Kurds might soon outnumber native Turks in Turkey? The reader will be shocked as Goldman goes through the numbers and explains the cultural and economic consequences of an Islamic world on the brink.

As a long time fan of Spengler from his perches at Asia Times online and First Things magazine, it was a pleasure to read this book, which was a synthesis of most of the seminal and original ideas that he has been writing about now for 10 years. Spengler is not a professional journalist, but rather a retired financial whiz and music theorist, and as such can afford to offend as many people as humanly possible with his terribly politically incorrect views. This is what attracts so many hundreds

of thousands of readers to his ATOL essays. Anyone who reads this book will see why he will never be hired to write the anodyne nonsense and trivial gossip that is now standard fare on the OpEd page of the NY Times. Spengler places high value on 3 points of view that have been virtually taboo in the world of our cultivated intelligentsia in New York and Washington. The first is the value of women having children and rearing them properly - even women with careers and other lifestyle options. The second is the importance of religious life in the modern world, especially for the educated class whose nihilistic, materialistic and low-fertility behavior threatens the survival of the nations they lead. The third scandalous idea (especially for the NY Times) is that Israel shines as a symbolic exception to the cultural and political disintegration and degradation not only of the Muslim Middle East, but in fact post-Christian Europe, as well. Yes, those pesky Jews who in Congressional District #9 just repudiated the favorite politician of the NYT, whose presidency is now endangered. In the educated class of America and Europe, the terms of discussion have changed dramatically in recent years.

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