



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR INFIDEL BY AYAAN HIRSI ALI

1. Hirsi Ali tells us that this book is "the story of what I have experienced, what I have seen, and why I think the way I do" (page xii). Which experiences does she highlight as being integral to forming her current views on Islam?
2. "No eyes silently accused me of being a whore. No lecherous men called me to bed with them. No Brotherhood members threatened me with hellfire. I felt safe; I could follow my curiosity" (page 185). This passage refers to Hirsi Ali's initial impression of walking the streets in Germany. What other significant differences between the West and Islamic Africa did she observe during her first days in Europe? Upon arriving in Holland, what were her initial impressions of the Dutch people and the Dutch government? Did these change significantly as she lived there?
3. How did Hirsi Ali's immigration experience and integration into Dutch society differ from those of other Somalians?
4. Discuss the differences that Hirsi Ali noticed between raising children in Muslim countries and raising children in the West. In particular, what did she notice about Johanna's parenting? How were Muslim parents different from Dutch parents in their instructions to their children on the playground? (see page 245).
5. In Hirsi Ali's words, "a Muslim girl does not make her own decisions or seek control. She is trained to be docile. If you are a Muslim girl, you disappear, until there is almost no you inside you" (page 94). How do the three generations of women in Hirsi Ali's family differ in their willingness to "submit" to this doctrine?
6. As seen through Hirsi Ali's eyes, what factors contributed to Haweya's death? How might members of her family describe events differently?
7. Although Hirsi Ali mostly refrains from criticizing her father, she publishes the personal letter he wrote her upon her divorce. Why do you think she included this letter? Were you surprised by any other intimate details of her life that she revealed in the book?
8. The events of September 11th caused Hirsi Ali to reread sections of the Quran and to evaluate the role of violence in Islam. Consequently, her interpretation of September 11th differs from those around her. What does she conclude? Do you agree with her analysis?
9. On page 295, Hirsi Ali lists the three goals she wished to accomplish by joining Parliament. By the book's end has she accomplished all three? How did her views of the Dutch government change over time?
10. Examine Hirsi Ali's relationship with her brother. How did Mahad's and Abeh's reactions to her political work differ?
11. Throughout her political career, Hirsi Ali has made several bold statements challenging the Muslim world. In your opinion, were these declarations worth the risk?



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12. Has this book changed the way you view Islam? According to Hirsi Ali, is Islam compatible with Western values and culture? Do you agree with her?

Questions issued by publisher.



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