TERRORISM AND ISLAM: INHERENT OR INCIDENTAL CONNECTION?

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Abstract
Ever since the 9/11, the world has come to experience the unfortunate reverberations of transnational terrorism. While the effects of such dastardly and lethal acts leave much to be desired, it has never failed to be noticed that the greater part of and the most heinous of these terrorist attacks are championed by Muslims and in the name of Islam. In Nigeria the two monsters of Boko Haram and Fulani militia have this Islamic connection. These have led to lots of aspersion cast on Islam as religion as well as heightened Islamophobia in some quarters. The question is whether this Islamic connection is merely incidental or inherent. The piece therefore is concerned with to what extent Islam as religion fuels terrorism and violence in general. It tries to find out if it has such potency in itself or is it a congregation of factors. In doing this it uses the philosophical methods of analysis and hermeneutics. It discovers that while there are presence of non-religious factors as well as Islamic factors that are merely incidental, Islam has contents, history, tradition, values which being rigid and dichotomist and even fundamentalist of a sort, predispose towards and encourage intolerance and violence, fanning the embers of Islamic terrorism.
Keywords: Islam, Terrorism, Religion, Connection

Introduction

In the history of world religions, acts of heroic virtues have been placed in the name of religion so also heinous crimes. At the beginning of the present write-up, it may be important to point out that no religion is immured from the use of religion as a rationale for violence and crimes. But it may be important to ask: What are precisely the motifs behind terrorism? The response to this question is indeed not an easy one to come by. There has not been consensus among scholars and in this regard: …we can see "academic fault lines between those who take a rational economic approach, those who take a rationalized political approach, or social approach and those who see terrorism as a less rational approach to a person's problems but rather the outcome of an ideological approach based on emotions and/or religious beliefs. (Tarlow, 2017)

Steve Mariotte (2016) notes that we can only ignore the economic underpinnings of terrorism at our peril. Alan B. Krueger and Jilka Maleckova (2002) on their own, do not see poverty as direct correlation of terrorism. For them, terrorism is rather "a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics." Amy Zalman (2016) seems to have towed this line when he writes that all terrorist acts are motivated by being dissatisfied by what perpetrators had perceived to be a social or political or historical wrong which they are determined to correct. He, however, adds that the perpetrators hold the view that violence or its threat is an effective means to the desired end. Terrorism phenomenon has also been shown as having multiple roots among which are mix of ignorance, poverty, oppression, repression, exclusion, marginalization, and occupation. These multiple factors lead to frustration that precipitate terrorism.

Beyond this, international terrorism is often seen as a response to perceived occupation of an area. Groups see terrorism as a method to dislodge the occupying force. This argument has been refined by other scholars, who have presented conditions or extensions of this argument. Others have focused on military intervention, arguing that the presence of troops, the negative sentiment that they evoke, and their effect on strengthening the government, all create incentives for groups to attack the foreign power that has deployed troops. According to a graph by U.S. State Department, terrorist attacks have escalated worldwide since the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Robert Pape has argued that at least terrorists utilizing suicide attacks—a particularly effective form of terrorist attack—are driven not by Islamism but by "a clear strategic objective: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland." Tarlow's view (2017) is that "terrorism is a form of war. Its goal is to destroy economies through random death and panic. Terrorism rarely occurs because of poverty or even as a result of social frustration." He reasons that were poverty and social frustration the causes of terrorism then it would occur wherever these social ills are located. Well it must be noted that it may be true that terrorism is a form of war and actually it is. State actors have employed it as much as non-state actors even during a normal conventional war to tip the bargain to their side. However, such way of speaking seems to assume that wars and/or acts of terrorism are without purpose and does not have reasons for engaging in them. But this is far from the case, for even war mongers have real or perceived or cooked up reason for engaging in acts of war/terror. It is in this wise that Clausewitz refers to terror as "a continuation of *politik* by other means." Terror is a tool used to achieve political, diplomatic, and at times economic objectives. (Barrett, 2014) And these objectives are not sought in a vacuum. One must have perceived certain disadvantage, injustice and frustration. To simply see terrorism as war embarked upon to destroy

economies without qualification may not help addressing the incubating factors of such terrorist mindset and acts. For instance the Global Terrorism Index has estimated a near 1700 violent deaths attributable to Fulani Herdsmen attacks. The group had been on rampage in 2018, while there was drop in the attack as far as one could garner from the media in the build up to the electioneering campaign. This drop for the present writer is a strong indicator of certain political motif behind the attacks. There could be politics of terrorism couched in a religious garb. The politics-rooted nature of global terrorism could be seen as well in the emergence of transnational terrorist group like al-Qaeda. Nicholas Fotion *et al* noted that contrary to some view that they came into international scene only with the unfortunate event of 11 September 2001, it rather crawled in with the help of American and Soviet secret services. Each of these bred terrorists in support of its cause during the cold war. Unfortunately, by the end of the war, terrorism had become solidified that even the secret services and large scale operations could not get them eliminated. (Fotion, 2006) If this is so, what it means is that politics was at the beginnings of al-Qaeda and not necessarily religion. This is allied to the studies that show that conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism in most countries throughout the world. Battle-related deaths and deaths from terrorism are closely correlated across countries. This is evident in the data that showed over ten countries with the highest impact of terrorism were all engaged in at least one conflict. These ten countries accounted for 84 per cent of all deaths from terrorism in 2017. When combined with countries with high levels of political terror the number jumps to over 99 per cent. Terrorist attacks in conflict-affected countries were also more lethal, killing 2.4 people per attack on average, compared to 0.84 people in non-conflict countries in 2017. (Global Terrorism Index, GTI 2018)

Be that as it may, one cannot just ignore the fact that the greater part of and the most heinous of the terrorist acts in the recent times have been perpetrated in the name of Islam: the menacing and ravaging attacks of Bokoharam and Fulani militants, the age-long and unrelenting unrests and terrorist acts in the Middle East, modern international Islamist terrorism which is a natural off-shoot of twentieth century Islamic fundamentalism. It agitates the mind that there have been not a few of Islamic motivated terrorist groups in history up till the present day. In fact the worst attacks according to 2020 Global Terrorism Index in took place in seven countries which are covertly Islamic namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan. The major (deadliest) groups responsible were Taliban, Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Bokoharam, Fulani extremists, al-shabab, Ansar Allah, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TPP). It may however be good to point out that the killings have been on the decline. Earlier, the 2018 Global Terrorism Index identified the following as the worst hit: Somalia, Egypt, Iraq, Lybia, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria. The

group-perpetrators of these attacks were in the main Islamic and these include Al-shabab, Sinai Province of the Islamic State, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Misrata Brigudes, Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), Jaysh Al-Islam, Anti-Balaka Militia, Is Khorasan Chapter, Taliban, Boko Haram, Fulani Extremists. In fact, it is the activities of the Fulani extremists and Boko Haram in Nigeria among other series of religious attacks domiciled most often in the Northern Islamic dominated Nigeria that became the spur for the present write-up. Four of these groups, all of which are Islamic, bagged the infamous repute of being the deadliest terrorist groups in 2017: ISIL, Taliban, Boko Haram and Al-shabab. The four groups according to the GTI were responsible for 10,652 deaths from terrorism, representing 56.5% of total deaths in 2017. In 2012 which is prior to the large increase in terrorist activity around the world, these four groups were responsible for 32% of all deaths from terrorism. A decade ago they accounted for just six percent. Of course it must be noted that except Al-shabab, the groups have experienced falls in terrorist activities in the past few years. Al-shabab committed the deadliest attack of 2017 which killed 587 people. Though one can factor non-Islamic etiologies of this phenomenon such as "political causes (the Israeli-Arab conflict); cultural causes (rebellion against Western cultural colonialism); and social causes (alienation, poverty)" No doubt the ember of intolerance is further fanned by, and gains sympathy by what many Muslims would consider the historical injustice of creation of Israel, the deployment of American troops in the Holy Land of Saudi Arabia, the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the support of corrupt pseudo-Muslim governments and the harassment of the Islamic religion in the West." Treating Islamic terrorism as the consequence of political and socioeconomic factors alone would not do justice to the significance of the religious culture in which this phenomenon is rooted and nurtured.

Religion and Terrorism

There is no universal agreement among scholars as to what ways religion and terrorism are related. While some read a direct connection, others see no inherent connection between the two, for others there is only an incidental connection. Zalman (2017) for instance rejects any of such correlation between religion and terrorism in a fundamental way as the former being the root cause of the latter. Religious fanatics, he argues are not necessarily terrorists. At worst, it may be true that religious zealotry creates conditions that are favourable for terrorism. Though there has been movement away from psychology-based explanation to ideology and grievance-based explanations, many scholars such as Ver Pierson (2017) for instance seems to be advocating for return to psychoanalytical or psychological approaches with regard to counter violent terrorism. Thus he speaks in terms of psychology of terrorism while writing with Western radicalization in view. The central argument is that there is a possibility that quest for significance in the light of

Rousseau's concept of *amour propre* (self-love), Hero complex and trait of narcissm could be an explanation for radicalization. Well, the latter may explain the attraction of an existent terrorist group but may be little in explaining the beginnings of a terrorist group.

Some scholars have taken along this line in appreciation of the motivating factor for terrorism. For instance there is the view that religion is itself generally a minor motivator of suicide terrorism. For this view secular political goals, combined with the strategic advantage afforded by terrorist techniques, form the primary impetus for such attacks. (Pape, 2005) Some have argued that "the nature of religion itself tend to create particularly violent and intense-even cosmic- conflicts, as compared to those arising from purely secular origins."(Juergensmeyer,2004) Rene Girard's view is more daring for he argues that violence comes from the very nature of man and maintains that religion is the traditional means by which a community channeled and purified itself of violence. Religion is therefore primarily "a consequence of that violence and secondly our primary protection against it." (Girard, 2004) Many see correlation between religion and terrorism due to the seductive power of the former which Karl Marx refers to as opium of the people. This is the reason that religion and religious ideology can be very potent. The potency lies more in the fact that sometimes religion could lay claims to things that are not empirically provable as well as promises that are not questioned, sometimes without justification of current realities. Texts and traditions which form the basis for faith practices are open to multiple interpretations and with historical evolution, unique and universal orthodoxy becomes impossible. This is added to the view to the effect that religions evolve, and there is usually enough ambiguity the founding scriptures to let them evolve in any direction.

There is therefore something true about the view that every religion or secular ideology offers possibility of violence and peace, oppression and liberation—all depending on interpretations and contexts. Any wonder they may slide into absolutes. (Tarlow, 2017) As David A. Kunin opines that Religion is dangerous because, too often, its adherents make claims of absolute truth. "We," they claim, "have the right and only answer about the nature of the divine, and everyone else is wrong. We alone know what the divine wants for and from humanity. This truth claim often becomes an excuse to kill, as it forms the basis for relations between those who follow the 'true and only revelation,' and those who do not. It becomes the excuse for war as people use 'divine promises' as the basis for claims about land rights and national sovereignty. There is obviously some connection though what nature and extent of this connection continues to engage scholars. Religion may not be the motivating factor per se but religious leaders could make a pervasive use of religion to brainwash and coach future terrorists who could kill under the

banner of religion. Here texts of the religion could be handy by giving them interpretations that further the terrorist agenda. Besides religious imagination hold an influential power in creating delusion to orient the bigot believers towards fulfilling their religious duty against those who are religious in a different way or not religious at all.

World Religions, even if not all, have had some stories of violent fundamentalism or violence that was religiously motivated. Even Christianity is not left out, not minding that the general conception seems to be that Christianity is a religion of peace or at least preaches peace. But this has never generally been the case in history. There has been for instance in history a number of terrorist acts by groups or individuals with Christian motivations and goals. These in various ways see Christianity as their identity and become antagonists to groups considered threatening to this identity, sometimes arising from some fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible and Christian beliefs. For instance, not a few especially given its use of explosives have classified the 1605 gunpowder plot which was a failed attempt by a group of English Catholics to assassinate the protestant King James I and to blow up the palace of Westminster, the English seat of the government. (Wikipedia) There were in 1930s, Orthodox Christian influenced movements in Romania involved in the Bucharest pogrom. The Ku Klu Klan (KKK) organization operated after the American Civil War of 1861-1865. The goal was simply to re-establish protestant Christian values in America by any means possible as it believed that Jesus was the first Klansman. On July 16 2001, Peter James Knight intent on massacring 15 staff and 26 patients in his Prolife Crusade walked into the East Melbourne Fertility Clinic, a private abortion provider clinic carrying a rifle and variety of weapons.

What about the November 2015 Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood Shooting which three were killed and nine injured. The gun man, Robert Lewis Dear, claimed to be a Christian and extremely evangelistic believed that sinners would burn in hell and that attack on abortion clinics was God's work. Anders Behring Breivik was the mastermind of the infamous 2011 Norway attacks in which eight people were killed by bomb detonation and 69 through gunshot. His grievance in a compendium of texts entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, a text that was electronically distributed on the day of attack shows a worldview antagonistic to Islam and Feminism accusing both of causing Christian European cultural suicide. He contends he was waging a necessary Christian war against multiculturalism. It must however be noted that later on in 2015, Breivik contrary to his earlier claims of Christian root, claimed rather to be an odinist. Whatever be his religious affiliation, it at least serves to show that Islam does not have the monopoly of terrorism and violence made on the basis of religion. Besides, there have been a number of Christian-motivated terrorist groups, many of

which are still in existence. Among them include Iron Guard, Red Hand Defenders, Russian Orthodox Army, Ulster Protestant Volunteers, White Terror in Spain, Army of God, Aryan Nations, Lords Resistance Army. (Wikipedia) Even if these may not have seen themselves as terrorists, they may have at least engaged in acts of terror.

The above exposition, by no means, is an effort to engage in a *tu quoque* fallacy of a sort that bars a Christian for instance from interrogating Islam in the light of the wave of terroristic attacks and violence. Neither is it an engagement in an apologetics in favour of any religion. Such approach is not likely to yield to needed objectivity that would yield to any meaningful explanation and pragmatic solution to the problem of terrorism. Such apologetic tone and argument in the fashion of *tu quoque* have characterized quite a number of studies by scholars in which one finds, sometimes, a sheer intent and subterfuge to confuse readers or at least a poor appreciation of religious texts and doctrines or at least a methodological fault. For instance a data analyst and research marketer, Tom Anderson perhaps in a bid to show that the Quran was not alone in its featuring violence engaged in a project that was aimed at portraying the Christian Old Testament as the most violent with approximately 5.3% of the text referring to destruction and killing while Quran recorded just 2.1% and the New Testament slightly higher at 2.8%. Such conclusion appeared simply to be based on word counts instead of considering the context and the use made of the word in the context it is used.

One cannot but see obvious gaping holes in methodology which of course has always been the case with regard to write-ups that try to underscore the fact that the Christian Bible is also a promoter of violence. It is the same gap that was observed in an article from the American Muslim Sheila Musaji (2007) entitled "Throwing Stones at the Quran from a Biblical Glass House". In this article , the author tries to show that such passages like Deut 20:10-17; 1Tim1:20; 1Sam17:46-54; 2Sam16:9; 2Sam4:7; 2King 10:6,7; Deut7:1-2 were violence verses. Sometimes, one observes some glaring omission and shoplifting that ignores the obvious historical context. These observations are not, in any way, geared towards absolving Christianity from having precipitated forms of violence and terrorism. In fact, anyone who knows the history of crusades would have known that Christianity like other religions is not innocent. As long as there are different persons with various manner of appreciation of reality, there is bound to be differences in interpretation of the basic texts and doctrines of a particular religion and sometimes some go on the way of literal interpretation that is most often the womb of religious fundamentalism and sometimes this can violent. Yet, this observation cannot in any way eclipse the fact that the contemporary world is being grievously challenged by the unfortunate experience of violent Islamic Fundamentalism

and if this is true, then there is a justification of interrogating Islam in this light. Is the problem essentially rooted in Islam?

Islam and Terrorism: Any Inherent Connection?

Efforts have been made to show that Islam is fundamentally a peace loving religion. In fact, the name itself comes from the Arabic root that denotes peace. Some critics however argue that the Quran is incompatible with other religious scriptures as it attacks and advocates hate against people of other religions. For instance, Sam Harris interprets certain verses of the Quran as sanctioning military action against unbelievers as a whole both during the lifetime of Muhammad and after. The Quran says, "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled."[Surah 9:29]. In *The End of Faith* Harris argues that Muslim extremism is simply a consequence of taking the Qur'an literally, and is skeptical that moderate Islam is possible.

There are really passages that command physical violence against the enemies of Islam, “those not like us”. Such passages include: "Those who disbelieve follow falsehood, while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord... So, when you meet (fighting Jihad in Allah's Cause), those who disbelieve smite at their necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives)... If it had been Allah's Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you). But (He lets you fight), in order to test you, some with others. But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.".. Quran (47:3-4); "And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And Al-Fitnah[disbelief or unrest] is worse than killing... but if they desist, then lo! Allah is forgiving and merciful. And fight them until there is no more Fitnah [disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah] and worship is for Allah alone. But if they cease, let there be no transgression except against Az-Zalimun(the polytheists, and wrong-doers, etc.)".. Quran (2:191-193); "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."… (Quran 9:29). One finds some of such texts that command violence in the Hadith and Sira: Allah's Apostle said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say. "O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him." (SahihBukhari 52:177); "Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war... When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one

of these, you also 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 Jizya. 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." (Sahih Muslim 19:4294); "the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: 'One who died but did not fight in the way of Allah nor did he express any desire (or determination) for Jihad died the death of a hypocrite.'" (Sahih Muslim 20:4696).

A reading of the verses above[1] shows that they are inciting to violence and intolerance of other religions. Quran is more pointed and direct in its command to terrify "those not like us." Most of these passages are laid as doctrine couched and worded in universal and eternal terms. These verses show that jihad is a personal duty and a religious imperative on the same plane with the other five pillars of Islam, namely, statement of belief or shahadah, prayer, fasting, charity and haj. When it is raised to an act of faith with a promise of future of reward then it receives a very strong motif that may be insulating to any form of deterrence. Sometimes because of this being a kind of sixth pillar, it can spill over to a form of politics whereby the leadership could try to proclaim popular jihad in order to further legitimize and further enhance and boost their leadership status.

There is no doubt that they have historical context and background but most often they are not laid down in the Quran or are obscure to the average reader. It requires some level of scholarship to be able to read them in the light of history of the life and works of the messenger of Allah. Now, it is the case that doctrines are more qualitative and has greater force that mere historical narrative whose doctrinal value may not be obvious. When violence is historical, it can incite but not as much as when it is doctrinal. For the former, historicity and contextualization become a wage against any form of universalized application. Doctrinalizing violence in the name of Jihad and done in plain terms portends, therefore, a great disaster for the society. More still is that the nature and the degree of the violence is left open. Besides, violence cannot be curtailed because of its spiral effect. And in the digital age as ours, the media acting as terror multipliers, bring the terror to limelight with the result that the terror instead of terrorizing locally, it unfortunately

[1] Other passages from the Quran that advocate jihad include Quran (4:76); Quran (4:95); Quran (4:101) Quran (8:15) Quran (8:57) Quran (8:67) Quran (9:5) Quran (9:14) Quran (9:20) Quran (9:30) Quran (9:38-39) Quran (9:41) Quran (9:73) Quran (9:88) Quran (17:16) Quran (21:44) Quran (33:60-62) Quran (47:35) Quran (61:4) Quran (66:9)

terrorizes widely and internationally. This obviously bolsters the determination of the terrorist whose aim is simply to superlatively terrorize.

Attempts have been made by various scholars to explain this jihad against the unbelievers in terms of self-defense. Yet this line of interpretation hardly squares with some of the passages highlighted above. Besides even if the theory of self-defense is to be advanced there is no gain saying the fact that it can be abused for one can claim to be engaging in self-defense just in defense of his religion no matter where and how far as it concerns the place of the attack. Yet the question of self-defense cannot be conclusively advanced. Nor can a spiritual interpretation be acceptable in explaining this Jihad. Nor does Karen Armstrong's view that the Jihad urged by the Quran alludes to the Muslim's duty to fight for a just, decent society. What begs the question in the later view is how the fight is to be fought and by what means? And again on whose terms would be the determination of a just decent society? These misgivings can be illustrated using just the following verses from the Quran read in the context of the trilogy: Quran (2:216) - "Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not." Not only does this verse establish that violence can be virtuous, but it also contradicts the myth that fighting is intended only in self-defense, since the audience was obviously not under attack at the time.

From the Hadith, it has been shown that this verse was narrated at a time that Muhammad was actually trying to motivate his people into raiding merchant caravans for loot. Quran 4:95 criticizes "peaceful" Muslims who do not join in the violence, letting them know that they are less worthy in Allah's eyes. It also demolishes the modern myth that "Jihad" does not mean holy war in the Quran, but rather a spiritual struggle. Not only is this Arabic word (mujahiduna) used in this passage, but it is clearly not referring to anything spiritual, since the physically disabled are given exemption. The Hadith reveals the context of the passage to be in response to a blind man's protest that he is unable to engage in Jihad, which would not make sense if it meant an internal struggle. (see Quran 8:12). It would therefore be off the mark to interpret this to mean a spiritual struggle, given that it both followed and preceded confrontations in which non-Muslims were killed by Muslims. The targets of violence are "those who disbelieve" - further defined in the next verse (13) as those who "defy and disobey Allah." Nothing is said about self-defense. In fact, the verses in sura 8 were narrated shortly after a battle provoked by Muhammad, who had been trying to attack a lightly-armed caravan to steal goods belonging to other people. The latter gives a historical and authoritative force to the issue of doctrinalization which had been discussed above. History is indicative of Muhammad's penchant for wars in the name of Jihad. This fact, given Mohammed's status and combined with

the issue of doctrinalization is a great reinforcement for the idea of a violent radicalism.
Besides there seem to be lack of precision surrounding the duty of jihad, namely it is not clear whether it is a personal duty (fard' en) for each and every Moslem under all circumstances and by whomsoever or whether it is a collective duty (fard kiffaya) that can be performed under the direction of a Muslim leader (such as imam, khalifa, amir al-mu'amiin). Morestill is with regard to consideration for jus in bellum.

Be that as it may, spiritualizing the concept, jihad goes to show that jihad is obviously obsolete as a religious practice. In fact not a few have while acknowledging the legitimacy of jihad, have sought through linguistic analysis to point out that the etymology of the word jihad (jihada) actually means to strive and so does not mean holy war nor does it necessarily have a military connotation. Some have proposed Islamic Protestantism that would divest Islam of vestiges of anachronistic beliefs. Unfortunately these proposals hardly find an average level of acceptance. Of course, Islam would not be the first to undertake a revision of itself. Unfortunately, Islam has shown itself more conservative especially since the tenth century when it canonized itself when it closed the gates of ijtihad which had been a mechanism of reform in existence prior to the 10^{th} century. Ijtihad is "the authorization of scholars to reach conclusions not from existing interpretations and legal precedents, but from their own perusal of the texts." (Bar, 2004) The gates of ijtihad was closed especially for most of the Sunni world. It is still however practiced in Shite tradition. Suffi tradition has had a history of syncretism, reformism and moderation. The impediment to the latter two traditions is their non-Arab origin and this adversely affects their universal acceptability and legitimacy. Little wonder jihad remains as religious practice. Shmuel Bar (2004) observes that while there has been attempts to bring Muslim clerics for instance to denounce terrorism, none have condemned the donations of money for jihad in spite of its connection to terrorism.

This is all the more aggravated by what Bar refers to as "the dilemma of the moderate Muslim." The dilemma is two pronged: "the difficulty of refuting the legal-religious arguments of the radical interpretation and the aversion to—or even prohibition of—inciting an Islamic Kulturkampf which would split the ranks of the ummah." The first according to Bar is predicated on the fact that characteristic of most revelation-based religions, the less observant or the less orthodox will be hesitant to challenge fundamental dogmas out of fear of being branded slack or lapsed in faith. This is linked to the second that explains the disinclination of the moderates to confront the radicals in terms of violent intimidations by the radicals. The more religious basis lies on the fact that Islamic ummah is at the roots of Islamic religious value and so most often the moderate shy away from standing up to the radicals as a result of strong

aversion to communal discord (fitna) which impinges on the ummah.(Bar, 2004) This is the reason that there exists, even when pressure is put on Muslim communities, a political asymmetry in favour of the radicals. Bar observes that in this light Muslim regimes in the Middle East and Asia are reluctant to crack down on the religious aspects of radical Islam and satisfy themselves with dealing with the political violence alone. In this milieu, one can say that there seem to be no clear cut demarcation between orthodox and radical Islam. There is the tendency of this being sacrificed at the altar of the priority of solidarity within Islamic world. Thus it is like we have radical Muslims on the one hand and moderates who are sympathetic to them, on the other. Little wonder the permissive silence among Moslems in the face of violent attacks as one finds for instance in Nigeria with regard to the onslaught of Bokoharam especially at its beginnings and the dastardly acts of Fulani extremists makes the refraining even more difficult. Such silence further nourishes this view of Islam as one, in being a violent religion. Jay Sekulow et al. (2014) corroborates this with regard to Syria, though they had to acknowledge the efforts of Peshmerga in Kurdistan in the fight against terrorism as well as the incalculable assistance rendered by the succeeding Egyptian government after the deposition of Morsi to Israel against Hamas. This not withstanding, it must be noted that the sixth pillar of jihad which unfortunately creates a violent dichotomist attitude cannot remain among tenets of Islam without raising once in a while Islamic fundmentalists and extremists who take to terrorist acts.

Pan-Islamism: The Impact of Sect-Based Organisational Differences

While Islam must be interrogated in the light of the wave of terrorism, it must be noted that significantly only a very small number of the world's over 1.5 billion Islamic adherents radicalize. There has been the tendency of a monolithic view of Islam which may not be a fair assessment of the adherents of that religion with regard to issue of terrorism and violence.

> Post 9/11, significant sections of the Western media have tended to misrepresent Muslims as a monolithic nation, a supposedly unified Global community of believers—sharing a national consciousness that subsumes their diverse ethnic, cultural linguistic, national, racial, or territorial identities under an all-encompassing identity of the '*Ummah*.' The disparate Muslim nationality movements of Palestine, Kashmir, and Chechnya are being clubbed with fringe pan-Islamic militant movement like Al-Qaeda and seen as part of a putatively wider 'Global Islamic Jihad' against the West. (Ahmad, 2008)

Obviously terrorist acts and terrorism are evocative of negative and resentful emotions. This is because of its unconventionality and its terror-component as well as the moral burden involved. Terror component lies in the fact that they kill and maim, making people to become terrorized, frightened or anxious or unsure of their safety with the aim of mounting pressure to effect the desired change. This is even more terrifying with the fact of the unconventionality and surprise dimension of attacks. The complexity of factors involved in setting agenda for the emergence of terrorist groups makes the present writer to be more reticent in conflating Islam and terrorism. This is not in any way to close eyes to expositions made with regard to materials of violence in Quran which are of fundamental and universal nature.

All notwithstanding, the present writer aligns himself with John Esposito's rejection of pan-Islamism. This is the myth that there is monolithic Islam, that is, that all Islam is one such that the same thing can be said of all Moslems. Such a view, according to him, is naïve and unjustifiably obscures obvious divisions and differences in the Muslim world. And this is expected, for no religion is likely to preserve its unity given variety of interpretations and idiosyncrasies. Of course, Islam as a unified community is an actuality imagined, for Islamic Ummah, right from the beginning, is simply communities fraught with fractures, fractures that are beyond the usual sunni-shia divide. There are Kharijite who see themselves as true Muslim. Even within the Shiites, there are divides, namely Fivers, Seveners and the Twelvers. In the Sunni divide, there are Schools of Islamic Laws, namely Hanafi, Shafai, Malike and Hanbali all of which give a certain angle to the practice of Islamic religion. And unlike the pyramidally structured system of control of Shiites which is clergy based, the lay component in Sunni Islam in terms of clergy leads even more to greater fracture. The reason is that any gifted speaker could rise to height of influence and this, with his own system of interpretation and idiosyncrasies. Even more, given that Islam is much more than the Western view of religion because it is also political, cultural, economic, social, all of which are enmeshed and specifically guided in the Islamic system of Sharia, the fracture is even more.

This is because political, economic, cultural realities are in the main contextual and local. Islam tend to take on the local, economic, social and cultural colorings of the immediate environment in such a way that even when theology is ostensibly the same, the application and manifestation depends largely on the local environment. Roby Barret notes that this tendency to disintegrate into splinter groups is particularly a feature of Sunni-radicalism. This is because the Sunni is not hierarchically structured like one finds with Shi'a. This may be the reason that non-state actors of Shi'a tradition are tied to or function as a part of larger political entities which share many attributes of a state as one finds with Jaish al-Mahdi, Hezbollah, et cetera.

This is a far cry of what one finds with Sunni tradition where "non-state actors tend to account for the majority of the violent jihadist organizations and their ties to functioning political entities are either far more tenuous or nonexistent." This lack of structure is evidenced in such places as Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, and Somalia, where radical violent organizations dominated by Sunnis constitute a growing regional threat to stability. The story is the same for instance in Chechnya and Dagestan, radical Sunni groups threaten the integrity of the Russian state. The same is found across Southeast Asia, precisely in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Sunni splinter groups seem therefore to account for the source for militancy and terrorism and this is due to the lack of a hierarchical structure in Sunni tradition.[2] Due to the splinter groups, it is difficult to know the authentic leader or spokesperson of any group as had happened in Nigeria with regard to government's effort to broker peace and compromise with Bokoharam.

> The fractured geopolitical and socioeconomic landscape of the region asserted its ascendancy, and Islam reflected this diversity. Islam was defined in terms of specific geopolitical and cultural settings the granularity of which transcended any limited concepts of Sunni and Shi'a or even Kharijite. (Barret, 2014)

The conflation of Islam with terrorism is at best giving a simplistic explanation to a rather complex reality. Even the terrorists themselves may be feeding fat on this, given that most often such a view seems to be in sync with their universal ummah ideology of all Moslems.

However it is the view of the present writer that the diversity should not be used as an excuse in dealing with the issue of a fundamental nature raised

[2] Barret, *Islamic Ideology and Conflict*, p.51 Barret illustrates the splinter-tendency of Sunni Islam using an incident in Malaysian Borneo which shows how very small groups and causes can serve as a rallying point for discontent. One hundred armed men arrived in the Sabah province of Borneo in Malaysia by boat from the Philippines. Some were claiming to be the descendants of the Sultan of Sulu, a Sultanate that at one time encompassed the southern Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysian Borneo. According to Barret, there were so many splinter Sunni Islamist splinter groups in the region that Malaysian and Philippine authorities were having difficulty identifying the group. Speculation was that it was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Others stated that it was a splinter group from the MNLF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and some worried that the interlopers could be associated with Abu Sayyaf or just a criminal gang. Roughly one week later, the group had announced that they were the Royal Army of Sulu.

above. Quran is the holy text of Islam and it is for all its adherents and so if it doctrinalizes violence, then it is a problem of all Islam. To use the diversity as an excuse is simply to play the proverbial ostrich. And so, the whole problem continues to hunt all Moslems and the global world. One must be ready to acknowledge the fact that there is a fundamental question with regard to the trilogy in their making doctrinal, violence against those not like "us" as has been argued. In simple expression, it provides basic moral logic in engaging in violent and terrorist acts in such a way that in the hands of fundamentalists, no form of violent acts can be outrageous provided in one way or the other it is done in the name of Allah. It gives rather heinous acts a supernatural and sacred foundation and framework.

There is something basically wrong when a religion provides grounds in clear terms of ethics of intolerance and violence. Perhaps, this is why it is even more difficult to refrain from equating violence with Islam. Given the fact that any attempt to alter the basic text of Islam is not likely to succeed, mainly because that is the foundational and sacrosanct text and partly because of the usual fight between those who love change and those who love tradition, and the near impossibility of controlling interpretations especially when there is no central head among Islam especially among the majority Sunnis, and given the fact that Islam is broader than theological delineations to include all spheres of life interwoven together, there is not likely an end in view with regard to violent Islamic terrorism

Conclusion

Religion creates a powerful energy that can be utilized both in positive and negative ways. Terrorism and violence in history have been linked to religion. The present work shows that terrorism is a hydra-headed malaise whose explanation is connected to myriad of factors. The religious factor remains very potent in all these. When terrorism is connected to religion, it is fuelled by certain ideology which almost always makes a pure and simplistic literal interpretation of the texts and tenets of such religion. It then becomes more dangerous when a particular religion advocates in a rather literal way a violent intolerance of other religions who are tagged 'unbelievers'. This is what is found with Islam and this should be the concern of all despite the granularity harped above, which itself is a seed of discord especially among the Sunni Islam. Doctrinalizing violence against "those not like us" in her most sacred and fundamental text seems to indicate a certain fundamental relationship between Islam and violence which ultimately breeds a violent fundamentalist mindset in some quarters. Thanks to the effort of Islamic theologians who have sought for a historical reconstruction of the Koran as well as develop the concept of progressive revelation with regard to the trilogy.

Acceptability remains an issue. There is no doubt that Islam needs such kind of reform. The gates of ijtihad must have to be opened. Perhaps the Westernized Moslems may take the lead but this is only when they have been able to distinguish between secularity and religion. In addition and very importantly, the world both locally and globally must strive to enthrone a civilization of justice, fairness, equity, equality, lack of which drive people into frustration that makes them vulnerable to violent and radical thoughts.

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