
‘Muslims, a Misrepresented Community: Terrorism Doesn't Define Islam’

As an African Muslim born in Canada and residing in the United States of America, I'm proud of my heritage and prouder of the fact that I'm an American citizen. It's the place where dreams come true after all. But in the recent days, I have come to live in fear and anticipation of what's going to happen next. Every time we hear about an act of terror or violence or watch it on TV, every Muslim household has just one thought crossing their mind. In trepidation, their hands are folded in prayer asking God to not let the suspect be a Muslim, to not let this act be yet another shameful and inhuman act of Islamic terrorism. The reason behind this is disheartening and yet, very simple. The recent happenings have witnessed large scale coverage of terrorist events where the first suspect that's covered by mass media always happens to be a Muslim element of terror because it's simply assumed that every act of terrorism is Islamic and every terrorist is a Muslim thus purporting an extreme hatred towards the entire community more infamously known as Islamophobia.

And quite frankly as a Muslim, I have come to grow extremely infuriated by these Muslim terrorists who are nothing but a blot on the entire Islamic way of life which preaches nothing but peace and kindness. These people with their lack of knowledge of the Holy Quran and the Hadi'th, their twisted sick misinterpretation of the true meaning of Jihad and their inherently deranged violent nature doesn't deserve forgiveness. They are nothing but a very minor radicalized percentage of the total Muslim population and yet, they are the ones corrugating the image of the entire Muslim race.

At the same time though, I'm also tired of people condemning every single one of these attacks on Muslims based on assumptions even when the very same attack is killing innocent Muslims too.

I'm tired by the fact that the much feared word 'terrorist' is not used in the same context whenever the attack or act of violence has a possibility of the suspect being a non- Muslim. Very conveniently, despite the context being similar, the word 'terrorist' is avoided and instead replaced by 'mentally disabled' or 'hate crime' in case the culprit turns out be of some other race or faith.

I'm also extremely tired of witnessing a series of terrorist attacks responsible for killing the innocent in the same scale and cruelty and still not being given the same amount of coverage that's there in case of the suspect being Muslim. An act of terrorism is just that: a vile, cruel act that should never happen. Then why do we have to blame just one community for it all and not realize that terrorism in all forms should be condemned. That should be the agenda. Misrepresenting one community and spreading hatred and fear towards it shouldn't be.

And finally, I am seriously exhausted of repeatedly trying to make people realize that all Muslims are not terrorists just the way all terrorists are not Muslims. It's high time that we established this for the sake of what our religion truly stands for and dispel the Islamophobia for good, once and for all. So the arguments that I'm now going to present here would hopefully help drive the point home and establish what we set out to prove, that is, Islam is a religion built on the

foundations of peace, devotion and selflessness not is defined by terrorism. It's misrepresented by it.

Majority of the terrorists in the United States are non-Muslims: Based on the data released by the FBI, 94% of the total terrorist attacks that the United States faced between 1980 and 2005 were carried out by non-Muslims. Mathematically, that makes the probability of an American terrorist being a non-Muslim nine times more likely than him being a Muslim. These acts were carried out by Jewish terrorists in a far greater number as compared to Muslims and yet how many of us are aware of this fact? The answer is a very small number, mainly because it wasn't propagated by the media, our chief source of information. So, if blaming the entire race of Christians or

Jews is not in any way justified for these acts of terrorism, similarly considering the entire Muslim race as one vile community is equally irrational and unjustifiable.

The statistics are even more unexpected when it comes to Europe and the thousands of attacks that it has witnessed over the past 5 years. The percentage of the attacks being led by Muslim terrorists is even lesser than two. These statistics prove that not all terrorists are Muslims. They have no religion to be honest. No God, no faith and no religion teach its followers to be cruel to a fellow human being and therefore vilification of any religion based on these grounds is highly unfair.

Terrorism cannot be associated with Islam just the way all terrorists cannot be Muslims: Since 1970, a total recorded number of 140,000 terrorist attacks have been conducted worldwide. Now let's assume for proving the hypothesis baseless that all of these attacks were carried out by Muslim terrorists (an assumption which in itself is incredulous but let's do it anyway to show the absurdity of it all). These terrorists would account for less than even 0.0001% of the total Muslim population. So what does that make the other Muslims? Terrorists or victims of unjustified and misrepresented hatred? I leave that for you to decide.

Islam is a peaceful religion and a true believer leads his life in a kind, selfless manner, never harming a fellow human: Considering all Muslims as terrorists just because a very minor fraction of the Muslim population is dominated by terrorists whom every Muslims condemns, is as illogical and irrational as considering Christians or Jews or Hindus or any other faith the perpetrator of fear and terror. All of these religions including Islam preach the same thing: Live and let live. Just like others, Islam too teaches to respect other faiths and ensure that you are living your own life in the right way. Out of the past twelve winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, five are Muslims. This just goes on to establish that this is what Islam truly stands for and not what the terrorists do or what is portrayed by the media. Terrorism by any religion is equally condemnable.

Islam is not the problem, if interpreted correctly, it's the solution: The most commonly used concept by terrorisms in order to justify their acts of violence is Jihad. Unfortunately, once again, it's a largely misunderstood term. Jihad does not mean declaring a war upon other religions and using violence to spread Islam. It in fact represents the hardships an individual has to face in order to be a good Muslim and lead the life peacefully by your faith. The holy Quran in fact refers to Christians and Jews as 'people of the book' as all three faiths worship the same God no matter by what name they address Him by. The Quran asks the followers of Islam to respect and protect people from all faiths and not the contrary. So, how is right to deprecate a religion

encompassing a peaceful race of 1.6 billion based on the actions of an insignificant fraction of it, which has gone wayward and does not deserve forgiveness in any form?

In the words of Martin Luther King Junior, "Hate can't drive out hate. Only love has the power to do that." There's no denying the fact that terrorism is one of the biggest threats that the world is facing currently. However, it is extremely unfair to equate terrorism to Islam and terrorists to Muslims. We can't continue being blinded by the biased media coverage of these despicable events and be driven by tainted hate. We are much more sensible than that.

As an American and as a Muslim, I implore all of you to logically consider all the aforementioned points before jumping to a conclusion whenever you see a Muslim pass by you next. The only way to uproot terrorism from this world is to target the elements that are causing it instead of falsely blaming a religion for everything. It's time that we addressed this major threat as the rational educated adults that we are and put an end to this.

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