


# Terror Has No Religion - Debunking the Regressive Left's Cliches

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4 July 2016

In the wake of recent Islamist terror attacks, the Regressive Left has once again prioritised the defence of an ideology over the lives of its victims. Armchair experts were quick to pin the Orlando massacre on the perpetrator's 'mental health', thereby propounding the widely misconstrued and exaggerated correlation between mental illness and violence. After all, ableist slurs are inconsequential to the all important task of defending religion. While Salon blamed "toxic masculinity", others were busy trying to find anything to insinuate that Omar Mateen was gay, thus absolving religion of having divinely sanctioned homophobia for thousands of years. Ironically, religion's neurosis with sexuality inspires exactly the sort of self-loathing that could drive someone to such extremes. Religious dogma is the *numero uno* reason why people struggle with their sexuality, often even after marriage.

Anyone who thinks religion has no bearing on the homophobia in it's flock, should browse through the thousands of vile comments under the on the Orlando story.

Anyone who claims to be a Muslim and kills in the Holy Month of Ramzaan is NOT a Muslim. They are terrorists. Sick minded cowards. Rot in hell

— Farah Khan (@FarahKhanAli) June 13, 2016

*Awkward Historical fact: Battle of Badr was fought by the prophet and his followers on 13th March, 624 CE in the holy month of Ramadan.*

In this piece I tackle the most common fallacies propounded by apologists in their hypocritical attempt at dissociating religious ideology from acts of terror.

**Disclaimer for bigots:** *This is an attempt to show a causal link between violence and Islamist ideology. Anyone who thinks that the vast majority of Muslims bear responsibility for the acts of their co-religionists will find no vindication here.*

## **Terrorism has no religion.**

It must be a strange coincidence then, that attacks on abortion clinics in the United States are carried out by far-right Christian conservatives, and not Star

Wars cultists; that Potterheads don't lynch people for eating beef, but Hindutva extremists who consider the life of a bovine to be more sacred than that of a human being do. Similarly, when a zealot opens fire in a cafe yelling 'Allahu-Akbar', we can be quite certain it's not a disgruntled Game of Thrones fan who just saw his favourite character snuffed out by the writers.

Yes, the vast majority of religious folks do not go about murdering people. But that does not absolve religious texts of inspiring the few extremists who do.

When Muslims donate to charity, we attribute their altruism to the third pillar of Islam. Why is it that when another Muslim acts as per the dozens of Quranic edicts which -- cast terror in the hearts of disbelievers (3:151), expose them to eternal hellfire (4:56), advocate crucifixion & chopping off extremities (5:33), denounce taking Jews & Christians for friends (5:51), smite their necks and fingers (8:12), slay & besiege idol worshippers (9:5)-- his/her actions have "nothing to do with religion"? I am not singling out Islamic scripture here. They are no more violent and bigoted than the Old Testament or the Manusmriti. However, we acknowledge that the inquisition was a product of medieval Christian dogma, and caste atrocities are a product of Hindu texts. Why then, do we excuse Islamic scripture of inspiring Islamists?

### **The verses are misinterpreted!**

So 20-plus translations of the Quran that are endorsed by the Ulemas, and the many dozen spine chilling verses in them are all misinterpreted? Reputed Islamic scholars such as Pickthall & Maulana Wahiduddin Khan got their arabic wrong, but secular Leftists whose knowledge of the text is restricted to sharing memes of verse 5:32 on Facebook have got it right? This is an argument from ignorance and incredulity, and is normally propounded by folks who have never bothered to read scripture.

### **The verses have been taken out of context.**

Apologists who have read scripture claim that the violent edicts must be seen "in their historical context", i.e. when the prophet and his followers were at war with the various idolatrous tribes and infidels.

In truth, only a few verses such as 1:191 come with a disclaimer: "*begin not hostilities, but if they attack you, then slay them*". The vast majority of violent edicts do not. What historical context justifies verse 4:15 (confine a lewd wife until death) or verse 4:34 (beat your rebellious wife)?

In a morbid hypothetical, if a book penned by a white supremacist were to command its readers to "*slay black people wherever you find them, but if they repent and pay their due, then leave them free*" (as Quran 9:5 prescribes for infidels), how many of us would be defending it by citing context?

The 'context' argument would make sense if people treated their holy book as a primer on Arabian history. It is a rather fatuitous alibi for a text that is peddled as the immutable word of god.

**But the Quran has some very beautiful verses as well.**

Of course! Just as Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice has some vile antisemitic rhetoric in Act I, and the sublime 'Quality of Mercy' speech by Portia in Act IV. However, only one of these books is considered to be divinely inspired. Therein lies the problem.

**It's not religion, it's lack of education, disparity. (a.k.a. Malala's Fallacy):**

How many of the 19 hijackers involved in the 9-11 attacks were uneducated or underprivileged? Mohammed Atta was a Cairo University & University of Hamburg alumnus. Wail Al-Shehri was a school teacher from Saudi Arabia. Satam Al-Suqami was a law student at King Saud University. Ziad Jarrah, Hani Hanjour, Majed Moqed-- all had a University education. Khaled Mashal, the leader of Hamas holds a BSc in Physics from Kuwait University. You would be hard pressed to find an unschooled individual in the upper echelons of any Islamist terror outfit. ISIS's social media whizkid Ahmad Abousamra-- an overprivileged kid from Boston, went to a private school in Massachusetts.

The destitute, uneducated, persecuted jihadi is a romanticised figment of the Regressive Leftist's mind. Hardly any terrorist from Boston to Brussels fits that description. What is common to all of them however, is that they were radicalised by Wahabi/ Salafist Imams and Islamist organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, financed throughout the world with dinars from the House of Saud.

## **It's American Imperialism, western foreign policy & the Iraq Wars that are responsible; not religion. (The Chomsky defence a.k.a. Mehdi Hassan's Fallacy):**

Apart from 12-16 million Christians, there are thousands of Bahai, Zoroastrians, Yazidis and Jews living in Islamic nations. If terrorism were simply a reaction to American imperialism, shouldn't these minorities also form a fraction of terror outfits? Or are they miraculously shielded from NATO bombs and American policies that affect the middle-east? Surely one disgruntled Zoroastrian would cross the Iranian border and join Hezbollah?

This favourite cliché of the Regressive Left fails to explain another phenomenon-- the "everyday terrorism" faced by millions of Muslims in the Islamic world. Was the spontaneous and gruesome lynching of Farkhunda outside an Afghan mosque a product of colonialism? Was the stoning of Roxanneh, the killing of Noor Malleki, the murder of secular bloggers in Bangladesh a result of US foreign policy? What does the violence unleashed against homosexuals, apostates, 'blasphemers', against Ahmedi and Hazara Muslims of Pakistan & Afghanistan (who are murdered by Sunni supremacists for not being 'Muslim enough') and the systemic genocide of ethnic minorities throughout the Islamic world, have to do with George Bush's Iraqi misadventure? At some point, Bronze Age belief systems must be held accountable for the atrocities inflicted on its followers.

## **The Left's soft bigotry of lower expectations:**

When Leftists allege that the 'West' brought this jihadist insurgency to the middle-east by toppling its dictators, what they are implying is that the Islamic world is only peaceful under the draconian reign of a Saddam, a Gaddafi or Assad. That without these despots, Muslims will only descend into an abyss of Islamist extremism. This is exactly the sort of soft bigotry of lower expectations (borrowing Maajid Nawaz's phrase) that makes Leftists who support emancipation and equality for European women at home, demand sex-segregated swimming pools for their 'immigrant Muslim sisters'.

By shutting down genuine criticism of Islamist ideology using the non-word 'Islamophobia', Leftists have failed the very people they claim to protect. The Left has actively shielded a totalitarian ideology (Islamism) by conflating its

criticism with bigotry against a largely peaceful and diverse people (Muslims). By refusing to address the elephant in the living room, Leftists have unwittingly created a vacuum which is now filled by xenophobes like Trump and Farage. We only need to look at Brexit to understand how disconnected and vacuous the Left's narrative has become, and how it has driven the masses towards the anti-refugee, anti-Muslim lobby on the far-right.

In the process, the Regressive Left has also failed liberal progressive Muslims like Asra Nomani, Irshad Manji and Maajid Nawaz, who are fighting to bring about reform at great personal risk. It is time for true (classical) liberals to stand up and take the fort back from the Left. We must show that it is possible to call out religious ideologies that inspires terror, while at the same time condemn the anti-Muslim bigotry of the far-right. For without identifying the carcinogen i.e. religious extremism, it is impossible to stem the affliction.

*Source of Quranic citations: Pickthall's 'Meaning of The Glorious Quran', published 1930.*