

Islam and Terrorism.....Hand in Hand?

The idea that this mind-set has become an increasingly acceptable belief to have, courtesy of infamous political groups such as Britain First, is both daunting and incredibly unsettling. Nevertheless, its support across England remains minimal which provides me with optimism that this alleged responsibility of Islam for terrorism can be put to bed.

Skewed interpretations of Islam by radicals, as well as their manipulation of Islamic teachings, undermines the context intended by the Prophet Mohammed. This selective thinking has created the notion that their acts of terrorism are justified by their sacred teachings. Britain First have been more than happy to play on this ignorance and naivety, and as a result infect the minds of the British population. I find it baffling that this association with violence and Islam is deemed a 'legitimate' understanding of the issue of terrorism. Particularly when the phenomenon of jihadi terrorism only sprung onto the scene in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, despite the fact that such a faith has been around since the seventh century. Do the millions of Muslims who live peacefully alongside us, doing their part to enrich the communities we live in, deserve to be labelled as belonging to a violent and barbaric religion? I think not.

Although my father discontinued religion in his life, Islam is consistent throughout his family tree. I have grown up with an Islamic community surrounding me throughout my childhood and couldn't be more grateful for the upbringing I have received as a result. My aunty Zarah Haidari has been a devoted Muslim her whole life and is a loved and respected teacher in Liverpool's Smithdown Primary School. I met up with her to discuss this association with Islam and Terrorism and get an idea of what emotions it must generate for a practising Muslim living in a world with such hostile and nonsensical solutions to worldwide issues. When questioning Zarah on why so many interpretations can come of one teaching of faith, she explained that the scholars you rely on to interpret the Quran are fundamentally important. *"I believe the main difference between peaceful and radical Muslims is the scholars they choose to interpret the Quran... [some] have interpreted the Quran in a violent way and are still followed to this day by extremists."*

This comment encouraged me to investigate further and in doing so the works of [Quilliam](#) (the world's first counter extremist organisation) allowed me to acquire a further understanding. I specifically paid close attention to a former extremist [Adam Deen](#) who now works for Quilliam. Adam, a former victim of radicalisation and part of Al-Muhajiroun (now referred to as Isis UK), alluded to the idea that less devoted individuals are vulnerable to Islamic extremism. Al-Muhajiroun was a narrowed interpretation of Islam exploited by extremists to suit their political goals. It is clear for me to see that... Islam is being used as an excuse for Barbarianism. A mind-set we cannot allow in our community and instead must fight against by promoting the importance of living in a multi-cultural society.

Although radicalised Muslims belonging to groups such as Al-Qaeda have been responsible for momentous terrorist attacks around the world, once more an automatic assumption that Islam is the sole cause of terrorism illustrates an alarming level of ignorance. Between 2000-2014 Al-Qaeda and ISIL were responsible for [12 percent](#) of all terrorist attacks, which although is truly unforgivable, does not represent the overwhelming majority of Muslims living in peace and harmony. As Zarah underlined *"The hatred I hold for these extremists is one I am not able to explain, as well as killing innocent people they are doing so in the name of a religion built on the foundations of peace"*. It is clear that Zarah speaks for the majority.

Let's ensure we live our day to day lives engaging actively with world-wide issues and not attacking a multi-national faith accused of terrorism which abide by teachings such as *"Who so ever kills a soul, unless it be for murder or wreaking corruption in the land, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and he who saves a life, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind"*.

What ever happened to that thing called compassion?

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