

# So who's The Terrorist?

**Muhammad Zafrullah**

Recently someone sent me an e-mail containing a German Muslim scholar's response to a question about "Islamic Terrorism". It is hearsay in that I do not have proper reference but hey it does contain some interesting points. So I am including it almost as I received it. (I say "almost" because I had to make some changes to pacify the word processing software.) Of course I will add my bit after that and, except for the few early paragraphs; it's sort of steeped in religious talk or preaching about a new kind of jihad, a more difficult one.

**"A German Muslim scholar was asked on a live TV show about terrorism and Islam.**

**He said:**

**Who started the First World War? Was it Muslims?**

**Who started the Second World War? Was it Muslims?**

**Who killed about 20 million Aborigines in Australia? Was it Muslims?**

**Who sent the nuclear bombs to Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Was it Muslims?**

**Who killed more than 100 million Indians in North America? Was it Muslims?**

**Who killed more than 50 million Indians in South America? Was it Muslims?**

**Who took about 180 million of African people as slaves, of whom 88% died and thrown in the Atlantic? Was it Muslims?**

**No, they weren't Muslims! First, you have to define terrorism properly. If a non-Muslim does something bad, it is a crime. But if a Muslim commits the same act, he is a terrorist. First remove this double standard, and then come to the point!"**

Now let me add my half penny's worth. The trouble with the world today is it's ruled by crooks; whether they are recognized as rulers or not. They know that if there is peace and harmony in the world they would be out of business. So they keep inventing ways of causing problems. One of the ways of causing a hullabaloo these days is to prepare a non-descript person/journal to publish something against Prophet Muhammad. The crooks in the Muslim world take the cue and start agitating. For them agitation is not complete if some building is not destroyed or someone is not killed. (For without that the media would not be interested!) The result usually is that the media pick up the footage of those angry acts to provide another proof that the Muslims are the terrorists.

The media anywhere are of course out to get more and more viewers/readers. Some of them would go to any lengths, i.e., appointing pretty red heads to find ways of doing illegal eaves-dropping in search of sizzling new stories. So you cannot blame them much. But the Western governments stay neutral during such episodes. Squarely criticizing both sides, at times, but jealously guarding the hate mongers' right to free speech.

Freedom of speech in the Western countries has already become a joke. It is like: if the noose fits you, you hang. If you praise a woman's "figure" at work you could be cited for harassment and if a cartoonist caricaturizes the same woman giving the title "fabulous boobs" the fellow gets

accolades. You can set up a website like pagethree.com where women show off their flesh but if a woman bares her assets in public she could be cited for indecent exposure. You may take a shot at any religion or religious leader but you will be in deep trouble if you appear to be anti-Semite and for that purpose Arabs are not considered Semites. It's a dishonest mess.

So, hoping that the Western media or Western governments would do something about hurtful literature being published appears to be a madman's dream. In fact it may well be that some Western governments have a vested interest in having Muslims painted as volatile and hence untrustworthy. Or they want to keep Muslims busy with protests on frivolities while their plans come to fruition. So let me turn to other things that I can say or have to say.

One of the other things that I have to say is: What beats me out of my wits is that the clergy the so called Mullahs are often at the forefront of those violent protests, against assumed insults to the Prophet. These Mullahs are supposed to know the Quran which allows violence only to counter violence, in self-defense or to help the oppressed. But what about people who have a low tolerance for ridicule especially of their loved ones?

I do say "assumed insults" because whatever anyone says or does would not decrease the already established position of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Prophet's position, with God, is given in the Quran:

**[33:57>(\*1) Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe, you *also* should invoke blessings on him and salute *him* with the salutation of peace.**

Let me put it in a different way as a question: When a dog howls at the moon does it somehow lower the moon? Does it decrease its beauty? So if a conning Copt concocts a film and brings in the Prophet's name, will it somehow lessen the beauty of the Prophet's teachings? Or if a two bit cartoonist draws a picture of a man in an Arab's garb in a compromising position and insinuates that it is the Prophet, will it demote the Prophet from the position of having immensely influenced the world, for the better?

Only a few days ago I read about the research of an American academic Prof. John Makdisi. This gentleman proves that European common law has its roots in Islamic law. Of course this is just one example which may amount to being a grain of sand on the tip of the iceberg; as Muslims the followers of Prophet Muhammad have, following his teachings, made so much contribution to most of the sciences that they are rightly regarded the builders of the modern civilization. If you do not believe me listen to Keith Devlin. In

[http://www.maa.org/devlin/devlin\\_0708\\_02.html](http://www.maa.org/devlin/devlin_0708_02.html)

Devlin complained that the Muslim terrorists were destroying what their forefathers had helped build. (\*2)

Usually people ridicule something that they either do not know much about or have had some bad experience related to it. So if a Coptic fraud tried to "avenge" the problems some of the Copts have in Egypt, it could be a cry for help. Personally I have met only one Coptic family and that in Libya. The man was a colleague and taught Pedagogy and his wife was a Physician. Initially I could not tell that they were any different from Egyptians, until a Pakistani snoop told me. But I could not detect any difference of behavior or respect for them from Libyans nor from Egyptians. Of course this is anecdotal, but I am basing it on the general attitudes that I observed.

The Copt with many names who can well be called Bacile the imbecile had his reasons for mischief and he probably had reasons for frauds that he had to go to jail for, but usually ridicule comes from ignorance.

Ridicule is nothing new to religion and hence Islam, as is mentioned in the Quran (Check out Quran [18:57]) Come on! If people do not believe like you they would have all sorts of funny notions about you, your prophet, and your religion. So let's see what Quran teaches us the ordinary folks about dealing with ridicule and defamation:

**[6:69] And when thou seest those who engage in *vain discourse concerning Our Signs*, then turn thou away from them until they engage in a discourse other than that. And if Satan cause thee to forget, then sit not, after recollection, with the unjust people.**

**[6:70] And those who are righteous are not at all accountable for them, but *their duty is to admonish them, that they may fear God.***

Notice, there's no mention of staging violent protests or murdering people for ridiculing/defaming Islam or the Prophet of Islam. It is like: if you find them engaged in slandering your religion or your Prophet leave their company. Of course God promises severe punishment for those ridiculing the teachings of Islam, in the after-life and on Earth. It is however the duty of Muslims to try to convince others about the beauties of their religion, by word of mouth and by example. The Quranic prescription for dealing with vain discourse or frivolous activity is given in a slightly different way, as a quality of good Muslims:

**[25:73] And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity.**

So, according to the Quran, if a two-bit cartoonist draws a funny picture of a bearded man in Arabic robes and insinuates that this is the Prophet, a Muslim should not indulge the cartoonist. Same can be said about hate speech. If someone calls the Prophet a child molester, because of his wife Ayesha's (RA) age at the time of matrimony he/she does not know or does not want to know that the marriage was not consummated until she came of age and that she was not as young as portrayed.

From other evidence we know the Prophet was a kind hearted person. So would the man who told Muslims to be kind to animals while slaughtering them for food, do something similar to a young living being and a human female? Of course he would not. Besides Ayesha lived a long life after the Prophet but never complained. Nor did her demeanor in any way indicate that she was unfairly treated. So the person who says that the Prophet was a child molester is just an ignorant and unkind fool. Besides Ayesha, though far younger than the Prophet, was not as young as depicted in some of the unreliable traditions. For a detailed analysis you may look up:

<http://qasimrashid.com/2012/09/17/ayeshas-age-at-the-time-of-her-marriage/>

The Quran tells us to keep our dignity by not indulging the fool. The special thing about insults is that they do not really materialize until you give them credence. That is what is hinted at in the Quran in [25:73].

Of course some of us are prone to get upset when someone does not treat with due respect the person we love more than we love our lives or our children. There are such cases in the early history of Islam. So let us see how the Prophet guided his companions in situations like that. As indicated in Al-Quran [18:57] all the prophets had to endure hardship because of resistance to the message they brought and Prophet Muhammad was no exception. That the Prophet endured the early hardship, often alone, in an exemplary fashion is a part of the history of Islam. I would not delve into it because it is not the behavior of the Prophet that is causing people to say that Muslims are terrorists.

Let me take my first example from the Quran. I will bring it in with some introduction for those who may not know. When the prophet settled in Medina, after leaving Mecca, there was a person, by the name of Abdullah Bin Ubayy Bin Salool, hoping to become a leader of the town. See for example the early part of Chapter IV of The Excellent Exemplar –Muhammad, by Sir Zafrullah Khan. You can find the book at <http://www.alislam.org/library/zafar/exampler.html>

The Prophet's following; his personality and God-given wisdom soon made him the leader of Medina. This intimidated Abdullah into hypocrisy. That is he claimed to be a Muslim but he always wanted to bring disgrace to Islam and to the Prophet. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was in constant touch with Meccans, who were always on the lookout for ways to harm the Prophet, and of course, there were other tribes around Medina who, either on their own or on instigation from Mecca, were ready to cause trouble. In short, life was not as peaceful at Medina for the Prophet as one would expect and he often had to take to arms to avenge some aggression. Being a Muslim in name at least Abdullah Bin Ubayy went with the Prophet on one such a campaign. God revealed to the Prophet what Abdullah had said to someone during the campaign in the following verse.

**[63:9] They say, 'If we return to Medina, the one most honorable will surely drive out therefrom the one most mean;' while true honor belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and the believers; but the hypocrites know not.**

When Abdullah Bin Ubayy's son heard of his father's boast, he made sure that Abdullah Bin Ubayy would not enter Medina before he confessed that he (Abdullah) was the meanest person of Medina. The same son went to the Prophet and offered to kill his father but the Prophet dissuaded him from that. Not just that when Abdullah Bin Ubayy died, the Prophet gave a piece of cloth for his (Abdullah's) burial.

This example shows that while it is natural to be angry at insults hurled at someone we love, we should not take extreme action. Of course no one can even think of emulating the Prophet's treatment of this situation with Abdullah, but we can restrain our emotions following the examples of his companions.

In the month of DhulQa'ad, in the year six of Hijra the Prophet decided to go for Umrah to Mecca. The Meccans, who had not let any Muslim enter Mecca for Hajj or Umrah, in the past six years, were in the way. They demanded a treaty with terms that were not favorable to Muslims.

The Prophet who was staying at a place called Hudabiya at the time agreed to the terms. One of the terms required that Muslims would not perform Umrah that year.

The companions of the Prophet were very unhappy at the terms of the Hudabiya treaty, they thought the Prophet had not been treated with due respect during negotiations and they were unhappy that they could not perform Umra. Indeed they were prepared to fight it out, whatever the odds, rather than accept all that humiliation. But due to their respect for the Prophet they kept their emotions in check. The patience and obedience of the companions resulted in conditions that made the Meccans irrelevant and in a couple of years Muslims were able to capture Mecca without any fight. So being patient and following the Prophet paid off. (\*3)

There are many more instances where some folks tried to insult the Prophet and the companions got angry but the Prophet told them to calm down. I would just mention one more. Once a Jewish trader lent some money to the Prophet and started asking for his money even before the time agreed. His manner was so insulting that one of the companions of the Prophet got angry. The Prophet told his companion to calm down explaining that the lender had a right to be anxious about his money. The Jewish trader who wanted to see the Prophet's reaction to undue provocation embraced Islam there and then.

So what does it tell us? Patience is a good virtue but only fit for a prophet? Well the prophets set examples to show that humans can endure as much. We cannot all be prophets but we can at least try to follow their examples. Indeed there are great rewards promised, in the Quran, for Muslims who are patient and steadfast.

**[13:23] And those who persevere in seeking the favor of their Lord, and observe Prayer, and spend out of that with which We have provided them, secretly and openly, and repel evil with good. It is these who shall have the *best* reward of the *final* Abode —**

I have selected the above verse for especially those who would claim that they took part in the agitation and destruction to please God. If you seek the pleasure of God then know that you will get it when you follow His commandments. Now I invite the agitators against foreign mischief to check on how many of the other good deeds they have performed that were demanded of them. Also, have they repelled evil with good or have they matched evil with evil and earned a bad name for Islam and Muslims? Here's another if they really want to see if their agitation for the love of God and for the love of the Prophet got them in Allah's favor.

**[2:46] And seek help with patience and Prayer; and this indeed is hard except for the humble in spirit**

Let me address those who took part in those destructive agitations: How many of you are regular in prayer? How many of you prayed to God to blunt the foreign mischief? And how many of you chose to show God that you can, on your own, defend the honor of His beloved Prophet Muhammad. So if you want to please Allah learn to be steadfast, learn to be patient and humble, and learn to pray to God. I say this and I have written this whole article to remind my Muslim brothers of their position and of their duty to humanity. God Almighty says this in the Quran for us the Muslims:

**[3:111] You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid evil and believe in Allah. And if the People of the Book had believed, it would have surely been better for them. Some of them are believers, but most of them are disobedient.**

Of course Allah Almighty is Most Merciful and Most Forgiving. If you truly repent at the death and destruction that you caused and make resolve to keep in mind that you are here to help not to hurt then there is chance that you will indeed win Allah's pleasure.

Now here's a question that may arise. Some folks like to engage in propaganda against Islam and the founder of Islam, some Muslims like to protest about it and some like to be violent while protesting. The thing evens out in a few days and leaves everyone happy with their performance. What is my problem?

My problem is the following observation. When the Japanese were A-Bombed, not many people cared about that event because the Japanese had been painted as merciless killers. Partly it was their own doing and partly because they had been painted as such. Then just before the Iraq War started the Iraqis were painted as having weapons of mass destruction at the ready to wreak havoc on Earth. In the end it turned out to be false propaganda to justify war against Iraq.

Now, via mischief like the trailer "Innocence of the Muslims" and the ensuing violent protests, and via other cleverly arranged footage of violent events in the Muslim World, a consensus is being built that Muslims are violent people and that Islam and terrorism are synonymous. The reason for building such consensus may be as innocent as an effort to pull a smoke-screen on what happened at Abughraib prison in Iraq or what is happening in Afghanistan or there could be some other sinister plan of making sure that when a certain Muslim country disappears from the map people merely say "good riddance".

That is of course one reason. The other is, as the interview of the German Muslim scholar shows, because of the general consensus, even those who genuinely want to know about Islam like to bring up the question of terrorism. One way of dealing with it is as the German Muslim demonstrated, by showing them the mirror. The other is of course becoming models of Islamic behavior in light of the Quran and Hadith and not taking the bait when provoked. I know that it is hard especially because being Muslims we are bound to respect and honor all the true prophets of God; so we cannot do a tit-for-tat. That leaves us one way of dealing with the problem that the Quran suggests. By being humble, patient and steadfast, by seeking God's help and pleasure and by being helpful to and useful for the humanity we can gain enough respect in the eyes of the world that no one would want to hurt us.

By the way if you tend not to believe that the story I started this article with is true then note that at least the person was a German, for a mention of Jews dying in labor camps is missing. Anyway the argument is otherwise sound, though the numbers are a tricky matter, and on the basis of what the person said we can rightly say: So who's the terrorist? Though, I must say, nothing beats being a model Muslim, as that may help us gain the pleasure and support of our God.

Notes: (1) Most of my references to the ayat from the Quran are off by one. This is because I believe that Bismillaha-Arrahmanir-Raheem is part of each Chapter of the Quran that begins with it. This is my belief, which I do not want to impose on my readers; hence this note. If you believe otherwise I would still care for you.

(2) Keith Devlin is a renowned Mathematician. He writes a Column “Devlin’s Angle”. When I first read his column on “The Mathematical legacy of Islam” I thought the style was a little condescending. So there was a heated exchange, but now that those troubled times are past, I see his point; all he wanted to tell the terrorists was look the work of your forefathers was at the basis of the culture that you seek to destroy.

(3)Of course with the entry of the Muslim forces in Mecca is attached another sign of the generosity of the Prophet. The Prophet declared a general amnesty, except for a few criminals, for Meccans.

(Later, some of those criminals were forgiven.) So, all those Meccans were forgiven who had persecuted the Prophet and his followers to the extent that they had to leave Mecca. Some of the companions of the Prophet thought of revenge but his example kept them in check.