

Once people become tolerant and obtain peace for its own sake, it opens up opportunities, which enable people to strive for their ideals, eventually attaining justice and other constructive ends.

Islam the religion of peace

This is the ideology of peace which can counter the ideology of violence and it is based on the original sources of Islam. The

Prophet of Islam provides a very clear example of this in his method of negotiating the Hundaybiyya Peace

treaty. In this treaty he unilaterally accepted all the conditions of his opponents, without receiving justice or his rights, to enter into a 10-year no war pact. This gave him and his companions an opportunity to work uninterruptedly on a constructive programme. Using

this peaceful non-political programme, they were able to consolidate themselves so thoroughly that without waging war, they acquired Makkah peacefully.

From this example of the Prophet Muhammad, we can understand that Islam is a completely peaceful religion and the Islamic method is a completely peaceful method.

*'To declare war
is the prerogative of
an established state.'*

—The Prophet
Muhammad

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The root cause of Terrorism and its Solution



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countering terrorism

There is no doubt that the terror attacks at different parts of the world are highly condemnable. People the world over are trying to find a solution to this menace. The authorities are trying to crush the terror menace through legal action; while the reformers are trying to curb it by engaging in condemnation. However both of these methods are, apparently, proving to be ineffective. Then what is the solution?

According to my assessment, the present problem of terrorism is based on an ideology and an ideology cannot be countered through legal action or by mere condemnation. We have to develop a counter-ideology to overcome it.

According to the UNESCO, 'Violence begins from the mind', it has to, therefore, be uprooted from the mind itself. This I feel succinctly captures the very root cause of terrorism. Therefore, in order to eliminate this root cause we need to initiate our efforts by beginning from the right starting point—of the re-engineering of minds of individuals by taking them away from the culture of violence and bringing them closer to the culture of peace.

mistaken belief

To explain the importance of the above, I would state two parallel examples from history. One of the American campaign against Communist Russia and the other of the American campaign against Saddam-led Iraq. While the US was successful in curbing the menace of Communist Russia, the same America failed to cope with the menace of Saddam-led Iraq.

This is because America met the Russian challenge at an ideological level while it opted for military action

*'God grants to
peace, what he does
not grant to violence.'*

—The Prophet
Muhammad

against Saddam's Iraq.

I believe that terrorism will persist in one form or another until the ideology of violence is countered with another ideology based on peace. The ideology behind present day terrorism is that, Islam being a political system, it is the duty of all Muslims to establish Islamic rule in the world. This thinking was not prevalent

during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a later innovation which was developed in the last few centuries by a handful of people. Having become wide spread in the Muslim world today, it is leading to present-day violence. It has influenced many Muslims, especially the easily influenced youth, and they have become obsessed with trying to establish the political rule of Islam, thinking it to be their ticket to paradise. Failing to achieve this objective by the peaceful method, they have started resorting to suicide bombing. The idea being that if we cannot eliminate the non-Islamic rule, then let us at least de-stabilize it and pave the way for Islamic rule.

peace is a pre-condition

I have studied Islam through its original sources – the Quran and Hadith – and I can say that this political interpretation of Islam is an innovation and the real Islam is based upon peace, compassion and tolerance.

Peace is not prevalent in the world as people the world over are acting intolerantly and indulging in acts of violence, saying, "Give us justice and peace will ensue." But when people, ostensibly seeking justice, stoop to violence, peace can never prevail. Peace is always desirable for its own sake, and every other desirable state comes after peace, not along with it. So, the maxim I follow is: "Ignore the problems, and avail of the opportunities."

*'Good and evil
deeds are not equal. Repel
evil with what is better; then
you will see that one who was
once your enemy has become
your dearest friend.'*

(The Quran, 41:34)

*'We will, surely,
bear with patience all
the harm you do us.'*
(The Quran, 14:12)