

## Questions For DWM (2015)

In your essay *Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism* [1] you wrote about the role of the Qadi, the need for Western governments to support classically trained Muslim scholars and promote "the opinions of learned Muslims" and that, in your opinion, the roots of Muslim extremism lie in particular interpretations of the Koran and the Sunnah. Can you expand on this since - after 9/11 - Muslim extremism is something which is of great concern to all western governments.

If one compares the Sunni tradition with the Shia tradition then the genesis of modern Muslim extremism - evident in movements such as Daesh and al-Qaida - is quite understandable. For one of the distinguishing features of the Shia tradition is taqlid: the requirement for every Muslim to become muqalid of a mujtahid, of an exceptionally learned, respected, Muslim scholar. Thus when I studied the Shia tradition, in the months following my conversion to the Muslim way of life, I became muqalid of Ayatullah al-Sayyid Ali al-Hussani al-Sistani, which meant that I was honour bound to follow his understanding and rulings in respect of the Shia way of life, that is in relation to Shariah [2]. For the essence of taqlid is the necessary acceptance that one is less learned than a mujtahid. This has led to there being no such thing as modern independent extremist Shia groups who indiscriminately target and kill the kuffar ('infidels') in Western lands or elsewhere, or who fly aeroplanes into buildings or who blow themselves up in order to kill 'infidels'. For Shia mujtahidun have given rulings in respect of such things - such as the *Advice and Guidance to the Fighters on the Battlefields* issued by Ayatullah al-Sayyid Ali al-Hussani al-Sistani - which Shia Muslims are duty bound to follow.

Since there is no taqlid in the Sunni tradition what has occurred in the last fifty or so years is quite understandable, with those who lack the learning of a mujtahid making some particular interpretations of Ahadith and ayat from the Quran the basis for their group or for their deeds and gaining as recruits and followers those who, discontented or disenfranchised or idealistic or otherwise, also lack the learning of a mujtahid. Thus such groups or individuals often quote various Ayat or Ahadith in justification for their actions but lack the scholarly knowledge, acquired over decades of learning, to understand those Ayat or Ahadith in context, with many Muslim youths simply being inspired by the actions or by the propaganda of such groups or individuals.

Hence why some young Muslims in a land such as Britain take the dehortations of the likes of Anjem Choudary and Omar Bakri Muhammad seriously even though neither of them has acquired the necessary, decades long, learning under the guidance of classically trained Muslim scholars [3], and thus are not qualified to make pronouncements about the Muslim way of life; and hence why some Muslims agreed with, and disseminated, the propaganda I produced in support of the Taliban, bin Laden, and al-Qaida even though I also lacked the

necessary, decades long, learning.

Those Sunni scholars and Imaams who, having been classically trained, do have the necessary learning have, with only a few exceptions, stated that the interpretations given by Muslim extremists to justify their deeds are wrong. But even though there is an emerging consensus among those of learning, many Sunni Muslims choose to ignore it even though, according to Sunni tradition, such a learned consensus (ijma) should be followed.

Hence why, based on my own decade-long experience as a Muslim, I suggested that the solution to modern Muslim extremism is to undermine and ultimately remove the pretexts on which such extremism is based: their particular interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah which they use to justify their deeds and their theoretical or practical implementation of Sharia. And removing the pretext by supporting classically trained Muslim scholars and promoting the opinions of learned Muslims. For, in my admittedly fallible opinion, the long-term solution does not lie in killing certain Muslims - by bombs or missiles - or in invasions or in training and supporting armed groups of Muslims deemed to be moderate. For such things do not - cannot by themselves - prevent the emergence of new extremist groups in the near or distant future and may often (as was the case in Iraq) even contribute to their emergence, provoking as such killings, invasions, and support for other armed groups often do resentment among Muslims and providing as they sometimes do material for extremist propaganda.

All of which raises interesting questions in relation to Shia and Sunni Islam, Iran, and the mainly Western-manufactured (post-WWI) modern countries and States such as Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Questions which few analysts, in the West, are asking with even fewer proposing answers based both on practical experience and a scholarly historical study of the many problems which beset such countries and States.

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I was curious how your path led to becoming a Muslim. Does this spiritual path somehow coincide with your past as a National Socialist or with National Socialism in general?

My journey towards becoming a Muslim in 1998 began ten or so years previously, and culminated in reflecting on my experiences as founder and leader of the National-Socialist Movement (1997-1998), on my thirty years of National-Socialist activism (1968-1998), on my arrest by Detectives from S012 Scotland Yard early in 1998, on further travels in Egypt during which I talked to several Egyptians about the Muslim way of life; and reflecting on almost a dozen such travels between 1988 and 1998, one of which travels involved cycling through the Western Desert. There was also a leisurely two week cruise (with my then partner) down the Nile from Aswan to Cairo which included

numerous excursions to ancient sites (including El Amarnah), with some of those excursions - mainly the ones in parts of Middle Egypt - involving being escorted by armed guards because of certain threats and recent incidents, and with me during such excursions affecting the persona of an eccentric English gentleman abroad: a linen suit, a Panama hat, a bamboo walking stick topped with a silver handle.

But back to my thirty years as an active National-Socialist: I was often involved in violent confrontations, was imprisoned for violence, often gave vitriolic speeches, often wrote propaganda, and became regarded as something of a 'neo-nazi' ideologue creating as I did what the anti-fascist Searchlight organization described as a 'revisionist' version of National-Socialism via pamphlets such as *Vindex: Destiny of The West*, *The Religion of National-Socialism*, and *The Meaning of National-Socialism*; many of which pamphlets were republished by George Dietz in the 1990's in his Liberty Bell magazine. I also had occasion to meet with a few individuals who had personally known Adolf Hitler, who still admired him, and were loyal to his memory.

As a result of my decades of involvement with National-Socialism - which included being a 'theoretician of terror', trying to organize an underground subversive group, personally knowing and respecting people such as Colin Jordan and John Tyndall - I came, in early 1998, to certain conclusions following the aforementioned period of reflection. The first conclusion concerned the treatment I received during and following my arrest by SO12 and the conversations - interviews/interrogations - I had with SO12 officers for over a year when as a condition of my bail I regularly reported to Charing Cross Police station in London (and on one occasion at the main Police station in Oxford). The second conclusion concerned post-WWII National-Socialism, while the third related to my experiences in Egypt.

The first conclusion was that I had, for decades, been mistaken about the Police. They were not 'the enemy' or even 'an enemy'. To paraphrase what I wrote some years ago, I came to appreciate that many of them were indeed honourable individuals who were motivated by the best of intentions and trying to do their best to help victims of dishonourable deeds and catch those responsible for such deeds. Thus I consciously understood that I had stereotyped them, dehumanized them, as a result of fanatically adhering to an uncompromising ideology; allowing as I did - and had done for some thirty years - some idealized goal and the violent struggle for that goal to overpower my empathy; to take away my own judgement based only on a direct and personal knowing of individuals. I also realized that - believing as I had that the Cause was more important than the individual, than the family, than one's loved ones - I had personally and selfishly put my duty to the Cause before the happiness of my wife and family, thus causing them to suffer.

The second conclusion I arrived at was that post-WWII National-Socialism - for the most part - attracted the wrong type of person and that in this respect Colin

Jordan had been right all along. For my thirty years of experience revealed that there was not, and never had been, a noble and charismatic leader and that lacking such a leader the constant feuds, the betrayals, the lack of honour, the lack of loyalty, the splits, the spreading of rumours about individuals, the poor quality of some of the people recruited, were all inevitable. For German National-Socialism was Adolf Hitler, an embodiment of his will. One could be loyal to a genuine leader, and do one's honourable duty even unto to death - and remain personally loyal even after a military defeat, as Rudolf Hess, Leon Degrelle, Otto Ernest Remer, and others, had done - but one could not be loyal to, not dutiful to, some ideological Cause, for such ideological Causes were always open to interpretation and misinterpretation. In effect, unless and until someone like Vindex or another Adolf Hitler arose, little of any significance would or could be achieved. For honour was a personal code: how one behaved, in public and in private, and why one was loyal to, and remained loyal to, a person or persons known personally.

Thus, my thirty years of involvement - as with the involvement of so many others, post-1945 - can be usefully summarized: acribus, ut ferme talia, initiis, incurioso fine. [4]

Pondering on all these conclusions during a trip to Egypt, I began to feel - following conversations with some Muslims - that the Muslim way of life might be an answer to some of the problems that I still at that time felt beset the world. To wit, ZOG; materialism - greed, egoism - before honour; and a turning away from the inspiring, numinous, dream, of Space exploration and the colonization of the star-systems of our Galaxy.

Thus I did indeed, at that time, find some affinity between the essence of National-Socialism - its spiritual core, such as Savitri Devi tried to explain - with what I then began to appreciate was the spirituality of, the sense of honour behind, the Muslim way of life. Hence why post-1998 - after spending a few years studying Arabic and Islam - I as a Muslim tried to bring National-Socialists and Muslims together in order to fight what I still then perceived was 'our common enemy'.

In particular, I concluded in 1998 that the Muslim way of life could - and did - inspire thousands of people to fight and die for a cause, while modern NS - with a few notable exceptions - did not and could not.

Thus, regarding becoming Muslim, there was not - as I mentioned in Part Six of my 2012 essay *The Ethos of Extremism: Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life* - no sudden decision to convert, but rather a slow process, lasting ten years, begun by travels in the Sahara Desert in the 1980's, continued by many other visits to Egypt and another Muslim land, and involving reflecting on my thirty years of activism as a National-Socialist.

In your *Extremism, Terrorism, Culture, And Physis* you made the interesting observation that, and I quote,

"a harsh modern interpretation of a particular religion hallowed what is masculous to the detriment of what is muliebral, making such a basal, such an unbalanced, masculous physis an ideal to be imitated and strived for, and which masculous ideal included the notion of a personal immolation, via kampf and a dishonourable disregard for the innocency of others, as a means to some posited goal. An unbalanced masculous physis also evident in - and idealized by - the ideologies of communism, nazism, and fascism, and in and by the 'puritanical' and inquisitorial interpretations of Christianity centuries before."

My questions are by "a harsh modern interpretation of a particular religion" did you as I assume you did mean Islamic extremists, and can you expand on your answer to the rhetorical question you posed which was "How can the masculous be balanced with the muliebral thus avoiding such unbalance, such bias toward the masculous, as has brought so much suffering recent and otherwise?"

Yes, I did mean Muslim extremism which is founded on, and relies upon, a harsh (unbalanced, often out of context) interpretation of ayat from the Quran, a harsh (unbalanced, often out of context) interpretation of Ahadith, and a harsh (inflexible) interpretation of Shariah which is contrary - as I mentioned in *Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism* - to fiqh.

In common with many people I regard our modern societies - both in the West and elsewhere in the world - as still dominated by a masculous ethos, manifest as that ethos is in such things as competitiveness, aggression, misogyny, a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love, compassion, and culture. While political and religious extremism - with extremism defined according to my understanding of extremism [5] - take that ethos to extremes, a masculous ethos still pervades our societies, even those in the West which, in certain areas, have strived and are striving for more equality between men and women. But introducing laws, having guidelines and training programmes, and other similar things, has not - at least in my fallible opinion - fundamentally changed that lack of honour which, for example, leads to or can lead to women being denied advancement, to women being dominated and manipulated, to women being raped, physically abused, and killed. Those involved in law enforcement - in countries such as Britain and America - know the number of reported violent crimes against women week after week, and that many perpetrators are never caught, or are never charged, or are found 'not guilty' (sometimes because the woman is not believed and/or her reputation is dishonourably called into question).

My fallible solution, in the essay you refer to was, in respect of individuals, cultivating empathy and the virtue of personal honour, for such cultivation would balance the masculous with the muliebral and thus forestall that which leads and had led so many men for three millennia to cause such suffering as still blights and has blighted this world. For as I mentioned in some essays a few

years ago [6], it is men - unbalanced in physis [7] - who have caused and are responsible for wars, invasions, and the deaths and destruction and suffering that results, just as most violent crime and murders are caused by men. And it is they, of course, who have - also for millennia - dominated and manipulated women (or tried to), who have raped women, who have physically abused them, and killed so many of them, and all because some men cannot control themselves lacking as they do the virtue of honour.

But how - or even can - societies in the West and around the world promote the virtue of empathy and personal honour, and if they could, would they want to given how most such societies (especially those in the West) are based on law and justice being the prerogative of the State? In respect of empathy at least, there is - as I suggested - the solution of *Studia Humanitatis*; that is, the solution of educating citizens in what I have termed the culture of *patheimathos* [8]. But since personal honour means that individuals should have the right to bear and carry weapons, and be lawfully able - in the immediacy of the personal moment - to use such weapons in self-defence and in valorous defence of others dishonourably attacked, it is most unlikely the governments or politicians of modern Western societies would even consider such an honourable solution to the problem of suffering. Indeed, they seem to be moving toward even more restrictions on individuals bearing and carrying weapons; moving toward severely punishing those who use weapons in self-defence or even in valorous defence of others dishonourably attacked. That is, that there is in many Western societies a desire, by governments and politicians, for more control over their citizens, for more interventions, at home and abroad, in the name of 'security', and for the use of force to be lawfully restricted to those - such as the Police or the armed forces - who are appointed and who serve on the basis of a chain of command which stops with some government representative or some politician or some military leader responsible to one of the foregoing. Thus, while I personally strive to uphold what honour demands in the immediacy of the moment, most people - even if they agreed with the principle - would be wary of doing so, given current laws in a country such as Britain. Or, more probably, they would consider it an unnecessary and possibly a retrograde thing to do. And they might well be correct. For our societies do provide hope, an intimation, a reassurance.

I have, since I was a teenager domiciled in the Far East, always felt (initially of course in a wordless not consciously understood way) that women embodied, could presence, and so connect us to - remind us of - τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and divinity. That certain women were, or could be, a conduit to the numinous. Which is why, for example, so many Catholics (including me) have or had an affinity for, a love of, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and why such artiselements as the Mona Lisa, and the life of Cleopatra, continue to intrigue us. In our modern world, as so often in the past, this wordless appreciation of the feminine has so often been subsumed by the masculous, even though some men - and of course many women - are so enticed by, and have an empathy with, such a film as *Carol* (starring Cate Blanchett), with Alison Balsom performing music by JS Bach and

Haydn, and with Corina Belcea (with her Quartet) performing the String Quartets of Beethoven as recorded in the Vienna Konzerthaus in 2012. For there, in such manifestations, are not only a presencing of the numinous, of culture, but also - and importantly - of what so many of our Western societies (and other societies, such as Japan) have enabled and achieved in the decades since the Second World War.

Furthermore, those on the 'outside' of Western governments - especially those with some supra-personal agenda, political or ideological or social - often fail to appreciate the efforts of those 'inside' who, motivated by the best of intentions, often have to balance conflicting interests in order to move, quite often ever so slowly, toward implementing what perhaps a majority would consider good.

Thus despite what has occurred and is occurring - in respect of, for example, modern Western States vis-a-vis laws restricting personal honour and the continuing misogyny in society - there has indeed been much progress and which progress should and must remind us of the reality: that there are, in government, in law enforcement, in politics, and among ordinary citizens, so many people of good intentions who, instinctively or otherwise, know what is right, honourable, and just, and who by working within the system have indeed made their countries, and the world, a better place. So much better, and so many people, that I, for one, acknowledge - given my past propensity toward hubris and error - that we do seem to have acquired or at least seem to be moving toward, by means of the process of modern democracy, a certain and necessary balance, and thus are progressing, albeit slowly, in the right direction. That therefore we may well be evolving toward what is required; and that my own preoccupation in respect of personal honour may be somewhat misplaced; and that such democratic governments and societies and laws as we in the West have (imperfect as they and such laws are) are, in truth, much better than any alternatives as well as the answer required so that it is incumbent upon us to support them and thus the democracy they represent. In other words, that I - with my metaphysical protestations about honour - may well be wrong and that those who, by working within the democratic system, have actually made a difference and are correct. That, for example, people such as Cate Blanchett, Alison Balsom, and Corina Belcea, have made far more of positive difference in respect of balancing the masculous with the muliebral than I with all my philosophical musings - past, present, and future - could ever dream of doing.

For their practical contribution to the culture of pathei-mathos - and the contribution of so many others since 1945 in so many lands - so far outweigh my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' in so many ways that I reminded yet again of the need for me to be reclusive.

I've read your book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and wondered how practical your philosophy is in today's world. I'm thinking here of empathy and honour which you apparently made its basic principles. Is that honour any different from the honour you wrote about when you were a neo-nazi?

Since my philosophy, such as it is, is essentially metaphysical - perhaps even mystical - then it not very practical according to how practicality is understood in most Western societies (functional; doing what is considered a recognized productive activity; being effective in a social or material or political way) just as the life of a Carthusian monk is considered by perhaps the majority of people in the West as rather impractical, and a 'retreat' from the modern world.

As a metaphysical theory my philosophy suggests an ontology and thus a particular understanding of physis [7] as well as a particular ethics, and which ethics are predicated on empathy and personal honour. In terms of epistemology it suggests the acausal knowing - of the numinous, of physis, and so on - that pathei-mathos and empathy reveal compliments the causal knowing attainable through such methodologies as experimental science. As to whether this particular metaphysical theory can form the basis for a way of life - a particular mystic way, for example - I do not know. In terms of my own life, it is just my pathei-mathos, which a few may find of interest, and which pathei-mathos reminds me to try to be compassionate, honourable, aware of and receptive to the numinous, and aware of my multitude of past mistakes and hubris engendering as that particular awareness does a certain (and for me a necessary) personal humility.

In respect of honour, I consider it a practical and living and personal manifestation of the acausal knowing and understanding, and respect for the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos make us aware of. A means, therefore, for an individual to be well-mannered (for good manners presence the numinous), to manifest what is (do what is) fair, and a means to - in the immediacy of the personal moment - restore the natural balance, the harmony, that an unfair person or persons disrupt(s) in a practical manner through some ignoble deed or deeds causing as such deeds do personal suffering and harm to others interiorly and/or physically.

To me, this understanding of honour is different from the 'honour' that I often pontificated about as a neo-nazi. One is personal and applicable only in the immediacy of the moment; the other is ideological, dogmatic. Thus, in many of my neo-nazi writings - while appreciating that honour implied manners and treating others fairly - it was tied to an impersonal idealism and which idealism was based on the supra-personal importance attributed to such concepts as one's folk and one's perceived duty to that folk.

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Since you announced in a post on your blog dated April 2015 that "there must be no further effusions" from you then why have you written an article published in November 2015 titled *Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism* and why are you publicly now answering questions such as this?

An excellent question. Following the events in Tunisia, the in-flight bombing of a Russian airliner, and the attacks in Paris in November of this year, I - as a former Muslim extremist who supported al-Qaida - was directly approached by certain people who sought my opinion on Muslim extremism in general. Although I initially refused to provide such a written opinion, I finally and reluctantly agreed to do so since one person reminded me not only that honour required me to be honest about what I thought about such events but also that by not so commenting I was perhaps being somewhat self-indulgent if not prideful, placing my need for silence and solitude - my reclusiveness - before the suffering of others. Would my silence really aid a few individuals to understand such matters as expiation for hubris? Or could my observations - derived from personal experience - really help some to understand, even given my past propensity for pride, selfishness, for causing suffering, and for making mistakes? There were, and are, no definitive or easy answers to this dilemma of mine. But: because some had sought me out and asked, I finally felt it was churlish, conceited, selfish, and dishonourable of me, to refuse. Expiation, or pride?

For I am so well aware that my decision to so comment might be the result of pride. Here, as so often in the past five years, I do so wish I had the guidance of some faith: some guidelines other than my own conscience, my sorrow, my solitude, my remorse at having caused such suffering as I did during my extremist decades. But, lacking such faith, all I could do was seek to read again such words as these:

Although I do not hope to turn again  
Although I do not hope  
Although I do not hope to turn  
Wavering between the profit and the loss  
In this brief transit where the dreams cross  
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying  
(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things  
From the wide window towards the granite shore  
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying  
Unbroken wings

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices  
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices  
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel

There were thus and again so many sleepless nights when the ageing body breaks slowly out into November darkness hoping against hope that sea spray and gusting wind will bring such a remembrance of the numinous that, at last, one mortal will be irretrievably either stilled or find that final answer. That I am still here and even now have no definitive, final, answer perhaps answers the questions asked.

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Several years ago you wrote that "based on experience and much reflexion, my personal view of diverse Muslim societies (Sunni and Shia, and from North Africa, to Egypt, the Sudan, the Middle East, to Asia), is that - on balance - they are also a force for good, full of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good and avoid what is dishonourable - Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar." Is that still your view or has it changed in the light of the murder of hundreds of people by Muslims in the past year alone. I'm thinking of attacks like the one in Paris and the bomb that brought down that Russian passenger plane, Flight 9268, over Egypt killing all 224 people on board.

The quotation is from my 2012 essay *Toward A Balanced View Of Islam and The West*. I also said in that essay not only that:

"my personal view now of Western societies - based on experience, a life of extremisms and subversions, and deriving from much reflexion, an acknowledgement of my own mistakes, and much pathei-mathos - is that they are a force for good."

but also that:

"both ways of living, that of West and that of the Muslims, can profitably learn from the other, because reasoned dialogue, an acceptance, celebration, and tolerance, of diversity, is the moral, the virtuous, thing to do."

My view regarding Muslim societies, and the Muslim way of life, and whether Sunni or Shia, has not changed because the incidents you refer to - and dozens of similar ones over more than a decade, and the barbarism of a group such as Daesh (ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil 'Iraq wa ash-Sham), are the work of Muslim extremists - a small minority - who are not in my experience representative of the Muslim way of life. One has only to have practical personal experience of families who follow the Muslim way of life - a personal experience over a period of a year or even for just some months - in places as diverse as Morocco, Egypt, Tanzania, Iran, the Philippines, Pakistan, Dubai, and Birmingham (England), to appreciate what the Muslim way of life means and implies, and what - in terms of family, and daily life - it does not mean nor imply.

Societies where the majority of people are Muslim certainly have problems and flaws, just as our societies in the West have problems and flaws. But to fundamentally change things for the better - in terms of decades and centuries, and have that change sustainable - requires individuals to change, internally, in

physis, and - as I have attempted to explain in several essays - this (at least in my fallible opinion) involves the muliebral virtues, for "it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and [a] loyal shared personal love." [9] I would also add Art, literature, music, and other art-forms such as film [10] and poetry; for such artissements, being as they are part of the foundations of our shared human culture of pathei-mathos, can be instrumental in that personal change which does not involve violence, which does not cause suffering to others, which is not traumatic, and which can connect us to, or remind us of, the numinous, of what we as human beings, en masse, have the potential to be: honourable, decent, tolerant, rational, human beings. And it is my considered - albeit fallible - opinion that one of the most important sustainable things that has changed us for the better, in last hundred and more years - and which has the potential to change us as human beings, en masse, even more - is that system of modern government termed democracy. For it is that system of governance which is tolerant, which has allowed Art, literature, music, and other art-forms to flourish, and which, via eduction, has preserved for us and presented to us the treasures of our human culture of pathei-mathos.

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David Myatt  
2015

[1] The essay is included below as an Appendix.

[2] A little known aspect of my strange, experiential, life is that some months after my conversion to Sunni Islam in 1998, I came to know a Shia Muslim and his family, who became my friends. Mentioning him and his family to some Sunni brothers, I was rather surprised by their extreme hostility toward the Shia. I thus saught, in a practical way, to discover more about Shia Islam and so, with my Shia friend, I frequented a Shia mosque, read works such as Nahj al-Balagha, and talked to Shia scholars. I even arranged a trip to Iran, took part in the Day of Ashura tradition which I found very moving, and came to understand the meaning of the phrase 'every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala'. Thus, for around a year I lived as a Shia (Ithna Ashari) and contemplated moving to permanently live in Iran given that at the time I was still on bail following my arrest in 1998 by Detectives from S012 with a criminal trial, a conviction, and a long prison sentence, seemingly inevitable.

But, still then and stupidly being an extremist, hubriatic, and an idealist, I desired to do something practical against 'the new world order' (the old enemy, from National-Socialist days) and - following several meetings with some Sunni brothers who had saught me out - I returned to Sunni Islam in order to support

al-Qaida and (encouraged by those brothers) began to write extremist Muslim propaganda and also post diatribes and engage in sophistry on Usenet and elsewhere. My life would probably have been somewhat different had I decided, as a Shia, to live in Iran.

But, as a wise person was once reported to have said: رَبِّ مَفْتُونٍ بِحُسْنِ الْقَوْلِ فِيهِ

[3] By classically trained in the context of Sunni Islam I am referring to centres of learning such as Al-Azhar in Cairo.

[4] Tacitus, *Annales*, Book VI, 17.

[5] qv. *Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism*, where I wrote: "A useful definition of extremism - based on practical experience - is that it is the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists, and/or what results from such harsh actions by such extremists. For an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some supra-personal objective, usually of a political or a religious nature; where by *harsh* is meant rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable."

[6]

"As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love." *Blue Reflected Starlight*, 2012.

"Perhaps the stark truth is that it is we men who are flawed or incomplete and who thus need to change. As if we, we men, have not yet evolved enough to be able to temper, to balance, our harsh masculous nature with the muliebral; a balance which would see us become almost a new species; one which has, having finally sloughed off the suffering-causing hubriatic patriarchal attitudes of the past, learnt from the pathei-mathos of our ancestors, from the pathei-mathos of our human culture, born and grown and nurtured as our human culture was, has been, and is by over four thousand years of human-caused suffering. A learning from and of the muliebral, for the wyrdful thread which runs through, which binds, our human pathei-mathos is a

muliebral one: the thread of kindness, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of empathy; of the personal over and above the supra-personal." *A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*, 2012

[7] In respect of physis, qv my *Towards Understanding Physis*, included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015, ISBN 978-1512137149.

[8] qv. my *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014, ISBN 978-1502396105.

[9] *Some Questions For DWM*. 2014. Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

[10] That is, film as an art-form, not as entertainment. For such a modern art-form can reveal something about our physis as human beings. Among the hundreds of examples are films such as *Carol*, *Monsieur Lazhar*, and *Etz Limon*.

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## Appendix

### Understanding And Countering Muslim Extremism

#### Preface

This article - commissioned after the events in Paris on the evening of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - will explain what Muslim extremism is, and what might be done to counter such extremism.

Based as my analysis and conclusions are on forty years of practical experience of extremism and extremists - which experience includes ten years as a radical Muslim - it presents 'an insider view' of the problem and thus provides a somewhat different perspective to that presented by many contemporary writings on the subject.

I have provided a glossary of some of the Islamic terms used, and have preferred the term Muslim extremism - the extremism manifested by those Muslims and groups, belonging to the Sunni tradition, who adhere to a particular interpretation of Quran and Sunnah - to the more common term Islamic extremism, since technically Islam is neither an -ism nor an ideology but rather submission by individuals to the will of Allah as manifest in the Quran and Sunnah.

#### Defining Extremism

A useful definition of extremism - based on practical experience - is that it is the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists, and/or what results from such harsh actions by such extremists. For an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is

harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some supra-personal objective, usually of a political or a religious nature; where by *harsh* is meant rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable.

An extremist, therefore, lacks an understanding of, or a feeling for, innocency: of treating individuals as individuals and of judging them only on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a period of time. Instead, the extremist uses some abstract criteria deriving from whatever ideology, or cause, or interpretation of some religion, or authoritative figure or leader, that they believe in or follow, for whatever reason or from whatever personal motive. Which abstract criteria almost always involves a division of people into an 'us' and a 'them': we, the true believers, the defenders of our cause/movement /leader/ideology/faith, and our enemies who are either intent on destroying/undermining 'us' and/or who are wrong/bad/evil and whom 'we' come to hate and despise, en masse.

Thus the extremist dehumanizes their perceived enemy or enemies, viewing them not as individual human beings but rather as a commodity, as a means to a supra-personal end. Hence why, for example, the statement attributed to ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil 'Iraq wa ash-Sham (Isil, 'Islamic State', Daesh) after the Friday 13 attacks mentioned 'crusaders' and called those massacred in the Bataclan theatre profane 'idolaters', with the statement beginning and ending with Quranic ayat (Al-Hashr 2 and Al-Munafiqun 8). For they were following a strategy outlined, among others, by the pseudonymous Abu Bakr Naji in the 2004 text إدارة التوحش: أخطر مرحلة ستتمر بها الأمة [Administering The Chaos: The Critical Transition The Ummah Will Experience] <sup>1</sup> and which strategy is of using violence and killing (including massacres) to provoke a response, to reveal the practical (rather than the theoretical) nature of Jihad (part of which Jihad is to deter the enemy), to wear down enemies, and to polarize and inspire both Muslim youth and 'the Crusader enemy', all of which tactics are explained in the context of the Quran and Sunnah, and thus by reference to Shariah.

This harsh perception of individual human beings as (i) 'a means to an end', and (ii) in terms of abstract categories to which they are assigned, en masse, by extremists on the basis of whatever ideology/cause/faith the extremist believes in or professes, is the *raison d'être* of all extremism. Only the categories, and the aim(s), differ.

### **Muslim Extremism**

The abstract categories of Muslim extremism are those of the kuffar (the unbelievers, infidels, idolaters), the believers (Muslims, the Ummah), apostates (murtads), heretics, and those fighting 'fi sabilillah' (Jihadists).

The aims for which certain categories are used are essentially two-fold: the

supra-personal one of the establishment of a khilafah through Jihad, and the personal one of a place in Jannah through either martyrdom or by strictly adhering to what is believed to be the correct interpretation of Quran and Sunnah and thus living according to Shariah.

These two aims - the supra-personal, idealistic, one, and the personal one - are inextricably entwined, and explain why for instance seven of the attackers in Paris immolated themselves by detonating explosives attached to their bodies. For not only could they massacre infidels - and thus support the strategy of 'creating and managing the chaos' - but they would, being Shuhadaah, attain the goal of Jannah.

These aims and categories are defined by particular interpretations of Quranic Ayat and Ahadith, and it is these particular interpretations which distinguish the harsh interpretation of Islam - the extremism of certain Muslims - from that of the majority of Muslims who reside in the countries of the West.

### **Countering Muslim Extremism**

Some examples may suffice for such a harsh interpretation to be perceived in context and thus understood for what it is, an extremist deviation. For there seems to be a distinct lack of knowledge about Islam both among Muslim extremists and those who (mostly associated with far-right political groups) react with hatred against Muslims in general as a result of the atrocities committed by some Muslim extremists. Both of which sides - with their 'us' and 'them' attitudes and divisions - just inflame and increase the conflict that groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida need and encourage.

Thus, neither side seems to know nor appreciate such clearly expressed sentiments, in the Quran, as the following:

"Remember that Allah is The Most Merciful, He Who Often Forgives."  
5:34 Interpretation of Meaning

"You who believe, be firm in being fair - as a witness for Allah - even though it is not to your own advantage, nor to the advantage of your kin, and whether the matter concerns the rich or the poor. For Allah is the best protector (of all). Do not just follow your own desires, for you may deviate, and turn away, and Allah is always knowing of all that you do." 4:135 Interpretation of Meaning

"Be loyal and do your duty to Allah; fear Him and always speak with honour. He will direct you to do honourable deeds and will forgive your mis-deeds. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will achieve the greatest achievement of all." 33:70-71 Interpretation of Meaning

"Observe the limits which Allah has set." 9:112

"Be forgiving and generous, for would you not seek Allah's forgiveness for yourself? For Allah is indeed The Most Merciful: He Who Often Forgives." 24:22 Interpretation of Meaning

Truths evident in the hadith regarding Mu'adh ibn Jaba as narrated by Abu Musa:

When Allah's Messenger (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) sent him and Mu'adh bin Jabal to Yemen, he said to them: "Make things easy for the people rather than difficult; provide them with reports of good, and do not let them turn away [from what is honourable]. You should both work together, with mutual respect, understanding and loyalty." Bukhari, Vol 8, Book 73, Number 145

and in the hadith narrated by Abdullah bin 'Amr:

"The Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never used insulting words and neither did he ever speak maliciously. He used to say that "the closest to me from among you is the person who has good manners and a noble character." Bukhari: Volume 5, Book 57, Number 104

and in ahadith such as:

"Those who believes in Allah and the Last Day should either speak honourably or be silent." Muslim Book 1, 75

For what these examples illustrate - and many more could be adduced - is that one effective way to counter Muslim extremism is for Muslims themselves to, using Quran and Sunnah, counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by the extremists. To thus express the humanity that is at the heart of Islam; a humanity so evident in the millions of Muslims, world-wide, who know or who intuitively feel that

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahman are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63 Interpretation of Meaning

and that

"We have made you [Muslims] a Wasat [just and noble] people, that you be examples for all other peoples as the Messenger [Muhammad] is an example for you." 2: 143 Interpretation of Meaning

There is therefore no need - as individuals such as Cheryl Benard suggested in her 2003 text *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies* - for the West to support and "encourage a moderate, democratic interpretation and

presentation of Islam", since Islam as understood and practised by the majority of Muslims world-wide enshrines the same values that make, and have made, the societies of the West what they are, as those who are familiar with *Studia Humanitatis* - ancient and modern - will assuredly appreciate, <sup>2</sup> with such a strident promotion and sponsorship of a Western-made "moderate, democratic interpretation" of Islam only confirming what Muslim extremists already believe - that the modern West is their enemy, and at war with Islam - and thus not only aiding resentment, disaffection, among many young Muslims but also contributing to the spread of Muslim extremism.

### **Beyond Missiles, Drones, And Invasions**

Have Western programmes of 'de-radicalization' and of 'tackling extremism' - of engaging with and encouraging 'moderate' Muslims and a 'moderate' Islam, of promoting a 'modernist Islam' - worked? Apparently not, given the attacks in Mumbai, Tunisia, France, and the numerous planned attacks that have been prevented in Britain and elsewhere, thanks to the security services.

Fourteen years after 9/11 - and almost five years after the death of bin Laden - and despite the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and military interventions in places such as Syria and Yemen, there are more Muslim extremists in more countries than ever. As recent police raids in France have revealed, such extremists have no difficulty in acquiring arms, from hand-guns to semi-automatic rifles, to rocket launchers.

The issue of Muslim extremism is not complex; it is simple. For the issue is one of interpretation of texts such as the Quran and Sunnah, and of a particular interpretation, or interpretations, being used by various groups and individuals to inflame passions and provide individuals - such as the disadvantaged, the disaffected, and those inclined toward idealism - with a sense of identity and a purpose which is vivifying. <sup>3</sup>

To counter such extremism there has to be, and of necessity from within Muslim communities and by individual Muslims, a promotion of classical Islamic jurisprudence and thus of the independence, the authority, the learning, of the Qadi. For a problem that was classically understood in Islam - and which is important and relevant today - was the distinction made by Muslim scholars between *fiqh* (classical Islamic jurisprudence) and *Shariah*, with *fiqh* understood as our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation, and with *Shariah* being the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah. For *fiqh* was based on the principles of acceptance of diversity of scholarly opinion, on custom <sup>4</sup>, and on logical deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. <sup>5</sup> Such a distinction allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, in arbitrations, and in determining penalties.

However, in modern times, this classical distinction between fiqh and Shariah - with its allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, its acceptance of local custom, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties - is not made by extremist groups such as Daesh when they implement their interpretation of 'Shariah law' and which interpretation invariably has an inflexible penal code and immutable penalties with those judging individuals using such an interpretation invariably lacking the learning and the independence of a classically trained Qadi. For it is the practical implementation of 'Shariah' law that is the *raison d'etre* of groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida, and it is that implementation, and their interpretations of texts, that needs to be exposed, from within Muslim communities, thus destroying the credibility and the allure that such groups have for a minority of Muslims.

Hence, and in addition to current strategies and tactics, it is (i) the scholarly, years-long, learning required for a correct interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, and (ii) the roles and importance of classically trained Muslim scholars and of the Qadi, and (iii) the opinions of such learned Muslims, that should be encouraged, supported, and promoted, by Western governments.

David Myatt  
2015

[1] The title is generally translated as *Management of Savagery*, although *Administering The Chaos* is more appropriate since what is referred to are not savage deeds per se but rather the violent chaos of the period of transition which, caused by Jihad, will precede the establishment of the Khilafah, with 'administering' capturing both of the implied meanings: that of 'managing' the chaos and that of administering 'the cure', of provoking the chaos as a means to an end.

[2] For thousands of years - from the classical world to the Renaissance to fairly recent times - *Studia Humanitatis* (an appreciation and understanding of our being, our nature, as humans) was considered to be the basis of a good education. Thus, for Cicero, *Studia Humanitatis* implied forming and shaping the manners, the character, and the knowledge, of young people through them acquiring an understanding of subjects such as philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, music, and *litterarum cognitio* (literary culture) with Cicero noting the importance of the Greek virtue of εὐταξία (self-restraint) manifest as that virtue is in manners: in what Muslims term Adab.

[3] What often seems to be forgotten is that extremist groups (Muslim and otherwise) have within their ranks many idealists who - initially at least - have good intentions and believe they are doing what is right and necessary.

[4] لعادة محكمة [4]

[5] One has only to read the chapter on evidence in al-Majalla al Ahkam al Adaliyyah (an Ottoman book of Hanafi jurisprudence published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) to appreciate how a Qadi was guided by logic.

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### Glossary

Ayah: a quranic verse. Plural: Ayat.

Ahadith: plural of Hadith (qv).

Fi sabilillah: 'in the cause of Allah'.

Hadith: a recorded saying, or deed, of the Prophet Muhammad.

Islam: literally means submission to the Will of Allah, as manifest in the Quran and Sunnah.

Jannah: Paradise. As recounted, for example, in the following Ayah:

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ 'م ك 'توب ذ ' ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." 61:12  
[Interpretation of Meaning]

Khilafah: Caliphate. A Muslim community (or nation/Empire) founded upon Shariah, led by a Khalifah ('Caliph').

Kuffar: those who do not believe in the Way of Islam. Often translated as infidels. Singular: Kaffir.

Qadi: A learned Muslim judge.

Shariah: the Muslim way of living, as manifest in the Muslim legal system, and which system includes the laws governing interactions between Muslims.

Shuhadaah: Martyrs. Muslims who die Fi Sabilillah. Singular: Shaheed. A Shaheed is often called a "witness to the truth (of Islam)".

Sunnah: The example of the life and deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammed as recorded in Ahadith.

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