

# Everyone Must Join Forces Against Terror

H A R U N Y A H Y A

The world has been living side by side with terror for hundreds of years. Even though actions may differ from country to country, all terrorist organizations aim at defenseless civilians and send their messages by way of these people. In the terrorist attack in Oklahoma in the USA 167 people were savagely slaughtered, 19 of them children. A fanatical Jew who opened a hail of fire on Muslims praying in a mosque in Palestine caused the deaths of 29 people. Thousands of people have lost their lives in attacks against Muslims in India over the years. Terrorist attacks both great and small have for years been perpetrated in France, Spain, the Philippines, Japan and Ireland.

One could go on. However, the entire world came face to face with terror in 2001. In the wake of the attacks against two major cities in the USA which led to the deaths and injuries of thousands of people, the concept of "terrorism" began to be debated once again. That was because that attack had been carried out at an unexpected time, against a country regarded as the world's only superpower, and in a totally unforeseen manner. The attack created an air of fear and panic all over the world, especially in America.

More than two years have since passed, during which time the USA has embarked on a major fight against terror. Many countries have lined up alongside America in this struggle, and lent their support to it. The series of bombings in Istanbul, just when it was thought that the forces of terror had been brought under control, again reminded people of terrorism's dark face: first synagogues, then the British Consulate, then the HSBC General Directorate building ...

The Saturday prayer, which had been performed for centuries, was interrupted by the bombs exploded on November 15th. Twenty-four people were killed in the explosions at the Neva Shalom synagogue at Beyoglu Kuledibi and the Beth Israel synagogue at Sisli, and 300 were injured. Dozens of more people lost their lives in the explosions at the British Consulate and the HSBC building, and hundreds were injured. Images similar to those which followed the September 11 attacks began appearing on our television screens. Ruined buildings, people fleeing in panic, burned out busses, corpses lying in the streets ...

The point we wish to emphasize in this article is the Islamic perspective on terror attacks and the killing of the innocent. All forms of terrorist attack are roundly condemned in Islam. According to the Qur'an, it is a great sin to kill an innocent person, and anyone who does so will suffer great torment in the Hereafter:

**... If someone kills another person—unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth—it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind. Our Messengers came to them with Clear Signs, but even after that, many of them committed outrages in the earth. (Qur'an, 5:32)**

This verse equals the killing of one innocent to slaughtering all of humanity! Another verse expresses the importance that the faithful attach to life:

**Those who do not appeal to any other deity besides God [alone]; nor kill any soul whom God has forbidden [them to] except with the right to do so; nor fornicate. Anyone who does so will incur a penalty. (Qur'an, 25:68)**

In yet another verse, God issues the following commandment:

**Say: "Come, and I will recite to you what your Lord has forbidden for you": that you do not associate anything with Him; that you are good to your parents; that you do not kill your children because of poverty—We will provide for you and them; that you do not approach indecency—outward or inward; that you do not kill any person God has made inviolate—except with the right to do so. That is what He instructs you to do, so that hopefully, you will use your intellect. (Qur'an, 6:151)**

Any Muslim who believes in God with a sincere heart, who scrupulously abides by His verses and fears suffering in the Hereafter, will avoid harming even one other person. He knows that the Lord of Infinite Justice will suitably reward him for all his deeds. In one of the hadiths, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) listed the kinds of people who are not pleasing to God:

***"Those who act cruelly and justly in the sacred lands, those who yearn for the ways of the ignorant, and those who wrongly shed human blood." (Sahih Bukhari Hadith)***

Another element we wish to concentrate on is the attack on devout Turkish Jews worshipping in their synagogues. Churches, synagogues and mosques are houses for the worship of God. It is a terrible crime in the sight of God to slaughter innocent people as they worship in their churches, synagogues or mosques. These are houses where the name of God is remembered, praised and recited. In the Qur'an, God reveals that:

**... God guides to His Light whoever He wills and God makes metaphors for mankind and God has knowledge of all things. In houses which God has permitted to be built and in which His name is remembered, there are men who proclaim His glory morning and evening. (Qur'an, 24:35-36)**

The people who go to those places are devout, prayerful people. All houses where the name of God is remembered are sacred in the eyes of Islam. Visitors to these houses may be Jews, Christians or Muslims. The important thing is that each one is a devout believer in God. A Muslim must respect and protect the holy places where the People of the Book worship God, and protect them. For Muslims, these places are precious because in these places, people, whether Jews or Christians, remember God. In the Qur'an, the places of worship of the People of the Book, ie. monasteries, churches and synagogues, are mentioned as places of worship protected by God.

**...[I]f God had not driven some people back by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, where God's name is mentioned much, would have been pulled down and destroyed. God will certainly help those who help Him—God is All-Strong, Almighty. (Qur'an, 22:40)**

As a manifestation of his loyalty to God's commands, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was most careful not to destroy the holy places of the People of the Book. Such destruction means, in the first place, opposing God's commands. This aside, it means preventing people who have faith in God worshipping Him. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) promised the Christians, who were the other party to a peace agreement he made, that their churches would not be destroyed and that they would never be harmed. The tax (Jizya) agreements he made with Christians also guaranteed the safety of churches.

The first agreement made after the death of the Prophet (pbuh) that guaranteed the protection of the temples was a tax agreement Khalid bin al-Waleed signed with the leader of the city of Anat. Ibn Ishaq stated that those agreements made by Khalid bin al-Waleed were also approved by Abu Bakr and the three caliphs following him. This aside, Abu Bakr offered the same guarantees that had been offered to the people of Najran by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The Islamic societies that abided by Islamic morality after the death of the Prophet (pbuh) also paid special attention to this issue. Muslim leaders who adhered to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) respected the places of worship of non-Muslims in conquered countries and showed great tolerance to the clergy.

## **Terror Will Disappear When People Come to Live by the Moral Values of Islam**

In the Qur'an (32:9), God reveals that He has breathed His own soul into Man, His creation, and that Man is His representative on earth (Qur'an, 6:165). One of the most important differences between Man and the animals is that Man was created with both earthly desires and with a conscience. Every person possesses desires that incite him to evil, along with a conscience that inspires him to avoid it. Alongside such pleasing attributes inspired by that conscience—love, sacrifice, compassion, humility, affection, honesty, loyalty and kindness—he also possesses destructive and undesirable tendencies, stemming from his earthly desires. Thanks to his conscience, however, the believer can distinguish between right and wrong and opt for what is morally right. Strong belief in and fear of God, faith in the Hereafter, powerful fear of the endless torments of hell and a yearning for Paradise all keep the temptations of his earthly desires at bay. Therefore, he always behaves well towards people, is forgiving, responds to wickedness with good, assists those in need, and shows compassion, love, affection and tolerance.

Terrorists, on the other hand, listen to their earthly desire for violence instead of their consciences, and can easily turn to all forms of wickedness. They become loveless, aggressive people who easily hurt others without the slightest pang of conscience. Having no fear of God, they do not know the morality of religion, nor do they

practice it. Nothing can stop them from committing crimes.

In restraining its citizens, society's prevailing rules can go only so far. Thanks to its law enforcement units, the state may be able to partially protect streets and public spaces, and—thanks to a powerful system of justice—may be able to take necessary means to ensure public order and ensure that the crime rate drops. But since it's impossible to keep watch on every individual, 24 hours a day, it's essential that peoples' consciences enter the equation at some stage. Someone who doesn't heed the voice of his conscience can easily turn to crime when on his own, or surrounded by people of like mind. That being the case, a model of society emerges which is composed of individuals who lie when necessary, have no hesitation about making unjust profits, and feel no unease about oppressing the weak. It is clear that physical precautions and measures will bear no fruit in a society which has no fear of God and which has lost its spiritual values. Religious moral values, on the other hand, command a person to refrain from evil, even if he is all alone, even if nobody will punish him for his evil deeds. It is evident that a person who knows that he will be called to account in the presence of God for his every deed, his every decision and his every word, and that he will be suitably rewarded for these in the eternal life of the Hereafter, will scrupulously avoid committing evil.

Terrorist organizations can't possibly have any place in a society whose people avoid evil of their own free will. Where religion's morality prevails, problems that give rise to organizations supporting the use of violence will disappear naturally. If the whole society possesses superior virtues like honesty, sacrifice, love and justice, there can be no place for such things as poverty, unequal distribution of income, injustice, the oppression of the weak, or limitations on freedoms. On the contrary, a social order will emerge that meets the wants of the needy; where the wealthy protect the poor and the strong, the weak; where everyone can enjoy the very best health care, education, and transport systems. There, tolerance and understanding will dominate the relationships between different ethnic groups, religions and cultures.

For these reasons, proper morality is the key to solving so many social problems. The source of that key, in turn, is the Qur'an, which God has revealed as a guide for mankind.

It must not be forgotten that unless necessary measures are taken, unless deep-rooted solutions are brought in, the 21st century will continue to be a time of terror and violence, just as the 20th was before it. The homes of innocent people will be bombed, and women and children will be slaughtered. The ideological fight against terrorism, therefore, must begin started with great and urgency, to include very great numbers of people. This fight will be fought on the level of ideas—between people who believe in the true religious morality, who are loving, forgiving, compassionate and in full possession of their conscience; and those who draw their strength from ignorance, arrogance and violence. In one verse, our Lord asks, **"Would there had been more people with a vestige of good among the generations of those who came before you, who forbade corruption in the earth..."** (Qur'an, 11:16). Believers should possess the virtue that God describes in that verse. While terrorists hope to achieve their aims by violence, believers should know that true success can be achieved only by clinging tightly to the religion of God, and acting accordingly. If Jews, Christians, and Muslims join together in that struggle, in a spirit of respect for all beliefs and ideas and, by the will of God, they will enjoy definitive success. This is God's promise to all His believing servants, which will definitely come true.

At this point, a great responsibility falls on all true believers, no matter what their religion. Jews must not ignore Old Testament statements calling mankind to peace and tolerance, and they must call on all other Jews to oppose terrorism—including the state terrorism employed by Israel in the occupied territories. So should Christians call on all other Christians, taking as their guide the morality most pleasing to God. One should not forget that terrorism stems from wrong ideas and the basic struggle against terrorism should be on the level of ideas. Believers must explain that these ideas are wrong both in terms of their theory and practice. No idea can prevail by means of violence, oppression and cruelty; and despotism can never triumph.

Terrorist ideology is built on sand. Its foundations can easily be swept away by mobilizing a proper education campaign. Sincere believers in all parts of the world can help end the ignorance that breeds terrorism by searching for solutions, writing books and articles, promoting educational activities and disseminating their own cultural heritage. The prevalence of tolerance, peace and security on the Earth, as commanded by God, will make terrorism disappear into the pages of history forever. Adopting a defeatist, pessimistic attitude in the face of terror is unacceptable. Our hope is that this suffering will not be repeated, and that all measures will be adopted to that end.

May God have mercy on those who died in those hateful attacks, and may He heal the injured. Our sincere condolences to all mankind. (For detailed information, please see [Islam Denounces Terrorism](#) and [Only Love Can Defeat Terrorism](#) by Harun Yahya)

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