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Terrorism and the Question of Islam

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TERRORISM AND THE QUESTION OF ISLAM: THE

MAKING OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

IN LEBANON

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Preface:

In many countries, especially in the United States of America, and increasingly since 9/11, Islam seems to be responsible for numerous acts of terrorism. In this thesis, I will try to understand and explain the religion of Islam and its relationship to terrorism.

Being a victim myself, as well as twenty persons of my immediate family, I am more eager than ever to know why this terror exists. Is it religious, political, hate, or all of the above?

Being raised in Lebanon, which is part of the Middle East, does not qualify me as an expert on Islam. I was born and raised as a Catholic; I was educated in a Catholic school and lived in a small town of about forty thousand people who were all Maronite Catholics. I only knew and heard of Muslim people in the southern and northern part of the country, contrary to those that lived in the capital, Beirut and its suburbs, people of all religions lived in the same building. I never had a Muslim friend, never ate in a Muslim house, so the idea of Islam was always foreign to me and my family. I was in my own little cocoon, and I had no reason to establish a relationship outside my community. So life went on, and I grew in a happy, peaceful town surrounded by my family, relatives, childhood friends and neighbors, until January 16, 1976. It was on this date that Islam crept into my life like an unwelcome guest and destroyed the life I had known and wiped my whole town off the map.

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to my brother Pierre and my sister Nada that have given their young lives at the age of 12 and 10 to satisfy an ideology that destroys humanity in the name of Islam. Every day innocent lives are taken accidently or through other natural causes, but when life is taken by force and in such a brutal way, it does not matter who does it and why. Their lives ended so early without living to see their future flourish and have mom and dad be happy of their accomplishments. Now they are angels in heaven along with so many young cousins and many other victims that died the same way for the same cause. Justice may never be served, but at least you have an older sister that almost joined you. Instead I am here for you talking on your behalf about the brutal death you had endured on the dirty hands of these monsters. I know you are in a better place than having to witness this horror that continues at the hands of extremists since you left this world. I will always love you and pray for your peace!

Acknowledgement:

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at Rhode Island College to help edit my writing. Paul Ethier was highly recommended as a tutor, and because of him this thesis came to a completion that satisfied my goals in achieving my Master's requirement. Receiving advice from these three gentlemen has given me confidence that this thesis will satisfy the committee's standards.

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Chapter I: Introduction

As we watch television, there is always a section in the news about someone or a group of people that have been shot and injured, or shot and killed by some type of an attack by a group of terrorists that represent some organization. Seeing this, many viewers just feel bad, others switch to watch a more entertaining program. In the end, people continue their daily lives as planned.

When victims die in such horrific attacks, whether it is on a national or international level, the dead leave a lot of sadness, empty hearts, and memories with the loved ones that they leave behind. The sadness diminishes as time goes on and the acceptance of loss becomes a reality that you learn to live with. What about those that are injured in an attack? The word "injured" comes in two forms. There are those that sustain minor injuries and do well after a short while, and those that sustain injuries that make death look so appealing. In my case, I fit the second category. Badly injured and left for dead, my life has been an endless battle of survival that has carried on to the present day. This is why I have a totally different perspective of the word "injured" when I hear it on the news or read it in the newspaper.

The extent of an injury leaves a permanent memory of the event in everything you do. It interferes in your emotions, your function in society, and the ability to keep on fighting to survive the next surgery. It is as if you were to take a person on a totally different journey in an instant. One moment, I was a healthy, beautiful, and a happy 19 year old, and within seconds, the bullets shattered my face and hand, and I was left for dead in a pool of blood next to my dead brother and sister. How did I envy them for lying there cold while half of my face was on the ground fighting to breathe, and my left arm hardly hanging.

Centuries of religious and ethnic wars in different parts of the world tell so many stories of suffering and survival, but it is only the person that has been through it that can relate to it best. Now, watching the news on television, the word "injured" takes me on a long journey where I can feel the pain of those transported on a stretcher to the unknown and the unpleasant. I can visualize their journey's timelines unfold, their ups and downs, their pain, agony, frustration, and their question of "why me?" as I often asked myself.

When you are a teenager and are suffering from such an extensive injury, you are only thinking about the time and how long it will be before you are well again. At times, I was very angry at those that did this to me, but I never knew who they were or why they wanted to hurt me so badly? It is one thing if an act of violence takes place in self-defense against an intruder, where one can actually have a cause and can put a face to the crime; but when guns are pointed at innocent people as target practice, it is never justifiable or forgivable.

Since I was shot in 1976 by terrorists in my hometown of Damour, Lebanon, only two words surface in my mind over and over again: Muslim and terrorist. The cry of "Allah Akbar" poured on us like heavy rain along with the words and swears of the terrorists, which were spoken in a heavy Palestinian accent. The attackers were later identified as members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Not knowing much about Islam and being raised as a Christian, the association of these two words had nothing but negativity in my life. What is a person to think of someone that totally destroys your life, kills and injures half of your family and childhood friends, occupies your town, and burns your house? There is nothing positive or forgiving about those horrific acts.

As I grew older in the midst of my experimental and failed surgeries, I heard more and more of similar attacks by similar people inside and outside of Lebanon. When 9/11 took place, all I could think was "Why did they follow me to America?" Until now, my journey has been to mend my physical and emotional life the best I can. The pain and uncertainty of my prognosis of having a jaw and teeth where I can speak and eat were always interrupted by tragic failures that required corrective surgeries all the time.

Despite this, I wanted to further investigate and learn some truth about why do tragedies like this happen to me and to others? Who are the perpetrators and what is their agenda? The ongoing surgeries and worries did not leave any room to satisfy my curiosity. It is very frustrating and unfair to have someone hurt you and not be punished. In my case, the massacre of Damour and the mass killings that took place with no protection from the Lebanese authorities, the criminals went on their shooting sprees as planned without the victims knowing who they were and without being prosecuted for their actions. As in many terrorist attacks, the perpetrators are labeled with the organization they belong to and no one will ever find out who the individuals who conducted the attack are. An example of this is what we hear in the media such as "Al Qaeda admits/denies responsibility." How does someone prosecute Al Qaeda, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) or any other terrorist organization?

I always felt that I was suffering in silence with no existence. Not only did I feel that there is nothing I can do to mend my life, I had to go through the hard feelings when I first came to Rhode Island, USA with severe deformities and had to deal with so many ignorant and harsh questions that Americans would ask me, such as: "What's wrong with your jaw?" "Why did you get shot?" "Did you belong to a terrorist organization?" "Why would someone shoot you unless

you did something wrong?" The last question was a huge attack on my innocence in this whole experience.

The ignorance of these questions made me feel guilty as if I needed to give an explanation. I knew it would not get me anywhere, since how do you answer and explain these questions to many local people who have not even been to Boston, let alone understand the complexity of life in the Middle East. On numerous occasions, I started to write a book, but my feelings were so shattered by the details and I could not continue.

For now, this thesis is a great accomplishment of my personal and academic life as it will satisfy some of the curiosity that I have been carrying on my shoulders for over three decades. Even though justice will never be served, my emotions and knowledge will be displayed in a thesis that will reveal some of my most personal moments and critical findings.

In this thesis, I take an auto-ethnographic approach developed in the last twenty years amongst sociologists and anthropologists. This approach takes the research process as stated above and combines it with my experiences resulting from the religio-political conflict in Lebanon, to comprise the core of this thesis.

Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln explain auto-ethnography as:

> Setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience, theory, evocation and explanation… and then letting go, hoping for readers who will bring the same careful attention to your words in the context of their own lives. (208)

Auto-ethnography will help me tell my story by setting the scene, leaving the reader wanting more, and in some cases even relating to their own struggles in life. Exploring my inner lived experiences lies at the heart of auto-ethnography. This method is expressed through many eventful stories that were created as a result of a severe gun shot that created so many avenues in the narration of my life, unfolding the circumstances that led to the massacre and some of the reasons behind it. All the dramatic recalls I went through, the flash backs and the flash forwards, bring out all the elements of auto-ethnography as a method and gives the story a sense of living the moment and seeing the events unfold as if the reader is living the moment with the author. The consecutive events from 1948 until the present, gives the reader a timeline of events to understand how and why Lebanon got to be part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The timeline also gives a brief history about Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine, and finally my hometown of Damour, where I paint a vital and otherwise obscure picture "by creating a plot that asks readers to live the experience with the author" as Denzin and Lincoln suggest.

By setting a scene for the events and my personal struggle to find out how much Islam is tied to terrorism, explaining the religion, and the politics behind the religion, will give some reasoning to the actions without reducing Islam to a simplistic conception. By using auto-ethnography, I was able to connect the past to the present through the alternative means of representations through research, textbooks, the internet, the media, and my own experiences inside and outside Lebanon.

In their forum on *Qualitative Social Research*, Ellis and Bochner state that "as a form of ethnography," auto-ethnography is "a part auto or self and part ethno or culture" and "something different from both of them, greater than its parts" (31-32). In other words, as Ellis and Bochner put it, "whether we call a work an auto-ethnography or an ethnography depends as much on the

claims made by authors as anything else" (49).   In my story the two elements of self and culture

are deeply rooted in my experience. The culture was shaped by being in a country that was

divided by politics and religion where the creation of Israel caused more of a divide by those that

opposed the Palestinians and those that welcomed them as a chance to increase the possibility of

an Islamic government. From this culture and as a result of a violent political agenda aimed at

the Lebanese Christians to displace and paralyze their presence, my story of survival was born

along with many others that survived to tell their stories and the stories of those that were never

able to told, like my brother and sister. Ellis and Bochner write:

> In auto-ethnographic work, I took the validity in terms of what happens to readers
> as well as to research participants and researchers. To me, validity means that our work
> seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is
> lifelike, believable, and possible. You can also judge validity by whether it helps readers
> communicate with others different from themselves or offers a way to improve the lives
> of participants and readers or even your own. (49)

The validity of my story is a sincere but difficult description of the details that took place

in a mass killing and the horror caused by it as a result. Its validity is confirmed not only by

survivors' stories, but also by the reporting of the truth on a national and international level

through the media. Because of this concrete validity, my town of Damour now stands as a ghost

of a previously lively and happy people where the blood of the innocents is buried in the soil and

fear has kept its residents away.

I believe that auto-ethnography offers so many benefits to its writers and its readers.

Denzin's important criterion is "whether the work has the possibility to change the world and

make it a better place" (256).   With my auto-ethnographic writings, I hope to accomplish some knowledge and distinction in a life of a citizen in one country where citizenship is masked by hate created by religion and politics. Creating an understanding of the culture of life in Lebanon will bring the reader to a whole new level of understanding that not only every country in the Middle East is different from another, but one country alone, like Lebanon, of only four million people, is divided and misunderstood by the Lebanese themselves, and for a reader to understand one section of it through the events surrounding my story, will solve at least one piece of the puzzle that might lead to a lifelong curiosity to learn more and understand the truth.

There has been much controversy in evaluating auto-ethnography. "As reviewers begin to develop ways in which to judge auto-ethnography, they must resist the temptation to "seek universal foundational criteria lest one form of dogma simply replaces another" (Sparkes, 223). I believe that there will always be some type of controversy to any type of writing, but I strongly feel that if and when auto-ethnography is closest to the truth by accomplishing the self and the culture combined, then a valuable piece of writing can bring us to the conclusion of rethinking on how to evaluate an auto-ethnography by taking into consideration the truth and the complexity of the subject.

My Story:

As the world knows it, Lebanon has been called "the Switzerland of the Middle East". Lebanon is not only known for its natural beauty, but also for its wide open hospitality to the world. This country has gone through many empires and so much history where many people in the world can claim some type of connection to it. Even though Lebanon is part of the Middle East, it always had its own flair and identity of having the exposure to many cultures and always being friendly. Salibi gives a brief history on how Lebanon got to where it is now since 1920: "The spread of the Christians, and particularly the Maronites, in Lebanon was to become a prime factor in the country's social development. As far as mere technicalities of government were concerned, Lebanon in 1930 was well on its way to becoming a moderate state. One important problem which remained unsolved, however, was entirely unconnected with government technicalities. It concerned the attitude towards Lebanon of the Lebanese Muslims. In 1920, when the territory of Lebanon was enlarged to include the coastal towns, the Tyre region, and the Biqa, the Moslem majority in the annexed districts found itself at a disadvantage. As Moslems or as Arab nationalists, Sunnis and Shiites saw that their incorporation in a Lebanese state under Christian domination meant their permanent separation from the Arab Moslem world." (Salibi, 169) As a result both Christians and Moslems felt threatened by each other, and two para-military group were established, the Christian "kataeb" and the Moslem "Najjada". Being already divided by religion, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict strengthen this divide and ever since Lebanon has had its share of violence created by its own people and found itself totally immersed in the problems of Palestine and Israel. As a result, my story of surviving these political and religious tsunamis remains a huge unrest to all people in the Middle East and Lebanon.   Palestinian-Israeli conflict played a big role in changing all of that, where it had

created a totally different type of war that is solely tied to those two countries with Lebanon as a chosen battleground. Being part of the conflict was the convenience of its location on the border of those two countries which gave an easy access to the Southern part of Lebanon. With time, the combination of being hospitable and sympathetic along with political opportunists inside the Lebanese government, the Palestinian refugees became a Lebanese problem because they would not leave, and the Israelis would not let them go back. Out of that, a huge monster was created, and many terrorist organizations were formed to fight Israel's occupation and anything that connected with it.

Since 1948, the Israelis have been determined to continue building on the Palestinians' occupied land while many countries watched and hoped for a solution. As the message to regain their land got louder by the Palestinian terrorist organizations, many countries had their share of brutal terrorist attacks, and still not many major countries wanted to offend Israel and get to the cause of the problem.

In Lebanon, the Palestinians got stronger in numbers and weapons supported by Iran and Syria to fight Israel, but they chose the wrong battlefield to supposedly accomplish their mission. At first, the excuse was that they will start a war against Israel with the help of Iran and Syria, and then Israel will back off and let them in. However, their presence gave a chance for a great number of Lebanese Muslims to join hands to help the Palestinian cause. As time passed, the opportunity for the Muslims to gain strength over the Christian based government looked bright. Along with the Palestinians, many Lebanese Muslims joined hands, and the 1970's were the beginning of a civil war where hundreds of Christian villages were attacked by Palestinian terrorist organizations with Muslim terrorists from many countries to help them achieve their goal, so that the Muslims would outnumber the Christians to gain power in Lebanon. As a result,

thousands of Christians fled the country and even today, the battleground and the ideologies have not changed. Among those villages that were attacked, was one peaceful town on the Mediterranean Sea named Damour.

Damour is located about twenty miles south of the capital Beirut, and this is where I was born and raised and lived all my life. This town had about 40,000 Maronite Christian residents, a branch of Christianity named after Saint Maroun. Damour enjoys a beautiful sandy beach that makes its location between Beirut and the South of the country an attraction for water sport visitors coming from all over the Middle East. Between the 17th and 20th Century, Damour was the capital of Mount Lebanon as it was the flourishing center of the Chouf Region, which is one of the counties in Lebanon. Because of its location and coastal beauty, construction developers had their eye on Damour before the massacre and many now have been negotiating some major tourist projects that have already been completed with some more on the way. In 2009, Noor Investment, a Beirut based developer was seeking to build a cedar island project in the middle of the ocean, very similar to the palm tree project built in Dubai, but was put on hold because of the continuous political unrest.

My fond memories of my town were those of fun, peace, and innocence. Waking up to look at the Mediterranean and the sun rising and setting was a privilege I never cherished. I just thought this was the way it was everywhere. The smell of orange blossom in our garden shook your senses. I grew up in a loving home with a strong Christian life where morals and values were part of our diet; "be good, be kind and you'll receive," my mother would always say. Life was simple and beautiful and we had no fear that someone was going to change it. I was totally wrong about that.

A few weeks before the attack, we heard about some individual incidents of killings of Christians at the hands of Muslims. We did not know we were going to get the worst of it. On January 16, 1976 while sleeping in our beds, the whole neighborhood heard loud screaming and shouting of the words "Allah Akbar" where thousands of terrorists came by boats as we lived closer to the water and started combing the town by attacking the neighborhood house by house. Unfortunately for me and my family, the killing started with those that lived near the water. Grenades were thrown at the doors and the hunting began by aiming heavy weapons on each member of my family. My brother Pierre, 12 years old and my sister Nada, 10 years old were killed instantly. My mom and brother were shot badly, and they kidnapped my dad for a ransom while my sister hid behind the bathroom door. As I was getting shot at, I covered my eyes with my hand which was hardly hanging by a piece of skin and the rest of my face below my eye fell on me and the ground around me.

That awful night, we had gotten a warning from the other side of town that there were snipers and kidnappers approaching our town, so my aunt recommended that we all sleep down at her house as it is lower and carved in a rock, and if anything should happen we would be safe. It actually worked in the enemy's favor. We all gathered in one room, so the multiple killings could be easier. As they threw grenades in the door, they showered the living room with shots everywhere; every shot was accompanied with "Allah Akbar." As fear set in, one by one, old, young, women and children started falling to the ground like a video game with no button to control.

I could still see my aunt Salma, clinging to a terrorist's boots begging him to spare her children, but he killed four of them and he wanted her to witness this horrible tragedy. Then he killed her last. Her older two girls were hiding behind the bathroom door with my sister Lina.

As they left to continue their killing spree in the rest of the neighborhood, I was the only one living among 12 dead people. I couldn't scream, I couldn't run, my lower jaw was hanging by a thread of shredded skin and blood. I can remember saying my last prayer and begging God to take me away. I even hoped that they would come back and finish me off. Lying among the dead on a tiled floor, half dead and bleeding badly, the cold from the floor and broken doors, froze my shivering bones. I prayed and begged to a broken picture of the Virgin Mary that the terrorists had shot at and stepped on, "please our mother, end my suffering." Twenty four hours of lying there expecting and hoping to die and struggling to breathe with dead skin blocking my airways, I heard noises and hoped that they were back to finish me, but later found out that they kidnapped my father and he ran away and went to the other side of the town to tell what happened. A group of courageous men, including my cousin Louis, came to my rescue and I was lifted to Sacred Heart Hospital by helicopter per orders of President Chamoun. When I arrived to the hospital, all the staff were petrified with what they saw, and they realized the extent and the seriousness of this attack. Later after the first surgery, I still did not know who died and who did not. My dad came to my bedside hysterically crying and saying: "your sister and brother are dead, your brother Elie and your mother are shot and are under surgery as we speak in different hospitals."

I later learned of so many stories of survival, one of them never leaves my mind. Our next door neighbor had just had a baby. When they heard what was going on outside, they cuddled together in one corner, then the baby started crying, for fear of not being heard by the terrorists, they put a pillow on its mouth and the baby died. By the time the news got to the whole town, everyone fled their homes by cars, boats and any other type of transportation they could find. They left behind everything they loved and cherished, not knowing that they would

never come back because it would be stolen, destroyed, and burned. Over thirty years later, the city of Damour is still a ghost town holding so many sad stories of the innocents that were killed, simply for being Christian.

Because of the complexity of my medical condition, I had one big surgery in Lebanon and flew the next year to the USA to complete my treatment. Even some of the best surgeons in Boston had never seen a case as difficult as mine. I was a guinea pig for many years, as experiment after experiment and failure after failure, became a part of my daily life. Although, this has been such a difficult journey, I will always be thankful to my hero Dr. Albert Carlotti and all the staff for the care I have received at the Miriam and Massachusetts General Hospitals. My journey has been a long and difficult road. Beside the physical pain, I have experienced a sea of sadness from every angle such as the sudden loss of my brother and sister, the killing and harm done to the rest of my family and relatives, losing our home and childhood memories, being displaced, living with severe deformities at the peak of my youth, and moving to a foreign country on the top of it all.

As if adjusting to a new world was not enough, my world was full of haunted memories, physical and emotional pain, and the financial worries of paying for all my surgeries. I lived with my aunt Emily Mardo in Warwick, R.I. which was supposed to be a few months but turned into ten months. Being without my parents and remaining brother and sister in a foreign country and in my condition almost took my sanity, especially when I had never been without them for even one day before the tragedy.   Having to wake up in the recovery room after each surgery and see people I never met instead of my family was harder than anything I had ever experienced. The kindness of those nurses and doctors took a lot of my anxiety away, and for that I will always be grateful. Being shot in the mouth has been the most challenging experience ever.

How can someone survive without talking and eating, which are the two most important functions in human existence? I could not do either for over a year.   I had a tracheotomy and I wrote what I wanted to say. I ate through a feeding tube as my whole mouth was shattered; I had no lower jaw, no teeth, no skin, and a half of a tongue. For the purpose of healing and not having an infection, I had to wait and wait before I was able to even drink water. Even watching television, the only way to entertain myself, was a challenge. The food commercials destroyed my patience to get well. My thin body got thinner and frailer by the day. Walking in the corridors of the hospital was another painful challenge, the bone and skin grafts taken out of my body were more painful than the jaw surgeries because taking healthy skin and bones out of a body is double the pain. I knew these procedures would benefit me in the long run, but I was so far from recovering any time soon.

The experimental surgeries and the painful procedures put me in a state of mind where I wished I never made it. I lost my will to live many times over. At a time when young people my age were living their teenage lives to the fullest, I was always shopping for a better doctor that would give me the most hope and successful results. While being treated for all this, I did not stop dreaming about finishing my education. I attended Rhode Island College where I received two Bachelor degrees. I got married in 1992 and I have a wonderful family. I went back for my Masters and graduated in 2008. This has been a long journey that in many ways also made me a better, stronger, and more sensitive, especially to the victims of wars and other handicapped and disabled people. Best of all, it taught me not to take anything for granted such as simple things we do not even think about, such as eating, drinking and talking.

The idea of writing a thesis that focuses on and extrapolates from my life has lingered for many years after graduation, as I always felt the events were overpowering, but I always knew

that was the subject I wanted to write about. By finally establishing this, I feel that writing about

something that has turned my life upside down is worth researching and writing about. It has

been hugely uplifting and therapeutic to my mental, spiritual, and emotional health as well as a

great accomplishment in my academic career. More importantly, the concepts of auto-

ethnography have given me the intellectual basis to turn this story into material for this analysis

of terrorism. While I stay close to a narrowly-defined geographic area, the "micro-history" of

my life, of Damour, and of Lebanon resonate with larger implications.

To better clarify and understand the religion of Islam and its relation to terrorism, it is not

a black and white answer as any person in any religion can be a fundamentalist or extremist as

there is difference between the two that we seem to ignore. As Appleby puts it in his book *The

Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*:

> Some commentators automatically equate "fundamentalism" with extremism and
>
> use the term as a broad brush with which to tar every religiously orthodox, literate, and
>
> committed believer. In that wrongheaded view, every believer is a militant, every
>
> militant is a fundamentalist, every fundamentalist is an extremist. Thus the enormous
>
> distance between ordinary, pious Muslims and bomb-throwing "Islamic terrorists" is all
>
> but erased, not to mention the finer distinction I am drawing between nonviolent militants
>
> and extremists. Some fundamentalist Muslims, Christians, and Jews object to
>
> "fundamentalism" for a different reason: it implies that their extremist coreligionists, who
>
> are a minority in every religious tradition, are actually upholding or defending the basic
>
> "fundamentals of the faith; the majority of believers do not see it that way.

To better understand this phenomenon from such an expert on the subject as Appleby, I will research those similar concepts about Islam through learning about the religion and its components as it relates to fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism.

Chapter II: Islam

A misunderstanding of Islam in the West has put the religion in a very negative position that is difficult to correct because of the many factors involved such as religio-political, geographical, and many ideologies, which have come together to distort the perception of true Islam by defining it through the eyes of violent terrorists. The increase in modern terrorism over the years by Muslim extremists, has translated Islam to a religion of anything but peace, putting its good followers in the very difficult and unfair position of distinguishing true Islam from radical Islam.

Just as in anything else, the media reports the big news that speaks loud and is worthy of peoples' attention. Announcing good news about people is not as news worthy and exciting as a destructive event. In most cases, these people direct the blame and make their own conclusions of the doers and their associations with certain religions or networks.

Historically, religion has been the cause of bringing people together, as well as creating a divide in many societies, where disagreements and violent acts have been created to satisfy certain ideologies. This disagreement in Islam was created following the death of its founder Mohammad because his wishes were ignored to have his son-in-law, Ali, be his successor. Ultimately this angered one group, who have since become known as the Shi'ites, creating a divide in the religion of Islam. The two branches of Islam are: the Sunnis and the Shias. While the Sunnis make the majority of Islam, the Shias remain the minority in countries such as Lebanon, Iran, Syria and Iraq. This split plays a role in theology, governance and leadership.

Increasingly today, we hear that many extremist Muslims have been gathering in mosques all across the West to blend in with Muslims that are there for the purpose of praying, and at the same time, to eliminate suspicion of those evil intentions planned by extremists as it is being done in a holy place that does not raise suspicion. The opposite has been true as many mosques today are being scrutinized as a result of these activities.

Fluehr-Lobban describes how Friday prayer is usually when the most number of Muslims gather together, making the sermons ideal for the Imams to explore topics pertaining to religious, social, and political subjects as well. These sermons sometimes "end in exhortations to political action, with demonstrations following the weekly ritual" (38).

As stated earlier, mosques are also using politics as part of their sermons, and it has been shown over the years that many terrorists were radicalized at mosques to avoid any questioning. In the case of Boston alone and most recently with the Boston bombing, the Islamic Society of Boston mosque, where the two bombers attended, and the Islamic society of Boston Cultural Center mosque reported "to teach a brand of Islamic thought that encourages grievances against the west, distrust of law enforcement and opposition to western forms of government dress and social values" (USA Today).

The most important rules of Islam teach us that like many religions, being a good Muslim is being devoted to God and his teaching. Submission to God gives a holy meaning to them, which in turn if followed properly by its believers, would seem a very peaceful and beautiful religion. The dedication to daily prayer makes a Muslim one of the most dedicated beings to the creation and cause of Islam. Among other duties that are taken seriously and practiced devoutly, especially during the holy holidays, are: The pilgrimage and the Zakat. Sharing what you have,

even if it is not much, makes the zakat as one of the most rewarding deeds done for others, and their willingness to help in any way they can. Visiting Mecca at least once in a life time is very costly, but almost every Muslim does it despite their financial situation as a devotion to true Islam.

So where does terrorism fit into this religion ? Here I should explain true Islam from the Islamists that chose terror to tarnish Islam. Although Sufis are few in numbers, they played a huge role in Islamic history, they contributed to Islamic literature. In one of the Hadith, the ngel Gabriel asked about the important features of the Islamic belief, they were: Islam, Iman, and Ihsan which translate into the religion of Islam , the faith or belief , the worship of Allah as though one sees him. Sufis are described as devout Muslims that pray, give to charity and fast.

The international Association of Sufism defines it as: " Tasawoof, or Sufism, is the esoteric school of Islam, founded on the pursuit of truth as a definite goal to attain. The truth of understanding reality as it truly is, as knowledge, and achieving ma'arefat. In Tasawoof, when we speak of understanding or cognition we refer to that perfect self-understanding that leads to the understanding of the Divine." While another order of Islam, the Salafis who favor a new order modeled on early Islam and they are slowly mmoving into a political space one occupied by jihadi millitants.   It seems like the word "Jihad" is the most associated word with terrorism, which is misunderstood by many, especially the Western world. "Jihad" has taken over many positives in the religion of Islam and has been transformed into a negative shrouded by violence and killing. Just like there is a tendency in the West to lump together Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims, "jihad" has been identified as not just a war, but a holy war, referring to its relation to the religion of Islam.

Today, there are over one billion people from all races, nationalities and cultures across the globe that are Muslims, and over seven million of them live in the United States. Islam seems to be a religion of peace and love, but why do we always hear the contrary and witness so much terror in the name of Islam?   As in any religion, certain people are moderate in their thinking and they do not let their religion run their lives, then there are those that are extremely devout and take their religion very seriously where it runs every aspect of their lives. When you become a slave for religion rather than a representative of faith, it becomes the compass and the decision maker in the inner and outer circles of someone's life.   As a result, many crimes have been committed in the name of religion over the years and are still committed today. There are individual small town' incidents and there are those that are so extreme and so severe that they require the world's attention and nations' interference to prevent it from happening again. Some other extreme acts committed in the world are: Adolf Hitler's killing of the Jews, and the hate of the Ku Klux Klan demonstrated against Jews and blacks, just to name a few. One can never clearly state this race is good and that race is bad or this religion is good and that religion is bad. There has been much controversy about Muslims being bad people who kill and destroy in the name of Islam. As a result there have been many books, media reports, and articles in every language written about this subject. The Muslims of the world have been stereotyped, especially by the horrific events of 9/11. Is there such a thing as bad Muslim and a good Muslim?

In his book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, Mahmood Mamdani goes to the roots of history to clarify and explain the history behind the question.   Mamdani blames "culture talk" for creating such a negative stereotype about Muslims in the world. "Culture talk assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence

of that essence. Culture talk after 9/11, for example, qualified and explained the practice of "terrorism" as "Islamic." Culture talk has also turned religion into a political category.

Mamdani seeks to dissect the stereotypes about Muslims and further identify how "culture talk" defines Islam.

> As if taking a cue from Bernard Lewis, Stephen Schwartz, director of Islam and democracy project for the foundation for the defense of democracies, claims that the roots of terrorism really lie in a sectarian branch of Islam, the Wahhabi. Even the pages of the New York Times now include regular accounts distinguishing good from bad Muslims: good Muslims are modern, secular, and westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, anti-modern, and virulent." Media along with "culture talk" can in doubt confirm someone's believes, and introduces those that are newly exposed to this talk, to believing it as the truth. (24)

It is much easier to accept what has been created for us than trying to find our own truth. This is what is happening here. If this is the culture talk, then it must be true, especially when confirmed by the media that supposed to deliver the truth.

The media has played the biggest role of promoting a violence image of Islam. When events take place, there is never a mention of why this violence happened even though it is unjustifiable, but in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, those acts are usually done as a result of the Israeli army bulldozing Palestinian homes in order to build residences for Israelis new-comers. Very rarely do we hear the media displaying the causes for retaliation. They just simply mention the actions of the Palestinians and not the cause of their actions.

Mamdani argues that the term "fundamentalism" was "invented in 1920 by the Reverend Curtis Lee Laws and was immediately taken up as an honorific by his Baptist Presbyterian colleagues who swore to do "battle royal for the fundamentals of faith" (36). This leads us to the conclusion that fundamentalism is not inherently Islamic, but was created by other religious leaders as seen in many historical events dating back many centuries. Mamdani discusses how televangelist Jerry Falwell believed that the idea that "religion and politics don't mix" was "invented by the devil to keep Christians from running their own country." This introduction of fundamentalism of having Christian roots brings us to an important realization: Christian fundamentalists were influenced by clergymen while "the pioneers of political Islam were not the religious ulama (scholars), but political intellectuals with an exclusive worldly concern" (43). This explains why political Islam is a more appropriate term than fundamental Islam, because of the way it was created.

Many Muslims scholars such as Mamdani would rather refer to extreme Islam as "political" rather than "fundamental" because, as so many researchers suggest, you can be fundamental by being a devout Muslim and religiously follow the teaching of the Qura'n and in some cases try to impose your religion on others without being violent. On the other hand, political Islam has an agenda that is tied to militants and is committed to fight for a political cause.

Sayyid Qutb, one of the most well-known figure on radical political Islam, tells us that in order to be a good Muslim, it requires "jihad" which religiously refers to an effort or struggle to contribute to spiritual, social, personal and political way of life in order to be accepted into the religion of Islam. He also separates modernization from Westernization where he rejects the latter. Westernization in his opinion derails devout Muslims from their commitment and opens

them to temptation to follow the Western way of life, that in his mind destroys the faith and its teachings.

Qutb makes a distinction between modernity and westernization, calling for "an embrace of modernity, but a rejection of westernization. He also made a sharp distinction between science and ideology, arguing that modernity is made up of two types of science: physical and philosophical. The pursuit of material progress and the mastery of practical science are a divine command and a "collective obligation" on Muslims. Modernization through the natural science was fine, but not through westernizing philosophical science." (Mamdani, 50) Qutb and many other intellectual pioneers of radical Islam, don't want Westernization, but don't mind the modern life, that is responsible for improving the way we live by promoting education and technology that are both part of a modern western world. Even though Muslims were responsible for the birth of civilization, being an open minded society with new and modern ideas, the west became the leader in delivering the modernity that many Muslims want, but refuse to credit the west with it. Qutb also believes that an egalitarian society should have the spiritual, social, personal and political system, where religion and state have proven to be fatal in many Muslim societies where many Muslim scholars still believe in its effectiveness. By admitting that there will be no social reform without taking over the state, Qutb and his supporters explain the ideology behind the thinking of radical Islam.

The debate around radical political Islam is thus increasingly a debate on the meaning of "jihad." To understand jihad, we should look to the historical context of its origins as stated in the Koran and not as stated by radicals seeking to accomplish an agenda. Concern for the umma, the Muslim community, is part of the five pillars (rukn) of Islam and is binding on every Muslim. The Koran insists that a Muslim's first duty is to create a just egalitarian society in

which poor people are treated with respect. This demands a jihad (literally effort or struggle) on all fronts: spiritual, social, personal and political. Qutb understands the traditional religious aspect of jihad, but at the same time wishes to integrate a political component that would defend religion through conflict.

In his book, Jihad vs Terrorism, Dr Maher Hathout defines the word "jihad" as a root verb: "Jahada", which in Arabic means "exerting maximum effort or striving".

The theological connotation is striving for betterment. Its major form is the struggle within oneself for self-improvement, elevation, purification and getting close to God. Another form is intellectual jihad, where the truth is offered to the hearts and minds of people through intellectual debate, wisdom, and dialogue, exposing the facts in the Quran in a clear and convincing way. Related to that is the concept of jihad, which is exerting maximum effort to derive solutions and rulings from the Quran and the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad, to be implemented in different and dynamically changing contexts. Another form of jihad is using economic power to uplift the condition of the downtrodden and to finance the struggle for justice and liberation. Last, but not least, of the forms of jihad is the physical form, where people actually fight against oppression. The principals of that form are stipulated clearly in the Quran and teachings of Prophet Muhammad. (18-20)

Contrary to this explanation of Jihad, the term continues to be a slogan for the struggle to fight "the so called enemy" by terrorist groups. They truly believe in using the phrase "Allah Akbar" before committing these acts. The parents of these terrorists are happy to call their children martyrs when they die fighting the infidels, such as Jews and Christians. "Hizballah"

which means "the party of God" believes that their cause is Islamic and justifiable; therefore, they think of themselves as shepherds of God, as the name implies. Violent actions by these extremists rob the meaning of true religious Jihad and transform it into a negative act that is "justified" by invoking God on every mission.

Hathout goes on to say that it is obvious that the concept of jihad is too comprehensive to be reduced simply to "war" even if described erroneously as holy. Jihad is the human endeavor of striving to improve the individual and the society and to bring life closer to the divine model. It is clear that the word jihad is an Islamic-Arabic term that has been incorrectly translated and largely misunderstood.

Hathout gives a general description for jihad as a noble act as opposed to violent terrorism, he gives a brief summary of differentiating one from the other by stating the following:

> 1) Jihad is to be launched by the recognized and established Muslim authority, as a policy of the collectivity of the Muslims, to deter aggression. Terrorism, on the other hand is committed by individuals or clandestine groups that neither represent the majority of Muslims nor did they receive any authorization from them.

> 2) Jihad is to be declared, while acts of terrorism are born in secrecy and executed as a deadly surprise.

> 3) Jihad is limited to combatants who represent a real danger to the Muslim military, while terrorism is usually directed to the soft spots of innocent civilians in a non-discriminatory way.

4) Jihad is bound to the ceasing of hostility and accepting peace if the combating enemy inclines to peace, while terrorism is launched against people who are at a state of peace to start with. (65)

Hence, any confusion between the destructive menace of terrorism and the constructive noble concept of jihad should never be allowed. Such confusion is a travesty or intellect and an insult to religion. Dr. Hathout's point of view is very comforting and true, but does every Muslim feel the same way and translate the Quran the same way by separating jihad from terrorism?

One would find the distinction between Jihad and terrorism very true once they go to the root of its noble meaning by the majority of devout Muslim believers. As many translate Jihad as a promoter of aggression, the Qura'n explains it is to deter aggression that is usually done by individuals acting on their own with no regard to the religious translation of the word. While a Jihad is used by defenders to protect the community from certain type of violence and is usually declared and known to take place, terrorism has a hidden agenda conducted through a secret network that operates randomly without consideration for innocent human lives. It has no boundaries or a particular enemy, its aim is to destroy, hurt and send a political message. In other words, Jihad is sort of an army for Islam with a religious component to strike if they were attacked and needed to defend themselves; terrorism, on the other hand, is created to strike, whomever, wherever, and whatever with no particular enemy except the ideology created to initiate the attack. The victims can be relatives, friends, neighbors and people of the same faith and beliefs, the act is broad and random, and sympathy is nowhere to be found as long as the message is loud and clear.

Understanding Islam is a very complicated matter that is even a challenge to some Muslims themselves. For instance, some Muslims in Lebanon or Turkey can be mistaken to a Western person with the way they live and dress that is totally foreign to the way of some Muslims in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia live, think, and dress.

I believe that extremists are radicalizing Islam to accomplish their own agenda which unfortunately tarnishes the name of Muslims and the religion of Islam, because violence and destruction speak much louder than a person who follows the teachings of the Prophet by being a good citizen and living life a good devout Muslim.

Chapter III - Terrorism

The search for a universal, precise definition of terrorism has been challenging for researchers and practitioners alike. Different definitions exist across the federal and international research communities. Title 22 of the U.S. Code, Section 2656f (d) defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." Both definitions of terrorism share a common theme: the use of force intended to influence or instigate a course of action that furthers a political or social goal. In most cases, National Institute of Justice researchers adopt the FBI definition, which stresses methods over motivations, and is generally accepted by law enforcement communities.

According to the National Institute of Justice definitions by other publications, it seems like there is no precise definition for terrorism as the motives sometimes vary from one place to another. Terrorism has always been around and terrorists of every nationality, background, and religion have committed violent crimes. The motivation behind every act is usually connected to a cause, and those causes can be different or similar on a case to case basis. In many situations terrorism starts as a political action, but it seems that there is also a religious component to justify the act and to make it more forgivable and appear to be a worthy cause.

Many researchers and scholars believe that colonialism holds a great responsibility for creating so many civil wars where many terrorist organizations originated. In *Ambivalence of the Sacred,* R. Scott Appleby states that: "Ethno-religious conflicts proliferated after the world

wars, just as the newly organized international community was attempting to strike an acceptable balance between support of universal human rights and the principle of state sovereignty from 1945 to 1960, following the dissolutions of the British, French, Dutch, Belgian, and Portuguese empires. Ethno-religious concerns drove more than half of the world's civil wars. The proportion increased to three quarters from 1960 to 1990, and accelerated again with the collapse of the Soviet Union" (58).

History has shown us that terrorism is not only committed by Muslims. Terrorism takes place all over the world but the magnitude of the recent events have given Muslims a violent title that is not easy to erase from many peoples' minds. In his book *Imposing Power Sharing-Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon,* Kerr demonstrates that other religions have and still commit acts of terrorism similar to those committed by Muslim terrorists. Terrorism in Northern Ireland identifies with Christians and was caused by many similar reasons and violent actions to Islamic terrorism. At the beginning of the twenty first century, reformulated consociational agreements were regulating both Northern Ireland and Lebanon's ethno-national conflicts. The external powers with influence over these divided societies had concluded that a return to a power sharing model of government was the best way to manage their historic dispute. The Oxford English Dictionary defines consociation as a political place system formed by the cooperation of different social groups on the basis of shared power (Kerr 26).

Comparing Lebanon and Ireland, it is possible to see how their relationship with terrorism seems to have started as a result of colonialism and the problem of balancing the power among the many nationalist groups within those two countries. Ireland was divided between those that wished to maintain their British connection and those that wanted to unite the two

parts of Ireland without the interference of the British colonial power. The same happened in Lebanon when France favored and supported the Christian Lebanese while failing to help and nurture the Syrian-Arab nationalists that were mostly Muslims. As a result, an ongoing political disagreement in Lebanon between the different factions and religions, mostly between Muslims and Christians, keeps the country divided even in the present day. What angered many Muslim groups is France's effort to help "Marionatism" to take over and announced that the President of Lebanon should always be a Maronite Catholic. As a result, the Sunnis and Shia'as of Lebanon felt that they could not have much control over the political system.   Denying the ongoing problems of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, many Muslim politicians saw it as an opportunity to build the Muslim population and team up with the Palestinians to destroy the Christians of Lebanon and reclaim the power for themselves.

Looking back, Lebanon and Ireland's struggles related to power sharing, and the lack of a solution by all parties continues to haunt the two countries. Year after year, the struggle to find a common ground to please all parties dragged into civil wars, divisions, and unrest. As a result, terrorist organizations were created to fight the opposing group and continue to do so even in present times.

It is important to learn more about the actual terrorists and how someone goes about becoming one. What are the causes of terrorism? How does someone turn so hostile to commit crimes against innocent civilians? What motivates a terrorist to become so destructive at any cost? How does it make someone so willing to die for a cause? Alan Kruger, one of the most knowledgeable people on the profiles of terrorists, introduces us to some of the ways someone becomes a terrorist. In his book, *What Makes a Terrorist?* he looks deeply at the many reasons

that can cause someone to fall into the allure of terrorism.   After all, someone does not simply wake up one day and decide to become a terrorist.

Learning the root of terrorism, Kruger claims that although there is a certain surface appeal to blaming economic circumstances and lack of education for terrorists' acts, "the evidence is nearly unanimous in rejecting either material deprivation or inadequate education as an important cause of support for terrorism or for participation in terrorist activities. The popular explanation for terrorism, poverty and lack of education, or the catchall "they hate our way of life and freedom" – simply have no systemic empirical basis" (Kruger 2).

The explanations of poverty and lack of education have been embraced almost entirely on faith, not on scientific evidence. Krueger claims that "if poverty and inadequate education were causes for terrorism, even minor ones, the world would be teaming with terrorists eager to destroy our way of life." Contrary to the popular stereotype, the uneducated, impoverished masses are particularly unlikely to participate in political processes, through either legitimate or illegitimate means. Krueger goes on to say: "instead of being drawn from the ranks of the poor, numerous academic and government studies find that terrorists tend to be drawn from well educated, middle class, or higher income families. Among those who have seriously and impartially studied the issue there is not much question that poverty has little to do with terrorism" (2).

The 9/11 Commission Report was quite clear on the role of economic deprivation in spurring individuals to participate in terrorism: "Terrorism is not caused by poverty" (378). Yet the claim that poverty is the root cause of terrorism continues to be made.

The fact that most terrorists are not poor makes sense because of the magnitude of the terrorist attacks that are carried out. These attacks require a lot of clever planning, have a hefty price tag to be carried out properly and precisely, and usually require educated people that have traveled abroad, know the geography of the targeted area, and sometimes speak a foreign language, making them capable of carrying acts without revealing any suspicion. When attacks are done on a larger scale such as 9/11, involving technology and ability to fly planes, we can see that it was not planned by an average every day peasant, but by young, educated, and clever people that knew the American culture, what goes on inside an American airport, who spoke the language, and carried the attack as smoothly as possible and got the exact results they planned for. Knowing that they were dying for the cause clarifies that money was not behind their act. Their motive and mission showed the world that they will do whatever it takes for the world to listen to their political agenda.

Kruger stresses that terrorists care about influencing political outcome. Instead of asking who has a low salary and a few opportunities to understand what makes a terrorist, we should ask: who holds political views and is confident enough to try to impose their extremist vision by violent means? Most terrorists are not desperately poor that they have nothing to live for. Instead they are "people who care so deeply and fervently about a cause that they're willing to die for it" (Krueger, 4). He also points to the evidence from public opinion polls that reveals that the best educated members of society and those in higher-paying occupations are often more radicalized and supportive of terrorism than the most disadvantaged. The illiterate underemployed population is often "unwilling to express an opinion about policy issues, probably because they have more pressing matters on their minds. But it does not foreclose the possibility that terrorists are motivated by inadequate or unequal economic opportunities in their

own countries. It is possible that members of the elite become terrorists because they are outraged by the economic conditions of their fellow countrymen" (Krueger, 6).

In his book, *Jihad vs Terrorism*, Dr. Maher Hathout defines terrorism as simply a violent act, while Krueger defines terrorism as "a politically motivated violence and a tactic." It is unusual to declare war on a tactic. Moreover, the tactic of terrorism is difficult to define. Krueger says that: "when I talk about terrorism, I refer to premeditated, politically motivated violence. Furthermore, the form of terrorism that I consider here is perpetrated by substate organizations and individuals with the intent of influencing an audience beyond the immediate victims" (Krueger,14). In Krueger's definition, the goal of terrorism is to spread fear. The victims are not as important as the message.   Another problem with defining terrorism is that it requires some understanding of the motivation of the terrorists. In this sense, "any classification of politically motivated violence must be somewhat subjective. This is an issue with which organizations that try to measure terrorist activity really struggle" (Krueger 15).

To prevent failure, terrorist organizations will not invest their time, money, and efforts if they cannot guarantee the results they are seeking, such as: accomplishing their mission carefully and successfully by proving a political point those they attack, such as what can happen to whom they are attacking when they oppose their political dealings on a national or international level. Krueger implies that terrorists are not people who have nothing to live for. On the contrary, they are people who "believe in something so strongly that they are willing to die for it" (Krueger 48).

There are many factors that Dr. Krueger displays which seem crucial and realistic to a terrorist profile and offer a valuable explanation of how it is difficult to define and fight a tactic which has been proven over time. Government officials elevate the terrorism alert to its highest

level when they do not know where an attack is going to take place and by asking everyone to be vigilant at all times and places. Fear is definitely the biggest goal that terrorists hope to accomplish because it usually paralyzes every positive activity on a national, international, and personal level. Everything is put on hold while the attackers are watching how successful they are in planting fear into the hearts of millions of people while watching the results of their actions unfold before their eyes. With today's technological advances, terrorist organizations, more than ever, are relying on skilled young people to successfully carry out their highly complicated missions that require intelligence and knowledge at all levels in order to accomplish their mission.

Those that do not fit this category are mostly motivated with an opportunity to feel wanted and part of something big, and maybe get a small compensation for their contributions. Those are the images that we always see on television: long bearded men with open toe slippers and missing teeth, usually seen with the likes of Osama Bin Laden. How does this group of people differ from the educated and powerful? This is where training camps and religious "madrassa" for these sort of men become a supplement when needed. I truly believe those men are mostly trained to shoot and are taught lessons about the "enemy" and the "infidels." This is where hate crimes become a part of terrorism; Krueger calls hate crimes "a close cousin to terrorism." When brainwashed to hate and shoot, the doers might act on their own or act against members of religious, racial, or ethnic groups based on that groups' affiliation and not by their individual characteristics or actions.

From my own experiences and research, I believe that there are two types of terrorists: the first type carries out sophisticated attacks in their own countries or abroad; they are usually rich, educated, and able to use technology as a means to greater destruction. The second are

those that have come from impoverished backgrounds with no education or goals in life. They are asked to become a member of an organization which makes them feel empowered, by becoming somewhat authoritative when given the opportunity to use a gun and practice their authority against whom they are taught to fight against. I believe that there are more hate crime terrorists than we are led to believe. History shows that many terrorist acts, such as the ones that wiped out entire villages in Armenia by the Muslim Turks, were carried out mostly by gunmen with a deep hate for the Christians.

In my home country of Lebanon, aside from sophisticated attacks on foreign embassies and other governmental establishments, the majority of the villages that were wiped off the map were done so abruptly, at night, and by a group of Christian-haters who carried guns, grenades, and attacked innocent families until the whole town was killed. Every attack begins with "Allah akbar" (God is the greatest), a statement that will never leave my ears. Hate plays a huge role in both types of terrorists. Whether they are rich or poor, behind it all, there is a political agenda that created the hate.

Coming from an ex-terrorist's mouth, I was able to understand and further my research by going inside one of the mastermind terrorists that had done and seen it all. In his memoir, he talks about himself, the reason he became a terrorist, and who financed his terrorist attacks. An inside look at his book, *The Blood of Lambs*, written by Kamal Saleem, gives the reader a step by step look at how you can develop from an innocent little boy to a dangerous terrorist.

Throughout my research, I could not find a more candid and truthful look into the life of a terrorist from childhood to manhood. What made this particular terrorist more interesting than any other is that he was from my native country of Lebanon. When I read his book, I had the

chills from confirming what I had learned after I was shot in Lebanon.   I now wonder if that man was one of the terrorists who attacked my town. Maybe he, his relatives, or his best friend shot me.   Living Kamal Saleem's experience makes my own story so real that I can almost feel his every act and reaction to it all.   Saleem is a Sunni Muslim, born and raised in Lebanon where he was taught about Islam by his parents from infancy.

This religion transformed into something much bigger, as his parents encouraged him constantly to become a hero in the name of Islam, by killing Jewish and Christian infidels. In his parent's eyes, Jews and Christians were the cause of all the problems in the world.   In "madrassa" (school), his mother loved to talk about her ancestor warriors, Arabs and Turks, who had used their thick and heavy swords to lob off the heads of Jews. "They were men of great courage," she said. Muslim warriors were clever and strong, first piercing the enemy's armor with their swords, then severing the infidel's arms from their bodies.   Saleem recalls his mother's stories as he describes: "Now the Jews and the Christians could not raise their swords against the Muslim fighters, and that's when the Muslims chopped off the infidels' heads." That day, during our coloring time, I pictured myself on a white horse slicing through enemy armies with my mighty Muslim sword. As a child of six years old, when your mother loves you so much and is nourishing you, you believe her with every part of your being" (Saleem & Vincent 1).

Kamal's education was about hate and killing, and when the preaching comes from the ones you love and trust the most, you believe that whatever they tell you is true. In his mind, he was never taught about love and to respect other religions; instead, he was taught that Islam is about hate and killing anyone that was not Muslim. Kamal loved power and guns, just as many young boys often fantasize about playing cowboys by using water pistols or plastic guns to feel

empowered; however, Kamal had every opportunity to fulfill his fantasy with real cowboys and real weapons. When he went to the mosque with his father, he was introduced to different imams, and his father would always brag about the courage his son had and how he can be a great warrior and fighter one day. His father was not talking about joining the Lebanese army to protect his country, but had a much more evil plan in mind. Every praise Kamal received confirmed his dream of becoming a fighter. But, who is he fighting and why did it never cross his young mind? His parents and the imams were his role models and he was to fulfill their dreams by fighting anyone in the name of Islam.

As Kamal's friendship with the imams grew, he received more encouragement to follow Allah's will by becoming a "jihadist" or a fighter against the infidels, namely the Jews and Christians. Kamal continued to go on mission after mission in the body of boy, masked with hate, and the will to accomplish the deadly missions he was assigned to do. He often wondered about his youth and how he ended up in such a bad position, but his desire to impress his parents, the imams, and his trainers overcame his doubts and made him face fear, danger, and death with open arms. Page after page, one can see the soul of a little boy that was hesitant about this whole thing, then came the older, supposedly religious and military experts to strip him of his childhood and lead him into more danger.

The imams spoke often about the Palestinians and about what the Jews, in league with the Americans, were doing to them. "Over time, I would learn that the Palestinian "issue" was a carrot." As the passion for fighting in Kamal grew, he was being prepped to become a trained fighter to go on secret dangerous missions against the Jews. He was a child at heart, but was reassured that he can do more than a trained older soldier with years of experience (Saleem, & Vincent, 131). Every time Kamal's real inner feeling woke him up and told him to be a child

again, some other forces would step into his life and build him up again to continue the fight. Words of encouragement and praise made him think twice to stay where he is and make it his life. Nothing convinced him more powerfully that he was doing the right thing than what happened next.

At an important meeting between the PLO and their smaller allies, Kamal Saleem had the chance to meet Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestinian movement. Arafat spoke of the Palestinian movement, the justice of the cause, and the deplorable conditions in which his people were forced to live. "It would be through soldiers like us," he said, "brave and committed fighters, that his people would be liberated and restored to the Palestinian homeland now occupied by the filthy Jews." Coming face to face with the leader, Saleem stated that he

looked into Arafat's face and saw that he was smiling. His thick glasses magnified his eyes so that they seemed huge, floating just below the lenses, I put my hand in his and he pulled me to my feet, turned me to face the crowded hangar, tucking me under his right arm. I could smell his sweat, the product of the warm spring day. "It is young men like Kamal who will be our great liberators!" he declared grandly. My head spun. Yasser Arafat knows my name! Then Arafat turned, put one hand on each of my shoulders and kissed my forehead, his breath tales of garlic and onion. The crowd screamed and clapped. Arafat released me and I, dazed and soaring with joy, sat back down, the boys around me slapping me on the back. If Yasser Arafat said I would be a great liberator, maybe I was not a coward after all. (Saleem & Vincent 122)

Now, Kamal was totally hooked. The leader of the PLO knew him personally and his words of wisdom to Kamal meant he was to stay for being recognized in front of everyone. He

started thinking about the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, their poor living conditions compared to the very sophisticated way of life the Christians of Lebanon lead.

Kamal grew up with some Christian friends. They played and shared laughter together at a young age, but he always saw the possibility of them growing with an education, traveling, and being able to live life at the fullest. They were encouraged by their parents to do the best. His sense of friendship with his Christian neighbors and friends had good intentions, but with a sense of jealousy. Their parents cared about their life accomplishments of becoming professionals, while Kamal was preached to hate and kill with no mention of schooling and loving your neighbor no matter who they are. The brainwashing he received from his parents, the imams, and his fellow fighters, did not leave any room to enjoy or even think about his life the same way his Christian friends did.

When children his age were going to school to plan their future, Kamal was too busy pleasing his "mentors" by killing innocent civilians in Lebanon and Israel. Kamal was now fearless and senseless, it did not matter how or who he killed. Killing children on a school bus was part of his mission, not thinking of what it would be like if someone killed him or his siblings in the same way.

Being angry at the Jews for taking their land can be justified, but teaming up with the Lebanese Muslims against the Lebanese Christians is truly unjustified. Instead of being grateful to the Lebanese for taking them in during what was supposed to be temporary settlement, the Palestinians bit the hand that fed them and they are still biting.

Not only did the Lebanese Muslims betray their country, they were betraying their fellow countrymen, just because they practiced a religion other than theirs. Reading Kamal's memoir is

not the only proof. Christian villages were entirely wiped out by Muslim terrorists in Lebanon year after year, and the dream of wiping the Christians out of Lebanon is alive and well today with the help of Iran and Syria supporting Hizballah.

Being such a serious worrier with grown up tactics, Kamal was slowly realizing that being a terrorist was not getting him anywhere. Where was he going with is life? What is he accomplishing? How many more innocent people will he be killing? His thoughts came racing and he felt that he needed to get away from it all and start fresh somewhere else.   Kamal thought that leaving the country would not immerse him as much killing and destruction. Maybe he could preach Islam in the west and change some Westerners' minds to follow his religion. His mission was far from over.

In the 1970s, a new kind of bad guy burst into view: the international terrorist. Wielding a machine gun, his face was sheathed in a black balaclava, meant both to conceal his identity and inspire fear. The radical Muslim began to show himself all over the world on a regular basis: Entebbe, Mogadishu, Germany. But in those days, no one thought radical Muslims would come to the United States. It happened while America slept.

I decided to go to America-but not to work for her, instead I was going to infiltrate, to poison, to destroy. Less than a year later, I moved to a major southern city for one reason only: it was smack in the middle of the Bible belt, the center of Christianity in the United States. If I was going to target America, I thought, I might as well aim at her heart. The city where I settled already harbored a significant group of young Muslim radicals, already hard at work in a apartment mosque. Several men concentrated on collecting information. Some specialized in "mapping". Where do the

Jews live? Put in on a map. Which city officials are Jews? Put them on a map. These brothers also mapped the Muslim community, which was much smaller than it is today. Another brother worked for the city and was able to get blueprints of key buildings. (Saleem & Vincent 238)

Despite the deep and immersed story of this young man involved in terrorism, two events happened in his life that would change his direction from one extreme to another. Kamal was in a serious car accident, he was picked up by an ambulance and taken to a hospital. Fearful of being found out and exposed, he forgot his pain. When the doctors that treated him found out that he has no family and he was just here visiting, one of the doctors offered him his house, as he needed a lengthy time for his recovery.   Kamal suspected that the doctor offered his home because he knew something. Kamal sick and confused accepted. As he entered the beautiful doctor's home, he was treated like a king, and the weeks slowly turned into months.

Every day he kept asking himself why would a Christian stranger, his wife and two children, take care of a perfect stranger? Especially when this stranger was a criminal and a hater of Christians? One day, it finally occurred to him, "why did my mother say that the Christians are bad people?" "I am a total stranger and they're treating me like a king, knowing that I am a Muslim" (Saleem & Vincent).

Day after day, his feelings about Christians and their love for God grew more and more, and he described the time he spent at the doctor's house recuperating as the best and most peaceful life he has ever had. As he got better, he left, thanking the family, and did a lot of thinking. With the excellent treatment he received from what he thought were infidels, he had a whole new mindset on what he has been learning all his life. He suddenly realized he was living

a huge lie based solely on hate. His new belief was confirmed when shortly after his recovery from his accident, he met an American woman named Victoria who was his boss at a franchise he was working for.

A few years later, they were married and had two children. Guilt and anger at himself has struck Kamal in the most forceful way on a daily basis. He questions how he fell into such a trap and how he took everyone's word to a point of drowning in an ocean of evil. To make up for all his wrong doings , killings, and destructions, he decided to come clean, so he and another ex-terrorist friend went to the media to tell their shameful stories and warn Americans about the termites like them in the "wall of America." Once news started to get out about Kamal and his friend, their safety became a living hell. Kamal now lives in hiding with his wife and children and are cooperating with law enforcement by working as an intelligence agent using his extensive experience in the field of terrorism.

To declare his honesty about his new feelings and love for America, he wrote *The Blood of Lambs,* with such intriguing details that inform the reader of the step by step stages of becoming a terrorist. He causes hate to build up in the reader's mind, and then the ending is like a white curtain that goes over a very dark cloud that has hovered over him and would not let go, even when he was doubtful because the pressure from his surroundings was much heavier than what a young boy his age could ever handle.

This is a great example of how terrorists become radicalized at such an early age. They are encouraged by their parents and training camps, and referred to as martyrs when they die. Sometimes, they die too early to have the opportunity to question, like Kamal did, what are they fighting for, and for whom?

Many of these young terrorists like Kamal go through life carrying a belief that was brought into their lives by others that encouraged them to live according to a continuous older ideology passed on to newer and more impressionable generations. These young men went without the opportunity to grow in an environment where they could enrich their lives with education and positive influences rather than accommodate the lies of people, family, and religious leaders who were supposed to be trustworthy but in the end did them a disservice by misguiding them and turning them into monsters.

By creating these monsters, hate is being created in a way that does not only target the so-called "enemy" but is blindly targeting an area or a group of people that will also include Muslim people themselves. Despite the fact that terrorism seems to have an agenda against non-Muslims, it is safe to say that when an attack takes place, it usually targets an area or a group of people with no regard for the religious or political affiliation of the victims. These acts usually affect non-Muslims as well as Muslims because of the magnitude of the plan and the amount of damage terrorists wish to create.

In my opinion, the best way to fight and end terrorism is not through the political negotiations and military involvement that has proven fruitless, but through investing in education rather than weapons to create an environment for young minds to flourish. If we provide an opportunity for these young men to see the world from a different point of view rather than just through the eyes of violent religio-political ideology, then we have won the war against terrorism. Until then, we can only hope that a political involvement will develop that has the future of these young men in mind.

Chapter IV: Terrorism and Lebanon

Based on my research, a precise definition for terrorism agreed to by all has been hard to reach. Looking back many years, there was always terrorism, but with time, the causes and the methods used have changed tremendously. Historically, one can find many terrorist organizations mostly from the Middle East and mostly Muslim, as a result of the creation of Israel. Since 1948, anger has been building up caused by the lack of concern from world leaders. As time progresses, the living conditions of the Palestinians get worse, and more and more generations are living as refugees in the worst conditions; as a result, the motives of so many young men have become aggressive where they are willing to give up their lives for the cause to gain Palestine back from Israel. To prove the fact that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is responsible for most of the terrorist attacks in the world, one needs only to look at the many terrorist organizations that were created as a result, such as: the PLO, Hama, Al Saika, Fatah and Al Qaida, just to name a few. All are Islamic in nature and all have a common goal to destroy Israel and the countries that support it. Because negotiations have proved unproductive over the years, more and more organizations were created with similar motives to show their support for the Palestinian cause.

Britain has made a promise to Israel that has proven to be detrimental and impossible to accomplish. Countless lives have been affected by wars since the occupation, and it seems like it will be impossible to reverse the decision.

Ever since the creation of Israel, it was obvious that the Palestinians and Jews were not going to live peacefully together. Britain realized that helping with the creation of a Jewish state was more of a problem than a solution, so from time to time, their guilt would reappear by asking

the Jews not to interfere in the remaining Palestinians lives, and when a policy called "the paper" was issued in 1939, Britain announced limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine and issued that Britain no longer planned that Palestine would become a Jewish state over the years. None of these conditions have proven fruitful or beneficial to both parties. The Palestinians are still refugees without a home and the Jews have continued to build on the Palestinians' land since the occupation.

In 1947, the United Nations called to end the British mandate and ordered division of Palestine which was voted on by the UN. The British then left as they did not want to supervise the division and on that Same day, May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister), proclaimed the existence of the state of Israel which instantly triggered the armies of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Trans Jordan to invade Israel which was the beginning of a long road of conflict in the region.

One of the Jews has truthfully written: "Until we succeed in securing the good will of the Arabs, a dark portentous shadow remains over the national home." The Jews may stand squarely on ground possessed by force, having still the authority of the United Nation's adoption of partition behind them, but with an unfriendly Arab world around them, their state cannot settle down to an orderly existence."

I think that all along, the Jewish government knew that it was wrong to do what they did, they hoped that Lebanon, Jordan and other countries will take the refugees and their dream of existence will become a reality, instead the refugees are still refugees and they brought their problems to the countries that they sought refuge at. In the meantime, the Jews were enjoying their residency at the expense of the Arabs that were homeless and living in tents, waiting for

handouts from other countries, wishfully thinking to return home soon. The Palestinians were not only angry at the Jews, but felt betrayed by the British.

Anger was building up by the Arab league, not only towards the Jewish people, but more so toward Britain. Instead of helping the situation, the British fueled the fire by giving away what was not theirs. The Balfour Declaration, which promised Jewish people to establish their homes on other people's land, was and still remains an unjust and illegal promise.

One can understand the anger and frustration of the Palestinian people, where it is bad enough that the Jews have no right to establish a state, Britain is making decisions on who gets what as if it was their land and always made their decisions in favor of the Jews. Living in uncertainty for over sixty years has created a lot of anger at Israel from every part of the world for being both unjust and inconsiderate, and not recognizing that they owe the Palestinians their land and they must give it back to make things better. Israel's independence meant the Palestinians' "Nakba", or catastrophe. At times, negotiations between the two countries through other super powers like the U.S. and Europe seemed hopeful, but never worked. In the 1990's, the Oslo Accord of the two sides recognizing each other, seemed hopeful, but was far from accomplished. It was impossible for Palestinians to agree to anything while Israel kept violating every accord by building more and more on their land. Everyone that was displaced had a story to tell about their experience with the Jewish occupation, one Palestinian had this to say:

In 1933, The British came and expelled the Arabs from Sidna Ali in order to settle Jewish immigrants on their lands. They offered compensation to the land owners. The compensation was one camel, twelve cans of oil, and 20,000 square meters of land with a house built on it in the Mogibla area near Jenin." I feel that if the Palestinians ever knew

they would be where they are now after all these years, they would have gladly taken the compensation, because those that did not became permanent refugees scattered between Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza strip, living with no identities, rights and the rejection from all the countries around them. They lack the simplest joys of life that every citizen is entitled to in any other country.

The Creation of the state of Israel angered all Palestinians and the Arab league, and serious fighting started with Muslim declaring jihad (holy war). Their intentions were made clear by Azzam Pasha, secretary general of the Arab league, when he declared: "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacre and the crusades. (Immell, 177)

Everything Pasha and other terrorist organizations have declared, has taken place and more, they have gone on an extermination spree, not just to kill the land takers, but anyone that even have the slightest possibility of being a supporter of Israel, such as the Christians of Lebanon.

In the early 1960's, the majority of the people in Lebanon were Christians, at around 60 percent, with around 40 percent being Muslims and other religions. Now, this percentage is reversed with 40 percent Christians and 60 percent Muslims.

The creation of the state of Israel and the refugees escaping to the Lebanese border changed the entire landscape of the country, from its population, the shakeup of its existence, and the immigration in search of stability and peace. Unlike many other groups that sought refuge in Lebanon in the past because of religious persecution, classic warfare, or to escape their empire's tyranny, the Palestinians were seeking nationalism. At first, Lebanon and many Arab countries

including the Palestinians thought that it was a temporary flight and that they would eventually go back. Also, many activists for Palestine's liberation were created and many were transformed into terrorist organizations such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

> In summer 1968, an increasing number of guerillas began to infiltrate from Syrian territory into the Arab region of the south. Clashes took place between the Lebanese army and the guerillas and between the latter and Israel. The first significant PLO attack on Israel from Lebanon occurred on 14 June 1968. On October 30, Israel carried out its first raid inside Lebanon targeting a Fateh encampment. The problem now was not only how to stop the guerilla infiltrations, but also how to deal with the mobilization of thousands of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon after 1967, every refugee was a potential guerilla. (El-Khazen, 137)

Lebanon was pressured by many Arab regimes such as Syria and Iraq as well as many Lebanese leaders such as Kamal Jumblatt. With this kind of support, the PLO military position was getting stronger and taking positions all over Lebanon which caused a continuous threat to Lebanon by having all these armed refugee camps and the ongoing possibility of creating a daily war zone on the Lebanese border. As the weapons took over the camps and the guerillas got support from Muslim Lebanese leaders, the position of the Palestinians looked bright, and as a result the terrorist networks grew rapidly. According to the Lebanese security sources, the number of guerillas based in the South in July 1969 was close to 4000 most of whom were with Sai'qa (1475), followed by Fateh (1300), the Arab Liberation Front (700), PFLP (200) and PLA (300). In February 1976, PLO forces numbered 30,650: 1,200 regular fighters, 19,450 members of the militia forces (El-Khazen, 147). By this time, the Palestinian refugees in the camps were totally armed and the south of Lebanon was transformed into a total and permanent war zone ready to

attack at any time. The refugees and the guerillas joined hands to fight for their cause that involved a more than just Israel.

President Suleiman Franjieh and the Lebanese army had no problem entering the camps, but controlling armed guerillas without the support of the Lebanese Muslim leaders was a huge challenge, and most Sunni leaders along with Jumblatt gave the Palestinians unconditional support. Days after Jumblatt's visit to Syria in January 1976, leftist forces and the PLO attacked my Maronite Christian town of Damour. It was an agreement between Syrians, PLO, Jumblatt and his supporters. While the Christians political establishment often articulated sympathy for the Palestinian plight, the Lebanese dynamic rendered the Palestinian presence in Lebanon a great threat to the perceived sectarian balance long established between the Muslims and the Christians.

The Massacre of Damour:

Damour is a town of about 35,000 residents, all of whom are Christian Maronites. It is located on the Mediterranean Sea where the beauty of its climate and peaceful living was the envy of many people. Damour was well known for the production of bananas, oranges, sugar canes and many other naturally grown fruits and vegetables that were transported to the whole country. It is worth mentioning that the first silk production factory in the country was built there, among the banana plantation where my dad used to go behind the building to smoke cigarettes with his friends without his parents finding out. The houses were very beautiful and many of them were built from the days of the Ottoman Empire with Turkish architecture with columns, arches and Turkish baths and gardens.

The residents all knew each other, hardly anyone moved, so the same house that was inhabited by the great grandfather was now inhabited by the grandson. It was safe, familiar and everyone kept an eye on their neighbor,   we all knew each other by first, last, and nickname. Life was simple and innocent; everyone had their own little garden that produced fresh fruits and vegetables all year round. Damour had over eight churches, two Catholic schools, one privately owned, and two public schools.   Neighborhoods attended masses at the same church and attended the same school. We all knew each other's homework assignments and helped one another when needed.   Just like anyone else in my neighborhood, my home was inherited by my father from his father. Not in a million year, this beautiful simple life will be one day taken away from us by force and leaving a trail of death, violence and destruction until the day of the massacre.

Why Damour?

No matter how I try to explain the causes of the massacre, I am sure the ones that planned it have a real motive and story behind it which will be on the mind of every Damourian as long as they live.

As we follow the ongoing events of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since 1948 and with no solution ever producing any results, the Palestinians' rage and anger in many parts of the world grew bigger. Having established themselves in Lebanon, a country with no sovereign political system and a growing Muslim population starving to take power from the Christians, the Palestinians felt a chance of settling in Lebanon and making it their new home, but this was not done with negotiations. Having armed Palestinian civilians and terrorists, the country

became constantly threatened by those uninvited guests to terrorize, kill and scare those that survived to leave the country and make room for the refugees.

Many Christian villages were attacked on the hands of the PLO with the help of our own Lebanese leaders. Those attacks were spreading like wild fire with no protection from any government officials.

Both being a Christian town and its location made Damour a great target to those terrorists. It is located in the middle between Beirut and the South where many Palestinian camps were located. As the transfer of weapons was increasing between the south and Beirut, the army stationed a checkpoint in Damour to search suspicious activities going through the town. This was an annoyance to the guerillas and they had a plan to wipe our town of the map to simplify their weapon transportation without any interference, and if succeeded, this would be another empty town that might be a possible new home for the refugees. All of this was on the back of the innocent residents that were experiencing the same tragedy that the Palestinians themselves experienced when they were expelled and killed by the Jews.

The horrible details of this attack were demonstrated through my own story of survival shared in the introduction and the intricate details that took place on that dreadful day. Today, Damour still stands as a ghost town that is a constant reminder of the massacre where the blood of its innocents is scattered on its soil. A few buildings have been built by private donations such as the church of Saint Elias where all the Damourians now go to celebrate special occasions and weekly masses. As far as the residents, a few have built a second home, but the majority were displaced and refuse to even go back and relive the tragedy, especially those that lost loved ones like my family did.

Chapter V: Conclusion

In my research I found that even though violent extremists represent a small minority of the Muslims, their threat is very real and destructive. Mr. Mamdani and other Muslim scholars continue stressing the difference between jihad and terrorism, jihad is a religious struggle and terrorism is a violent act against innocent people. Many fundamentalist extremists interpret terrorism as religious jihad to give it a religious legitimacy. Terrorism has always existed, but in case of the Middle East, especially Lebanon, hundreds of Islamic terrorist organizations were established after 1948 and they continue to grow at a fast pace in order to accomplish their political agenda. This has created a new phase of modern international terrorism. Also, the failure of Arab nationalism in the 1960's gave those opposed to secular nationalism an opportunity to join hands with extremists so they can fight Israel on one hand, as well as fighting against the westernization that preaches against their Islamic values.

Almost every religion has had its criticism where opinions vary from person to person; Muslim extremists take criticism to a different level where they are heard by the whole world by having huge demonstrations, retaliations, and killing actual people or believers in events such as:

- The Danish Cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad that created violent demonstrations condemning the people behind it and others that agreed with it.

-The burning of the Quran by the Florida pastor Terry Jones and other Quran burning incidents by American soldiers.

- Many videos about the Prophet that many Muslims felt were unjust and untrue where violent demonstrations took place because of it.

When Muslim extremists protest the Danish cartoon or the burning of the Koran, with their extreme and destructive actions, it seems minimally justifiable to the killing that takes place by the same people when they kill a whole town of young men, women and children just because of their religion. These destructive acts continue in the elimination of whole towns of innocent people because they are Christians, burning churches all over the Middle East, and the recent kidnapping of the Bishops in Syria and Egypt that no one know their whereabouts. Why is it that killing and destruction of people from other religions is acceptable in the minds of these terrorists, but burning a Koran or depicting the prophet Mohammed is not?   When was the last time we heard Christians or other religions walking the streets and threatening to use violence for similar faux pas by followers of the opposite religion? Most people usually voice their opposition through the media, civil discussion, or through legal actions, not through violence and threats.

Whether you are Muslim or not, the religio-political sphere is responsible for converting faith into ideology that results in the destruction of the true meaning of faith and the spread of hostility in the world. From research and my own experience, I find people who follow the religio-political agenda do not really have a good translation of their own faith or the faith of others, so they disconnect themselves and become followers of their ideology at any extent, even by refusing to socialize with those that do not agree with their way of thinking. As a result of this religio-political ideology, hate is created, as seen in Kamal Saleem's biography *The Blood of Lambs*. If you are preached hate at a young age and teach children to become warriors who fight infidels, these children and many others like them will most likely multiply and grow with time, hating people of other religions without knowing why.

Fear also plays a huge role in Islamic society whereby many are blinded by the protocols of religion. There is also a fear of the west controlling their younger generations and poisoning their minds with Western ways of life by deviating from true Islam and its morals and values as seen in the case of present day Egypt. President Morsi wants to rule his country and his people as if they were his puppets where an extreme Islamic practice will take over the country despite the great majority opposing it.

Growth of population in many Islamic countries, and the ability for a man to have multiple wives and many children , creates an uneducated and uninformed society that can be easily transformed to extreme thinkers because of the lack of opportunities to benefit from education. Belonging to a school is costly while joining a party or a organization gives you a sense of belonging, which later leads to serving this organization out of a loyalty to it.

Poverty and lack of education in many cases are responsible for producing extreme ideology, but the opposite has been proven that you do not have to be poor and illiterate to be an extremist. Whether rich or poor, the actions of Islamic extremists are defined by their cause or goals to achieve a political agenda.

In the case of the Middle East, the birth of Israel has been responsible for the creation of so many terrorists. The ideology of their sympathy to the cause has led many to believe that violence is justifiable as it is taking place in order to help someone get their land back, and God is fine with that no matter how brutal and violent the terror is.

The lack of concern for the Palestinians has created much anger and distrust by all Palestinians and their supporters all over the world. Terrorism was created to instill fear in the heart of the Jewish people to coerce them to give back the land they took in 1948. This has left

hundreds of thousands of people dead as a result of Israel's creation. The Jews will not accept the Palestinians and the Palestinians will not accept the Jews. It is pretty fascinating to watch how one country's problem becomes the problem of another neighboring country. Not only was Lebanon severely affected by the refugees' problems, many of the residents of Lebanon became refugees themselves because of the expansion of the Palestinian problem throughout the country. The Palestinian refugees are now a Lebanese problem that has changed the entire landscape of the country.

Terrorism can take place in any country by any religion; however, extreme ideology seems to have taken a front seat in many Muslim societies that is making moderate and secular Muslims opposed to this practice, as they themselves are being targeted for opposing extreme Islam.

To diminish terrorism, the entire world should work on a solution to make peace between the Israeli and Palestinians and give them their land back. In addition to this, all countries need to work together in order to monitor and paralyze the terrorist networks. Lastly, limit the population by limiting the number of births per family as in China, so parents can support their children and invest in their education. If we do not work on these elements as a civilized society, this pattern will continue and the terrorist network will keep on growing. To support my theory, Fluehr-Lobban, agrees that:

> If we truly seek to unite humanity and flow with the movement of history to gather humankind together and unite all people in one nation, then we need to devote all of our energy to returning religion to its original purpose - a means of interrelating and interconnecting and integrating human beings. This mission demands that we sever

politics entirely from religion and restore religion to the pedestal of pure understanding, respect for one's own faith and the faith of others. (Fluehr-Lobban, 72)

Since the majority of Muslims oppose to the actions of extremists, retaliation has silenced those opposing it through so many avenues such as the media or their personal beliefs. A great example of this, can be found in Fluehr-Lobban 's *Islamic Societies*.

Dr. Muhammad Said al-Ashmawy is an Egyptian jurist and former chief justice of the high court of Cairo who began writing against the growing politicization of Islam in 1979. Since 1979, Ashmawy's writings have stressed that the political trend in Islam is not the real Islam, but rather a political ideology similar to fascism, nazism, or other totalitarian doctrines. One of their leaders wrote in an Islamist newspaper, "Judge Ashmawy must be silenced", a coded signal for his elimination. Since the early 1980's, Ashmawy has been forced to live under the protection of the Egyptian government which has battled extremism and terrorism. Two armed guards survey his apartment." This is a true picture of what happens when any Muslim or non-Muslim that speaks the truth against these extremists.

There have been comments from Americans about how many Muslim communities do not stand up with Americans when terrorism takes place, such as during 9/11 and the latest bombing of the Boston Marathon. Fear of retaliation from extremists has been one of the biggest reasons why they do not, although many of them work in secrecy to avoid being hurt. These violent terrorist attacks are not only aimed towards non-Muslims. Politics often stands between two Muslim brothers from the same family, as among Sunnis and Shias that are both Muslims, such as in the case of Syria now. The same scenario is also taking place in Tripoli, Saidon, and

in Lebanon, where Sunnis and Shia's are fighting each other. Politics are the main cause, but both are fighting in the name of Islam.

This brings us to the conclusion that terrorism is not Islamic: it is an ideology that hides behind Islam to justify the cause. Some of the solutions I discussed earlier might diminish the strength of terrorism, but unless a serious global effort is made to fight it from every angle, the results will continue to be the same.

In a recent Lebanese Maronite Convention I attended in Tampa, Florida, flyers by the Lebanese Information Center based in Alexandria, Virginia summarized it best:

In recent years, the Arab spring has shaken the whole region as well as the world. The people of the Arab world have awoken and have decided to rid themselves of the dictatorships that have abused them and hindered their progress and freedom throughout their modern history. Decades of oppression, however, have created a very fertile ground of extremist ideologies to flourish and grow stronger roots in that region under the guise of religious fervor. These fanatics are no better than dictators themselves. They teach hatred, brand all who do not share their radical viewpoints, whether Christian, Muslim or others, as "infidels" and promote the spilling of blood as a religious duty. (WWW.LICUS.ORG)

While I totally agree with the above powerful statement, I am also convinced that terrorism might be Islamic in nature in my case; the most aggressive violent acts that we have been witnessing today are political Islam and not true Islam. This has been an enriching experience to learn that ideologies have no boundaries and they can take place against anyone, anywhere. It important to work together to fight those ideologies by

understanding the many layers of politics while not judging the religion of Islam and its followers as being responsible for all the violence conducted by political Islam around the world.

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APPENDIX

Wherever you look to find information about the Damour massacre, the priest of our town tells the horrible stories that he witnessed as he was burying the dead including my brother and sister. As one of the main witnesses, this is what he saw:

Ex From 'CEDARLANDS' and READ THE REST AT

http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/2587/damour.html

"".....On 9 January 1976, three days after Epiphany, the priest of Damour Father Mansour Labaky, was carrying out a Maronite custom of blessing the houses with holy water. As he stood in front of a house on the side of the town next to the Muslim village of Harat Na'ami, a bullet whistled past his ear and hit the house. Then he heard the rattle of machine-guns. He went inside the house, and soon learned that the town was surrounded. Later he found out by whom and how many — the forces of Sa'iqa, consisting of 16,000 Palestinians and Syrians, and units of the Mourabitoun and some fifteen other militias, reinforced by mercenaries from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and a contingent of Libyans.....

Father Labaky telephoned the Muslim sheikh of the district and asked him, as a fellow religious leader, what he could do to help the people of the town. 'I can do nothing,' he was told 'They want to harm you. It is the Palestinians. I cannot stop them.' While the shooting and some shelling went on all day, Father Labaky telephoned a long list of people, politicians of both the Left and the Right, asking for help. They all said with apologies and commiserations that they could do nothing. Then he telephoned Kamal Jumblatt, in whose parliamentary constituency Damour lay. 'Father,' Jumblatt said, 'I can do nothing for you, because it depends on Yasser Arafat.' He gave Arafat's phone number to the priest.

"...In all, 582 people were killed in the storming of Damour. Father Labaky went back with the Red Cross to bury them. Many of the bodies had been dismembered, so they had to count the heads to number the dead. Three of the men they found had had their genitals cut off and stuffed into their mouths.

The horror did not end there, the old Christian cemetery was also destroyed, coffins were dug up, the dead robbed, vaults opened, and bodies and skeletons thrown across the grave yard. Damour was then transformed into a stronghold of Fatah and the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). The ruined town became one of the main PLO centres for the promotion of international terrorism. The Church of St Elias was used as a repair garage for PLO vehicles and also as a range for shooting-practice with targets painted on the eastern wall of the nave.

The commander of the combined forces which descended on Damour on 23 January 1976 was Zuhayr Muhsin, chief of al-Sa'iqa, known since then throughout Christian Lebanon as 'the Butcher of Damour'. He was assassinated on 15 July 1979 at Cannes in the South of France..."""