WHAT IS THE TRUTH BEHIND ISIS?

AsSalaamulaikum

For many years now, the Muslim world has been at a crossroads. The voices of Justice are being drowned out by the sounds of gunfire. We are blinded to the beauty of Islam by images of death and destruction. All the while, the evil we see being carried out takes the guise of our religion. The justifications are drawn from words we hold most dear. We cannot stand idly by and allow violence and extremism to dictate the terms. Our Imams and Scholars have a responsibility to the youth – to educate, inform and guide them on the right path.

The likes of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Ash-Shabbab have, for too long, hijacked the right to inform. The content in this magazine will help tip the balance back in our favour. The menace of extremism and the lust for blood has shifted the focus away from true understanding and has glorified violence as the only means to salvation. The Muslim youth are being misled. Their innocence is being preyed upon. They are being forced to accept lies backed up by propaganda. The truth of extremism could not be further away from the truth of Islam.
Ḥaqīqāh has bought together senior Islamic Scholars from Britain to explain just that.

The Scholarly contributions you will see in this magazine focus specifically on educating the Muslim youth about the reality of extremist movements. The Scholars in this magazine have stood up and taken responsibility to present the correct, informed and educated interpretations of the Qur’an and Sunnah as the only legitimate way of counteracting evil, immoral and malevolent mindsets.

The struggle against extremism is one that requires fortitude and haste. It is critical that we mobilise resistance to extremism in a quick and active manner. The energy of youth needs to be utilised as best it can under the direction and guidance of positive religious leaders. The onus on us is to ensure we are resilient in our condemnations and forthright in our response. Imams and Scholars need to understand the troubles and anxieties facing a young, contemporary Muslim generation and must ensure they adapt to deal with their needs. Know this though; the facade of extremism is being removed. The realities of their waywardness are being exposed. With the will of Allah, goodness will triumph over evil.

JazakumAllahu Khairan, Shaukat Warraich
The following article outlines the rules that show how in Islam, using the Qur'an and the Prophet’s Sunnah, ISIS' declared Caliphate is illegitimate.

On the 29th of June 2014, the group known as ISIS released a press statement in which they declared to the world that a Caliph had been elected. He would be the leader of the Islamic World - from Morocco to Indonesia. All 1.6 billion Muslims were now religiously obliged to follow him.

Understand that a Caliphate is not a personal kingdom.
The words of Allah are clear:

"VERILY, ALLAH COMMANDS THAT YOU SHOULD RENDER BACK THE TRUSTS TO THOSE TO WHOM THEY ARE DUE; AND THAT WHEN YOU JUDGE BETWEEN MEN, YOU JUDGE WITH JUSTICE"  
—[Qur’an 4:58]

The statement from ISIS read: “With this declaration of khilâfah, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the khâlifah Ibrâhîm and support him”. But it is not clear why Muslims should pledge allegiance to a fringe terrorist organisation that has neither religious nor political legitimacy. Recently, you find them avoiding religious justifications for why they are an Islamic State or why al-Baghdadi is the Caliph. What more evidence do we need to see that this is not a group acting on a religious basis but for their own twisted gains. The Qur’an is explicit when it says: “THERE IS NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION...”  
—[Qur’an 2:256]

By interspersing the occasional out of context Qur’anic verse with hyperbolic arguments, they have managed to convince some Muslims, unfortunately, that they are in fact a “State”. ISIS is an empty banner. That banner should not be mistaken for an Islamic State.

There are legal grounds for an Islamic state and there are rules for who leads and how they lead.

There is no room for a ruler that flexes his muscles to extend his power as he pleases. If minorities are being mistreated and forced to coerce then there is a severe absence of justice and fairness. We do not need to go into the gruesome details of what this group has done but it is a clear indication that there is not an ounce of compassion, justice or fairness in them.

So let us be absolutely clear here: calling themselves a “state” does not make them a state. Calling himself a “Caliph” doesn’t make him one. Without the necessary justifications, as derived from the scripture, there is no obligation to follow such exclamations.

There is a great body of Islamic jurisprudence that has been around for over a thousand years and since the time of the Prophet (PBUH). It has allowed us Muslims to live by a code. There is no reason why we should suddenly stop consulting the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

THE HADITH CLEARLY STATES:

"WE DO NOT APPOINT TO THIS POSITION ONE WHO ASKS FOR IT NOR ANYONE WHO IS COVETOUS FOR THE SAME"  
—[Sahih Muslim]

A person cannot just become a Caliph of an Islamic state. There needs to be a consultation meeting with a number of candidates that are then subjected to an election. A ‘self-proclaimed’ ruler of Muslims does not equate to anything.

"AS FOR THE OATH OF THE COMMON PEOPLE WITHOUT DISCRETIONARY POWER TO ENACT OR DISSOLVE A PACT, IT IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE"  
—[Ibn Hajar Haytaami]
Dr Mohamed el-Sharkawy
Principal, Al-Azhar Academy

THE FITNA OF VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM

The desire to fight appears attractive. Unfortunately, the rise of extremist groups has romanticised the idea of violence and perverted the notion of Jihad. What we see in Syria and Iraq under the rule of groups such as ISIS is nothing more than a great fitna in this land. It is very important to know that there is no basis to abandon your homes and leave to join these groups for ‘Jihad’. Just by looking at the actions they take, the way they conduct themselves and in particular the grotesque nature of the violence they administer, you can see that all manner of rationalised, clear thought has left them.

An intellectual analysis of the Holy Scripture in the context of modern day extremism is enough to sufficiently disprove the justification for their actions. This insight shows the flaws in reasoning of individuals who act out and claim to be following the teachings of Islam. There is little trace of organised, reasoned thinking behind the actions of extremist groups as their sole aim lies in their commitment to cause disruption. VIOLENCE does not come through reasoned or liberalised thought. Rather, it comes after the mind has ceased to rationalise and sees only one way to persuade others of its opinions or methods – by FORCE.

The allures of heroism and the belief that you are fighting for a just cause and for the betterment of your people is always strong in the hearts and minds of the youth.
The most serious form of violence is complex violence. It is not linked to personal, social, or economic problems but is associated with extravagance and overstepping the limits, strictness and exaggerations of legal matters. We can know the features of extremism in religion through the following:

- Strict interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith including that which is opposed to the purpose of Islamic Law.
- Exaggeration in studying the meanings of Qur’an.
- The person who obligates himself with what was not dictated by God.
- The person who deprives himself on matters that were not prohibited by God on his people.
- Leaving the essential matters such as eating, drinking and sleeping.
- Extremism in the position of others either through excessive praising, or being overly disparaging.

God says in his Book, warning of exaggeration in the religion:

“O PEOPLE OF THE SCRIPTURE! DO NOT EXAGGERATE IN YOUR RELIGION NOR UTTER AUGHT CONCERNING ALLAH SAVE THE TRUTH...”
—[Qur’an 4:171]

A Hadith narrated by Ibn Mas’oud (God Bless him) says:

“EXAGGERATORS ARE DOOMED.”
—[The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said it 3 times]

There is no doubt that violence that comes as a result of exaggeration in religion is displeasing to Allah as it is considered a deviation from the moderate attitude chosen by God to this nation.

What we see by groups such as ISIS is exactly this. They are a group of individuals that have abandoned all notions of moderation and control. It has been replaced with bloodlust and the desire to cause harm to any and all that oppose them.
“VIOLENCE DOES NOT COME THROUGH REASONED OR LIBERALISED THOUGHT.”

“It comes after the mind has ceased to rationalise and sees only one way to persuade others of its opinions – by FORCE.”
They are individuals who study Islam from a superficial point of view and emerge with their own ideas and imaginary interpretations, which often diverge greatly from established Islamic principles.

We can see that many of the characteristics found in these young men and women are similar to those identified as the Khawarij (Extremist/Dissenters) by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

They have no grounding in Islamic sciences or jurisprudence and yet want to establish an 'Islamic state'/'Islamic System'. In the pursuit of their ill-intended aim, they are prepared to bulldoze the fundamental teachings of Islam.

**THESE KHAWARIJ HAD 5 CHARACTERISTICS:**

1) They will be young enthusiasts without much vision, strategy or experience. They will be full of anger and frustration:

*IN THE LAST DAYS (OF THE WORLD) THERE WILL APPEAR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH IDIOTIC THOUGHTS AND IDEAS.*

—[Shahi Bukhari 5057]
“YOU CANNOT DECEIVE YOUR CREATOR. HE ALONE KNOWS YOUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS AND DESIRES AND THE LEVEL OF IMAAN IN YOUR HEARTS.

SO BE AWARE OF THESE SIGNS. STAY VIGILANT AND DO NOT FALL INTO THEIR TRAP.”

AND INDEED WE HAVE CREATED MAN, AND WE KNOW WHATEVER THOUGHTS HIS INNER SELF DEVELOPS, AND WE ARE CLOSER TO HIM THAN (HIS) JUGULAR VEIN.

- [Qur'an 50:16]
2) They will be arrogant and self-righteous:

“... THE PEOPLE WILL BE AMAZED BY THEM AND THEY WILL BE SWOLLEN WITH PRIDE, AND THEY WILL GO OUT OF THE RELIGION (DISCARD ISLAM) AS AN ARROW GOES OUT THROUGH THE GAME.”
—[Musnad Ahmad].

3) They will misinterpret the Qur’an. The message of the Qur’an will not reach their heart and mind so that they can distinguish between right and wrong or to see the error of their ways:

“THEY WILL RECITE THE QUR’AN BUT IT WILL NOT GO ANY FURTHER THAN THEIR THROATS.”
—[Sahih Muslim 1066].

4) They will be eloquent in speech - they will impress people by delivering the teachings of Islam with eloquence. Sophisticated and powerful social media campaigns are drawing impressionable individuals to them:

“THERE WILL BE PEOPLE WHO WILL SPEAK WELL BUT THEIR ACTIONS WILL BE VILE.”
—[Sahih Abu Dawud].

5) They will be quick to pass out ‘Fatwas’ of disbelief (takfir) against Muslims and consider their blood as lawful:

“THEY WILL KILL THE MUSLIMS...”
—[Shahi Bukhari 7432].
HAQQAH

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE; HUMAN LIFE IS EXTREMELY SACRED IN ISLAM. ONE OF THE MOST GRIEVOUS SINS IS TO DESTROY LIFE AND TO KILL ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.

Adapted from 'Human Rights' by Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain Pirzada, Founder and Principal, Jamia Al-Karam.
RIGHTS TO BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE

It is the strict responsibility of the Muslim leader to arrange for food, clothing and shelter for all their citizens. These rights are fundamental to individuals living within a Muslim state, be they Muslim or not.

"THE SON OF ADAM HAS A RIGHT IN THREE: A HOME WHEREIN HE MAY RESIDE, CLOTHING WITH WHICH HE MAY CONCEAL HIS PRIVATE PARTS AND A MORSEL OF BREAD TO CONSUME"

—Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

RIGHTS TO JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

The existence of justice and fairness in any progressive society is elementary, because the lack of it leads to the exploitation of the people, by which the society becomes prone to deterioration, and that is why it has been emphasised with much importance in the Qur’an:

"OH YOU WHO BELIEVE! BE THOSE WHO STAND FIRM FOR ALLAH (UPON THE TRUTH), AS JUST WITNESSES, AND LET NOT THE ENMITY OF OTHERS INCITE YOU THAT YOU DO NO JUSTICE; DO JUSTICE, IT IS CLOSER TO PIETY"

—[Qur’an 5:8]

When one is wronged, they would generally exceed all boundaries in the passion for revenge. Even at such a time of provocation, Islam has ordained us to keep our emotions in control and answer the call of justice and that is for the reason that if one were to transgress the confines in seeking revenge, then they would themselves end up as a wrongdoer.

“HE WHO SEVERS TIES WITH YOU, YOU SHOULD JOIN TIES WITH HIM, AND HE WHO DEALS WRONGFULLY WITH YOU, YOU SHOULD TREAT HIM WELL, AND ALWAYS SPEAK THE TRUTH BE IT AGAINST YOUR OWN SELVES”

—Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

RIGHTS TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

There is no coercion in Islam, and religious freedom is respected. If, in Islam, it was permitted to force others into becoming Muslim, no-one would have remained a non-Muslim during the Rightly-Guided Caliphate. Islam binds its adherents to abstain from verbally abusing the deities of others and from adopting a libellous approach towards them. Allah says in the Qur’an:

“AND (O MUSLIMS) DO NOT ABUSE THOSE DEITIES WHOM THEY WORSHIP BESIDE ALLAH, AS THEY WILL ABUSE ALLAH, UNKNOWINGLY, EXCEEDING ALL LIMITS”

—[Qur’an 6:108]
WHOEVER KILLS A PERSON, NOT BEING FOR (THE RETALIATION OF) MURDER OR FOR (CAUSING) CORRUPTION IN THE LAND, IT WOULD BE AS THOUGH HE KILLED THE WHOLE OF MANKIND; AND WHOEVER SAVES IT, IT WOULD BE AS THOUGH HE SAVED THE WHOLE OF MANKIND.
The non-Muslims inhabiting the areas assenting to Muslim rule are at liberty to remain adherents of their own religion. Security is scribed by the Prophet (PBUH). An example of non-Muslims living under Islamic rule shows them to have had protection over their lands, lives, property, religious laws and holy buildings. Their religious leaders were even retained in their appointed posts.

SAY YOU (TO THE NON MUSLIMS), ‘THIS QUR’AN IS FROM YOUR LORD; WHOEVER WISHES, LET HIM BELIEVE, AND WHOEVER WISHES, LET HIM DISBELIEVE. —[Qur’an 18:29]

WELL-TREATMENT OF PRISONERS – OF – WAR:
Take heed of the example of the Prophet (PBUH) following the conquest of Makkah, where despite their disbelief and their history of oppression, he forgave his worst enemies.

Allah says:


It is a statement of the non-Muslim prisoners:

“THESE MUSLIMS SURVIVE MERELY ON DRY DATES, BUT THEY FEED BAKED BREAD TO US. WE FEEL EMBARRASSED AND WANT TO RETURN THE BREAD TO THEM BUT THEY REFUSE”
SHOW FORGIVENESS, ENJOIN WHAT IS GOOD AND TURN AWAY FROM IGNORANCE

—[Qur’an 7:199]