

The Cruel Myth of Western “De-radicalising” Discourse

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One current buzz word is de-radicalisation but what it is the talking heads simply don't have a clue as they are all nonbelievers insisting that they understand what it is to be Muslim in the West whilst addressing Muslim reality via worldviews and discourses that cannot understand Islam and in many cases don't want to understand Islam. Even worse is the insistence by these talking heads that they have and can frame "programs" that will prevent Muslims from becoming "radicalised". The very discourse that drives their public sales pitch reveal that they are not concerned with addressing the problem they say they are dealing with but to assuage the fears and paranoia of the western voting audience. We rub salve on your fears and paranoia, we access government grant money and play ourselves on the media whilst the threat evolves and mutates aided and abetted by the hustlers and their cruel three card game.

What is necessary is a conversation within Islam where Salafi Jihadi discourse is exposed to the scrutiny of Quranic/Islamic discourse where a study of the verbs of the Arabic of the Quran exposes Muslims to the structure of these verbs and the range of concepts that each verb commands and their derivatives. Each verb of the Quran is then a discursive building block which all together are welded together to constitute hegemonic Quranic/Islamic discourse by the strategic intent of Almighty Allah, the All Knowing (swt). Persons undertaking this journey who insist that Quranic discourse is hegemonic in Islam must then face the hard questions that arise. What follows is a small contribution of mine to this process.

Salafi Jihadi discourse insists that Jihad is primarily fighting the enemies of Islam and it's a special and specific condition of violence unique to Muslims hence a holy war fought by special Muslims: Mujahids. The discourse is then violence centred and driven but what is the reality of fighting and slaughter revealed by the verbs of the Quran? There are three root verbs in the Quran translated to fight: * h r b; *j h d and *q t l. * J H D: The Form 1/stem verb is JAHADA which is translated as: striving, endeavour, most earnest. The verbal noun derivative (jahd)/earnest is present 5 times in the Quran whilst the masculine noun (judd)/ability, power, endeavour is present once. JAHADA is the level three form of this verb and there is a divergence among noted translators of the Quran into

English as to the range of meanings this Form 3 verb commands. The majority of translators choose: to struggle, to strive but Ali includes “to fight for the faith”. Because of this the verbal noun of this verb would contain a range of meanings namely struggles, striving and fighting for the faith and the active participle of Jahada will be one who struggles, strives and fights for the faith. Given Ali’s translation one of the meanings attached to Jahada is Jihad in the Salafi Jihadi context. Jahada is present 15 times in the Quranic text, its imperfect action derivative (yujahidu) 5 times, its imperative form (jahid) 7 times, its verbal noun form (jihad) 4 times and its active participle (mujahid) 4 times. The questions that arise from this reality of usage in the Quran are: if the 7 times the imperative jahid and the verbal noun jihad 4 times all refer to the making of war by Muslims on non-Muslims? And why did Ali in his translation accept the consensus of meanings of Jahada (Form 1 verb) but inserted “to fight for the faith” and “fighting for the faith” in the meanings of Jahada (Form 3 verb) when the range of meanings in the Form 1 verb does not embrace violence and war?

The Quranic discourse of fighting in all its forms is revealed in the range of meanings embraced by the verb * Q T L. The Form 1 stem verb is QATALA which means: to kill, to slay; the perfect passive form is May he be slain; Perish he; May death seize him. The verbal noun is the act of killing, slaying. The perfect action occurs 19 times in the Quran, the imperfect action (yaqtulu) is present 34 times, the imperative (uqtul) is present 10 times, the perfect passive (qutila) 17 times, the imperfect passive (yuqtalu) 3 times, the verbal noun (qatl) 10 times and Qatla the masculine noun 1. The Form 2 verb of * Q T L is QATTALA which means to slaughter and the verbal noun means: the act of slaughtering. The imperfect action (yuqattilu) is present 2 times in the Quran, the perfect passive (quttila) 1 time, the imperfect passive (yuqattalu) 1 time and the verbal noun (taqtil) 1 time. The Form three of * Q T L is QATALA which means to fight, Allah assail them and the verbal noun means the act of fighting. The perfect action of the verb is found 11 times in the Quran, the imperfect action (yuqatilu) 26 times, the imperative (qatil) 14 times, the perfect passive 2 times, the imperfect passive (yuqatalu) 1 time and the verbal noun (qital) 13 times. The Form 8 of * Q T L is IQTATALA which means to fight one against the other. The perfect action is present 3 times in the Quran and the imperfect action (yaqatilu) 1 time. From the frequency of use in the Quran it’s apparent that * Q T L is the dominant verb used in the Quran

to express ideas of killing, fighting and slaughter not * J H D. All of the verses of the Quran cited by Salafi Jihadi discourse to justify Muslims killing and slaughtering unbelievers all contain the form verbs and their derivatives of * Q T L not * J H D specifically the imperative of QATALA Form 1 UQTUL examples of which are: 2:191, 4:91, 4:93 and 9:5. From QATALA the form 3 verb 2:191, 2:190 and yuqatilu (imperfect action) 9:36. The imperative qatil: 2:190, 2:193, 2:244, 9:29, 9:36 and 9:123 and the verbal noun QITAL 2:216. Not a single Quranic verse containing verb forms and their derivatives from *J H D are cited by Salafi Jihadi discourse. The lesson of the Quranic text is then that there is no special condition of holy war in Islam for all killing and slaughter is the same condition for there is no differentiation between Muslim killing of unbelievers, Muslim on Muslim killings and unbelievers on Muslims killings they are all the same human action regardless of the perpetrator. There is no special exemplary state of war in the Quran because the Quran refuses to create such a distinction and that is the lesson of the verbs to all of humanity especially Muslims. There is then no special exemplary condition of Muslim existence created by this supposed special condition of permanent war and this is seen in the verb forms of * J H D. The active participle MUJAHID of the Form 3 verb JAHADA is found in only 4 places of the Quranic text with 3 of these in one verse/ayat this is 4:95 and the other 47:31. The active participle “who struggles” then applies to all Muslims who engage in most earnest endeavour in the path prescribed by the All Knowing (swt) in the Quran. A Muslim so engaged is a Mujahid not because she/he is bearing arms and killing unbelievers and all Muslims so engaged are Mujahid. There is no special category of Muslims termed Mujahid simply because they are bearing arms to the exclusion of Muslims who are not but there is a distinction between Muslims who are committed to the agenda of the All Knowing to the point of selflessness (Mujahid) and those who are not and these Muslims are deemed the munafiqun/munafiq in the Quran. You can then be killing unbelievers and be of the Munafiq for killing, slaughter and mayhem in Islam doesn’t require moral steadfastness as do all humans and human belief systems. Since there is no concept of a specific and exemplary condition of holy war in the Quran the question arises of the Islamic practise of war as presented in the Quran. What is now apparent is that Quranic discourse falsifies the Salafi Jihadi discourse of permanent war driven by its concept of holy war and holy combatants.

The final presentation of this article is the interrogation of the Salafi Jihadi discourse of the Shahid under the headlight of the Quranic text. In the Quran the verb * SH H D consists of SHAHIDA a form 1 verb with the following meanings: to witness, to be present, to bear witness, to testify. The verbal nouns are: testimony, witnessing, that which is visible. The active participle is: a witness. The adverbs are: witnessing and standing before. The passive principles are: witnessing, memorable (day). The perfect action occurs 17 times in the text, the imperfect action (yash. hadu) 22 times, the imperative (ish.had) 5 times, the verbal noun (shahadah) 26 times, the active participle (shahid plural shuhud and shahidun) meaning witness/witnesses 21 times, the passive participle (mash.hud) 3 times. The form 1 verb SHAHIDA and its derivatives listed above have no meaning of martyr attached to them in the Quranic text. This will come with the masculine noun SHAHID plural SHUHADA which means: a witness, the attribute of Allah (swt): Witness, martyr, one with a present mind, with full intelligence. This masculine noun occurs 56 times in the Quranic text with 3 times translated as martyr namely 4:69, 4:72 and 57:19. The form 4 of the verb is ASH.HADA which means to make one testify, to call to witness. The perfect action occurs 2 times in the Quranic text, the imperfect action (yush. hidu) 2 times and the imperative (ash.hid) 3 times. The form 10 of the verb is ISTASH.HADA which means to call to witness and the imperative (istash.hid) occurs 2 times in the Quranic text.

From the text it is apparent that a martyr in Islam is a witness who dies as a result of standing before and presenting testimony, bearing witness as to the power and majesty of the All Knowing (swt) and the necessity of acceptance of Islam. In the Quran you simply don't die and your death bears witness rather you die because of your testimony and this death is part of your duty as witness as you died assured of your reward. The primary emphasis is not war and death but being alive to stand before to bear witness to give testimony. There is no cult of death and the martyr. The Muslim has then to grow into the existential and action state of being Mujahid and Shahid as both are conjoined, simultaneously existing and co-determinants there is then the state of Mujahid/Shahid as you cannot be one without the other. To grow into this state of Muslim existence you have to be alive and bearing witness and martyrdom whilst in this state is par for the course a Muslim must adopt. To die in battle against unbelievers cannot render you a Shahid for you are already dead as it is only by the Jihad of the Muslim you can

accomplish the state of Shahid and this state this existential condition of being Muslim never ends until death. The active participle SHAHID is the witness who bears witness and gives testimony both conditions in English require being alive and communicating. The masculine noun SHAHID is a now deceased witness who died in the course of bearing witness and giving testimony. A Muslim who is not in the condition of/the existential/action condition of being a witness cannot be a martyr.

The Salafi Jihadi discourse takes Quranic concepts and attempts to assign meanings to them that are not Quranic in order to justify a cult of death which is anathema to Quranic discourse. The issue is not attaining a special condition of existence post death as anyone of dubious moral fibre can kill and be killed but to struggle to discipline your complete self to submit to the will of the All Knowing (swt) on a sustainable basis thereby attaining the condition of Mujahid/Shahid where your death becomes irrelevant to you is the methodology of the Quran. To kill in the name of Islam in the Quran is not a special door to a bountiful reward where the act of killing and dying trumps the process of moral rehabilitation and transformation. The special reward exists only for those who have accepted and implemented the methodology as outlined in the Quran as there are no shortcuts and get out of the process free cards. This why the discourse of IS and other Salafi Jihadi groups is driven by moral relativism which is anathema to Quranic discourse and repulsive to Muslims grounded in Quranic discourse. To counter the impact of the Salafi Jihadi discourse on the worldview of Muslims of the west Salafi Jihadi discourse has to be deconstructed exposing every one of its discursive building blocks to interrogation by Quranic/Islamic discourse. A task that is in the hands of Muslims who have rejected Salafi Jihadi discourse because of its attempt to stifle Quranic discourse and replace it with a false Islamic discourse. With the pleasure of the All Knowing (swt) I will continue to make my contribution to this testimony.

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