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Analiza Etyczna Przemocy na tle Religijnym we Współczesnych Debatach o Terroryzmie

(Ethical Analysis of Religious Violence in the Contemporary Debates on Terrorism)

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List of Abbreviations

AIS - Islamic Salvation Army

ALN - National Liberation Army

AQIM - al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

ATR - African Traditional Religion

BCE - Before Common Era/ Before Christ's Era

BG - Bhagavad Gita

CE - Common Era/ Christ's Era

FIS - Islamic Salvation Front

GCSP - Geneva Centre for Security Policy

GEE - Generalized Estimating Equation

GEM - Global Extremisms Monitor

GIA - Armed Islamic Group

GNP - Gross National Product

GTI - Global Terrorism Index

IDF - Israel Defence Forces

IEDs - Improvised Explosive Devices

IRA – Irish Republican Army

IRGC - Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISWAP - Islamic State West African Province

JI - Jemaah Islamiyah

KKK - Ku Klux Klan

MILF - Moro Islamic Liberation Front

NPFL - National Patriotic Front of Liberia

NSAs - Non-State Actors

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organisation

Introduction

> My study is not dedicated to proving the facts of religious violence in the late antique world by cataloguing and enumerating riots, attacks on temples, and other incidents—previous scholarship has already done that. Rather, I have sought to explore what violence *meant* to those involved, both actors and victims, how it was experienced, represented, justified, or contested.[1]

Despite predictions of continuing secularization, the twenty-first century has witnessed a surge of religious extremism and violence in the name of God. It is obvious that 'since the attack on New York's Twin Towers and the Pentagon on 11th September 2001, religiously motivated violence has not diminished.'[2] It has rather increased with some sort of overwhelming radicalism that leaves one wondering if violence is part of religious expression or an exceptional accident. This is not new to religious traditions because, almost every known religion of the world has its own share of violent experiences either as victim or perpetrator. More so, even some acts of violence in history with secular or political ends have been given religious interpretations. One cannot deny the existence of various accounts and stories of wars and other acts of violence encoded in the canons of the religions of the book like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Some of the accounts of violence found in these sacred writings are considered 'Credal imperatives' from an absolute God, and so are not only justifiable but also sustainable. As such, the presence of hostilities in the world's religions has prompted various impressions and attitudes that more or less heighten scepticisms about religion as a phenomenon that fosters peace and unity.

The dark attraction between religion and violence is endemic to religious traditions.[3] And the nature of this connection has been a topic of heated debates especially as acts of violence performed in the name of religion have erupted onto the global stage. Many theorists of religion, sociology, political science, philosophy and phenomenology have committed trails of unending arguments to this end, yet one thing that remains common among them is that life is threatened, hurt or lost either in the name or on behalf of God. This has a lot of compelling consequences in today's world affairs, attitudes towards religion and life, as well as our impressions about morality and faith.

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[1] Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 2.
[2] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name, Confronting Religious Violence*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 2015), 5.
[3] Mark Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's Religious Traditions: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

This essay is therefore an attempt to carry out an ethical analysis of the religious violence in the light of contemporary debate(s) on terrorism, with the view of giving an ethical look to the whole issue of perpetuating terror for the sake of a perceived 'higher/ultimate good'. Taking cognisance of the sociological, political, historical, theological and phenomenological perspectives of this issue, this work will be largely ethical, in the sense that it will make use of the wealth of knowledge provided by the aforementioned perspectives in order to answer some basic moral questions bothering the minds of intellectuals and common men.

It is indisputable that murder and any form of terror is evil no matter the motivations, but in this issue, one cannot not ask some questions like; what are the moral implications of people killing in the name of the God of life, waging war in the name of the God of Peace, hating in the name of the God of love and practicing cruelty and hostility in the name of the God of compassion? (J. Sacks, 3) Although this will take us to the backgrounds and motives of hostilities in the various religious traditions, our task will remain to ask and attempt some response to the moral questions about the complexities of this issue.

It is true that various thoughtful analyses have been dedicated to this issue especially in our time; as some scholars have placed the blame on religion; some have exonerated religion from this immorality. Some call for a reformation of the idea of religion or a total abolition of religion as a public activity while some still hold that religion retains its moral integrity despite any violent deviations. Various theories have been employed to understand and properly demonstrate the moral complexities of this exhibition of hate, as we see in concepts like 'Religious extremism/fundamentalism', 'Banality of Evil', 'Moral Blindness', 'Altruistic Evil', 'Pathological Dualism' and the like. By exploring the various circumstances of the present experience of religious terror, we shall probe whether religion divides or unites us and why, as well as attempt with the help of numerous literatures an understanding of this moral dilemma of perpetuating violence in the name of a peaceful God. The key issues here concern various controversies and debates characterising the relationship between religion and violence. These debates have discussed a lot of complex questions such as: is there something religious about violence? Does the concept of religion say anything about violence? What accounts for the belief that religion is uniquely violent? Is there anything uniquely violent about religion? What are the moral implications of religion's relationship with violence?

It is true that today, the menace of religious terrorism is central to political and intellectual discussions. Its ugly effects in my home country Nigeria prompted me to write my master's thesis on "Ethical Case Study of Terrorism in Nigeria in the Light of Hannah Arendt's Notion of Banality of Evil" in order to join in the conversations about ideological violence which would impact the dynamics of contemporary events. My motivation to write my doctoral thesis on the "Ethical Analysis of the Religious Violence in the Contemporary Debate(s) on Terrorism", comes from the various experiences of religiously motivated crises in my country as well as the various questions raised in my master's thesis on the moral implications of prejudicial violence. With the help of materials from various disciplines, I will be able to contribute to the discussions on whether violence is an exception or a fundamental part of religion.

Purpose/objective:

Discussions about religion and terrorism are sensitive and controversial. My purpose in this work is to analyze the ethical implications of perpetuating violence in the name of God, giving considerations to the contemporary debates on terrorism. This would enable us take an ethical philosophical glance at the rationale and implications of "killing in the name of the God of life, hating in the name of the God of love, waging war in the name of the God of Peace, and practicing cruelty and hostility in the name of the God of compassion."[4] Although this will take us to the backgrounds and motives of the hostilities in the various religious traditions, my task will remain to raise questions and attempt some responses to some of the moral issues arising from the complexities of these debates.

Scope:

Taking cognisance of the inter-disciplinary aspects of this issue, this work will be largely ethical in the sense that it will focus on analysing the philosophical nuances of the complex issues involved. This will take us through a critical consideration of some ethical theories that attempt to address this moral challenge as well as lead us to the need to further advance the personalistic dimension of the ethical norms affected by this problem. By exploring the various circumstances of the present day experiences of religious terror, this thesis will probe whether religion divides or unites us and why, as well as attempt with the help of numerous literatures an understanding of this moral dilemma of perpetuating evil in the name of a good God.

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[4] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 3.

Significance:

This dissertation is not an attempt at raising a political discussion that has nothing much to so with philosophy. It rather seeks to reflect on the moral elements of religion and on the need to address the ethical dilemma that has made religion vulnerable and dreadful in our time. With a good review of the elements of violence in various religious traditions, I will try to seek a common ground that not only highlights the moral fundamentals of religion, but also suggest possible ways of confronting the challenges of contemporary terrorism as it affects religious beliefs. Without claiming superiority of opinion, I accept liability for every limitations in this essay as I believe that with the intellectual guidance of Rev. dr. hab. Alfred Marek Wierzbicki (Prof. KUL), I will be able to do justice to this essay.

This essay has been grouped in three parts with five chapters to reflect the major themes of the debates. Part one titled *Religious Violence: a Problem of Meaning,* discusses the challenges of defining and describing what religious violence is. It presents the first two chapters of the work with Chapter one focused on the task of understanding how complex the concept of religious violence is by analyzing the difficulties of attempting a working definition and taking a historical look at the experiences of violence among various religious traditions. Chapter two highlights the issues arising from the debates on whether religion is inherently violent or not. It identifies various forms of religious violence to show that violence in religion may be cultic or combative and can be seen encoded in the hard texts of the sacred books of most religious traditions that provide solid basis and motivations for violence. The part two titled: *Religion and Contemporary Terrorism* which comprises chapters three and four, offers an analysis of how religious extremism accounts for most cases of contemporary terrorism. Chapter three discusses religion's role in contemporary terrorism through a critical analysis of the categories of terrorism, while drawing insights from Nigeria's experiences of terrorism as a good case study of identifying religious elements of contemporary terrorism. Chapter four makes a case for the various justifications for religious violence, war and terrorism. By weaving together the arguments about the value justifications that give rise to religious terrorism into a coherent conversation, this chapter attempts to identify the most notorious versions of religious terrorists with the view of exposing their devastating effects and examining the numerous counterterrorism measures that could avert these challenges. The third and final part of the essay is dedicated to the ethical analysis of the whole issue. It presents the last chapter (five) as more of an analytic consideration of the moral implications and provocations of religious terrorism. This chapter

highlights the opinions of various theorists in order to make it clear that the whole phenomenon of religious violence is better understood when we consider it an ethical problem. It develops the moral implications of this religious predicament through an analysis of Hannah Arendt's notion of "banality of evil", Dietrich von Hildebrand's insights on "value blindness", Zigmunt Bauman's concept of "moral blindness", and Jonathan Sacks' idea of "pathological dualism", each in their own way emphasizing that monstrous violence can be perpetrated by frighteningly normal people. These moral implications point to the phenomenon of "heartless otherization" which reveals the centrality of "person" in the entire debates and the need to recognize the danger of neglecting the personalistic norm in interpersonal relationships. This shows that violence begins with one's very conceptualization of the "other" either in the context of the "mimetic rivalry" of "Us vs them" or in line with the axiomoral understanding of "One-an[d]-Other". By identifying the golden rule as a point of moral convergence for religious non-violence, this chapter calls for the rejuvenation of the personalist morality in religious beliefs and practices which would help provide viable antidotes to the conceptual and practical challenges of violence in religion.

PART ONE: Religious Violence: a Problem of Meaning

"Is violence a rare exception in religious traditions or is it one of the Rules?"[5]

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[5] Juergensmeyer, *Violence and the Worlds Religious*, 2.

Chapter I: Towards an Understanding of the Reality of Religious Violence

1.1   The Meaning of Religious Violence

The idea that religion has a tendency to promote violence has been a subject of debate over the years. This is because, religion is commonly looked upon as that which deals with the divine, spiritual, holy, peaceful and loving and so should have nothing to do with the evil of violence. But experience reveals a good number of instances of religiously motivated violence which prompts us to ask whether the term religious violence is a way of demonstrating that religion is intrinsically violent or that an act of violence is religious. Delving into the contentious religion and violence arguments is a difficult task giving that the discussions deal with two very broad phenomena. Religion and violence are two complex concepts that have remained problematic to be defined. As a matter of fact, there is no universally acceptable definition of religion just as there is no scholarly consensus over what violence is. So when we speak of religious violence we attempt to discuss these two complex issues together and this makes it more problematic. Little wonder scholars like Mark Juergensmeyer try to avoid using the phrase "religious violence" and would rather prefer to discuss the issues separately as "religion and violence" when analysing the enormous impact of the relationship of both terms in the society. Some of these scholars[6] consider the phrase "religion and violence" to be "jarring," and so see the combination as uncomfortable and disturbing. The definition of religious violence is always one of the first problems we encounter whenever we discuss the relationship between religion and violence.

The fact that the history of the world's religions over the years has been littered with various forms of violent conflicts gives strength to an understanding of religious violence. For when we speak of religious violence, we refer to situations when religion is a subject or object of violent behaviours. It is specifically violence that is motivated by religious precepts, texts, or doctrines or in reaction to religious beliefs. This may include violence carried out for the sake of or against religious institutions, people, objects, or events which is motivated to some degree by some religious aspects of the target or by the precepts of the attacker. This act of violence is not restricted to acts committed by religious groups, it also includes acts committed against religious groups by non-religious platforms say, secular groups. It follows then that whenever religion is at the centre of violent actions either as the motivator, perpetrator or victim, one would likely speak of religious violence. "Religious violence can

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[6] Theorists like, Ralph Tanner, Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson try to avoid a combination of the two terms Religion and Violence.

therefore be seen as a sub-category of ideological violence. It can be firstly regarded as violence sponsored or performed by individuals or groups who self-define and are identified by those around them as religious. Secondly, these actors account for their violence in a religious language, invoking religious symbols and referencing religious norms and values."[7]

History has revealed how much religious people perpetuate and justify acts of violence in the service of their beliefs. This is evident in the various experiences of violence that in one way or the other bore the seal of religion in the past like the Persecutions of the 1st and 2nd century AD, the Jihads of the 7th centuries, the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as in recent conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, the Indo-Pakistani war, the Northern Ireland conflicts and the scourge of terrorism that profess religion in the wake of the new millennium. Some undignifying and harmful practices like; the killing of heretics, forced castration, amputation of thieves, bombing of abortionists, human and animal sacrifices have been carried out in observance of some harsh religious codes. Hence, "from the West Bank to Northern Ireland to Gujarat, India, to Badr City, Iraq, to abortion clinics in America, violence is readily couched in religious terms."[8]

The destructive connotations of religion as a dangerous phenomenon became so widespread since the beginning of the twenty-first century, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the New York twin towers and the Pentagon, Washington. This marked the dawn of a new era referred to as the 'age of terror' with serious religious underpinnings. It is rightly so because in this new era, the threat of terrorism "has assumed an unprecedented potential for inflicting violence on a mass scale" with the aid of advanced technology and also by means of non-conventional assaults that require just the influence of a persuasive ideology—which is usually religious—to happen. Charlene Burns in his *More Moral than God* acknowledged that "violence in the name of religious ideologies is nothing new, but its potential destructiveness has grown exponentially as technologies of warfare are made more efficient. Hundreds of books on the subject of religion and violence have been published in

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[7] Gideon Aran & Ron E. Hassner "Religious Violence in Judaism: Past and Present, Terrorism and Political Violence", 25:3, (2013) 357, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2012.667738

[8] John Teehan, *In the Name of God: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Ethics and Violence* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 145. Reports abound about anti-abortion extremists in United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand carrying out acts of violence against providers of abortion. These radicals involve in vandalism, arson, and bombings of abortion clinics and killing of clinic staff all in the name of religious pro-life doctrine. Such anti-abortion terrorists like Eric Rudolf (1996-1998) and Scot Roeder (2009) claim they were motivated by their faith to commit violence as punishment against abortionists. However linking this type of single-issue terrorism to religion remains part of the debate we shall consider in this work.

recent decades, with a nearly exponential increase in activity since 9/11."[9] Consequently, terrorism has become a common subject of ceaseless debate which complicates the problem of defining religious violence the more especially as world leaders declared "war on terror" without clearly associating the ideology to any religion or system. It is clear that this whole 'new era of terrorism' comes with its attendant complexities given that experts have often struggled to find a proper label for the enemy – be it Islamic extremists, militant Jihadists, or Islamo-fascists. We cannot declare a war without identifying the enemy.

This reluctance to give a comprehensive name to the enemy is not simply an outcome of the difficulty the elites have in making sense of the threat they face. It is also motivated by a sense of anxiety about appearing to explicitly convey the message that identifies the enemy too closely with Islam.[10] Consequently, Western officials have resorted to political correctness in their opinions on the ideology this war is targeting in order not to call it a war against Islam. "Indeed they continually heap praise on Islam and contend that terrorism violates the fundamental tenets of the Koran. 'While the War on Terror is a battle of ideas, it is sometimes claimed that terrorists distort or exploit religion. So there is a lot of ambiguity in all this conflict."[11] You can see that the advent of the new terrorism, apart from amplifying the popularity of discussions on religion and violence further reveals the overwhelming complexity that characterises the arguments. For whenever we speak of the threats of religious violence, it readily begs the question whether religion is dangerous or not and also opens up myriads of contemporary debates on religion, violence and terrorism. In line with this, Charles Kimball a professor of comparative religion, in his book *When Religion Becomes Evil* has this to say;

> Contemporary debates about globalism versus tribalism or the clash of civilizations raise important questions about the future of human civilization. Religiously based conflict figures prominently into such debates. Clearly, the status quo is untenable in the long run, if not the short term. All of this begs the question, "Is religion the problem?[12]

The answer to this question has become the task of various experts in religious studies, security and strategic studies, political scientists, historians, sociologists, psychologists and even the man on the street. Each response to this question reveals a larger picture of the expert's views and attitude towards religion. Prominent anti-religion scholars

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[9] Charlene P. E. Burns, *More Moral Than God: Taking Responsibility for Religious Violence* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2008), ix.
[10] Frank Furedi, *Invitation to Terror,* xi.
[11] Frank Furedi, xxxiv.
[12] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 26.

like Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Don Cupitt, and Christopher Hitchens, are vociferous in their emphasis that religion is naturally dangerous and so deserves to be eliminated whereas others like Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Julia Neuberger, Karen Armstrong, Ann Widdecombe, Charles Kimbal and Jonathan Sacks would arguably stand in defence of religion against such indictments of violence. But one intriguing thing common in this debate is that some of these advocates of religion argue that although religion is not inherently dangerous, it can still be dangerous in a way. It is Charles Selengut who stressed that "no one would deny the obvious nature of the various forms of violence perpetuated in the name of religion which has made religious violence one of the most pressing and dangerous issues in today's world affairs."[13] It follows that even the use of the word religious violence or an attempt to describe an act of violence as religious presupposes that religion is a dangerous phenomenon. This has made Charles Kimbal to say that "the word religion also conjures up images of destructive or even cruel behaviour. Assumptions about religion now include violent actions rooted in intolerance or abuse of power."[14] We shall come back to this debate in detail later, but to acknowledge the fact that religion can serve as a means to perpetuate violence affirms in a way that the concept of religious violence is common to everyone's knowledge but the definition remains complex with enormous implications.

It is true that the advent of the new terrorism heightened the discussions on religions violence yet the reluctance with which political leaders try to shield religion from these discussions on terrorism complicates the debate. It is such reluctance that prompted Andrew Sullivan, in his post 9/11 article "This is a Religious War" published in *The New York Times Magazine*, to write that "Perhaps the most admirable part of the response to the conflict that began on Sept. 11 has been a general reluctance to call it a religious war. Officials and commentators have rightly stressed… that the murderers are not representative of Islam." But "the only problem with this otherwise laudable effort is that it doesn't hold up under inspection. The religious dimension of this conflict is central to its meaning. The words of Osama bin Laden are saturated with religious argument and theological language…. The terrorists' strain of Islam is clearly not shared by most Muslims…. But it surely represents a part of Islam – a radical fundamentalist part – that simply cannot be ignored or denied. In that sense," Sullivan concluded, "this surely is a religious war."[15] This view—which is not uncommon—represents a section of the debate that is guilty of what Charlene Burns calls

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[13] Charles Selengut, *Sacred Fury, Understanding Religious Violence* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2003) 3.
[14] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2008), 16.
[15] Andrew Sullivan, "This is a Religious War" in *The New York Times Magazine*, October 7, 2001,accessed October 27, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/07/magazine/this-is-a-religious-war.html

"reification of religion" which will be discussed latter in this work. But the point of emphasis here is that Sullivan joins the crew that affirms the intelligibility of the concept of religious violence.

Scholars have demonstrated diverse opinions on the complex impressions of attempting a definition of religious violence. Such impressions make one to inquire whether "religious violence" implies acts of violence that is religious or acts of violence motivated, committed or supported in the name of religion. Some describe religious violence as a pervasion of religion, meaning that religious violence is like an abuse, a deformation and a deviation of what religion is or ought to be. For them, those who engage in religious violence do violate religious precepts and principles. The concept of religious violence therefore evokes multiple impressions which can be divided into two major tracts. The first is the idea of religious violence that points to some religious or religiously sanctioned actions and practices like rites, rituals or customs that are violent in nature. The second is the idea that sees religion as a tool or means, whereby religion becomes a motivating factor or a justifying element for violent activities. Such activities may be carried out in defence or in promotion of religion. It can also be used as a tool to motivate or justify perpetrators in their political or economic struggles in order to make them never give up but fight to the finish. In this manner, religion becomes an ideological phenomenon that fuels an unprecedented violence which has nothing to do directly with religion. One then wonders what makes religion such a violent-prone instrument and whether it is this element that breeds the concept of religious violence.

It is true that today, talks about religion and violence have become a great deal, and apparently a great deal more than we used to know. Talking about a topic does not necessarily entail having clear and easily comprehensible views on it. But since September 11, 2001, historians, sociologists, political scientists, religious studies professors, security experts and others exploring the peculiarly violence-prone nature of religion have committed a lot of volumes to this issue. Most of these scholars explore the ideological uses of the construction of the term "religion". "On the one hand, we have a group of scholars who are convinced that religion as such has an inherent tendency to promote violence. On the other hand, we have a group of scholars who question whether there is any "religion as such,"

except as a constructed ideological category whose changing history must be carefully scrutinized."[16]

Consequently, these scholars have analysed the issues concerning religion and violence from the backdrop of their disciplines, expertise and experiences. "Historians document ancient and modern incidents of 'dying for faith'. Scholars of religion tell us that various religious traditions have accommodated theological and ethical justifications for sacrificing individual lives in the name of faith. Anthropologists describe incidents whereby violence against the self and others can be part of the religious and ritualistic aspects of cultures. Sociologists investigate dynamics of social interactions that may result in acts of individual or group suicide or homicide. Political scientists analyse such violence in the context of political conflicts, national interests, and ideological commitments. Psychologists delve into the depths of the human psyche to discover personal motivations and 'pathologies' that may push the individual to overcome the basic instinct of preserving human life. Experts on terrorism have also appeared, who theorize the phenomenon with the hope of identifying its underlying causes and possible prevention."[17] These perspectives represent the various stands and theories that have enriched the entire debates surrounding the conceptualisation of religious violence to the point that discussion on this complex topic reveals the standpoint of the analyst who discusses it.

Be that as it may, the conceptualization of religious violence can be said to be not so simplistic but not impossible after all. This is because, the experiences of certain acts of violence that have links to religion, make it possible for someone to speak of religious violence. Such acts whether affiliated to religion in the guise of rituals or in the form of motivations, give reasons to critics who condemn religion as a source of more evil than good. Just as Jonathan Sacks acknowledges in his *Not in God's Name*, "none of the great religions can say in unflinching self-knowledge, 'our hands never shed innocent blood.'"[18] And so it has become common but arguable to say that "religious ideologies and commitments are indisputably central factors in the escalation of violence and evil around the world."[19] No doubt thanks to violence, secularists, atheists, and humanists agitate for the abolition of

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[16] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and The Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 4.
[17] Madawi Al-Rasheed and Marat Shterin eds., *Dying for Faith: Religiously Motivated Violence in the Contemporary World* (New York: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009), xviii.
[18] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 20-21.
[19] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 4.

religion or rather its relegation to the private sphere. For some like Christopher Hitchens, "Religion Kills", "it poisons everything."[20]

Faith and religion are seldom associated with danger or violence. They are often used to promote the moral character and ethical standards that involve knowing God and doing the good. Of course religious people are considered to be people of strong character and high moral principles who focus on realising a better world through appropriate loyalty to a Supreme Benevolent Being. As one of the main sources of morality, religious codes consist of dos and don'ts that guide the moral life. Consequently, in the words of Jessica Stern, "it seemed to me, in short, that faith made people better—more generous, more capable of love."[21] People of faith seem to be more associated with good and peaceful character, and so are less likely to resort to violence. Thus it is so intriguing and morally challenging to speak of violence in matters of faith. But that is the reality even from the historical accounts of religious traditions. "For contemporaries, religious conflicts were first and foremost about religion, and attempts to downplay this fact smack of "false consciousness," betraying an assumption that social and economic issues are somehow more "real" than religious concerns."[22] That is why any attempt to define religious violence remains debatable and so evokes moral conversations.

[This] dark attraction between religion and violence is endemic to religious traditions. It pervades their images and practices, from sacred swords to mythic conquests, from acts of sacrifice to holy wars.[23] Hence, when religion is associated with violence, it is as a result of a long term experience of violence in religion which in this century has manifested with unprecedented magnitude. This is why any violence committed for religious reasons or in the name of religion could be referred to as religious violence. Some of these acts include violence justified in literary and theological foundation of faith traditions, ritual practices, social acts of vengeance and warfare that bears the mark of religion in the form of motivation or justification over the years. So when people speak of religious violence, they do so from history and experience of violence in holy places; experiences that reveal how "acts of destruction in the name of God or the gods of religion have been rooted in historical and literary contexts from early times to the present."[24] Hence it is trite to acknowledge that "too

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[20] Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 22.
[21] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the name of God, Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2003), 18.
[22] Michael Gaddis, *There is no Crime*, 11.
[23] Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's Religious Traditions,* 1.
[24] Juergensmeyer et al, 1.

often in the history of religion, people have killed in the name of God of life, waged war in the name of the God of peace, hated in the name of the God of love and practiced cruelty in the name of the God of compassion."[25] It is this study of how men commit or suffer violence in the name of religion that we refer to as religious violence for the purposes of this work.

From every indication, it is obvious that as difficult an attempt to a definition the term might be, religious violence is an experienced reality whether understood or misconstrued. It is a reality easier known from experience than from academic analysis. This is because; acts of violence are evidently seen in many religious expressions and practices. These acts may be seen on one hand in the form of rites and rituals which are essential to a religion or on the other hand in the form or destructive reactions, bloody attacks and even full blown wars with some subtle support from religious authorities. This enduring relationship of religion and violence has given rise to the much debated phrase religious violence.

This study of religious violence has become more relevant and imperative in this century because over the past few decades we have witnessed tens of thousands of young people from similar backgrounds join the ranks of jihadists and other religiously motivated courses that justify the use of violence in order to achieve their sectarian goals. The end of communism opened up a new wave of ideologically motivated conflicts which rather than remaining economic became veiled in religiosity with serious totalitarian tendencies. "Although communism was eventually vanquished a new force has risen in its place."[26] Of course, the new threat of terrorism resembles the ideology of communism in its pursuit for totalitarian aims. And the fact that all major world faiths have at times sanctioned the use of violence to protect or to promote their own sectarian interests allows religious terrorists today to claim moral justification for their actions. We are in troubling times when issues of violence are variously linked to profession of faith making faith-inspired terrorists find in their religious traditions, role models that give legitimacy to their use of violence. Although most religious authorities dissociate themselves from and denounce such groups as extremists who misrepresent the authentic faith, their claims are not strong enough to change the impressions that associate these violent activities to religious affiliations. Juergensmeyer sums it up in these words;

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[25] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 3.
[26] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2006), ix.

> Contemporary acts of violence related to religion are profuse. Since the end of the cold war, violence in the name of religion has erupted on nearly every continent, and many of its perpetrators have claimed divine justification for their actions. Although no longer novel, such violence and the adulation of its prophets continue to confound scholars, journalists, policy-makers, and members of the general public. Some of them have argued that these forms of violence are not really religious – they are symptomatic of something else and thus constitute an anomaly, a perversion of foundational religious teachings. Yet it is precisely the foundational religious teachings that may of its perpetrators claim sanctify violence. Others cite bloody legends of martyrs and heroes and argue that religions, or some of them, are violent at the core, their leaders masterminds of criminal behaviour. Yet there …are more nuanced interpretations of the presence of violence in so many different traditions.[27]

Hence it is clear that as some experts reject the concept of religious violence and rather prefer to say 'violence in religion,' those that agree with the concept have no scholarly consensus as to what it means. Religion can become an instrument for violence but believers would readily stand to denounce such manipulations as contrary to the teachings of their belief. They cannot accept that the faith which they profess in order to attain peace of soul and eternal life is capable of hurting anyone.

Violence in religious terms is not restricted to observable physical injury. It also includes the various forms of nonphysical, psychic violence and social violence. Selengut echoed Mary Jackman's distinction to show that such injury may be corporal, written or verbal. "Religious violence therefore includes activity leading to (1) physical injury or death, (2) self-mortification and religious suicide, (3) psychological injury, and (4) symbolic violence causing the desecration or profanation of sacred sites and holy places."[28] These forms of violence are to be taken into consideration in this work, but physical injury remains the most recurrent.

Moreover, dying for faith may come in various ways. First, it "involves annihilating the self for a religious cause. This act is a result of a personal or group decision, the consequences of which involve only the actors, such as the mass suicide of the Peoples Temple in the jungles of Guyana in 1978. Second, annihilating both the self and the enemy of the faith. This act leads to the death of the actor and many others. Thus, Jewish Zealots and Sicarii adopted a strategy of violent attacks to provoke massive uprising against the Roman occupation. It has been argued that in this sense, al-Qaeda's acts of violence committed in

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[27] Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's*, 2.
[28] Selengut, *Sacred Fury*, 9-10

different parts of the world can be seen as an expression of such old strategies. Third, annihilating others for one's faith without going as far as dying with the victim. This act is usually part of warfare that is intended to kill the enemy, and may or may not lead to the death of the perpetrator together with his victim. The Crusades is one example."[29] The random shootings, stabbings and running over of people with vehicles which of recent is credited to Islamic State are contemporary versions of this type of killing in the name of religion.

Religious violence has become a worrisome issue in this century. This is because one cannot easily reconcile how such an ideological force of division and hate thrives in an age of globalization when technological advancements of modernism have necessitated pluralism and interconnectivity among hitherto divided people. Rather than being a binding force of inclusion and tolerance, these agents of violence and terror have used these advancements to propagate their divisive and hateful activities. Are we witnessing a new chapter of revolution and counter revolution just as in the time of Reformation. Jonathan Sacks must be right in his observation that "what printing was to the Reformation, the internet is to radical political Islam, turning it into a global force capable of inciting terror and winning recruits throughout the world. The extremists have understood that in many ways religion was made for the twenty-first century. It is a more global force than the nation states. Religious radicals use the new electronic media with greater sophistication than their secular counterparts. And they have developed organisational structures to fit our time."[30] This shows that violence always finds a way to infiltrate our religious organisations and whenever it does, the effects present religion in bad light. But we cannot understand the reasons for this unless we probe into the historical realities of religious traditions and their involvement in violent experiences. Hence, to bring some clarity to the concept of religious violence, a look at the historical account of religiously motivated violence is very expedient.

1.2   Violence and the History of Some Religious Traditions
> Because we 'know' what the Historical record has to reveal, we never feel a need to scrutinize it. One can continue to ignore the past, but there surely will be a price to pay.[31]

The history of religion is replete with stories of violent acts which were carried out in the name of a worshiping community or against people of a particular faith tradition. These

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[29] Al-Rasheed and Shterin eds., *Dying for Faith*, xviii-xix.
[30] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 17.
[31] David Rapoport C. and Alexander, Yonah, Eds., *The Morality of terrorism, Religious and Secular* (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1982), xii.

violent activities are often associated with objectives that are not intrinsically religious; however some of these harmful actions may be seen to be justified by some religious traditions. In this work we shall consider some elements of violent experiences in the history of known religious traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, African Traditional religion. The analysis of these faith traditions would enable us expose these violent experiences in order to analyse their motivations.

No religion can comfortably plead innocence of involvement in violent practices. "None of the great religions can say in unflinching self-knowledge, 'Our hands never shed innocent blood.'"[32] Violence has been part of the history of religious traditions. Stories of violence have formed part of their no too pleasant biographies and to some extent are seen encoded in some of the texts they consider sacred to guide their lives. Although most religious people would readily deny that their own faith traditions have violent tendencies and so do not indulge in violence of any form, historical accounts have contrary opinions. It is evident that "adherents to most religious traditions almost universally regard their own faith as pacific, as one that abhors violence and proclaims reconciliation among foes. Perhaps they are right, since the overwhelming message of scriptural writings and prophetic voices is that of love, peace and harmony. And yet both historians and keen observers also see another side. They point to the legends of war, sacrifice, martyrdom that cling to the histories of all the great religious traditions.…Some argue that great global religious traditions, because of their long histories of intertwining clerical authority with political powers, are more inclined to violence than are local ones. Yet sources for local religions, collected often at the crossroads between tradition and modernity, also report many forms of ritualized violence, such as assault sorceries, martial initiations, and pre-battle sacrifices."[33]

Religion may by its nature advance nonviolence but cases of violence have been seen times without number generated or motivated by various religious beliefs. In the words of Juergensmeyer, "Only the most unreflective believer can fail to be jarred by the bloodiness of portraits of the Hindu goddess, Kali, and the dying Jesus. Nor are the bloody images limited only to religion's past: modern newspapers are crowded with pictures of Islamic and Sikh terrorists, guerrilla Christian priests and revolutionary Buddhist monks."[34] The various accounts of violence experienced in the history of most religious traditions does not only

[32] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 20-21.
[33] Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's,* 2.
[34] Juergendmeyer in Selengut, *Sacred Fury,* 2.

provide evidence that strengthens the claim that religion is violent, it further advances the debate that queries whether these instances of violence are intrinsic or not, and whether an act of violence is religious by the virtue of the fact that it was carried out by and within the community of adherents. Of course one cannot place violent sacrifices and religious wars/conflicts in the same level of religious violence. This is because violence in religion can come in real or symbolic forms. The extent of harm caused by both forms is as different as the influence of religion in these forms. As Juergensmeyer rightly pointed out, "aside from ritual sacrifice, real acts of violence are seldom intrinsic to any specific religious experience – wars are often justified in the name of religion, for instance, when the primary purpose is to extend political power. Because violence in both real and symbolic forms is found in all religious traditions, it can be regarded as a feature of the religious imagination. Almost every major tradition, for example, has some notion of sacrifice and some notion of cosmic war, a grand moral struggle that underlies all reality and can be used to justify acts of real warfare."[35]

History has thrusted religion into this conundrum and has made it a readily available source of motivation or "inspiration"—whether in real, symbolic or instrumental forms—for people who fan the embers of violence in order to fulfil some deep seated yearnings, ulterior reservations or transcendent goals. It is true that since the end of the Cold war, religion independently or in combination with other factors has become a readily identifiable source of violence. And Christianity and Islam seem to be the most widely accused traditions for most if not all of the religiously motivated violence. Far from that, every religion has its own episode and tendency of going violent for what it professes. It will be good therefore to "remind ourselves that for centuries, individuals and groups have been prepared to sacrifice their lives for a religious cause, from the Jewish defenders of Megiddo through the Russian Old Believers to the more recent cases of mass suicide in new religious movements (or 'cults'), such as the Branch Davidians or Solar Temple. This extremely complex social phenomenon has so far mainly attracted sensational media coverage, but insufficient academic attention."[36] That is why it is expedient at this point to present brief selections of some of the violent episodes in the histories of some popular religious traditions from ancient times to modern day experiences.

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[35] Jugenmeyer et al, 6.
[36] Al-Rasheed and Shterin, *Dying for Fait*, xviii.

1.2.1 Violence in Hinduism

As one of the world's most ancient and most populous religious traditions, Hinduism has its own experiences of violence. The ultimate goal of Hindu practice is the *Brahma* which is achieved when one's soul (*Jiva*) breaks from the cycle of rebirth/reincarnation (*Moksha*) to become one with the absolute reality. Hinduism is the religion mostly practiced by Indians. It reveres the observance of one's own religious duty as paramount to one's attainment of *Brahma*. The most widely known Hindu scriptures *Bhagavad Gita* (BG)*,* reveals that the god *Krishna* emphasises that "Your own duty done imperfectly is better than another man's done well."[37] This implies that one's religious duty matters more than any other commitment towards others. Hence you can do anything to fulfil such religious obligations even if it means hurting another person.

Violence in Hindu tradition can be more understood from the backdrop of Hindu reflections on violence and non-violence which seeks to know how human societies can find a way out of cycles of violence. These reflections make use of a wealth of resources which include textual materials and ethnographies. Most of these sources provide materials that make discussions about violence and non-violence central to ethics and schemes of living a good life. Given the enormity and complexity of these sources, one cannot delve into a chronological account of the various debates on violence and non-violence. It is rather good to highlight the grey areas that demonstrate the trails of Hindu experience of violence over the years. It is interesting to note that the debate about what violence is also makes its way into sacred reflections from Hindu ancient writings. These discussions are done under two major domains which are defined by (a) the relation to animals as sacrificial offerings and as food in the language of ritual" and (b) gendered violence in the imagination of sovereignty in the mythic register.[38] It follows therefore that violence in Hindu moral considerations is broadly discussed to incorporate harm done to plants and animals as well as psychological and emotional hurts like betrayal and disappointments. A typical example is the narrative from a 13ᵗʰ century text *Dharmaraya Purana* about the "argument between the Brahmins, who are depicted as those who perform sacrifice, and the Jains, who are shown as upholders of ahimsa (nonviolence)."[39] In response to the Jains who urged the king to withdraw his patronage from the Brahmins for indulging in violence, the Brahmins considered it hypocritical for anyone to claim innocence of violence because we cannot live without

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[37] Bhagavad Gita, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 3.35. Citations hereafter in the text will be abbreviated BG followed by chapter and verse numbers.
[38] Veena Das, "Violence and Nonviolence at the heart of Hindu Ethics", in Jeugensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's*, 8.
[39] Jeugensmeyer et al, 9.

violence since we are bound to inflict violence on plants and animals in order to eat. This also gave grounds for the big debate on whether the killing of animals for food or in sacrifice can be regarded as acts of violence that we commit every day in order to survive?

Suffice it to say that discussions about violence in Hindu tradition go beyond inflicting harm with malicious intent or hurting human beings alone. Hinduism has great regard also to animals some of which are include in the cycle of reincarnation which makes adherents become more of vegetarians to avoid killing of such animals. Those who agree with the Brahmins argue further that violence is much more expensive than physical harm because harbouring anger and jealousy are also forms of violence. From this perspective therefore, sacrifice provides a dramatic expression of the ambivalence that surrounds the topic of violence and nonviolence —one might regard ritual violence as enacting puzzles about the costs we pay in order to live.[40] Ancient Hindu ritual texts like the Vedic and the Brahmanas consider ritual sacrifice as non-violent acts of killing or better still acts of violence that we can live with. "The Vedic texts distinguish between domestic animals (*Pashu*) and wild animals (*mriga*)—killing of animals could take the form of either sacrifice, in which the offerings are domestic animals (including humans), or hunting that was oriented to wild animals."[41] Wendy Doniger captures this idea in her remark that "human beings are, like all other animals, fit to be sacrificed to the gods, they are, as it were, the livestock of the gods."[42]

Hinduists choose to convert the facts of violence in acts of ritual sacrifice into nonviolence and this is characterised by three different elements. These elements are (a) Euphemistic redefinition of ritual killing as Pacification through which the victim is converted to a willing participant in the sacrifice for good. Since it is through sacrifice that man ransoms himself from the gods, the violence being done to the victim, prefigures or anticipates the violence that the sacrifice would be subjected to in the final death rituals. Hence, "all violence mimes the ultimate violence of death." The ritual vocabulary in Vedic sacrifices therefore transforms the killing into creating a beatific path for the victim to reach the gods. (b) Ritual substitution which theorists like Rene Girard (1997); and Levi-Strauss (1963, 1969) acknowledge to be central to sacrifice as it entails using victims of less sacrificial quality like ox to replace those of higher quality like man. Of course the Vedic ritual included man among the five series of animals fit for sacrifice and the Brahamanic texts

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[40] Jeurgenseyer et al, 9.
[41] Jeurgensmeyer et al, 9.
[42] Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternate History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 152.

considers man as the first to be used by the gods as sacrificial beast. (c) Converting the violence of sacrifice into an act of beatific regeneration. This concept traces back to story of *purusha sukta* which describes the original sacrifice of *purusha* or the primeval man whose dismembered body generated the natural and social order. Different parts of this sacrificed body formed the structure of the universe. Even the popular caste system can be traced to "this sacrificial moment with the moth becoming the Brahmin, the arms the Kshatriya, the stomach the Vaishya, and the feet the Shudra. In a repetition of the original sacrifice, death rituals re-create death as an act of sacrificial offering and regeneration."[43]

The controversies surrounding violence (*himsa*) and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) at the heart of Hindu traditions reflects in the various interpretations of their sacred texts that stipulate codes for their moral lives. Some of these texts give contradictory injunctions like in the *Laws of Manu* "one of the rules states that one can never obtain meat without causing injury, and therefore one should abstain from eating meat (5:48); while another says that there is no fault in eating meat, drinking liquor or having sex for these are the natural activities of creatures, though abstaining from these activities carries great rewards (5:56)."[44] Contradictions such as these create a parallel of opinions about violence in Hinduism. One side of the conversations interprets that violence could be allowed in fulfilment of one's sacred duty but the other side of the divide shuns violence of every kind no matter the reasons. The *Bhagavad Gita* (BG) is a source of reference for most Hindu justifications of violence. This is because like other Hindu texts some of the instructions in it present controversial views on violence. The BG on one hand allows violence when it is dharma (a sacred duty) even when it means killing a relative. "And so, violence is acceptable when committed in order "to protect men of virtue, and destroy men who do evil" (BG 4.8)."[45] But on the other hand the BG also extols non-violence as a part towards ultimate goodness.

One of the most popular epics about violence in the BG is the battle fought by *Arjuna* of the *Pandavas* in the battlefield of *Kurukshetra* against his cousins the *Kuravas* to regain the lost kingdom. Arjuna was refusing to go into battle with his kin but through the counsel of the incarnate god *Krishna* he went into the battle in which almost everyone on both sides was killed. What is very important in this story is *Krishna's* justification for this act of violence which for him was not only necessary but cannot be considered as violence in the broader scheme of things. Krishna said "Look to your own duty; do not tremble before it; nothing is

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[43] Juergensmeyer, et al, *Violence and the World's,* 13.
[44] Jeurgensmeyer, et al, 14.
[45] Charlene P. E. Burns, *More Moral than God : Taking Responsibility for Religious Violence* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.),15.

better for a warrior than a battle of sacred duty . . . if you fail to wage this war of sacred duty, you will abandon your own duty . . . only to gain evil (BG 2.31–33)."[46] Of course the god Krishna is always present in every scene of violence in most Hindu epics. The *Bhagavad Gita* as a sacred text has contributed to the philosophy of action behind the notions of violence and war in Hindu tradition. But it has also shown "how nonviolence which *Krishna* propagates as the highest dharma is enmeshed in violence."[47] Hence although Hinduism possesses some sacred images and stories that motivate and legitimate violence it also considers nonviolence as an ultimate virtue within violence since the force of violence leads to the scene of the loss of self, whereas the virtue of non-cruelty is advocated as a way out of the cycle of violence. "The injunction to practice noninjury and at the same time be willing to kill for the sake of one's duty is taken to mean that in one's personal conduct *ahimsa* is the ideal, but one must be prepared to use violence when necessary to sustain the social order. Dharma provides social stability, and whatever maintains balance must be seen as one's duty."[48]

The caste structure which gives a religious description of the Hindu social order also provides for the political structure of India. This has made people give religious interpretations to political cruelties such that "Hinduism has at times been interpreted to legitimate absolute and even dictatorial rulers."[49] However, it was people like Mahatma Gandhi (1868-1948) who "brought the principles of nonviolence or *ahimsa* to the political arena."[50] In the 20th century, two divergent interpretations of the Hindu scriptures emerged, one leading to a violent purification of India and the other leading to a call for nonviolence. The first which is more of a literal interpretation of the BG leads one into a contradiction that breeds violence whereas the second which is a nonliteral interpretation considers the *Gita* as a description of the internal struggle that goes on within ones heart. Gandhi belonged to this group who "came to believe that the *Bhagavad Gita* was best read as an allegory of the struggle against evil in the human heart, not as a text that legitimates violence. In his own translation and commentary on the text, Gandhi said, "I do not agree that the *Gita* advocates and teaches violence in any part."[51] His expensive ideas of violence and nonviolence do not limit *ahimsa* to the eating or killing of animals, but rather extends it to not hating or hurting any living thing, resisting injustice of any kind, the pursuit of truth (*satyagraha*) and celibacy (*brahmacharya*). "Grounded in his nonliteral reading of Hindu (and Christian) scripture,

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[46] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 14.
[47] Jeurgensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's,* 21.
[48] Burns, *More Moral than God,*14.
[49] Burns, 15.
[50] Jeurgensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's,* 14.
[51] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 15.

Gandhi developed a program of nonviolent resistance to political oppression which succeeded in bringing independence to India after centuries of foreign domination by Muslim and British rulers."[52] He believes that the structure of governance, be it British or Indian is contaminated by the stain of violence. This is why "an expanded notion of *himsa* and *ahimsa* in varied Hindu traditions found expression in Ghandi's politics."[53]

Hindu traditions seem to talk more about noncruelty/noninjury than nonviolence as a way of creating a balance within the controversy between violence and nonviolence. Doniger remarks that the use of the word non-cruelty *anrishansya* instead of nonviolence *ahimsa* offers a compromise to this controversy in Hindu tradition whereby in line with the *Vedic* and *Brahamanas* texts the cycle of violence is considered inevitable since in order to live, it is necessary to inflict violence on animals or plants. The Hindu tradition therefore uses Non-cruelty as a more morally appropriate term to be used in the place of nonviolence which in its broader use may include the killing of plants and animals for food or sacrifice. "The issue of non-cruelty to animals is a minor variant on the heavier theme of non-violence (ahimsa)…in an age when violence toward humans and animals is inevitable"[54] Little wonder the epics on many occasions emphasise that *ansishansya* or noncruelty is the highest dharma.

However, many Hindu nationalist movements have in recent years condemned this nonviolence approach as an aberration and so have advocated for a return to the ancient and more authentic ways which involves a radical and strict adherence to the caste system and a literal interpretation of the BG. These Hindutva movements "argue that nonviolence is effeminate and contrary to the true nature of Hinduism."[55] Consequent to this approach these groups perpetrate and justify acts of violence against non-hindus by appealing to a literal interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita.*

1.2.2 Buddhism and Violence

The history of the Buddhist tradition is commonly assumed to be pacific and free from violence due to its foundational doctrine of *ahimsa* (the duty to do no harm to any living being).[56] Buddhists are people who follow the four major truths of Buddha who they consider as the penultimate figure. From the history of theories and practice of Buddhism which is a reflection of the core values of this religion, one could readily subscribe to the common

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[52] Burns, 15.
[53] Jeurgensmeyer, et al, *Violence and the World's,* 15.
[54] Doniger, *The Hindus*, 270.
[55] Burns, *More Moral than God,*15.
[56] Burns, 19.

assumption that "no major war has ever been fought in the name of Buddhism."[57] Of course it is true that the teachings of Buddha which is codified in the four major truths and eightfold part has no violent connotations. But experience has shown numerous instances of violence associated with Buddhism or Buddhist elements. As a social phenomenon that affects every religious tradition, violence is not lacking in the Buddhist experience over the centuries. As a matter of fact, "various Buddhist elements are embedded in acts of violence. Tanks have patrolled with Buddhist amulets on them, monasteries have served as military compounds for soldiers, and monastic Buddhist reliquaries (*stupas*) and pagodas have been used for military defences."[58]

It is true that the Buddhist core values abhors violence and admonish adherents to refrain from violent activities and destruction of lives, acts of violence can be traced from the three Jewels (the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha) which is core to this tradition; Self-proclaimed bodhisattvas, arahants and buddhas (Buddha) have engaged in violence, violent acts are done in the name of Buddhist teaching (Dhamma), and monks have committed violence (sangha).[59] Most of these actions are justified by references to scriptural sources or traditional codes. One very important element that is central to Buddhist tendency towards violence is the Buddhist identity. This sort of a politicised identity engenders a deep-seated notion of Buddhist nationalism that results to wars, revolts, stereotypes, racism, slavery and other forms of social exclusion. History reveals cases of people committing suicides, engaging in wars, leading revolts and supporting nation states in their drawing inspiration from Buddhist principles as they consider their nationality intimately linked with Buddhism. Consequently, this Buddhist identity is often closely knitted to the various ethnicities of the adherents to form Buddhist nationalities such as Tibetian Buddhist, Thai Buddhist, Chinese Buddhist etc. "the construction of an identity requires the distinction between those within and outside the imagined community. This politicized element has been the genesis for many structural forms of violence over the centuries."[60]

It is plausible to argue that most of these violent activities are not fundamental to the Buddhist tradition, but a lot of theoretical references and practical evidences show that Buddhism cannot be exonerated from violent activities. "There are numerous passages within Buddhist scriptures that either condone the use of violence or are hermeneutically ambiguous

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[57] Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence* (New York: Suny Press, 1992), 1.
[58] Juergensmeyer, et al, *Violence and the World's,* 59.
[59] Juergensmeyer, et al, 59.
[60] Juergensmeyer, et al, 38.

about it."[61] The five Buddhist moral precepts which require one to abstain from killing sentient beings, stealing, lying, partaking of intoxicants that cloud the mind and sexual misconduct underscores the nonviolent essence of Buddhist ethics and morality. However, some canonical and commentarial sources condone violence by creating exceptions based on three variables: the intention of the perpetrator, the nature of the victim and the stature of the one who kills. Various scriptural traditions like the Terada, the Mahayana and the Vajrayana express these considerations with variety of examples of violent scenarios. The intention in Buddhist tradition changes the quality of the violence. It distinguishes man slaughter, attempted murder and premeditated murder. The Mahayana scriptures brought in the notions of skill in means and emptiness to provide justification for violence in a way that "the absence of ill intent is sufficient to pardon an act of violence"[62] especially when the actor is a bodhisattva—an enlightened being. Skill in means is an intended act of violence employed by an awakened being out of compassion to awaken or protect others. One popular example is the story of the compassionate Ship captain who killed a robber on-board the ship who intends to kill five hundred passengers and the Captain because "there is no means to prevent this man from slaying the merchants and going to the great hells but to kill him."[63] This act of murder is a skill in means motivated by the compassion of Captain in order to save both the passengers and the Robber who would be reborn in the world of paradise.

With regard to the nature of the victim and the killer, these texts tend to justify the killing of a being with little virtue like unbelievers and communists who are considered to be not more than beasts. "A communist was a bestial type of a person and not complete person at that. More importantly her or his death served to support the Buddhist doctrine."[64] Of course this is dehumanization of the victims which is at its worst against the *icchantika*—those who have repudiated the basic tenets of the doctrine—regarded as lower than animals. To kill them therefore accrues no karma because they are empty of substance. "Just as no sinful karma [will be engendered] when one digs the ground, mows grass, fells trees …the same is true when one kills an *icchantika* for which deed [also] no sinful karma [will arise]."[65] Justification for killing such victims amounts to a defence for the killers whereby killing is justified in so far as it is done to defend religion. In Buddhist morality, there are

[61] Juergensmeyer, et al, 39.
[62] Juergensmeyer, et al, 47.
[63] Mark Tatz, trans. "Murder with Skill in Means: The Story of the Ship's Captain." *The Skill in Means* (Upayakausalya) *Sura*, (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994), 74.
[64] Charles Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism." *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma,* ed. Bardwell L. Smith, (Chambersburg, Penn: Anima Books, 1978), 153.
[65] Liu Ming-Wood, "The Problem of Ichantika in the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra," *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* 7.1 (1984): 68.

different ethics for different roles. People are bound by the ethics of their roles. "*Bodhisatvas* may do anything, even commit murder. Fully enlightened beings are not hindered by the attachments of ill thoughts, so their actions are different from others."[66] Their acts of violence can be regarded as skill in means since by destroying heretics they liberate people and protect the religion.

Most Buddhist images and symbolic representations depict violent actions and rhetoric. Numerous incident of religious violence has been recorded in the history of Buddhism since the time of the great Ashoka (269–32 BCE) who decreed nonviolence and religious tolerance. Some of these activities include wars, punishments, revolts and other social upheavals sanctioned or sanctified by Buddhist leaders and monks. These acts of violence were necessitated by the close political ties between monasticism and state. Legend has it that even "Ashoka ordered eighteen thousand non-Buddhists executed because of an insult to Buddhism made by one man. He regularly enforced the death penalty for criminals and executed his own wife."[67] During the time of Tabgatch Empire, Buddhist inspired revolts occurred from 402-517 CE and from 613-626 CE. Monks were involved in political conflicts in the Heian period (794-1185). "Monks became warriors in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Sri Lankan traditions. Perhaps the most widely known of these are the Shaolin monks of the Chinese Chan tradition, who developed martial arts for meditation and fighting."[68] The Colonialists faced stiff military oppositions from Buddhist rebels who fought to reaffirm their identities against predominantly Christian colonial powers. Korean monks stoop up against the US forces in the 1940s to cleanse the world of the growing military influence of Christian power which they regarded as the evil of *mara*.[69] Their opposition to US suppression were often expressed through self-immolation which became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Monks championed Buddhist nationalism which resulted in contemporary conflicts like the Sri Lankan war against LTTE (1983-2008) and the persecution of Rohinga Muslims in Myanmar. Other forms of physical injuries like punishments by state authorities were supported by Buddhist who regarded corporal punishments as executions of the law of Kamma. Such punishments include torture, blinding someone for stealing, cutting out a tongue for lying as well as capital punishments. States

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[66] Juergensmeyer, et al, *Violence and the World's,* 55.
[67] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 20.
[68] Jeurgensmeyer et al, 60.
[69] *Mara* etymologically means 'causing death' or 'killing'. Evil of *mara* comes from the Buddhist legend about the demonic celestial king who tried to seduce Prince Siddhartha (Gautama Buddha) with the vision of beautiful women. Mara represents the personified forces that are antagonistic to enlightenment.

were justified for using such measures to preserve the dhamma. Such sanctification of state control has led to some form of social control by way of justification of preferential treatment for Buddhists which has manifested in the forms of gender stereotypes, racial discriminations, and slavery. All these forms of intolerance were perpetrated or justified by Buddhists.

1.2.3   The Violent Experiences of Sikh Tradition

Sikhism can be regarded as a spiritual breakaway from Islam and Hinduism. This is due to the conception that Sikhism is a mix of Hinduism and Islam. It was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) who through his revolutionary preaching converted millions of people in Punjab and beyond. Nanak travelled wild and made disciples across the subcontinent. "He emphasised the importance of meditation on a unitary divine spirit and on rightful living."[70] He advocated against the caste distinctions that characterised Hinduism and strove to build an egalitarian community which endeared him to many. After his death a series of ten gurus followed who according to Sikhs possess supernatural qualities. Three Gurus were prominent among the ten namely; Guru Arjun the fifth guru who wrote the *Adi Granth* (the Ancient Scripture) that later became central to the faith. Arjun suffered martyrdom in the hands of *Mughal emperor Jahangir*. He was succeeded by Hargobind the sixth guru who was key to Sikh militancy and martial tradition.

Hargobind initiated the violent part of the Sikh religion by taking up arms in defence of the faith. He is known for carrying double swords which represents the complementarity of temporal and spiritual power (*miri* and *piri*). This initiated the militancy in the community which led to the depiction of Sikhs as militants in the Subcontinent. Hargobind also supplemented the symbol of the sword to defend the weak, with that of the kettle to feed the hungry. "kettle-sword-victory" (*Deg Teg Feteh*) is a Sikh motto that remains popular in the militant community.[71] But his battles were totally defensive, in protection of the small and vulnerable community and the young faith. This militancy continued until the tenth and last guru, Gobind Sigh who led the community towards full militarization. He established the army of the Khalsa who were committed to fight and die for the faith. Tradition holds that this group represents the five volunteers who were willing to pay the ultimate price for their guru and so were called *panj piaray* (the five beloved) who "were to be saint-soldiers and were regarded as having wisdom of saints and courage of soldiers."[72]

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[70] Juergensmeyer, et al, *Violence and the World's,* 70.
[71] Juergensmeyer, et al, 71.
[72] Juergensmeyer, et al, 72.

One other remarkable thing Guru Gobind did was to pass the spiritual authority to the sacred scripture as a living Guru known as *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Scriptural Lord Guru) and his worldly authority to the community. From thence, the book and the community embodied the guruship and the manifestations of divinity in the Sikh tradition. It follows therefore that insults to the *Guru Granth Sahib* amounts to blasphemy and direct affront to the guru and by extension against the faith. This marked the end of individual guru and began the Sikhs absolute reverence to the holy book. Militant Sikhs vow to violently defend the book against any form of blasphemy.

During the Geopolitical restructuring of India and Pakistan, in the 1940s, many Sikhs hoped for the establishment of the Sikh nation of Sikhistan or Khalistan. Nationalist sentiments which characterised this geopolitics of India-Pakisan political configurations, especially with the redrawing of Punjab boundary lines that brought majority of Sikhs together in one Punjab state of India. Economic inequalities and unemployment amplified the nationalist course for an independent state. This nationalist agenda took the guise of self-determination, championed with some level of religious motivations. "The struggle for Khalistan was a resistance movement against the perceived injustices of the Indian state and a political movement aimed at sovereign rule, but it also provided an existential means of being a Sikh, independently of instrumental political goals."[73] Hence the Khalistan movement in the 1980s hijacked the popular perception and identity of Sikhism, so much so that the militants fighting for the course of independence consider themselves as people fighting a religious course for the survival of Sikh identity. Hence "popular misconception around the world that Sikhism is a violent religion and that Sikhs involved in the movement for Khalistan were terrorists."[74] The revolutionary nature of the militant movement which is motivated by the massages of the charismatic gurus made Sikhs consider the possibility of a religiously created homeland through violent struggle that encourages martyrdom. Consequently, the Sikh tradition was variously associated with violence and conflict as typified in the widespread designation of "Sikhs as terrorists", a propaganda that has distorted the theological message of the tradition.

Militant Sikhs carried guns and ammunitions to confront the Punjab police in the 1980s and 1990s and this led to the death of many people. These violent campaigns were carried out to fulfil a nationalist quest for an independent Khalistan which they consider to be

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[73] Juergensmeyer, et al, 72.
[74] Juergensmeyer, et al, 73.

in defence of Sikh identity and faith. Hence spiritual identity is realised when worldly sovereignty is actualised. "And Sikhs did attempt to ensure the political space for their search for truth by becoming *sant-sipahis* or saint soldiers, trained as well in the martial as sin the spiritual arts."[75] The *sant-sipahis* (saint soldiers) are considered to be the ideal Sikhs, who live with their heads in their hands to defend the Sikh identity and faith. They live selflessly by the 5 articles in service of the faith. This is why every Sikh aspires to live by the 5 articles of faith which entails keeping; "uncut hair bound into a turban, a wooden comb signifying purity, a steel or iron bangle on the right wrist, a martial loincloth used for horsemanship, and, perhaps most important, the kirpan or sword."[76] The life of the *sant-sipahis* now becomes the ideal life of a real Sikh. Every believing Sikh vows to give one's head and live one's life for one's community and faith. Little wonder, Sikhs are considered to be militant and violent.

Sikhs believe that the use of the kirpan is to defend the faith, correct injustice and protect the weak. As such, the sword is not to be used offensively but defensively especially when the Sikhi identity is threatened. This is the motive behind the 1984 assault championed by Jaenail Singh Bhindranwale the charismatic preacher who roused the signs to defend their identity or face extinction. The same impression motivates a believing Sikh to see himself as *sant-sipahis* in the nationalist fight for independence to save the faith and defend the identity. Hence, the Khalistani activists were fighting a religious course. The religious motivation gives the militants enormous courage to fight to death. The double-barrelled basis of Sikh tradition, *Guru Granth* Sahib, (the holy book) and *Guru Panth*, (the community), reflects the perfect blend of religion and politics. This granth/panth formulation of authority in Sikhism allows for self-interpretation of the morality of violence, causing militants to be brutal in their violent engagements. Consequently, Khalistani fighters are evaluated according to their courage and smart but brutal strategies which makes them turn defeats into victories since for the sake of the faith and identity they are ready to fight to the end. For the Sikh, victory is assured, little wonder the initiates greet themselves with the words "all victory to the khalsa". This never give up spirit is spurred on by the religious duty to protect the Sikh identity and defend the faith from extinction. This is why the Sikh religious history is littered with pockets of violence that created the misconception that Sikhs are terrorists. Of course the Sikhs acknowledge the militancy in their religion which they use as a tool for self-defence and self-

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[75] Juergensmeyer, et al, 76.
[76] Juergensmeyer , et al,76.

determination. But the Indian authorities consider their militancy acts of terrorism which serves the Ironical belief that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter".

1.2.4   Violence in the Jewish Tradition

The dynamics of Jewish religious violence tradition and the various transformations it has undergone over the years present an ambivalence of opinions about acts of violence that bear the emblem of Judaism. This is because, a good number of Jewish writers tend to obviously and consistently place the Jewish religion either at the receiving end or at the morally justifiable end of acts of religious violence. It is therefore taken for granted by such writers that the Jews are always right in every violent engagement with others. Hence they make bold claims that "violence has always existed, and the Jews have been its victims for thousands of years in all parts of the world and in all periods of history…."[77] Arguable as the claim may be, this statement exposes two major facts that are very important in our analysis. First, that the Jewish history is obviously replete with acts of violence. The second is the fact of the long term entwining dichotomy between Jewish history as a nation and Jewish history as a religion which often burdens every analysis of Jewish identity.

When we speak of violence in Jewish history it is often difficult to dissociate the religious from the nationalistic elements. This is because, in Israel, religion intervenes in almost everything, "the case of Jewish violence is especially complicated since Judaism is characterized by a close relationship and substantial overlap between religious and ethno-national association."[78] Unlike other religious traditions, the Jewish religion presents an exclusive faith tradition and practice of a particular people to the point that "affiliation with the Jewish religion implies affiliation with the Jewish people and vice versa. For more than three millennia, until the late 18th or 19th century, it was difficult to differentiate between the religious and the ''tribal'' components of Jews' identity."[79] The Jewish religion has always been regarded as the religion of the Jewish people just as the Jewish people have always been seen as the people of the religion. Being Jewish implies both the religion and the people. It is observable therefore, that since biblical times, "not only are nationalism and religion interlocked in Judaism but in modern Israel, religion and state are inseparable."[80] Numerous

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[77] Salo W. Baron, and George S. Wise, eds. *Violence and Defence in the Jewish Experience* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1977), ix.
[78] Gideon Aran & Ron E. Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism: Past and Present", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 25:3, (2013) 354, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2012.667738
[79] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 364
[80] Allen Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 160.

accounts of Israel's history give religion a central place and more so, biblical accounts present the entire story of Israel as a religious one in a way that gives spiritual meaning to every aspect of their life, even the most non-religious ones. Charlene Burns captures this point appropriately in these words; "because there was no compartmentalization of life into secular and sacred, the ancient Israelites understood every aspect of existence as the outworking of the Lord's will, so it makes sense that the record of ancient violence portrays these acts as divinely guided."[81]

However, until recently (two centuries ago) when it became known that the vast majority of contemporary Jews are not religious, the Jewish identity became a subject of clarification and classification (the religious and the secular). "Consequently, if before, the term ''Jewish violence'' was sufficient to describe our phenomenon because it referred to both religious and ethno-national violence, the recent two centuries require us to distinguish between two types of Jewish violence: ''Jewish secular violence,'' which is mainly associated with Jewish nationalism (i.e., Zionism), and ''Jewish religious violence,'' on which this essay focuses."[82] This change in the conceptualisation of Jewish identity does not imply that we exclude the violence before 18th century from our analysis; rather it exposes the transformative nature of religious traditions as vital and open-ended in the analysis of the nation's history. Hence a critical look at these ancient sources is crucial, not just for the sake of history of the tradition's survival, but for the fact that they provide basis for most modern ideological leanings and activities. "It also legitimated a vast array of interests and moral stances by providing them with a "traditional" authority. This included an abundance of materials that supported religious violence and an abundance of materials that opposed it."[83]

A good analysis of the Jewish tradition of violence in religion begins with the biblical testimonies. The Hebrew bible (Tanakh) remains the most crucial source of information for the earliest history of Jewish identity and faith. It is also "the most fundamental element in the Jewish cultural reservoir"[84] and the main reference point for every discussion on religious violence. As a theological account of the entire history of ancient Israel, the Bible is filled with abundance of stories that clearly justify violence as well as those that extol nonviolence. "It is a remarkably militant text that includes an extraordinary range of aggressive themes and models, often confusing and contradictory. Violence is evident in the image of God, his treatment of humanity, the manner in which he demands to be worshiped, and the rules he

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[81] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 16.
[82] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism" 364.
[83] Hassner and Aran, "Religion and Violence in the Jewish Traditions", in Juergensmeyer, *Violence* 83.
[84] Hassner and Aran, "Religion and Violence", 85.

sets forth for social control. Violence is also apparent in the chronicles of the Israelites, replete with war, genocide, and internecine conflict, as well as in prophecies that envision a turbulent end of times."[85] One remarkable aspect of the Hebrew bible is that it commands emulation of the divine activities in a way that God's wrathful and militant actions may be effective directly or indirectly—when others carry out violence on his behalf. Of course the book of Exodus says that "the Lord is a man of war," "majestic" and "terrible in glorious deeds" of conquest (New Revised Standard Version, Exodus 15:3, 11). "He is a 'Lord of Hosts', vengeful and militant. He ruthlessly kills individuals, annihilates groups, and punishes humanity with plagues, brutal wars, and natural disasters. He also commands killing on a 'chauvinist' basis: his chosen people are instructed to implement his fury against inferior peoples that are accursed from the moment of their inception, like the Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites."[86] It is correct to claim that the Bible presents every violent experience as divinely willed.

Jewish religious violence in the scriptures appears in various forms as; ritualised violence, violence as a form of social control, violence as punishment for wrong doing, violence as a means of professing God's power and might. Although there are forms of violence that are not divinely sanctioned which the God of the bible condemns and punishes, such as the first human act of violence; the fratricide committed by Cain against Abel, most of the violent activities approved by God are considered noble and salutary. Ritualised violence in the scriptures are gestures that express connection with the divine either in the forms of sacrifices which involves peace or burnt offerings like animals, wine, grains and incense offered for thanksgiving, appeasement, covenant, voluntary offering. Jews also practice Circumcision (*brit milah*); a ritualised violence that involves humans in covenant with God who does not accept human sacrifice as demonstrated in the sacrifice of Isaac. This prohibition of human sacrifice shows that the bible condemns killing of human beings and encourages protection of life.

Bible also tells stories of divinely approved violence that restores the social order. When the bible approves of the execution of Hamman to prevent his planned extermination of the Jews, violence is sanctioned as a form of social control (Esther 7:1-10). Also as part of this divine nemesis, the bible recommends capital punishment for violent offences such as murder, homicide and rape. It justifies vengeance in the pattern of "life for life, eye for eye,

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[85] Hassner and Aran, "Religion and Violence", 85.
[86] Hassner and Aran, "Religion and Violence", 85.

tooth for tooth, hand for hand foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise" (Exodus, 21:23-25). But it extends such punishment to people who commit sexual crimes like incest, adultery and bestiality, and for religious offenses like idolatry, blasphemy, and desecration of holy things. The culprits are to be punished with violent death while the executioners are absolved of agency and responsibility. The Israelites considered most defeats and exiles they suffered to be punishments from God for their unfaithfulness. Many of such violent punitive laws abound in the Hebrew bible and the ancient people of Israel observed such laws as guidelines for their faith and morals.

Another aspect of Jewish religious violence in the bible is the divinely commissioned brutal wars, carnages, genocides, conquests, massacres, and violent campaigns that Israel carried out against her neighbours in their quest for possession of land and settlement. From the divinely inspired struggle for liberty championed by Moses the freedom fighter that unleashed mayhem against the Egyptians who suffered the plagues and drowned in the red sea, to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, violence reigned and prevailed as divine mandate and providence. This campaign included "destruction of Jericho and Ai, the enslavement of the Gibeonites, the defeat of the Amorites, and the destruction of Hazor, all aided by divine intervention. Israel sustained this violent campaign after settling in the land against neighbouring ethnic groups like the Amalekites, Moabites, Midianites and the Philistines. This resulted in the ruthless killing of the people especially in the six Canaanite communities (the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites), during which no individual may be spared. Wars against these groups were regulated by the laws of the ban (herem), in which all the spoils of war were dedicated to God"[87] and often committed to the flames as burnt offerings. The religious nature of these wars were such that the tribes made sacred commitments to participate, soldiers and weapons are consecrated and the enemy is condemned as something unclean and evil. Failure to participate in this violence incurs the wrath of God which is more severe. According to the Bible, God is not only active in such brutalities he exonerates and rewards the perpetrators for fulfilling a divine will.

But we would be greatly misguided to refer to these conflicts as "religious or holy wars,'' since they are not described as launched by Israel in God's name or in defence of the faith. Rather, they are ''holy wars'' to the extent that they were fought by God himself to defend Israel. In other words, in this category of "holy wars" Israel did not arise to protect

[87] Hassner and Aran, "Religion and Violence", 87.

faith in Yahweh but Yahweh stood up to defend Israel.[88]   Although the bible narrates a theological history, these stories remain crucial to the extent that many generations of Jews not only identify with them as standards, but also are inspired and ideologically motivated by them. But one striking thing in most of these stories is that Israel's faith is connected to their fight for national identity and survival in their quest for possession of land and settlement. Little wonder "the Bible was adopted by Zionism as a core text that transformed from a religious to a political and national document…. And the present day geopolitics actualizes the Bible, including its most violent components. "[89]

But a typical instance of Jewish religious violence in the sense of fighting for God came into play in extoled heroic act of zealotry by Phinehas who slaughtered a prominent Israeli aristocrat for committing blasphemy and desecration of the holy place. Phinehas and his generation were rewarded highly for this violent act which for generations remained a quintessential ideal and reference point for virtuousness. Through many generations, the Jewish zealotry tradition flourished and became a morally prescribed virtue for Jews. "According to this biblical precedent, zealotry is defined a religious violence aimed against those who are perceived as opposing the divine will, particularly by violating the boundaries of the collectivity and thus threatening its identity."[90] Zealotry continues to cast a great shadow on the Jews through many generations. Most violent reactions from the Jews in defence of the faith or their identity often gained motivation and momentum from this ancient precedent. This is very evident in the period of the great revolts.

The period of the great revolts (otherwise known as the Second Common Wealth era) which comes after the ancient biblical period—from the 2nd century BCE to the 2nd century CE—was a period in which Jewish violence was conscupious and consequential.[91]   It was a traumatic period in Jewish historiography replete with military, political and religious catastrophes. This period comprises of four major revolts namely; "the Hasmonean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire (167–160 BCE), the Great Revolt (66 CE–73 CE), the Revolt of the Diasporas (also known as the ''Kitos War,'' 115–117 CE), and the Bar Kokhva Revolt (132–136 CE) against the Roman Empire."[92] Jews engaged in armed revolution to resist foreign occupation in defence of their faith and identity. These revolts are religious violence to the extent of their three common characteristics: first, political sovereignty and religious

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[88] Gerard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 72.
[89] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 370.
[90] Aran & Hassner, "Religion and Violence", 90.
[91] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 375.
[92] Aran & Hassner, 374.

autonomy, Second, the spirit of messiainism[93], and third, the killing of political traitors and religious deviants. Although the revolts were repressed and crushed by the superior Roman Empire, this period became a unique and remarkable reference point due to its great emphasis on Jewish messianism, national militancy and heroic zealotry. "It was the period, in which the last books of the Bible were written, a tumultuous period of changing governments, wars, civil wars, rebellions, the destruction of the Temple, and exile. All were momentous events in ancient Israel, upheavals of geopolitical, national, and religious dimensions."[94] During this period, various sects of Judaism appeared with attendant controversies and the numerous books written in this period (like the Maccabees and dead sea scrolls) reflected the challenging nature of this period when Jews killed and were killed for their faith and national identity. "It is these revolts which maybe said to have brought the history of 'Ancient Israel' to its close"[95], but records from these texts offered behavioural models for later generation of Jews, in particular Zionists. "Lessons like the most gruesome incident of Jewish martyrdom: the legendary tale of an anonymous mother and her seven children who are willing to undergo gruesome torment and, painful death rather than go against their faith, were preserved and extoled for everlasting remembrance as emphasised by the narrator in 2 Maccabees, 7:20."[96]

The eighteen centuries of Jewish exile which preceded the modern period, was greatly characterised by Jewish victimhood and nonviolence. Most Jews were scattered in European and Middle Eastern Diasporas as minorities and so were victims of violence from non-Jews as they survived at the mercy of their Christian and Muslim hosts. During this period, Jews were targets of violence (antisemitism) in many places for example; various Jewish communities were attacked by the Crusaders in the 11th and 15th centuries and were compelled to convert or face expulsions in host communities like Spain. "In 1096 some of the crusaders on their way to liberate Jerusalem, massacred Jewish communities in Cologne, Worms and Mainz."[97] Jews were also victims of the 19th century pogrom in Russia. The motif of Jewish victimhood and antisemitism remained a concern for Jews and eventually became the background against which modern Israel was realised, albeit under traumatising circumstances evidently climaxed at the holocaust (1941-1945). Of course the holocaust

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[93] Jewish Messianism represents an idea or a system of belief or a movement that is centred on the expectation of a messiah from the stock of David who will liberate Israel from every foreign rule and domination, and will reunite all Jews in the Land of Israel, with peaceful and prosperous reign.

[94] Aran & Hassner, 375.

[95] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (New york: Harper and Row Publications, 1960), 7.

[96] Aran & Hassner "Religion and Violence", 94.

[97] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 77.

represents the highest manifestation of Jewish victimhood, because having been scattered the world over, European Jews became sacrificial victims who were offered as holocaust in the time of the Second World War. Out of excruciating ordeals, from the smoke and ashes of this smothering holocaust, a new Jewish identity was revived and championed by a group of secularist Jews known as Zionists.

Zionism is an ethno-nationalist movement for the realisation of the Jewish identity and Jewish state in Israel. "The new Jewish identity that emerged in the mid-19th century and that crystallized in the early 20th century sought to pass over two millennia of exilic experience and connect with the two previous periods in Jewish chronology: the Biblical era and the Second Commonwealth era. The common denominator of these two phases was not merely Jewish territoriality, physicality, and sovereignty but also Jewish violence directed both inward and outward."[98] Zionism sought to revive the spirit of zealotry and messianism in its nationalist agenda. Although it was more of a secularist political movement with no religious affiliation, it reintroduced a lot of ancient Jewish religious traditions to facilitate its course for nationalization. Jewish holidays like Chanukkah, Purim, Passover, and La Ba'Omer were observed and celebrated, biblical heroes and conquerors like David and Joshua, the judges Ehud, Gideon, and Samson, the Maccabees, and particularly the Masada zealots were revered and the biblical claim to the land remained central to their quest for their repossession and political sovereignty. It is obvious that this politically motivated agitation were characterised by numerous violent engagements.

Initially, violence in the pre-state and newly sovereign Israel was largely regarded as politically executed within the context of national liberation and protection of the new state. For example, "between 1932 and 1977 most of the 150 recorded incidents of violence were politically motivated and executed by secularist militant groups like the Zionist Underground movements that unleashed terror in Palestine—the Haganah, Etzel (Irgun), and Lehi (Stern Gang) against British Mandate Authorities and against Palestinians (such as the attack on Deir Yassin), and against fellow Jews (in competing movements, collaborators, etc.)"[99] But later years from 1978, violence in Israel started taking a more religious colouration. "Some scholars are of the view that 90% of the cases of violence between 1978 and 2008 have some affinity with the Jewish religion as the perpetrators were largely national-religious Jews: Gush Emunim settlers, followers of the Kahane legacy, and various Jewish underground

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[98] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 388.
[99] Aran & Hassner, 357.

cells."[100] These Zionist religious Jews amplified the religious vigour of Jewish violence by reinforcing the messianization and the nationalization of Jewish orthodoxy thus making the noble course for national sovereignty ideologically-motivated by religion against contending enemies from the Muslim-Arab world. "But is it a coincidence that the proliferation of Jewish terrorism occurred parallel to the emergence of religious terrorism worldwide in the past three decades?"[101] This question is pertinent to the observable fact that the number of Jewish violence in the modern era increased exponentially from the 1980s and most of these incidents have links with religion. Prior to this time, Jewish violence was manifestingly political and was executed by secularist nationalists with little or no religious intent. The bible in this period became a national document used both for secular and religious reasons. Apart from providing a rich archive of Jewish past, it provided a veritable blueprint and wellspring for both god-seeking and secular messianic impulse. This led to the emergence of a kind of religious Zionism; an orthodox appropriation of a secular movement that became both ultra-religious and ultra-nationalist using the bible as an authoritative *Vada Mecum*. "The bible was translated into a political blueprint for direct activism, thus becoming fundamentalist text."[102]

From the moment of its creation as a new state till now, Israel has faced numerous hostilities from its predominantly Muslim-Arab neighbours. The Arab-Israeli relations has remained volatile and has led to full-scale wars and a century long protracted conflict. "The violent reality of Arab-Israeli relations has led some observers to associate the State of Israel with militarism, as indicated by the percentage of GNP dedicated to security, the percentage of the population at arms, the length of mandatory military service, the number of generals in the high political and economic echelons, etc."[103] This militarization has often led to various cases of religiously motivated violence especially due to the great influence of religion in the military hierarchy, trainings and activities. It is therefore not surprising or speculative to say that a new resurgence of acts of zealotry can be seen from among contemporary Jews. As a result of this, most incidents of Israel-Palestinian conflict have underlining religious motivations.

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[100] Aran & Hassner, 357, made reference to David Weisburd, *Jewish Settlers Violence* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1989), 20-21.

[101] Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, ''The FourthWave: Comparison of Jewish and Other Manifestations of Religious Terrorism,'' in Jean E. Rosenfeld, ed., *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves Theory and Political Violence* (London: Routledge, 2011), 103.

[102] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 390.

[103] Aran & Hassner, 393 in Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben Ari, eds., *The Military and Militarism in Israel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).

In the 1980s, the terrorist attacks that killed many Palestinian targets in the West Bank was carried out by religious activists called "Jewish Underground" whose arrested leaders revealed their intent and plan to blow up the Dome of the Rock, the most significant Muslim shrine in Jerusalem, in order to cause the Armageddon (world war III). The group considered this an act of zealotry and sought authoritative approval from rabbis.[104] What about the case of Baruch Goldstein who in Feb 1994 massacred 29 Palestinians in a mosque at the tomb of the patriarchs? His act of terror was considered heroic by some Jews who gave religious justifications for the massacre and named him a martyr after he was killed. More so, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by the radical right winged activist Yigal Amir who considered him a traitor and shot him dead in November 4, 1995 to the support of his fellow ultra-orthodox Jews who described the act as a holy mission of zealotry. Even from among members of the military we find incidents of religiously motivated violence. The case of Israel Lederman, an Orthodox reserve soldier who shot a Palestinian at close range and that of Ami Popper a dishonourably discharged soldier who in May 1990, lined up and shot Palestinian labourers to avenge the intifada may be essentially political and secular in nature, but they have some deep-rooted religious impulse. This is because, although these militants may be fighting for territorial autonomy and political sovereignty, religion makes it more mandatory for them. "Of course we are dealing with social networks that slide gradually into political violence and are driven by religious convictions."[105]

Like their counterparts elsewhere, Jewish terrorists combine religious motivations with political and territorial goals.[106] This is because "while clearly motivated by religion and executed by religious actors, these Jewish violent acts have a clear political and national dimension that is right-wing and hawkish. As a rule, this violence appears in connection with Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank and with efforts to promote a Greater Land of Israel agenda."[107] Hence the Jewish religious violence reveals the ambivalent nature of Jewish identity which reflects religious impulses even in their secular national matters. But it is good to note that the fact that religiously related violence is on the increase does not make Judaism a violent religion. The Jewish tradition extols non-violence as a virtue and has relished periods of peace and non-violence. The phenomenon of Jewish victimhood also supports this notion that Judaism has been more of a victim than the perpetrator of violence.

[104] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism, 373.
[105] Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, ''The FourthWave'', 104.
[106] Jean E. Rosenfeld, ed., *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves Theory and Political Violence* (London: Routledge, 2011), 5.
[107]Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 373.

And the holocaust, though a purely political agenda also left some religious impressions and implications on the whole discourse of Jewish victimhood.

In the whole analysis of violence in Jewish traditions, we realise that ethno-nationalist political foundations are combined with inspiration and mandate rooted in scriptures, rites, and collective memories, inherited from times past and remote places.[108] Each of the instances reveals this mix in a way that shows how the traditional religious aspects are present and self-evident.

1.2.5   The Christian account of violence

In spite of its nonviolent beginnings, Christianity in its two millennia history has had its own share of violent experiences. Jesus the founder and his immediate followers were popular for preaching non-violence and even became victims of violence and persecution. Although during his public ministry, Jesus expressed anger and used physical force to caution the merchants for desecrating the temple of Jerusalem, his life and teaching is commonly presented as essentially nonviolent. But this pacifism did not last beyond the 4th century. "Historical evidence clearly indicates that, for the first three centuries, Christians followed the nonviolent example of Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," but that changed rapidly once Christianity transitioned from persecuted minority to privileged majority."[109] "Constantine's embrace of Christianity began a process that elevated the hitherto persecuted minority religion to the status of a dominant, hegemonic religious community. The new relationship between Christian religion and state power raised complicated questions of secular power, spiritual authority, and moral legitimacy."[110] The eventual marriage of Christian ideology and Roman imperial power that took place when Roman Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity the state religion ignited the fire of violence in a bid to impose Christian ideologies with the impunity of imperial legitimization. A good example is the pogrom that massacred the entire Jewish community in Alexandria in 414.

During this Christian imperial influence and rise to political power, Christian theology began to justify the use of violence with the view of giving divine legitimacy to the supremacy of the Christian faith. This led to the introduction of the just war (*jus bellum*) theory into the Christian moral theology. This idea of just war spanned through the medieval era and became also the source of various international laws, civil rights and politics of war. St. Augustine (354-430) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) analysed the just war criteria

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[108] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 373.
[109] Burns, *More moral than God*, 22.
[110] Gaddis, *There is no Crime,*1.

to include; legitimate authority, just cause, right intention, proportionality of means, double effects, restoration of peace and non-combatant immunity. This brought a total change to the Christian attitude towards the use of physical force, and made "Augustine justify the use of violence against the Donatists, a schismatic group in his region of North Africa. The popularisation of this idea in this period made likes of Hugo Grotius consider war as not in conflict with the law of nature, and to clarify the limits, Isidore of Pelsium argued that private murders are impure and guilty. But there is no guilt in killing in a just war."[111] This is to say that "the purpose of just-war theory … was not to rationalize violence but to limit its scope and methods."[112] One can therefore agree to the idea that "Just war thinking is Christianity's clearest institutionalised, church-related justification for using coercive force."[113]

From the backdrop of the *jus bellum* justification stemmed the practice of the crusades undertaken from the eleventh to the thirteenth century as a holy war divinely authorized. The medieval Christianity was the time of imperial Christianity when priests doubled as spiritual and secular leaders, sanctioning and sanctifying wars as well as commissioning and consecrating with holy rituals, armies who participate in these wars. Suffice it to say that "in medieval Europe Christian practice had become so distanced from its nonviolent roots that warriors were ordained as knights in ceremonies called the "eighth sacrament."[114] The eight crusades to Palestine were carried out in this period to win Jerusalem back to Christ from its Muslim occupants. It was a sacred duty giving that "the pope, Christ's vicar on Earth, was sending forth an army with a holy commission to return Jerusalem and Christ's tomb to Christian hands."[115] Over the two hundred years that followed, Christians and Muslims massacred themselves in a succession of brutal combats to realise what each party considered to be a sacred obligation of laying rightful claim to the holy land. Pope Urban II the initiator described the Muslims as "an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation, forsooth, which has neither directed its heart nor entrusted its spirit to God. So killing these godless monsters was a holy act: it was a Christian duty to "exterminate this vile race from our lands.""[116] The crusades were violent contests aimed at fulfilling a religious motif using imperial political means. Although some of the crusades have defensive motives against invading Muslim militants, for most Christians, the knights Templars fulfilled the will of God

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[111] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 23.
[112] Richard McBrien, *Catholicism: Study Edition* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), 1036.
[113] Lloyd Steffen, "Religion and Violence in Christian Traditions", Mark Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's,* 122.
[114] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 24.
[115] Steffen, "Religion and Violence in Christian Traditions", 123.
[116] Karen Armstrong, *Holy War, The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World* (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), 3.

by combating the enemies of the faith. According to St. "Bernard of Cleaivaux who completed the sacralisation of combat calling it an act of virtue in his pamphlet, *De Laude Novae Militae*, the knights were ministers of God's justice charged with *malecide*—killing of evil: "'The soldiers of Christ . . . can fight the Lord's battles in all safety. For whether they kill the enemy or die themselves, they need fear nothing. To die for Christ and to kill his enemies, there is no crime in that, only glory."[117] It is good to acknowledge some non-violent exceptions from major Christina figures like St. Francis of Assisi who through his works of Charity to Muslims and non-Christians during this period showed the superiority of the nonviolent gestures over the violent attacks of the crusaders. The crusaders also invaded Constantinople as part of the orthodox versus catholic institutional contests. Although these crusaders fought with good intentions of defending the faith against violent assailants, it was bad institutions that led to such highly politicised violent executions.

What followed the so called virtuous act of combating the enemies of God from the outside was the violence against the enemies of God within the church. The Christian authorities of the middle ages also declared war against heresy and heretics which led to the infamous inquisition. Heresy became treasonable and courts were set up to try heretics and condemn them to the flames. "The purpose of the inquisition was to suppress heresy, to return heretics to the Catholic Church and to punish those who could not recant their errors."[118] Inquisition lasted beyond the middle ages as many heretics suffered persecution and execution even in the modern period. Well-known example is the case of the Pisan astronomer Galileo Galilei who faced imprisonment at the pleasure of the inquisition for popularising the theory of a heliocentric universe originally proposed by the polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. "Galileo was silenced by the Inquisition and forced to recant, but his own somewhat belligerent temperament had also played a part in his condemnation"[119] what about the Spanish inquisition that lasted from 1478-1834 which led to the death of many groups including Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Bogomils, Moriscos, Waldensians, Cathars and Lollards who were outlawed for threatening the stability of the kingdom with their heresies. "Spain (r.1555–98) regarded Protestantism in the Netherlands as a political as well as a religious threat."[120] But the practice of executing heretics was not exclusive to Catholics because Protestants like Calvin condemned heretics like Michael

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[117] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 24-25 quoting James A. Aho, "Religious Mythology and the Art of War: Comparative Religious Symbolisms of Military Violence, vol. 3", *Contributions to the Study of Religion,* ed. Henry W. Bowden (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 84.
[118] Steffen, "Religion and Violence in Christian Traditions", 126.
[119] Karen Armstrong, *The battle for God* (New York: Random House Inc., 2000), 67.
[120] Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015), 246.

Servitus in 1553 theocratic Geneva. "Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists could all find biblical texts to justify the execution of heretics."[121] There was this general feeling of fear that false doctrine destroyed souls and heretics tore the church apart. "So the death penalty for heresy was neither unusual nor extreme. Executions were usually carried out in public as a ritualized deterrent that expressed and enforced state and local authority."[122] This is because there is need not only to save the souls of heretics but also to save the community from its consequence.

The torture and execution meted out to the heretics was also extended to those considered as witches who were burnt at the stake for being enemies of the faith. Millions of people were executed by Catholics and Protestants for being witches. In the words of Martin Luther "I would burn them all."[123] These executioners saw themselves as missionaries of good with the task of cleansing the world of the evil which heretics and witches represent. Being a heretic or witch therefore makes one an enemy of God who has lost his or her dignity and has become a danger to humanity. "It is hard for us to wrap our minds around this today, but it is quite clear from the accounts of the Inquisition and, indeed, of the religious wars that continued to rage in Europe for nearly three centuries, that many of the fanatics who burned human beings at the stake were acting out of what they genuinely thought were the best interests of the victims. With the power of the state, they used fire, as opposed to simple execution, because it was thought to be spiritually cleansing. A few minutes of hideous torture on earth were deemed a small price to pay for helping such souls avoid eternal torture in the afterlife."[124]

By the sixteenth-century Reformation, Christian acceptance of violence as a means for enforcing compliance to doctrine had become widespread. Religion and politics in Europe were so entwined that it is often difficult to separate out causative factors for wars conducted during this period.[125] Clash for doctrinal legitimacy and political rivalry within the secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies led to reformations and often violent confrontations. The consequent divisions that ensued from reformation and counterreformation between Catholics and Protestants deteriorated to the infamous thirty years (1618-1648) religious war that claimed millions of lives and ended with the *treaty of Westphalia.*

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[121] Armstrong, *Fields of Blood,* 247.
[122] Armstrong, 247.
[123] McBrien, *Catholicism,* 122.
[124] Andrew Sullivan, "This is a Religious War", *New York Times,* October 7, 2001, accessed October 27, 2019 https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/07/magazine/this-is-a-religious-war.html
[125] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 25.

Meanwhile, with missionary zeal and supremacist ideology that characterised these contests, the imperialists from Europe were determined to colonise and evangelise the whole world with their philosophy and values. This explains the various theological justifications given to the slave trade and colonialism by some catholic and protestant missionaries of the period. "Christians have used Christianity to justify slavery of Africans and the removal to reservations, or death, of Native Americans."[126] And the reluctance and passive attitude of the hierarchy towards condemning the scandal and calling out the slave dealers till it was late, expose their irresponsibility as moral authorities and make them morally complicit in this evil. "There is no denying the fact that the Muslim Arabia and the Christian Europe were the authors and executors of this great tragedy. The slave dealers who were predominantly Christians caused suffering to far more people than were actually carried off into slavery."[127] This is not to say that their nefarious deeds have the approval of the Christian community, but the seeming silence and passivity from among the Christian hierarchy have great moral implications.

The indirect ripple effects of slave trade were too alarming. For fear of local slave raiders, people volunteered to be ritually dedicated to shrines by offering to belong to caste groups—where those dedicated to deities suffer the social cost of losing their dignity as humans and becoming tabooed as inferior and unclean—rather than losing their lives, freedom and roots to slavery.[128] It is true that the Christian hierarchy did not realise the enormity of this scandal. Some slave owners were Christians who justified the violence of slavery with the claim that it is a means of evangelization that offers slaves opportunity of salvation through conversion to the Christian faith. "As Europe extended itself into the world, Christian mission work was deemed an extension of colonial power. Christian missionaries undertook evangelising activity in the Americas, in Asia (India, China, and Japan), Africa—all over the world. Missionaries from Spain, France, and Portugal were sometimes persecuted in various settings due to resistance from indigenous people who mistook them with the colonial invaders."[129] It is good to note that even though they both came from the same place (Europe) and around the same time, there is a clear difference between the colonialists who were merely business politicians and the missionaries who came to evangelize and educate. However, the colonialists and the missionaries collaborated in the task of winning over the loyalty of the indigenous people whose resistance were often suppressed to compliance by

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[126] Jack Neilson-Palmeyer, *Is religion Killing Us* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 19.
[127] Venatius C. Oforka, *The Bleeding Continent* (Milton Keys: Xlibris, 2015), 61.
[128] Oforka, *The Bleeding Continent*, 60.
[129] Steffen, "Religion and Violence in Christian Traditions", 127.

colonial violence. Little wonder the concept of "bible in hand, sword in pocket" became a common cliché Africans used to describe this collaboration that brought them Christianity.

The embers of religious violence kept burning in the 20th century especially between Catholics and Protestants. The holocaust and the two world wars that took place in this century had no direct links to religion, but religiously motivated violence was on the rise from the 1970s with the rise of terrorism. Some of these hostilities were external i.e. against members of other religious sects like Jews and Muslims, while some were internal violence among Christian denominations. "The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (a section of the former Yugoslavia) in the 1990s is a prime example, as Orthodox Christians had pillaged and killed Bosnian Muslims and Croatian Catholics by the tens of thousands."[130] "Protestants and Catholics were engaged in mutual terrorist actions against each other in Northern Ireland."[131] Protestants had long hated Roman Catholics and fought with them in America.[132] Most of these acts of violence were backed by theological justifications and have carried more momentum in this age of terror than we had in the past.

Many religious leaders gave their blessings to the US war against terror, saying that it conformed to just war principles. President Bush said confidently that "God is not neutral in conflicts such as these, implying that God is with us in our noble cause of hunting down terrorists."[133] The vicious attacks and bombings of abortion clinic employees in the United States by extremist campaigners, who claim they are fighting for God, as well as the various cases of violence against homosexuals in the name of the faith, fall into the category of religious violence from among the Christian groups—some of which are more political than religious. Charlene Burns captures the present situations in these words; "with extremist interpretations of the scriptures, preaching in churches aimed at support of a war that has been incorrectly framed in terms of Christian versus Muslim, and isolated acts of violence by individuals against people like abortion clinic employees and homosexual individuals. Some conservative groups believe that Christ's Second Coming will not happen until Israel is solidly in the hands of the Jewish people."[134] These are the so-called Christian Zionists who religionise every violent political affront as part of this divine eschatological plan.

What can one say about the excessive superstitious violence from among Christians in the name of fighting the devil through violent exorcism and deliverance sessions that

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[130] History.com,"Bosnian Genocide," http://www.history.com/topics/bosnian-genocide. Accessed, 22nd November, 2020.
[131] Steffen, "Religion and Violence in Christian Traditions", 129.
[132] Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, 170.
[133] Neilson-Palmeyer, *Is religion Killing Us?*, 15.
[134] Burns, *More Moral than God*, 25.

sometimes lead to the death of the victims who are accused of witchcraft and possession by demons? The superstitious belief in witchcraft and the devastating danger it brings, make most Christians—especially from Africa, Latin America and Asia—resort to violent allegations, detentions and torture of those accused. "According to the report, accusations seem to arise from 'multi-crisis' situations and usually affect children who are already vulnerable."[135] In these acts of systematic religious violence, the perpetrators strongly believe that they are doing favour to the accused and also saving the community from the calamities. This renewed version of witch-hunting is popular among Pentecostal Christians and has caused "widespread harassment, torture and violent deaths of those accused of witchcraft—many of the stigmatised children are tortured by being bathed in hot water, branded with hot irons, locked up in dark rooms for months and chained in prayer houses."[136] These Pentecostals justify the violence with scriptural references like Exodus 22:18, "Suffer not a witch to live".

In summary therefore, it is obvious that Christianity has its share of rationalising, executing and justifying violence in the name of God. This is more evident especially in its golden imperial period that spanned through the middle ages till the enlightenment. Many scholars are of the view that "in comparison to Islam, Christianity for most of its history has had a worse record of violence. The Crusades, Inquisition, and bloody religious wars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries meant that "Europe saw far more blood spilled for religion's sake than the Muslim world did."[137] However since the last two centuries, only isolated cases of Christian motivated violence has been seen, this is because Christianity since this period has worked to rediscover its pacific values which have become a major influence in the present day democratic values and principles. Pope John Paul II at the first Sunday of the Lenten season of the new millennium invited all Christians to an examination of conscience for the "purification of memory." He implored forgiveness for the past and present sins of the church. He said, "Today, the First Sunday of Lent, seemed to me the right occasion for the Church, gathered spiritually round the Successor of Peter, to implore divine forgiveness for the sins of all believers. Let us forgive and ask forgiveness! We cannot fail to recognize the infidelities to the Gospel committed by some of our brethren, especially during

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[135] UNICEF, "Cases of Children Accused of Witchcraft Rising in Parts of West and Central Africa", July 28, 2010, Accessed October 27, 2019, https://www.unicef.org/protection/nigeria_55301.html

[136] Valentine Iwenwanne, "Pentecostal Pastors Continue to brand Children in Nigeria", *TRT World*, December 7, 2018, accessed October 17, 2019, https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/pentecostal-pastors-continue-to-brand-children-as-witches-in-nigeria-22281

[137] Neilson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 17.

the second millennium. Let us ask pardon for the divisions which have occurred among Christians, for the violence some have used in the service of the truth and for the distrustful and hostile attitudes sometimes taken towards the followers of other religions."[138] The Christian tradition has championed the course of non-violence and respect for human rights in the face of terrifying and violent challenges of the present day Islamic terrorism.

1.2.6 Islam and the Story of Violence

Allahu Akbar is a common Islamic phrase that expresses the greatness of Allah the God of the Muslims. This phrase has become the refrain for terrorist activities, breeding feelings of fear and uneasiness whenever it is mentioned. The world security is always at alert against surprise attacks that accompany Islamic presence and slogans because Muslims have been in the public security discussions for the wrong reasons. Islam since 9/11 attack has been associated with violence especially as violent Islamists continuously threaten world peace with killings and bombardments. But one wonders how much Islamic history and Identity have to do with violence and terror. Of course, when one thinks of Islam and violence, one would be tempted to begin with the Arab/Muslim suicide bombers who crashed hijacked planes into buildings in New York and Washington. This is not the beginning of Islam's experience with violence because long before 9/11, Islam has since its beginning in 611 AD been at the centre of violent religious experiences. So "If we begin in 611 rather than 9/11, the first expression of violence and Islam is not violence directed by or sanctified through Islam but rather violence against Muslims."[139]

It may sound so strange today to call Islam a victim of violence, especially with recent experiences of some violent activities that are rationalised, perpetuated and justified mostly by people who profess as Muslims. Since most terrorist attacks in the world today are linked to people with Islamic roots or affiliation, it is common to consider Muslims as perpetrators of religiously associated violent activities rather than as victims. "Sadly, Islam is currently more "infamous" for its violent history than other faiths because of recent episodes of very public violence committed in the name of Allah (literally, "the God"). Nonviolence is not often associated with Islam even though it began with the peaceful preaching of a simple message that God is one."[140] Is it plausible to agree with Reuven Firestone that "Islam is

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[138] "Day of Pardon", *Homily of the Holy Father*, Sunday, 12 March 2000, accessed August 21, 2020. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20000312_pardon.html
[139] Bruce B. Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement with Injustice and Violence", Mark Juergensmeyer et al, *Violence and the World's"*, 141.
[140] Burns, *More Moral than God*, 26.

perhaps the most misunderstood religion to the West, and many stereotypes still hinder clarity about its tenets and practices? Western prejudice toward Islam is as old as Islam itself."[141] This is why there is need to analyse Islam's engagement with violence from its beginnings till this time.

When Islam began around 611 with the revelations received by Muhammad ibn Abdullah, Muslims were a minority sect in the Arabian society. Muhammad and his handful of members believed that they possess the true and complete message of God which has been handed down since the time of Adam, continued through the Jewish prophets and Jesus till its completion in the last prophet Muhammad. During the 12 years of revelations to Muhammad between 610 and 622, "Muslims were the nonviolent members of Arabian society in general and urban Mecca, in particular."[142] But this sect came under attack from the largely polytheistic population in mecca, especially the aristocrats who were not only opposed to Mohammad's monotheistic ideologies but also his social activism against poverty and inequality. During this time, Muhammad and his group maintained nonviolence in the midst of hostile countrymen. "The early followers faced curses and death threats from prominent Meccans, some of whom were relatives of the prophet."[143] This handful of believers became closely knitted in their victimhood as well as through the inspiration of some verses of the revealed Qur'an that encouraged nonviolence and social justice like the one that says; "And do not approach the property of the orphan, except with what is better till he comes of age. Take not life which God has made sacred." (Surat al-Anam, Q 6:151-152). When the persecution became so intolerable, Muhammad and his group embarked on the first *hijrah* or exodus to Medina where he established a community of followers that eventually mobilized to attack their former aggressors in Mecca.

The war against Mecca by Muhammad and his community was considered to be a defensive war for the survival of the community and faith rather than a contest for superiority or wealth. It is so interesting to observe how a nonviolent minority group of religious activists transformed into a band of violent militants, and how a peaceful religious leader could turn into a brutal military commander. Of course the Medina experience was like and empowerment to the hitherto minority sect. Muhammad gained numerous followers and benefactors from Medina who were attracted to the new faith by the content of its message and the charismatic nature of its leader. Consequently, he regarded his *Hijra* as a necessary

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[141] Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999), 13.
[142] Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement", 143.
[143] Lawrence, 143.

and successful religious experience which Allah has ordered to save the faith from extinction and to increase believers in number and in strength. Empowered by divine approval, "Muhammad and his followers entered into an unending conflict with their Meccan kinsmen and opponents. From 623 to 632, Muhammad planned thirty-eight battles that were fought by his fellow believers. He led twenty-seven military campaigns. It became obvious that the nonviolent protestor had become a general, waging war again and again."[144]

From the first military campaign at the wells of *Badr*, to the very last, Muslims regarded their battles as divinely willed. They were far outnumbered in their first battle against Meccans, and the Qur'an has it that "Muhammad and his followers should have lost; they would have lost, except for the intervention of angels." (Q 3:122-127). Muslims believe that even in defeat (like in *Uhud*), Muhammad and his followers saw God's will. "The prophet resolved to learn deeper lessons behind his bitter defeats. He regarded the defeat of *Uhud* to be as important for Islam as the victory of *Badr*, for in defeat as in victory Muslims had to acknowledge that their fate was not theirs but God's to decide."[145] This spiritual interpretation makes the Muslims see in Muhammad's military expeditions a spiritual journey with ups and downs. Their conquests invariably became a means of conversion and propagation as they conquer and compel cities to surrender both political power and their faith to a superior religion. "The Qur'an and early tradition literature tell us that some early Muslims were quite militant, while others refused to go to war. Some wished to promote Islam with the sword, while others were willing to do so only through the word. Some were ready to initiate war in order to advance the cause of the faithful, while others were only willing to fight in defence of the community."[146]

Beyond the battlefield, Muhammad never ceased trying to convert his Meccan opponents to the religion of Islam.[147] He embarked on a peaceful pilgrimage return to Mecca in 630 and yet faced the battle of Hunian to subdue his enemies and punish the infidels. He made a pact with several neighbouring tribes who converted to Islam. Muslims believe that Muhammad fought these necessary battles under God's inspiration for the survival and spread of Islam. "Though he had forsaken nonviolence, he had not embraced violence as a way of life, only as an expedient to a higher end."[148] In all as noted above, "Muhammad personally participated in at least twenty-seven military battles and sanctioned about fifty-

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[144] Lawrence, 145.
[145] Lawrence, 145.
[146] Firestone, *Jihad*, vi.
[147] Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement",146.
[148] Lawrence, 146.

nine others. The Quran itself valorises these battles: in Sura 8, for example, we read that God instigated the battle of Badr in 624 CE and sent angels to ensure victory."[149] The successors of Muhammad after his death, continued with the violent propagation of the faith, to keep the converts committed and also to win more followers. "When several tribes tried to withdraw from the treaty that bound them to Muhammad, Abu Bakr fought them in what became known as the *Rida* wars, the wars of apostasy or repudiation of Islam. For many scholars, this period initiates the practice of open warfare in the name of Islam. It is said to be the time when jihad, or war in defence of the faith, came to be associated with Islamic expansion."[150]

The concept of jihad in Islamic tradition is broader than its narrow interpretation as holy warfare. Jihad literally means struggle or strive against evil or spiritual weakness. Hence Muslim scholars divide jihad into two; greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*) and lesser jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*) with the former representing the struggle against the self and only the "lesser jihad" referring to warring in the path of God.[151] The military expeditions carried out in the name of the faith are lesser than the internal spiritual struggle. "This jihad consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defence."[152] Jihad is waged against idolaters, apostates, infidels and polytheists, with expectation of material reward here on earth or heavenly reward in paradise.

The division of Islam into Shiites, Sunnis, and Sufis was also characterised by violent conflicts between Muslims caused by doctrinal variances. In the 8th century, a group of Shiite militants emerged known as *Ismaili Shiites* or Assassins. It was a messianic movement of the followers of Isma'il that fought and murdered people to further their leader's political goal. "They conducted a "war of terror" against kings, princes, and holy men who condemned the sect. Within the Ismaili, the Assassins were believed to be among the most faithful of Muslims. As such, they earned the ultimate prize—immediate entry into Paradise upon death."[153] Even the crusaders dreaded this jihadist group for their brutality and loyalty to their chief.

The jihad was revitalised and emphasised during the crusades from the eleventh century when the crusaders on holy rampage captured Jerusalem in 1099 and some parts of the holy land. The Muslims led by Saladin in 1144 recaptured Jerusalem in a jihad that was a

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[149] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 27.
[150] Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement", 147.
[151] Firestone, *Jihad,* 17.
[152] Burns, *More Moral than God,* 27.
[153] Burns, 28. Ref. Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 45-47.

direct response to the Crusader's campaign. "It was during the fateful twelfth century that the doctrine of jihad was revived and heralded as a paramount duty to preserve Muslim territorial, political and symbolic integrity."[154] Jihad became the holy war fought by Muslims in defence of Jerusalem against the invasion by Christians on holy crusades. These conquests emboldened the Muslim leaders who over the centuries became so powerful in the Arab region. "Islam remained a central focus of identity as well as the ideological underpinnings for a variety of social and political movements."[155]

Islam became a force to recon with as the Seljukids and the Mongols unleashed brutal jihad that led to the emergence of three Islamic empires; Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal. Motivated by the jihad doctrine, the Ottomans attacked and raided many cities and converted them to Islam including the great Byzantine Empire after the conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453. "Islam became an explicit ideology, and building block of public prestige…. The conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul), was a singular moment that saw not just the collapse of the truncated Byzantine Empire but also the rededication of Constantinople as a Muslim Capital city."[156] Syria, Egypt and Hijaz region were conquered later in the sixteenth century. "With the possession of Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina, the Ottomans controlled the three holiest cities of Islam."[157]

The rise of the Ottoman Empire was the height of an Islamic hegemony characterised by numerous conquests that brought fear to their European rivals. According to Reuven Firestone, "the incredible success of the Conquest and the great civilization that arose along with it represented Europe's greatest threat, both politically and intellectually, for a thousand years. From the conquest of Spain in the early eighth century to the siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Turks in 1683, Islam represented a threat to the very physical existence of Christendom. This and Islam's achievement in all scientific and intellectual fields during its heyday in the Middle Ages caused a reaction in the West that epitomized Islam as cruel, evil, and uncivilized. This negative characterization began when Islam was powerful and Christianity weak but has continued into our own day."[158] Consequently European colonization prowess was antithetical to the Ottoman influence. What separated colonies like Pakistan and India was more of religious than political because great signs of incompatibility existed between the Muslim Pakistanis and the predominantly Hindu Indians. The increasing

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[154] Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement", 150.
[155] Lawrence, 151-152.
[156] Lawrence, 154.
[157] Lawrence, 155.
[158] Firestone, *Jihad*, 13.

influence of Western Europe met stiff resistance from the hitherto Islamised regions. "Muslim groups revolted against the ascendant, which has become the dominant, world order linked to Western Europe."[159] The internal strife within the Empire coupled with the overwhelming external influence of the Western European sea power that redefined the world order, saw to the collapse of the Islamic Empire and the eventual division of Muslim world into fragments of competing territories. However, Muslim groups have readjusted in response to this new challenge either in the form of revivalist protests, reformist resistance or Islamic fundamentalist opposition.

The concept of nation states that characterised the modern era invigorated the spirit of jihad, as an ideology that enables religious nationalism. For instance, "Sayyid Qutb the prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood who was convicted for killing President Massar of Egypt considered nationalism as "true" Islam where nationalism is the belief, homeland is Dar al-Islam, the ruler is God and the constitution is the Qur'an."[160] Nationalism gave Islamists a lifeline and an ideological platform to fight for an Islamic state. This led to the weaponisation and instrumentalisation of eschatological religion as a means for actualising this ideological nationhood that has been lost since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. It became expedient with the rise of America to power and the eventual establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine after the Second World War. Islamist groups saw in these developments the resurgence of the crusades that should be countered with stiff jihadist resistance. Consequently various Jihadist groups sprang up from most Muslim dominated countries to promote a new form of Islamic nationalism antithetical to the secularist nation building that planted Israel in the Middle East and against the new wave of globalisation championed by "Crusaders" from the West. For these sects of extremists, "the power of the United States and Israel has made Islam so rotten and corrupt that no external institution is now able to represent it credibly; it is only the pure intentions of the last surviving upright believers that can form the core of a new community of the elect."[161] So there is need for "true believers" to revive the power and purity of true religion through Jihad that brings back the eschatological influence of religion into the common life. This is evident in the ideology that motivated the Arab world to rise in fierce combats against the newly established state of Israel immediately it was declared sovereign. Since then, the Middle East

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[159] Lawrence "Muslim Engagement", 158.

[160] Bruce Lawrence, *Shattering the Myth; Islam beyond Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 68.

[161] Hans, G. Kippenberg, *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalisation* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press), 2011, 201.

has known no peace and the religious connection to the conflicts has turned it into the world's most troubled region till date.

Islamic fundamentalism is therefore a response to the crusader-championed globalisation by Islamists desperate to shield their religious identity against what they consider to be destructive cosmopolitan influence. These jihadists interpreted the world affairs from a parochially religious perspective and continuously reference the distant past to substantiate their claims for historical authenticity and scriptural accuracy. "References to early, even to ancient history are commonplace in public discourse. In the 1980s, during the Iran-Iraq war, for instance, both sides waged massive propaganda campaigns that frequently evoked events and personalities dating back as far as the seventh century, to the battles of Qadisiyya (637 C.E.) and Karbala (680 C.E.). The battle of Qadisiyya was won by the Arab Muslim invaders of Iran against the defending army of the Persian shah, not yet converted to Islam and therefore, in Muslim eyes, still pagans and infidels. Both sides could thus claim it as their victory—for Saddam Hussein, of Arabs over Persians, for the Ayatollah Khomeini, of Muslims over unbelievers."[162] There is a sort of Islamization of politics which gave religious interpretations and response to the impact of globalization, the crisis in the Middle East and great power politics. By the last three decades of the twentieth century, many militant Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram etc., sprung up in various Muslim dominated nations to demonstrate their opposition to these developments in various ways.

In the wake of the 21st century, Islamist response to the new trends changed the course of history with the 9/11 attack which snowballed the scourge of terrorism to an unprecedented magnitude. Terrorism adopted a global approach by exploiting the instruments of globalization to advance a jihadist course. Although President Bush and other Western leaders continuously deny its religious links by saying that the war against terrorism is not a war against Muslims, Osama bin Laden persisted that, this is a religious war, a war for Islam against infidels, and therefore, inevitably, against the United States, the greatest power in the world of the infidels."[163] He further described it as a war between aggressive crusaders and defensive believers, and Muslims have a stark choice, either to side with the infidel oppressors or to support the beleaguered but pure and resolute Muslim defenders."[164] The globalised nature of Islamic terrorism makes it possible for terrorist groups to operate in a

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[162] Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam, Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: The Modern Library,2003), xxiii.
[163] Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam,* xv.
[164] Lawrence, "Muslim Engagement",166.

network of individuals scattered all over the world. With the aid of modern information and communication technologies they could actualise their jihadist goals anywhere in the world. This is why their leaders like Bin Laden use the media to instigate individuals by "speaking to them directly, and commending their worthiness to participate in global jihad…."[165] Global terrorism developed and spread all over the world, causing untold harm in various cities through an unconventional warfare that includes suicide bombings and even establishment of an Islamic State. "It is certainly true that not all Muslims are terrorists, however, sadly we say that the majority of terrorists in the world are Muslims."[166] Hence, "from the assassination of Anwar Sadat to the fatwa against Salman Rushdie to the decade-long campaign of bin Laden to the destruction of ancient Buddhist statues and the hideous persecution of women and homosexuals by the Taliban to the World Trade Centre massacre, there is a single line. That line is a fundamentalist, religious one. And it is an Islamic one."[167] Samuel Huntington captures this trend in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, when he spoke about the "Islamic Resurgence" which entails the adaptation of Islamic civilization to the West, whereby Muslims accept modernity and reject western culture by embracing "Islam as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power and hope." The goal is to modernize, not to westernize, because Islam is not just a religion but a way of life. This resurgence is both ideological and revolutionary as it makes Muslims from the world over become increasingly conscious of their Islamic identity and manifestingly expressive of it, even in an extremely violent way. According to Huntington, "this resurgence involves efforts to reinstate Islamic law in place of western law, the increased use of religious language and symbolism, expansion of Islamic education… increased adherence to Islamic codes of social behaviour… increased domination of Islamic influence against secular governments, and expanding efforts to develop international solidarity among Islamic states and societies. Like Marxism and Protestant Reformation, it aims for a perfect society through commitment to fundamental change, rejection of the secular status quo of nation states and passionate institution of a new Islamic order that is moderately reformist or violently revolutionary."[168]

Another aspect of Islamic religious violence can be found in the absolutist interpretation and application of some of its punitive laws. Some of the punitive measures

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[165] Lawrence, 167.

[166] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence,* 1.

[167] Andrew Sullivan, "This is a Religious War",

[168] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 109-111.

meted on offenders as encoded in the Islamic law are usually harmful and violent. The sharia law is a central part of Islamic moral and legal framework. Some of the punishments encoded in the sharia are not only violent but extreme. Punishments like amputation for stealing, stoning for adultery, and even beheading for apostasy or blasphemy betrays Islam as a violent religion. This is why radical atheists like Sam Harris attacked religion on the basis of such fundamentalist approach to scriptural passages like "whoever changes his religion, kill him". He said that "the justice of killing apostates is a matter of mainstream acceptance, if not practice. This explains why there did not appear to be a single reasonable Muslim living on earth when the Ayatollah Khomeini put a bounty on the head of Salman Rushdie."[169] More so the instantaneous violent reactions and public unrests that follow any instance of profanity like in the case of Charlie Hebdo attack[170] and Miss World riots in Nigeria[171] further reveal this fundamentalist approach.

In a related vein, some vulnerable people suffer torture and violence for accusations of witchcraft, evil possession, drug addictions and apostasy. Muslim rehab centres and Koranic schools are established in the form of ghettos and torture houses where such people receive harsh treatments in the name of healing remedies and spiritual training. Parents and guardians freely send their troublesome wards to these places "believing that these schools have the spiritual power to heal. They don't mind how much the children are dehumanised, or how they're treated, as long as their child receives a Koranic education and is rehabilitated."[172] Typical examples of such torture centres were discovered in the cities of Kaduna, Kano, and Kastina of Northern Nigeria, where about 300 victims[173] with mental or character deformation were subjected to "the most debasing and inhuman conditions in the name of teaching them the Koran and reforming them,"[174]

Islam, as all religious civilizations, represents a complex system of values and ritual, theology and folklore, law and faith. Like all religions, it contains within it, both the deep and

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[169] Sam Harris, *The End of Faith* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 116.

[170] *BBC News,* "Charlie Hebdo attack: Three Days of Terror", 14 January 2015, Accessed October 30, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237

[171] *The Telegraph,* "100 Killed in Miss World Riots in Nigeria", 22 Nov. 2002, accessed October 30, 2019, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1413995/100-killed-in-Miss-World-riots-in-Nigeria.html

[172] Mayeni Jones, "Nigeria's Tortore House Masquerading as Koranic Schools", *BBC News,* October 28, 2019, accessed October 30, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50167453

[173] *New York Times,* "Hundreds of Chained Men and Boys Are Rescued from Nigeria", September 27 2019, accessed October 27, 2019 https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/world/africa/nigeria-boys-torture-slavery.html

[174] Yaron Steibuch, "Hundreds of tortured Students freed from Islamic Schools in Nigeria", *New York Post*, September 27, 2019, Accessed October 27, 2019, https://nypost.com/2019/09/27/hundreds-of-tortured-students-freed-from-islamic-school-in-nigeria/

the simple, the sublime and the cruel, the exalted and the ignoble.[175] It is obvious that Islam has its version of non-violence but the various factors discussed above express its stint with violence over the years of its existence. It can be observed that Islam's contact with political power gifted it the penchant for struggles and violence which the globalising impact of modernity could not defuse or liquefy. Is it any wonder then that in the opening decade of the twenty-first century, Islam is defined and understood as a phenomenon of monotheistic faith associated with fear, violence and terrorism?[176]

1.2.7 African Traditional Religion and Violence

The cosmologies of African Traditional Religion ATR predate the experience of colonialism. Yet the colonial version of African faith and practices as savage and brutal has shaped numerous descriptions of the African identity. This is as a result of lack of written documents of the African past and the reliance on oral tradition. More so ATR has no central doctrine and hierarchy which gives it the ability to adapt to dynamics without getting subsumed. Christian and Muslim missionaries looked down on this unique element and condemned the indigenous beliefs as barbaric in their bid to bring salvation and civilization to the people they considered pagans. But African Cultural reality is intrinsically and holistically religious. The common belief is that nothing happens in the physical without a spiritual connection. Hence, "the peoples who subscribe to the traditional religious beliefs find in it not only answers to most practical and esoteric questions but also a means of drawing directly on the spirit world to affect events in the material world."[177] In the world of ATR, life is totally spiritual.

African Traditional Religion refers to the original belief systems of the African people, practiced before the advent of Christianity, Islam and other religions, and sustained in various aspects of African life. Although these beliefs are practiced largely in Africa, they have been transported to other parts of the world during slave trades and migration of the Diasporas. Consequently, "African Traditional Religion remains primarily an African phenomenon, and as a result, it is tightly connected to the cultures and realities of the continent…. It is a repository of oral traditions without a single founder or central sacred text but, nonetheless, with a striking number of coherent themes across this vast continent….

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[175] Reuven Firestone, *Jihad*, 13.
[176] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence,* 1.
[177] Nathalie Wlodarczyk, "African Traditional Religion and Violence" Jeurgensmeyer et al, 173.

While the many peoples of Africa have their own deities and spirits as well as their own rituals and celebrations, their traditional belief systems share some core features."[178] This system is "poly-monotheistic" in the sense that it expresses belief in one Supreme Being as well as acknowledges other lesser deities and ancestors that individuals and communities appeal to. One special element of the ATR is that "these gods are assumed to be largely morally neutral. Their power can be used for positive or negative—constructive or destructive—purposes."[179] Although constructive use of spiritual power is encouraged, this ambivalence and ambiguity makes it possible to manipulate forces for destructive selfish purposes.

In the African belief systems, every individual has connection with the spirits, yet there are spiritual practitioners like priests, spirit mediums, diviners, healers, witch doctors and witches, who specialise in spiritual matters. The belief in the inseparable link between the material and spiritual powers in African belief allows for syncretism which incorporates some traditional cults and rituals with the practice of imported religions like Christianity and Islam. Hence the ambivalence of spiritual powers that operates in the ATR is often transposed to the practices and rituals of the new faiths. "African traditional beliefs, offer a means of engaging with the world that has the added edge of spirit power. But the end to which it is directed is usually dictated by the concerns of the material world. This has made it at times a violent practice and at others a promoter of peace."[180]

Witchcraft in ATR is always associated with untold violence. Witches are often accused of being responsible for evil omens. "They often become scapegoats for unwanted developments and events, and rarely do the accused witches own up to the activities of which they are accused."[181] Most of these accusations are levelled against children, elderly people, widows, widowers, people with disabilities and other vulnerabilities. The reasons for these accusations are mostly related to their misfortunes which in ATR makes them bearers of bad omens. Since life is not improving for them, they knowingly or unknowingly bring untold harm to the community. The accused often faces mob justice which often amounts to public executions or forced exorcism by a witch doctor using severe beatings and starvation that sometimes lead to death of the accused. "Some of the medications and potions witch doctors

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[178] Wlodarczyk, 174.
[179] Wlodarczyk, 175.
[180] Wlodarczyk, 187.
[181] Wlodarczyk, 176.

provide require human body parts—some of which leave the donor dead."[182] In Nigeria today, sources reveal that witchcraft beliefs are common, and that accused witches suffer harsh violence and death. "Even the police usually express 'indifference' to these violence may be because witchcraft itself is a punishable crime in Nigerian law…. In 2004, at least 25 accused witches died by what is known as 'trial-by-ordeal'."[183]

Violence in ATR also manifests in various conflict situations. It is true that African traditionalists never engaged in Holy wars like Christians and Muslims, but in most inter-tribal conflicts, warriors were required to consult with the spirit mediums for rituals and protective charms in view of successful battles. As Nathalie Wlodarczyk puts it, "in warfare, traditional religious practice offers a means of enhancing powers to fight, survive, and win."[184] Some of these rituals are often transactional in the sense that warriors turn to spiritual practitioner to gain spiritual protective powers in exchange for sacrifices that may involve ritual killing of humans. "The at times violence nature of rituals also means violence is visited on victims who fall prey to these spiritual practitioners…. This protection usually comes in the form of charms, amulets, and potions alongside behavioural rules and taboos that must be upheld."[185] However, human sacrifice is rarely condoned in ATR and considered a destructive form of spiritual practice. But no one is in doubt about this reality even in this modern era. Cases of ritual killings for amassing great wealth or wining political office still abound till this day. And the transactional nature of these rituals requires that value of object of ritual determines the potency of the ritual. While some rare animal body parts are required as powerful ingredients for magic, high premium is placed on human body parts, especially from people with unique characteristics like albinos, dwarfs, virgins and people with hunchbacks.

Report has it that recently albinos are being attacked in places like Tanzania, where "they are mutilated and killed to benefit others through an illegal trade in albino skin, bones and hair that are used in potions and charms to bring good luck and make people rich."[186] Another report says that over 30 ATR priests were arrested in 2004 when 50 mutilated bodies

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[182] Wlodarczyk, 180

[183] Jill Schnoebelen , *Witchcraft Allegations, Refugee Protection and Human Rights: A Review of the Evidence, By Policy Development and Evaluation Service* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees , 2009) 36. Accessed November 15, 2019, https://www.unhcr.org/4981ca712.pdf

[184] Wlodarczyk, 180

[185] Wlodarczyk, 183-184.

[186] Gettleman, Jeffrey. "Albinos, Long Shunned, Face Threat in Tanzania" *New York Times* (June 8, 2008), accessed November 15, 2019, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/08/world/africa/08albino.html (last visited Feb. 07, 2020)

used for ritual sacrifices were found near shrines in Anambra State, Nigeria.[187] However, one cannot speak less of the "tradition of hunting societies in which hunters resort to spiritual help to trap and kill animals in the time of peace and enemies in times of war."[188] This practice manifested in civil wars like in Uganda, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe where warriors resort to old traditions to seek spiritual legitimacy and ritualistic immunity against death and injury. There is also the tradition of dedicatory sacrifices (evident in the caste systems), and the practice of retainer burials where servants, maids and even wives are buried alive alongside their diseased masters/husbands to accompany them to the world beyond. It is surprising that most of these acts of violence may still be happening in some African communities notwithstanding the predominance of modernity. Even some Christian and Muslim spiritual ministers—as already discussed above—take the place of witch doctors when they practice not too different violent rituals in the name of exorcism. This is a typical reflection of how African superstitious beliefs like witchcraft are incorporated into brands of Christianity and Islam and transposed to suit changing circumstances. A recent report by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)[189] and The UN Refuge Agency (UNHCR)[190] highlighted the violence and abuse towards children accused of witchcraft, possession by evil spirits by Christian[191] and Islamic[192] spiritualists. These instances manifest the great influence ATR has on the African cultures and worldviews, even when most Africans of today profess other faith systems like Christianity and Islam. Such influence gives evidence to how much African Traditional Religion motivates, perpetuate, and justifies violence.

The issue regarding the history of violence in religious traditions exposes the link between religion and violence which all religious traditions without exception manifests in ritual and in practice. One would observe that as a social phenomenon, religion comes in contact with other elements to form the entirety of a person as one who believes. But the persuasive influence of religion on individuals and communities as demonstrated above makes one wonder whether it is in the identity of religion to cause harm.

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[187] Schnoebelen, "Witchcraft Allegations", 37.
[188] Wlodarczyk, 185.
[189] *UNICEF* "Cases of Children Accused of 'Witchcraft' Rising in parts of West and Central Africa, At a Glance: Nigeria", 28 July 2010, Accessed November 27, 2019, https://www.unicef.org/protection/nigeria_55301.html
[190] Schnoebelen, "Witchcraft Allegations", 37.
[191] Iwenwanne, "Pentecostal Pastors Continue",
[192] "Nigeria: Police Free Chained, Abused Children from Islamic School", *DW News*, September 27, 2019, Accessed December 5, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/nigeria-police-free-chained-abused-children-from-islamic-school/a-50605407

Chapter II: Violence and the Identity of Religion

2.1 Is Religion Prone to Violence?

The historical excursus in the previous chapter reveals the experiences of violence in religions since past centuries. This indicates that every religion as well as every period has had its own share of this experience. Hence one may be tempted to rush to the conclusion that religion rationalises, motivates, authorises, perpetuates and justifies violence. Of course it will be hasty to draw such inferences. But one fact remains clear: the interplay between religion and violence presents religion in bad light despite its positive characteristics and derivatives. "The fact that religion is so frequently involved in communal violence raises intriguing questions about faith, religious organizations, and religious leaders. Why is it that religious communities whose holy scriptures call for peace are engaged in so many wars and violent conflicts all over the globe? What about the Golden Rule and the teachings in the world's religions calling for tolerance, acceptance, and loving-kindness for all people? And the yearning for the eschaton, an end time when all the peoples of the world live together in peace and harmony, without war or conflict which is at the center of all religions? [193] Simply put, why speak of violence in Religion? Questions like these prompt one to examine whether it is in the identity of religion to be violent or not. And this cannot be done without confirming if violence is peripheral to the religious imagination or at its core, and indicating the factors that account for the violence we experience in religion and how fundamental these factors may be to the identity of religion as a phenomenon.

Scholars have divided opinions in determining if violence in religion is fundamental or circumstantial. Some agree that religion promotes violence while some attribute the violence in religion to some other social and natural factors. Although whether religion is distinguishable from these factors remains an ongoing debate, the link between religion and violence opens up various discussions on what religion really is and what it is not. Many researchers on religious violence have provided various classifications of views which can be narrowed to three major approaches namely; first is the deterministic view that sees religion as the essential cause of religious violence. For them, "violence is inherent in the very institution of religion and traceable to its deep structure and primordial essence."[194] The second is the Dualistic or Manichean approach which holds a two-sided view that some religions are violent while some are not. This approach distinguishes between religions that

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[193] Selengut, *Sacred Fury*, 1.
[194] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 356.

are inherently violent and those that are inherently peaceful. It takes the middle way by making violence characteristic of some particular religions. The third approach is the instrumentalist view that sees religion as an "infinitely flexible tool at the disposal of rational agents who engage in violence for practical reasons. In this account, religion is epiphenomenal, a medium for strategic or materialist motives."[195]

At the basis of these classifications is an understanding of some of the basic elements that characterise the identity of religion—which were discussed in the preliminary part of this thesis. As a meaning seeking creature, man is naturally religious. This religiousness comprises the experiences that make one transcend the biological character of existence bringing ideas that give ultimate order and meaning to one's life. According to Richard Wentz, religiousness is an inevitable universal human characteristic; to reject it is to reject one's freedom and of course transcendence. For him, "to be human is to be religious. Unless we become merely functional or mechanical entities, we will try to find ways of proving that we are more than biological organisms, that we have insights and make decisions on the basis of some sense of ultimate order and meaning."[196] Our religiousness is not just conceptual, we also express it in actions which often creates community of religious likeness when we align with people of similar religiousness. This is because, when human beings discover their religiousness there is a tendency to build walls even without noticing it. "Their understanding of who they are and how they fit into the scheme of things is a religious affair, whether it is recognised as that or not. It is part of the quest for order and meaning. When the walls begin to take shape, our religiousness translates itself into religion…. Religiousness acted out within walls is religion—whether we call it religion or not."[197]

Wentz's ideas are not exhaustive of what religion or religiousness entails, but they provide a general insight to some elements that make religion an ambience of influence like every other persuasive phenomenon. Wentz explains that when one says "I am a Christian", it implies that one creates special ideas, beliefs and values, engages in special practices and rituals, behaves in a certain way and identifies with a distinctive community in one's quest for ultimate order and meaning. Suffice it to say that based on this explanation, religion divides; but division is not always a bad thing. This is because, "Religions are walls erected based on our quest for order and meaning. And building walls is inevitable and good as long as people are more important than walls. When it is the other way around, bad things may be

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[195] Aran and Hassner, 356.
[196] Richard E. Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things in the Name of Religion* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1993), 14.
[197] Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things,* 25.

done in the name of religion."[198] It follows that these religious divides are compartments of identities that bring ultimate order and meaning to the adherents who comfortably align to them. This affiliation affects the way they think and behave. But does this explain why some people do bad things in the name of religion? Does it give insight to the whole discussion about violence in religion?

The first approach to be considered in this debate is the deterministic view that holds that religion is the essential source and cause of violence in the name of God. Proponents of this view consider religion as dangerous and inherently violent in a way. They believe that violence is traceable to the very essence and institution of religion because "religious beliefs are uniquely comprehensive and dogmatic: they offer believers a strong and certain worldview."[199] These essentialists like Charles Selengut, Charles Kimbal, Richard Wentz, Lloyd Steffen, and John Hick disagree with the instrumentalist view that religion is a delicate tool at the behest of other social factors. Selengut in his *Sacred Fury* "insists that religious violence is not a cover-up for economic or cultural disputes or group competition and envy but a spiritual and theological essence of religious organizations. What this perspective teaches is that religious conflict and violent encounters are, above all, sacred struggles on behalf of religious truth and divine revelation. Holy wars are encounters between good and evil, between truth and falsehood, between the children of God and the offspring of Satan."[200] And since light and darkness is in constant struggle, real believers must necessary be on the side of light with every means at their disposal—even violent ones. It follows that, "in this encounter, pious believers are not free agents permitted to choose between violence and nonviolence but are drafted into God's infantry to fight the Lord's battles and proclaim his message to all the world."[201] The moral implication of this restricted approach is that it ignores and trivializes other historical circumstances that necessitate such violence and by so doing puts responsibility solely on the deterministic and imperative nature of religious injunctions, leaving actors with little or no agency. Believers should therefore pride themselves in violence for God—be it ritualistic or confrontational—since it is necessary for religious growth and deserving of God's blessing and ultimate redemption.

The strength of this approach stems from the characteristic nature of religious faith, organisation and leadership. Acts of religious violence rather than being arbitrary or

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circumstantial, are essentially connected to religion as acts of faith which are eminently reasonable to "believers" and rest on what Richard Rubinstein calls "a coherent principled theological rationale"[202]. Hence for the deterministic approach, religious violence has religious motivations, and is executed as religious obligation with an ultimately religious goal in view. "All religion is inherently prone to violence. . . . Religion causes violence."[203]

The nature of religion as absolutist shades light to this perspective. Determinists believe that religion has to do with ultimate truths about an ultimate being or reality that gives ultimate commands and brings meaning and fulfilment to man. This absolutist character of religion gives it the proclivity for violence, since religious injunctions are considered inerrant and incontestable imperatives from an infallible being which behoves one to conform unreservedly and identify their actions and motivations as springing from ultimate purposes and intentions. When human action is clothed with ultimacy, there is tendency to exempt it from moral evaluations which breeds the propensity to commit violence. Brian Smith agrees that "violence is authorised by religion because religion is inherently absolutist in the type of authoritative claims it makes and in the all-encompassing nature of its demands on its followers."[204] This exposes how powerful an ambience of influence religion is.

Religion is so powerful to the extent that it influences people's decisions and actions. According to Lloyd Steffen, "the power of religion to affect behaviour is especially visible when it inspires violence. It takes a powerful motivator to incite a person to inflict intentional harm on others, even to kill, but it is an extraordinary power that is able to motivate suicide. Religious suicide is perhaps the best exemplar of religions power…. the perpetrators of the September 11, 2001, attacks murdered and sacrificed their own lives in a cause that they apparently believed was religiously sanctioned. In this case, we see more than violence; we see the power of religion expressing itself through violence."[205] The ultimacy of religious power can manifest constructively or destructively in the sense that religiously motivated actions appeal to ultimacy to establish meaning and subordinate morality to the whims of religion. "By reasonable moral reckoning, life itself is a preeminent value in the hierarchy of the goods of life, but even the good of life is subject to subordination in the face of

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[202] Richard Rubinstein, ''The Temple Mount and My Grandmother's Paper Bag'' in *Jewish-Muslim Encounters: History, Philosophy, and Culture*, ed. Charles Selengut (St. Paul: Paragon, 2001), 141.
[203] Hector Avalos, *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2005), 18.
[204] Brian K. Smith, "Monotheism and Its Discontents: Religious Violence and the Bible," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66, (1998): 406.
[205] Lloyd Steffen, *Holy War, Just War: Exploring the Moral Meaning of Religious Violence* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 13.

ultimacy."[206] "In a world of absolute truth, in matters graver than life and death, there is no room for dissent and no room for theological moral doubt, but a big room for violence."[207] "So, when zealous and devout adherents elevate the teachings and beliefs of their tradition to the level of absolute truth claims, they open a door to the possibility that their religion will become evil."[208] One could say therefore, that by the virtue of these absolute claims, religion can be dangerous.

Steffen considers religion to be dangerous like fire is; capable of promoting as well as destroying life. This is as a result of its absolute character. He believes that "religion is dangerous—and never not dangerous because of its absolute ultimacy…. Ultimacy is an incendiary concept fraught with the potential for creating violence. But violence emerges from religion only when ultimacy is transformed and becomes equated with the idea of the Absolute."[209] Although he remarked that it is wrong to identify ultimacy with absolutism even though they are related, he observed that it is an absolutist understanding of ultimacy that makes religion dangerous. This is because, absolutism entails ultimacy in a way that encompasses everything, both positive and negative. According to him, "the idea that an absolute ultimacy entails evil is hardly hidden even if it is sometimes not noticed. Absolutism necessarily requires that the presence and persistence of evil are located in the absolute itself, for the absolute encompasses everything."[210] Hence religion is dangerous when ultimacy is equated with absolutism because, "people armed with absolute truth claims are closely linked to violent extremism."[211] In the words of Selengut, "religion can tell us that it is ultimately right to love our neighbors, but it can also instruct us that it is our sacred duty to kill them. Religious violence is among the most pressing and dangerous issues facing the world community. The fervently faithful, acting in the name of religion, have, in the last decades, murdered hundreds of thousands of people throughout the globe, and groups of militants, in various religious communities, are organized into terrorist networks whose avowed goal is to destroy all those who oppose their religious goals."[212]

Absolutism breeds other characteristics that make proponents of this deterministic view say that religion is inherently dangerous. They observe that it is these absolute truth claims that make adherents of particular faith traditions create a common identity that is

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[206] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 17.
[207] Sullivan, "This is a Religious War" https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/07/magazine/this-is-a-religious-war.html
[208] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 52.
[209] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 23.
[210] Steffen, 31.
[211] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 52.
[212] Selengut, *Sacred Fury*, 2-3

exclusivist and contradictory to others. "The construction of an identity" according to Michael Jerryson "requires the distinction between those within and outside the imagined community. This politicized element has been the genesis for many structural forms of violence over the centuries."[213] "Forming community around absolutes therefore necessitates the construction of exclusionary boundaries against any and all who reject the absolutist picture of ultimacy, and the creation of exclusionary boundaries eventuates in resentment, anger, hostility, and violence."[214] Absolutist impulse makes adherents naturally form separate communities of "the elect" with a high sense of chosenness that sets them apart from unbelievers who are usually denounced and regarded as damned enemies. "Once a particular group considers itself as divinely chosen and draws sharp boundaries between itself and others, the enemy has been clearly identified, and violence can become actual. Religion possesses special power for creating violence because its texts and injunctions have ways of locating eternal, supernatural, and absolutist impulses in the temporal world or the natural order."[215] Exclusivism is therefore another element that makes people like Martin Marty, Mark Juergensmeyer, Llyod Steffen and David Rapoport argue that religion by its essentially divisive tendencies is violent, since it creates strong distinctive identities in the form of "us" versus "them". Suffice it to mean that "religion can create identity and sustain community at the expense of "others" who are barred and excluded and, finally, demonized."[216] For religious reasons, people draw dividing lines between themselves and others, making "the elect denounce "others" … and often act violently against such unbelievers."[217] The danger here is that, in establishing an Other who is essentially irrational, fanatical, and violent, we legitimate coercive measures against that Other.[218]

The exclusivist argument is prevalent among critics who take the second approach—the dualistic or Manichean view. The Dualistic view attributes violent to the essence of particular religious traditions. According to this view, some religions by nature are inherently prone to violence while others are not. For example Religions like Islam are regarded as a cause for violence whereas others like Buddhism are considered pacific. Proponents of this position accuse Monotheistic religions of divisiveness more than others, in that they (monotheisms) tend to be essentially parochial in their doctrines, and dogmatic in their ideas

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[213] Michael Jerryson, "Buddhist Traditions and Violence", Jeurgensmeyer et al, 38.
[214] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 39.
[215] Martin E. Marty and Jonathan Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Inc., 2000), 28
[216] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 41.
[217] Marty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good* , 26.
[218] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 5.

more than other faith systems. The profession of faith in one God as well as the injunctions on one particular way of worship gives them the tendency to claim a monopoly on God or knowledge of his will with a high sense of elevated status that excludes—at the expense of the claims and knowledge of others. Some of these "critics say that religions' tendency to turn violent is especially true of monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Because by nature they invoke an exclusivist, jealous God, monotheistic religions cannot avoid perpetrating violence against those outside the faith."[219] These critics tend to exonerate polytheism from violence probably due to its pluralistic nature that accommodates multiplicity of beliefs and practices with little or no ontological constraints. They therefore consider monotheism to possess fundamental elements that appear to be exclusivist and may incite violence. Regina M. Schwarz argues in the *Curse of Cain: the violent Legacy of Monotheism* that the most basic of these exclusivist elements as encoded in monotheistic scriptures is "a principle of Oneness (one land, one people, one nation), which in monotheistic thinking (one Deity), becomes a demand of exclusive allegiance that threatens with the violence of exclusion."[220] She contends that biblical monotheism is inescapably bound up with violence because it has formed and continues to form identity by designating a chosen people apart from others, in a way that unavoidable provides divinely sanctioned justification for violence toward those outside the boundaries."[221]

The principle of oneness and its resultant "divine favouritism" characteristic of monotheistic traditions, distinguish them from other systems of religious beliefs. Scholars like Jonathan Sacks argue that this very principle of oneness emerged as a reaction to the disharmony caused by beliefs in competing deities of polytheistic traditions.[222] But the harmony believed to have been brought by monotheism further created its own calamities from misguided claims. This is because the history of monotheism has left some violent legacies which bothers on the exclusivist tendencies to "abhor, revile, reject and eject whatever it defines as outside its compass."[223] What monotheism has done is to eliminate the tribal conflicts characteristic of polytheistic traditions as well as to introduce an exclusivist privileged position that is realised in an unquestionable submission to one and only God the father of all peoples, nations and races. The result is the consequent "barrier building that generates a politics of insiders and outsiders, saved and lost, winners and losers; barrier

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[219] Marty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good* , 29.
[220] Regina M. Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 3.
[221] Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*, 5.
[222] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 4.
[223] Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*, 63.

building is inherently violent."[224] Proponents of this dualistic view seem to imply that the three major monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) can be blamed for most of the religiously motivated violence in history. Speaking about contemporary terrorism, Andrew Sullivan said, "It seems almost as if there is something inherent in religious monotheism that lends itself to this kind of terrorist temptation."[225]

Even within these monotheistic traditions, there are rivalries and conflicting tendencies whereby each of the three faiths attributes violence to the other in a bid to present itself as more pacific and authentic. "At the heart of all three faiths is the idea that within humanity there is one privileged position—favoured son, chosen people, guardian of the truth, gatekeeper of salvation—for which more than one candidate competes."[226] The rivalry among the Abrahamic faiths also reflects in their claims of being peaceful and their accusations against others for being violent. Christians accuse Muslims and Jews, Muslims accuse Christians and Jews, just as Jews accuse Christians and Muslims. John Docker demonstrates this inter-group contest within monotheism in these words; "I saw, and still see, monotheism …as a religion that works by reaction against other religions, or parts of its own religion, with which it disagrees. Monotheism's historical mode of existence tends therefore to be fractious and always potentially violent, wishing or attempting to exclude, persecute, discipline, erase the non-monotheistic world or adherents of monotheism it opposes. Its history, in Europe and the West, is riven by endless splits, between Old Testament and New, Catholicism, Protestantism, and multiple Protestant groups and grouplets from Puritans, Calvinists and Lutherans onwards, and such a fissiparous mode shows no sign of lessening."[227] Hence one does not need to be a religious expert to observe the exclusivist character and the potential for violence among monotheistic religions.

However, it will be hasty to conclude that violence is exclusive to monotheistic faith traditions because our discussions in the previous chapter reveal that all faith traditions (polytheism and monotheism) have their history of violent experiences. Every religion has extremists and fundamentalists who in their absolutist views carry out violence in the name of Religion. Hence, "fundamentalism is not confined to the great monotheisms. There are Buddhist, Hindu, and even Confucian fundamentalisms, which also cast aside many of the painfully acquired insights of liberal culture, which fight and kill in the name of religion and

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[224] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 40-41
[225] Andrew Sullivan, "This is a Religious War",
[226] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 99.
[227] John Docker, *The Origins of Violence Religion, History and Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), xiii.

strive to bring the sacred into the realm of politics and national struggle."[228] To say that violence is peculiar with monotheism amounts to being myopic and stereotypical in analysis. It is true that monotheism with its scriptural canons reveals some exclusivist qualities that may become catalyst for violence, but these qualities are not exclusive to the Abrahamic traditions. This is because, "it is equally true that plenty of cruelty and violence is on display in the pagan or non-biblically based religions of the world…. The Greek, the Norse and the Hindu gods are not exactly social democrats."[229] No religious tradition enjoys the monopoly of violence since in one time or another all traditions have had their violent episodes which were sometimes caused by factors external to religion.

To speak of external factors is to discuss the third approach which is the instrumentalist view. This is the view that religion is an ever-available instrument at the disposal of rational agents who perpetuate violence for practical reasons external to religion. This view appears to be more utilitarian that makes religion a means towards achieving a non-religious end. It agrees that it is not in the nature of religion to be violent. That religion is essentially peaceful but sensitive in a way that can be manipulated to serve the whims of violent individuals with the view of achieving a non-religious goal say political, economic, or ethnic. Proponents of this view like Julia Neuberger, Karen Armstrong, and Ann Widecombe say that religion is dangerous only when it is perverted and used to serve man's selfish motives. In this case, it is not religion that uses people, rather people use religion. They argue that since the sanctity of life is at the centre of every religious belief, violence in religion is an aberration and cannot be essential to religious beliefs. Consequently, the violent injunctions found in the sacred texts of religions lack essential connection to religious motivations. In this case, religion is not like fire, it is like a fuel that is poured to exacerbate and sustain the destructive fire of violence for underlying political or economic reasons.

When asked if religion is essentially dangerous, Julia Neuberger replied, "No. It's plainly not the nature of the religion. The nature of the religion is by no means inherently aggressive. There is an Islamist movement within Islam which, within Islamic countries is growing in influence and which is both quite fundamentalist and aggressive and has a variety of goals, one of which is to reclaim Islamic land for Islam. I think the best parallel really is: it's a bit like the Christians in the medieval period in the crusades, claiming land for Christendom…. But I don't think Islam is by its nature violent or aggressive. I think there are

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[228] Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Random House Inc., 2000), xi.
[229] Peter Berkowitz, "Thou Shall not Kill," *New Republic*, June 23, 1997, 42.

elements within Islam at the moment which are."[230] Her instrumentalist approach brings to fore the need to clarify what these elements are and whether they are religious or not. When Islamists or Crusaders act violently in the name of religion, their mission is primarily an expression of a religious opinion but more of an expression of relevance or superiority that has to do more with power rather than faith. In the face of violence therefore, religion is a susceptible instrument at the behest of people's impulses rather than a motivation. "It is neither good nor bad—it just is. I think it is good", said Neuberger "and it can be used for good and it can be used for evil. People prey on religion in order to justify and do terrible things and they prey on religion to do some very good things."[231]

The instrumentalist approach tries to present various external factors that necessitate what we call religious violence. Religion here is epiphenomenal in most religiously associated violence, in the sense that the primary objective has nothing to do with religion. For example, "the activities of pre-1948 underground movements in Israel and the campaigns fought by the Israel Defence Forces IDF may or may not be ''Jewish'' in character but it would be difficult to describe them as ''religious.'' After all, the motivation, definition of objectives, and their justification by political and military leaders as well as participants, betray no conscious religious component. Their logic was geopolitical and national."[232] This must be the reason why it is difficult to distinguish religious from ethno-national elements in most religious conflicts, since there is usually a common attitude of superior-identity projection in a combative way that betrays more politics than religion. Hence religion serves as a kind of non-rational tool in the hands of rational radicals who showcase their prowess and political relevance with the cloak of religion. This is a perversion of religion and religion cannot be blamed for being such a dangerous tool. Ann Widecombe acknowledges that "religion has always been dangerous when perverted for man's purposes…. So yes, if you pervert religion for man's ends, to promote a particular dynasty for example, or as it has been perverted in Northern Ireland, then it is dangerous…. But the answer to your question is that religion, perverted by man, can be highly dangerous and it is one of the worst forms of danger."[233]

In the instrumental approach, violence is dependent on the subject who wills to achieve a goal using religion as a means. Karen Armstrong accepted that religion can be

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[230] Julia Neubeerger, in *Conversations on Religion*, Mick Gordon and Chris Wilkinson, eds., (London: Continuum Books, 2008), 139.
[231] Neubeerger, in *Conversations on Religion*, 136.
[232] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 393.
[233] Ann Widdecombe, in *Conversations on Religion*, 181.

dangerous when used as an instrument for actualising powerful yearnings of man. She likened it to sex, "because it is dealing with very powerful emotions." And she emphasised that "every informed person would notice that much of the terrorism that we are experiencing at the moment is politically inspired. It is not inspired by religion, even though it may be articulated in a religious idiom."[234] The violence in Middle Eastern countries serves as Karen's model examples of the instrumentalist approach. Hamas and most of the conflicts in the Middle East are largely resistance movements against western ideologies imposed during the colonial period. But using religion as a means to express this remains a perversion. "Because once you kill in the name of God you have lost the plot completely. The respect for human life is crucial to all religions."[235] This must be the reason why Martha Crenshaw in her famous article titled *Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches* sees Terrorism as "a means to a political end and religion as a persuasive mask for political support."[236] Hence religious violence in the instrumentalist view is a situation where rational agents prey on religion in order to realise some political end.

These external factors that parade the religious banner in most instances of violence are principal but subtle in a way that it may be difficult to clearly distinguish them from real religious elements. This is why most contemporary anti-religious thinkers like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens argue strongly that religion is the source of the violence as a result of its ideologically non-rational positions that favour hate, anger, fervour and fanaticism. Although Bhikhu Parekh, Scott Appleby, and Charles Selengut also agree to this view in a way, the radical ideas of the above "evangelistic atheists" and their great detest for religion makes the discussions very interesting. "In their view religion is an anachronistic way of looking at the world and the cosmos—specifically, a very dangerous anachronism."[237] Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens stereotypically denounce religion as inimical and venomous to rational truth and critical thinking. Dawkins calls it a virus[238], Harris calls it lunacy[239] and Hitchens says it is poisonous in his famous phrase, "religion poisons everything"[240] The trio remained combative in their efforts to present religion as the source of most violent evils in the world. Dawkins puts it thus, "if you abolished faith-based education

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[234] Karen Armstrong, in, *Conversations on religion,* 191.

[235] Karen Armstrong, in, *Conversations on religion,* 191.

[236] Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 10:4, (1987): 13.

[237] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 27.

[238] Richard *Dawkins in Conversations on Religion,* 121.

[239] Harris, *End of Faith*, 72-73.

[240] Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Allen & Unwin, 2007), cover page.

then you would get rid of those sorts of troubles because there would no longer be that tribal identity."[241]

But their derision of religion as the principal element that eventuates in what we call religious violence and their deliberate refusal to give consideration to other contiguous factors is embarrassingly myopic and delusional. Religions may have a spotty historical record when it comes to violence but nonreligious alternatives have fared no better. [242] William Cavanaugh is a champion in this position against the anti-religionists' propaganda that religion should be shoved into the oblivion of private affairs for being a threat to public peace. He emphatically described these assumptions as myths and so called out this hypocrisy of the anti-religious liberalists in these words; "the myth of religious violence helps to construct and marginalize a religious Other, prone to fanaticism, to contrast with the rational, peace-making, secular subject. This myth can be and is used in domestic politics to legitimate the marginalization of certain types of practices and groups labelled religious, while underwriting the nation-state's monopoly on its citizens' willingness to sacrifice and kill."[243] It follows therefore that wholesale rejection of all religion as pernicious and delusional is itself a type of fundamentalism that these very writers rail against.[244] Fundamentalism cannot be the only valid form of religion; it is rather a perversion of religion just as racism can be a perversion of nationalism. And also to claim that religious identity is at the root of all bigotry is a showcase of total ignorance of social identification just as "defining all acts of "sacred violence" as ipso facto irreligious is to misunderstand religion and to underestimate its ability to underwrite deadly conflict on its own terms."[245]

In this respect, it would be salient to acknowledge that religion—with its relational and communitarian elements—is also a social phenomenon like every other social activity, and so possesses and expresses the very combative features of every social life. Although whether these combative elements are fundamentally religious remains a debate, "to interpret acts of violence and terrorism committed in the name of religion as necessarily motivated by other concerns and lacking in religious qualities is an error.[246] But if conflict is part of brutish human nature, then we can agree with Shelina Janmohamed that not only religion, but "all thought systems can be dangerous when used for unworthy ends…. The problem of danger

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[241] Dawkins, in *Conversations on Religion*, 121.
[242] Marty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good*, 39.
[243] W. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 4.
[244] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 31.
[245] R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000), 30.
[246] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 30.

comes back to this idea that human beings will use the tools that they have to hand to get what they want. So if you are Richard the second you will say let's go and defend the Holy Land because it is our religious duty, when in fact it was political, commercial and imperial goals that were the motivation for the wars."[247] One can thus speak of religion as an infinitely flexible and persuasive phenomenon that entwines with other social elements, and remains available to the whims of rational agents who engage in violence.

The fact that both secular and religious ideologies present episodes of violence gives credence to the fact that violence is an essential element of social life. As social animals, human beings form identities and systems of meanings within communities in a way that makes people contest and justify their conflicts from the standpoints of these identity cleavages. Religion with its absolute tendencies is not an exception. "Absolute claims do not admit of compromise or negotiation; divisive identities make empathy or even impartiality difficult; and passionate beliefs often burst the bounds of rational self-control. Thus, at the level of conceptual analysis, these qualities of religious belief do seem likely to foster violence."[248] Jonathan Sacks paints a clearer picture of this idea when he said; "Violence exists because we are social animals. We live and find our identity in groups. And groups conflict. They fight over the same resources: food, territory, other scarce goods. That is our nature and it leads to all that is best and worst about us: our altruism towards other members of our group, and our suspicion and aggression towards members of other groups. Religion plays a part in this only because it is the most powerful source of group identity the world has yet known. Every attempt to find a substitute for religion has resulted in even more violence. Nationalism led to two world wars, political ideology led to Lenin and Stalin. Race led to Hitler and the Holocaust. The result was the bloodiest century in human history. The idea that we can abolish identity altogether by privileging the individual over the group is the West's current fantasy and it has led to the return of religion in its most belligerent form."[249] If all substitutes to religion ended up in more devastating violence, then one could accept that "definitively declaring religion is the problem is a form of absolutism"[250] with equally violent potentials. The question now persists, if people are naturally part of communities of violence, does it mean that religion is not the problem here? Someone may say "that religion is not at fault; that people are at fault, and their religion often tells us why."[251] But a look at the

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[247] Shelina Janmohamed, in *Conversations on Religion*, 210.
[248] James Bernard Murphy "Religious Violence Myth or Reality?, 480.
[249] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 100-101.
[250] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 33.
[251] Wentz, *Why People Do Bad Things,* 1.

various forms religiously related violence may help us know whether religion is prone to violence or not.

2.2 Forms of Religiously Motivated Violence

The acts of violence that bear the label of religion manifest in various forms within a religious situation. Some of these may have nothing to do with religion while some may have. But there are reasons why it is always common to associate religion to acts of violence in any or all of these situations: First, if the act of violence happened within a religious environment. For instance if a church or a mosque was attacked, one considers it as an attack against religion. Second, if the act of violence was motivated by some provocative texts, incisive injunctions or charismatic leaders/rabble-rousers in relation to religion. For example, the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, France, on 7th January 2015 was an incendiary situation with links to religion. Third, if the violence occurs as a form of religious ritual or as a response to some cultic taboos/omens. For instance, Human sacrifice, Female Genital Mutilation, execution of twins/albinos and killing of witches and religious offenders are happenings within a cultic religious observance. Fourth, if the violence is kind of revolution against an unwanted influence—say cultural or political—that contradicts an ethno-religious background. For instance, some of the revolutionary movements like the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, Hamas, and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are all ethno-religious militant groups resistant to foreign interference. Fifth, if violence occurs as an affront carried out by terrorist organisations or state sponsored groups in religious gabs. For instance; Al-Qaeda, Taliban and ISIS are organised terror groups stoking their influence with religious rhetoric. Sixth, if it comes in the form of outright religious wars involving state direct powers and influence. For example, the Crusades and the Jihads of the Middle Ages and the 30 years' wars of Religion (1618-1648) that involved national powers. Seventh, if the violence is committed by persons with religious privileges either in the form of abuse or cruelty. For example, abuse of power, sexual abuse and persecution of dissidents and non-loyalists.

These forms of violence within a religious circle are real but not all of them carry a religious mandate, motivation or validation. However we shall discuss all in brief to showcase how close or distant they are to religious belief and practices. In view of this, it will be convenient to categorise the above listed examples into two major divisions; the Cultic and the Combative.

2.2.1 Cultic Religious Violence:

Cultic religious violence comprises those violent acts emanating from within the religious cults. As already discussed in the previous chapter about history of violence in religious traditions, it is observable that there is violence lurking within the cults of religion. Some of these violent situations are approved as normal practice while some are products of deviance. Such acts of violence take place during the administration of religious function. They may be ritualistic, punitive or abusive; or sometimes a combination of some or all of these. In short, every act of violence experienced during exercise of a religious office or execution of a religious demand.

2.2.1.1 Ritualistic Violence:

This form of cultic violence happens during a ritual action. A ritual "is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication."[252] Religiously speaking, "rituals, defined as formal social acts based on traditional beliefs that function to create communication between the human world and the spirit or supernatural world, play important roles in creating social cohesion and re-enforcing power structures."[253] The symbolic communication of rituals is consciously or customarily constructed to suit man's religious objectives through shared social action and beliefs that give the rites quality of sacredness. So "rituals embody cognitive systems of values that instruct and mobilize participants. These embodied values are rhythmic and cognitive, spatial and conceptual, sensuous and ideological."[254] Rituals involve symbols, words, gestures, materials and actions that often come in the form of sacrifice, offering, function or obligation that reflect significant social meaning. And in some of these ritual practices violence is meted out to animals and humans that have been adjudged victims of great value. It follows therefore that, "Individual human products such as blood, semen, or body parts can be sacrificed, but human life is considered the most valuable of sacrifices."[255]

The whole enterprise of ritual violence entails that "all violence mimes the ultimate violence of death."[256] So ritual sacrifice ransoms the individual or the community from the

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[252] John W. Rick, "The Nature of Ritual Space at Chavín de Huántar," in *Rituals of the Past: Prehispanic and Colonial Case Studies in Andean Archaeology* Silvana A. Rosenfeld, Stefanie l. Bautista eds. (Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 21. DOI: 10.5876/9781607325963.c002, URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1mtz7j7.6

[253] J. Marla Toyne, "Interpretations of Pre-Hispanic Ritual Violence at Tucume, Peru, From Cutmark Analysis", in *Latin American Antiquity*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (December 2011), 506. Accessed: 22-02-2020, URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23072572

[254] Richard Schechner, "Ritual, Violence, and Creativity", *Creativity/Anthropology*, Smadar Lavie, Kirin Narayan, and Renato Rosaldo eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1993), 302. Accessed: 22-02-2020, URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt207g6hf.16

[255] Toyne, "Interpretations Of Pre-Hispanic Ritual Violence", 506.

[256] Vena Das in Mark Jeurgensmeyer, *Violence and the World's*, 11.

gods' demands, and so requires totally giving up the victim in a way that maintains a spiritual balance with the supernatural. This total surrender may involve dedicatory sacrifice of the victim—as in the case of caste systems—bloodletting, organ extraction, cannibalism, flesh-piercing, decapitation and killing the victim. J. Marla Toyne captured this point thus; "Sacrifice is a particular type of complex ritual action that involves offering something of value within a symbolic system. Offerings are usually destroyed or transformed in some way so that they become accessible to the supernatural world.… A sacrificial offering is made as a means of communicating with supernatural forces in an attempt to influence them on behalf of human societies by giving with the hope of receiving in kind."[257] The ritual violence done to the victim prefigures and substitutes instead the anticipated violence the sacrificer would suffer. These violent rituals may come in the form of dedicatory sacrifices (castes, scapegoats and totems), retainer burials[258], initiatory ordeals, traditional body markings, ritual prisoner sacrifice, genital mutilations, decapitations, and taking of trophy heads in either military or ritual events. "The violence acted out in performance rituals is no mere "symbol," sapped of its ability to wound, frighten, and astonish. It is rather a mortgaged actuality, awaiting while indefinitely postponing future catastrophe. Ritual violence is not a remembrance of things past. …The present moment is a negotiation between a future and a past, both always in flux."[259] What ritual violence does is to create a sacrificial logic of substitution that mimes and eventually alleviates an impending violence. Rene Girard in his *Violence and the Sacred* recognises this mimetic ability of rituals to sublimate violence. He agrees that "The function of ritual is to 'purify' violence; that is to 'trick' violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals."[260]

Ritually motivated violence, including sacrifice, falls under the category of socially sanctioned actions, where individual deaths are conceptually acceptable within a particular context. Ritual death can be a religious act involving reciprocal exchange between humans and the gods or an act of political power that reinforces social order and hierarchy.[261] The violence of ritual represents those patterned violent behaviours that simultaneously present a bloody surrender of the victim in totality alongside a guaranteed appeasement from the

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[257] Toyne, "Interpretations Of Pre-Hispanic Ritual Violence", 506

[258] "The term 'retainer sacrifice' rings of an archaeological term for people who were brutally murdered to accompany and serve their masters, in the afterlife." Ashley Cowie, "Matter of Honor? Evidence of Brutal Child Sacrifice Surfaces in Ancient Mesopotamia", *Ancient Origins*, 2 July, 2018. Accessed, 24th February, 2019. https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/honor-evidence-brutal-child-sacrifice-ancient-mesopotamia-021961

[259] Schechner, "Ritual, Violence, and Creativity", 313.

[260] Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 36.

[261] Toyne, "Interpretations Of Pre-Hispanic Ritual Violence, 506

resultant ritual substitution, with an obligatory normalcy that treats the violent act as if nothing happened. These violent rituals are believed and expected to tame and mortgage a greater violence and death. We find examples of ritualistic violence in ancient and prehistoric religions typified in the classics about the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father Agamemnon, the story of Oedipus and king Laius, and the child sacrifice to Moloch which the bible condemned (in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20) but mirrored in a unique way in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and the killing of Jephthah's daughter. "The remains from the Temple of the Sacred Stone at Túcume provide physical evidence of ritual behaviours associated with human sacrifice, whose meaning can be explored through an understanding of Andean symbolic ideology and religious tradition."[262] Some acts of ritualised violence practiced in the African traditional religion include; human sacrifice, ritual killings, dedicatory sacrifice, retainer burials, genital mutilations etc. Some of these practices survived till the 20th century while some are still practiced covertly. "Even in places like Papua New Guinea, communities engage in inter-tribal warfare and head-hunting for these bloody rituals, a practice that have been transformed today into theatre to re-enact these earlier, bloodier "primal rituals" and entertain tourists."[263] But the question remains whether these bloody ritual practices tame the violence they are believed to ransom?

2.2.1.2 Punitive Violence:

If ritualistic violence serves as ransom, punitive violence in religion serves as retribution and restitution. Religion is seen as one of the major sources of the moral law. This is because most religious codes and principles also deal with the basic moral considerations of dos and don'ts, rights and wrongs, good and evil, with special connection to something beyond us. As a result of this, "religion has power to affect human action and moral meaning. With regard to the moral question, "why do people do what they do?" it affects in powerful ways what people do—and why they do it."[264] Consequently, religious people see their moral lives as also a religious responsibility. Hence religious traditions provide some internalized sense of justice and moral responsibility that not only offers rewards and punishments but also serves as a form of ritualized deterrent to acts deemed religiously reprehensible. Of course, "the sincere belief that a very powerful agent will punish you, if you act immorally, is a very strong incentive to avoid acting immorally. This incentive strengthens ordinary morality and also serves to extend its scope when it gives

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[262] Toyne, "Interpretations of Pre-Hispanic Ritual Violence", 506.
[263] Schechner, Ritual, "Violence, and Creativity", 314.
[264] Steffen, *Holy War,* 14.

people leverage to regulate others through threats of punishment and exclusion from the community."[265] This is where the issue of punitive religious violence comes in. like moral misdemeanours religious transgressions deserve punishments and some of these punishments are violent in nature.

Some religious traditions recognize God as a just and jealous disciplinarian who punishes sins with violent consequences like natural disasters, plagues, sicknesses, misfortunes, brutal wars, exiles, servitudes and deaths. The belief is that "God who created the heavens and earth measures everything and punishes the sinner."[266] The bible demonstrates that "the entire nation of Israel is punished, overrun in stages by conquerors who exile and murder the Israelites at the instigation of an angry Father."[267] By implication, God is considered vengeful and so commands others to execute violent justice on his behalf. Hence there is provision for penance for every transgression, some of which are harshly executed by human agents. Instances of these violent punishments abound in every religious tradition. The inquisition was a violent punitive measure meted out by Christians against heretics and witches. Some of these punishments were justified by theologians[268] as a religious duty to correct errors. The Islamic sharia law has been used to justify violent punishments like amputation, decapitation, stoning and flogging for offences like adultery, blasphemy and apostasy. Of course in Islam, ""apostasy," according to the hadith, is punishable only by death. There is no right to change religion, and all religious states have always insisted on harsh penalties for those who try it."[269] And what can we say about the famous story about the adulterous woman taken in (John 8:3–11), who according to the Mosaic Law deserves death and was dragged before Jesus by the Jewish Pharisees? These and many others are acts of violence that are seen from among religious traditions as religiously justifiable punishments for misdeeds.

Religious punitive violence is therefore experienced when religious authorities, groups and individuals choose to enforce harmful measures as punishments for religious offences. This situation stems from the religious moral obligation to uphold sacred values. According to Steve Bern, "The behavior of people seeking to uphold sacred values conforms

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[265] Steve Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence* (Chichester: JohnWiley & Sons Inc., 2014), 83.
[266] Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain*, 173.
[267] Schwartz, 115.
[268] It is puzzling to learn that in the Christian tradition, Aquinas and Gratian both recognized the punishment of heresy and sinful behavior as a just cause for military action (Johnson 1997, pp. 52–3, See Steve Clark, the justification of religious violence, 96). And that Thomas Aquinas famously argued for the suppression of heretics who must be compelled to return to the orthodoxy more than the infidels (James Bernard Murphy "Religious Violence Myth or Reality? 482).
[269] Hitchens, *God is not Great,* 29.

to patterns consistent with deontological reasoning and….the best explanation for these observed patterns is that reasoning about sacred values simply is a form of ordinary deontological reasoning. Therefore, it justifies particular forms of behavior, including violent behavior, in the same way as do other forms of deontological moral reasoning."[270] With the view of sustaining the sanctity of sacred values, religious people seek to translate the vengeful attributes of the divine to actual practical situations by applying this deontological moral requirement to punish and deter, in order to maintain the moral balance that comes from the integrity of these sacred values. "To justify violence we usually argue that the persons we want to hurt either deserve punishment for misdeeds or that they deserve it because they can hurt us and intend to do so."[271] Little wonder "if a binding moral rule has been broken then there is a moral duty, incumbent upon governing authorities, to mete out deserved punishment. The appropriate punishment for the violation of a sacred rule will not always be death, but it will almost always be a severe form of punishment, as those who uphold sacred values would be failing to treat these values with due respect if they did not punish violators harshly"[272]

These harmful religious penalties are justified mostly by adherents who eventually become religious authoritarians in their bid to defend sacred values and ensure compliance. They make themselves God's executioners and protectors of ancient divine tradition who subject people to violent punishments that are often justified with radical transcription of religious canons to give force to their violent resolves and vengeful arrogance. This is because their absolutist and idealistic notion of the ultimate feeds the pride of place they have given themselves, in a way that behooves them to punish in God's behalf and so maintain their exalted relevance. James Jones argues that "when religious leaders manipulate textual interpretation to support punishing and vengeful views of the divine, internal mechanisms of shame and humiliation are "hooked" into a psychological cycle which can end in violence."[273] Consequently, the excessive need to service this punitive obligation numbs every empathetic consideration to the point of condemning people to flames and gulags even when there are better punitive alternatives.

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[270] Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence*,150.

[271] David C. Rapoport and Yonah Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism Religious and Secular Justifications* (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1982), xiii.

[272] Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence*, 151.

[273] James W. Jones, "Why Does Religion Turn Violent? A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Religious Terrorism," *Psychoanalytic Review*, 93, no. 2 (April 2006): 169.

A typical example of such religious authoritarianism is the aftermath of the Miss world riots in Nigeria 2002, when the then "deputy governor of the conservative, predominantly Muslim state of Zamfara in Northern Nigeria, which follows shariah law, issued a *fatwa* calling on Muslims to kill Isioma Daniel, a journalist who was held to have insulted the Prophet Muhammad in her article that caused the uprising on the grounds that Islam prescribes the death penalty on anybody, no matter his faith, who insults the Prophet"[274] Such deontological justification for violence in the execution of religious duty betrays religion as fueling the inflexible need to defend conventional values. As a result of this rigid deontology, "authoritarians are always on the lookout for violators of these values, whom they seek to condemn, reject, and punish harshly. Thus, they would accept that "an insult to our honour should always be punished".... This trait, often called authoritarian aggression or punitiveness reflects more than normal disgust or anger at injustice; it involves a hearty enthusiasm for severe and damaging punishments."[275] They exploit the deontological elements of religious principles to feed their deep seated authoritarian arrogance, thus giving rise to such violent and abusive punishments.

2.2.1.3 Abusive Violence:

Religious traditions have histories of abusive practices that have over the years tarnished the image of religion and caused untold harm to innocent victims. Abusive violence in religion happens when religion becomes a platform for abusive behaviors which may be physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological. These abusive behaviours have discredited religion greatly in a way that gives radical atheists grounds to justify their anti-religious claims. "History shows that abuse in the name of or justified by religion can take many forms. This is why these evangelistic atheists preach that all religious faith is delusional and pernicious."[276] But it will be wrong to give a general condemnation of religion as a result of instances of abusive practices of a few religious people. Be that as it may, religion as a persuasive phenomenon has been used as a tool by some people in position of power, to violate, harass and oppress subordinates.

Religious abuse is also referred to as spiritual abuse to the extent that these abusers take advantage of their victims as spiritual leaders. So it "encompasses the practice of a person in some sort of dominant position using scripture or religion to control, harass, ridicule or intimidate someone else. This could be done by an abusive partner, parent or a religious

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[274] Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence*,136.
[275] Neil J. Kressel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 218.
[276] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 29.

authority, such as a priest."[277] This abusive violence can be seen in two ways as; abuse of religion and religious abuse of victims. Abuse of religion happens when someone twists the revered privileges and good teachings of religion to suit ulterior and corrupt ends. In line with this view, "sacred texts are the most easily abused component of religion. Daily newspapers and broadcasts are filled with examples of religious and political leaders citing selected verses or phrases from the Bible or Qur'an in support of policies that hurt the lives of millions."[278] Abuse if religion is a wrong way of using religion by exploiting its persuasive elements as well as people's reverential obedience in order to feed selfish ends. It can also be considered as aberration of authentic religious practice, a form of irreverence that desecrates and profanes the sacred in a way that has damaging consequences. Typical examples include the healing centres, Koranic schools and other religious ministries where vulnerable people are subjected to inhuman conditions and are manipulated to accept them in the name of religion. In such situations, "religious texts, images, symbols, and myths are often used and abused to evoke various emotions such as heroism, gullibility, chivalry, loyalty, bravery, vengeance, and violence, perpetuating a culture of violence."[279] This is pseudo religion because, "to associate God's name with deception is to abuse it, and to weaken its power to signal commitment to reciprocation."[280] These examples show that abuse of religion also leads to the second form of abuse in that when religion is first abused it is often used to abuse people.

Religious abuse of victims points to the situations where people take advantage of religious privileges to commit violent evil against others who out of reverential obedience become vulnerable victims of their abusive behaviours. Such abuse is prevalent among people in positions of religious authority who have the advantage of people's spiritual confidence. They exploit a people's trust by using the compelling influence of their privileged positions to abuse victims to their own advantage. Hence this form of abuse also bothers on abuse of power and trust whereby victims give in to their gimmicks because of their positions and as a result of this get hurt or damaged. This violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, social or emotional. It may be as a result of sanctioned practices like the caste systems and genital mutilations or may be caused by a deviant attitude of a pervert or predator. "An unsettling example has been visible within the Catholic Church for the past

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[277] *Domestic Shelters.org*, "5 Ways to Recognise Religious Abuse", January 10, 2018, accessed October 27, 2019 https://www.domesticshelters.org/articles/identifying-abuse/5-ways-to-recognize-religious-abuse
[278] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 62.
[279] S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Peacebuilding in the Muslim World", in Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby, and David Little, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 438.
[280] Teehan, *In the Name of God,* 87.

few decades. Since the 1980s, a number of shocking stories emerged alleging sexual abuse of children by predatory priests."[281] Although this abusive violence is said to have been done by a tiny minority of the clergy and religious "at a percentage paralleling that of other religious and secular agencies, it has done immeasurable damage both to the reputation of the Church as well as to the victims."[282]

There is a tendency to regard this kind of abusive violence that is done through religious platforms as abuse of religion. But this apologetic move is unnecessary to the extent that "it is unwarranted to give religion credit to the good values and exonerate it from the violent abuses that people commit with it. The apologetic move of characterizing violence done in the name of religion as an abuse of intrinsically peaceful belief systems is undermined by an evolutionary understanding of the moral psychology embedded in religion that gives rise to both pro-social moral behavior and violence against those identified as out-group members or defectors from the religious in-group."[283] It follows therefore that religious violence is not restricted to the cultic practices which may be approved or abused. It is largely exposed by the combative experiences that results from its divisive tendencies. That is why we should consider the combative side of the coin to know how destructive religious violence can be in conflicts and crisis situations.

2.2.2   Combative Religious Violence:
Most instances of religious violence are combative in the sense that they are rooted in intolerance and conflicts. It is true that "religion is often presented as a force for good in the world, and yet it is too often implicated in some of the greatest evils of which humans are capable of." [284] Religion has been at the centre of most conflicts in the world. It has triggered and motivated numerous clashes, some of which have little or nothing to do with religion. However one cannot totally exonerate religion from these violent experiences because as people fight, hurt, kill and destroy in defence of religion, they also commit such evils with religious motivation for other goals. To reconcile these facts therefore, there is no need to distance religion from all the violence done in its name, rather there is need to understand the various conditions that necessitates the involvement of religion in the various combative experiences. Combative religious violence can take various shapes. It can be revolutionary, separatist or sectarian, it can also a religious war or an act of terrorism. Hence it will be

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[281] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil,* 157.
[282] Scot Appleby, "Religion and Development as Partners in Strategic Peacebuilding," in Omer, Appleby, and Little, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion*, 200.
[283] Teehan, *In the Name of God,* 194.
[284] Teehan, 7.

plausible to consider some of these religiously related conflicts in order to demonstrate how much they have to do with religion. These conflicts will be analysed in line with the five core elements of conflict analysis which include knowing; (a) the people or stakeholders i.e. who is involved. (b) The issue/core of the problem i.e. what is at stake. (c) The context of the conflict i.e. where and when it took place. (d) The process of response i.e. how it happened and. (e) The interests and objectives i.e. why it happened.

2.2.2.1 Revolutionary:

Revolution is the transformation of the society through change in political power by means of violence. Various revolutionary groups have put religion at the center of their quest to topple a siting government. These revolutionary movements have political motives, but they use religious ideologies to give force to their political projects. Their attempts to take over political leadership may be violent or non-violent, but the centrality of religion in their primary objectives gives it the character of religious violence. Such religious revolutions are intent on bringing down a sitting government and establishing a religious nation. The Iranian revolution is an instance of such revolutionary fundamentalism that toppled an existing secular government (Pahlavi dynasty) in order to install a religious one. "From the outset, the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran undermined the functioning of an effective government in the country. Revolutionaries established parallel institutions alongside each government apparatus to impede nearly every decision-making process. For example, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) meddled with the country's economy and interfered with the Iranian armed forces at will."[285] But a more violent version of such religious revolutionary campaign was experienced in Algeria when the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)—an armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)—organized a violent takeover of government of Algeria. "The communiqué that created the AIS advocated "recourse to jihad, in the path of God, as a means of establishing an Islamic state in Algeria, prelude to the establishment of the Caliphate." Consequently, the group conducted, classic guerrilla warfare modelled on that which the National Liberation Army (ALN) fought against colonial France from 1954 to 1962."[286] As for the GIA, it sought to destabilise and overthrow the government, and to create an Islamic state by purging the land of the ungodly". The group was behind most of the violent acts aimed at creating "an atmosphere of general insecurity". It distinguished itself from other groups through its

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[285] Shima Bozorgi, "Iran, Algeria, Sudan and Venezuela Have one Major Similarity", *Global Security Review*, June 9, 2019, accessed, October 27, 2019, https://globalsecurityreview.com/iran-venezuela-algeria-sudan-regime/
[286] Enclyclopaedia.com, "Islamic Salvation Army AIS", February 19, 2020, accessed March 15, 2020
https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/islamic-salvation-army-ais

indiscriminate targeting of security forces, foreigners and civilians who became victims of kidnapping, hijacking, assassination, and bombings.[287] It is true that the goal of these revolutionary movements is a political one, but that politics feeds on a religious lifeline. Their target is to take over a political governance of a state and transform it to a religious one.

2.2.2.2 Separatist:

Religious violence can be seen among separatist groups in their quest to secede from a bigger body as a result of their religious ideologies which are at variance with the original larger group. There are numerous separatist groups seeking political autonomy from their parent states. Most of these groups have ethno-nationalist tendencies. Only a few seek to separate on the grounds of religious difference. A good example is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Philippines. This group is the largest militant organization in the Philippines that seeks autonomy for Filipino Muslims. "Unlike other secularist separatist groups, the MILF is purely and Islamist organization with the goal of creating an independent, Islamic state for Muslims in the country's southern regions known as the Moro region. They are militant Islamists to the extent that from inception in the 1980s they have clear Islamic fundamentalist orientations which they tend to institutionalize in their quest for political autonomy using violence."[288]

These religious separatists like the secular ones seek meaningful self-determination, but in this case they express fundamentalist motives by launching violent attacks against the state and its citizens. There are various instances of religious separatists engaging in assassinations, guerrilla warfare, bombings and destructions with the view of achieving independence from the central government and creating an autonomous religious state. Most religious insurgent groups have separatist tendencies and when such tendencies employ religion as a reason for ethno-political struggles, it often leads to conflicts against adherents of other faiths whom they regard as infidels and enemies of the course. Consequently, it is both a political necessity and a religious duty to fight and kill them.

2.2.2.3 Religious Wars:

Every religious tradition has at one time or another waged war for the sake of what it holds sacred or ultimate. A religious war simply refers to a situation when wars are fought and justified as a result of religious differences. "The term "holy war" is a European

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[287] *United Nations Security Council*, "Armed Islamic Group" Updated July 19, 2019, accessed October 27, 2019, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/armed-islamic-group
[288] *Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation*, "Moro Islamic Liberation Front", updated January, 2019, accessed October 27, 2019 https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moro-islamic-liberation-front#highlight_text_12968

invention and derives from the study of war in its European context. It does not define types of warfare, such as "primitive" or "modern," nor does it define whether a specific engagement is defensive, pre-emptive, or initiatory. Rather, in its most broad definition, the term defines a form of justification for engaging in war by providing religious legitimization."[289] It is true that most of the wars classified as religious are characterised and caused by factors more secular than religious. But the presence of religion as a persuasive and defining element in these conflicts, leads one to believe that these wars were fought along confessional lines. This is what Christians have in mind when they engage in Holy Wars or Crusades, while their Muslims counterparts consider it a sacred duty to carry out a Jihad. In these combats, people fight and kill for what they hold sacred. Religious wars have been waged since ancient times, but the concept became a subject for both intellectual and popular consideration in the middle ages. This is because due to the influence of religion in secular affairs, most of the medieval wars were fought with an increasing religious momentum.

According to David J. B. Trim, religious war is "a Holy War, in which the enemy's population is targeted for destruction because of its religious beliefs. It is the final terrible extension of religious persecution, an ultimate expression of religious intolerance."[290] The interreligious hatred prevalent in the Middle Ages gave strength to the onslaughts which sometimes were fought in defence of religious identity or ethnic survival. Religious wars can be fought defensively to defend the faithful or counter persecution, but it can be fought offensively too as a means of propagating and imposing religious beliefs on others. "The Crusades to the holy land which started in 1095 were originally undertaken to free the holy places of the Christian faith from Muslim occupation and to defend the eastern (Greek Orthodox) Christians from Turkish oppression, but they later became wars of European expansion."[291] It follows therefore that what began as a sacred task ended up as ethno-political exercise. But some of these wars were justified by religious leaders as just wars and moral duties void of every form of culpability. Fighting became a spiritually meritorious act as the knights were referred to as soldiers of Christ.

Another example is the Jihad which the Muslims launched in defence, against the Crusader's onslaught and to achieve the re-conquest of Jerusalem in 1187 which also became

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[289] Firestone, *Jihad*, 15.
[290] David J. B. Trim, "Religious Wars and Religious Freedom: A Troubled History", *Liberty Magazine*, March/April 2010, accessed January 27, 2020, http://libertymagazine.org/article/religious-wars-and-religious-freedom-a-troubled-history
[291] Trim, "Religious Wars and Religious Freedom",

build-up to the Ottoman Empire. And the European Wars of Religion (c.1517) which spanned through the reformation and counterreformation till the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, represents an instance of intra-religious warfare among contending sects of Christianity. Although these wars were also characterised by secular elements like political revolts, territorial ambitions, and Great Power conflicts, they brought about a total transformation of the religious and political order. The concept and reality of religious wars are still relevant till date. They are reflective of the various acts of hateful intolerance and sectarian incompatibility that betrays the peaceful nature of religion. This is why Karen Armstrong expresses that "the Crusades [and jihads] were not a fringe movement in the Middle Ages; they were central to the new Western identity that was forged at this time and which persists to the present day. The Crusades also show religion at its very worse."[292] Today most sectarian acts of violence are reminiscent of these medieval controversial tendencies. Little wonder radical groups of today remain intolerant in their onslaughts because they believe they are fighting a holy war in the spirit of these long past medieval conflicts. For when wars are waged in the name of faith, religious tolerance disappears and mutual respect loses its meaning.

2.2.2.3 Sectarian:

Sectarian violence is a bloody conflict between members of different sects within a community who are inspired by ideological affiliation. It is a form of social polarization of groups who fight along ideological lines which may be religious, ethnic or political. Religion has a good way of creating ideological in-groups as against out-groups which often leads to misunderstandings. Some of the conflicts discussed under the title of religious violence are between members of different religious sects or between denominations of same tradition. That is to say, sectarian violence among religious groups may be inter-religious conflicts or intra-religious conflicts. For example the Buddhists anti-Muslim violence in Burma/Myanmar, is sectarian but inter-religious whereas the Suni-Shai conflicts in the Middle East are also sectarian but intra-religious. However it is good to also acknowledge there are political and ethnic factors enabling some of the sectarian conflicts we see among religious sects. "A chain of political and religious upheavals, beginning in 1979, ignited and fuelled sectarian hatred and added an ethnic bent to it. The results were catastrophic: Sectarianism caused deep societal fissures and cost hundreds of thousands of lives over a

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[292] Armstrong, *Holy War*, ix.

sustained period of time…. Contemporary sectarianism thus has racial and geopolitical components."[293]

The crusades for instance, expressed great interreligious intolerance it also had huge intrareligious effects by further widening the hostilities between Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. Even the various violent clashes between Catholics and Protestants are instances of sectarian violence. Among Muslims, there are conflicts between members of different sects especially Sunnis and Shias. Most of these sectarian conflicts are rooted in doctrinal incompatibilities, variations in interpretations and superiority contest. This implies that, the fact that religious traditions fight against each other does not mean that there is no internal wrangling within each party. Northern Ireland experienced an intensified sectarian hatred and violence between Catholic and Protestant Christians which claimed many lives. Although this conflict was largely "influenced by political, economic and social considerations, it is at heart, a religious conflict."[294] Scotland also reflects this sectarian dichotomy in the sports rivalry between the protestant affiliated Glasgow Rangers and the Irish-Catholic oriented Glasgow Celtics, which has often resulted in violent attacks.

Religious sectarianism has connections with nationalism. This is evident in the sectarian conflicts between Israel and Palestine, India and Pakistan and in the various ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The Israeli-Palestinian conflicts which has persisted till date reflects a sectarian conflict between people of different religious backgrounds (Jews and Muslims) who are fighting with ethno-nationalist motives. Also the India-Pakistani disputes have been continuously fueled by religion especially in the Kashmir region, even though the parties disagree largely on political grounds. The Nigerian case is interesting to the extent that these sectarian conflicts between Muslims and Christians happen among citizens who live in the same geopolitical environment but fight with ethno-religious sentiments in political disagreements. Hence, religious sectarianism demonstrates how much people could highlight the fault lines of religious differences in order to perpetrate violence even for nonreligious reasons. This of course is at the basis of extremists' strategy when they profess ideologies that result in acts of terrorism.

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[293] Hassan Hassan, "The Eclipse of Sectarianism," The Atlantic, October 23, 2018, accessed 29th January, 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/end-sectarian-violence-middle-east/573580/
[294] David Harkness (October 1989). "God Save Ulster: The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism by Steve Bruce (review)" *The English Historical Review*, Oxford University Press. 104 (413)

2.2.2.4 Terrorism:

Terrorism is one of the most frequently used words in contemporary geopolitics. This is because, after the 9/11 attacks, the whole enterprise of global geopolitics was changed by the threat of terror. Terrorists are radical fundamentalists who resort to threat of violence in order to achieve socio-political goals. Although there is no consensus among experts about the definition of terrorism, Jessica Stern's definition provides a general notion that distinguishes it from other forms of violence discussed above. For Stern, "terrorism is an act or threat of violence against noncombatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise influencing an audience."[295] Here two characteristics stand out to distinguish terrorism from other conflicts. First, the fact that non-combatants are also targets. Second, in terrorism, the threat of violence is more important than the act of violence itself. It follows therefore that terrorism involves indiscriminate violence and the threat of violence for dramatic reasons. Without delving into the full debate about the most comprehensive definition of terrorism, it will be plausible to acknowledge that acts of terror has long been experienced over the centuries before the 9/11 ordeal and religion has been one of the principal elements used for terrorist activities.

With its persuasive and absolutizing tendencies religion has been used in a pervasive way to propagate violent extremism by deviants who profess a totalitarian ideology that attacks, threatens and destroys randomly in order to impose their views and advance their objectives. Religious terrorism as the name goes has since the 9/11 grown exponentially. Good to note therefore that terrorism is used as a strategy while religion as an ideological catalyst. "The ideology and the violence associated with it have been growing over a period of decades stretching back to the 1980s."[296] As a strategy, terrorism can be used in any of the other forms of combative violence like wars revolutions, separatist or sectarian violence. For instance, some acts of terrorism were associated with situations of religious conflicts like the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Indian-Pakistani disputes, even war situations like the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, hence the old cliché, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Religious extremists therefore weaponize religion as motivation and justification for the threats and danger they pose in these acts of terror. This ideology has festered and spread all over the world and have metamorphosised into global networks of radicalised fundamentalists acting as non-state armed groups that have kept the world on its toes till date.

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[295] Stern, *Terror in the name of God,* xx.
[296] Global Extremism Monitor, *Violent Extremism in 2017*, by Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, September 2018, 17.

Although the effect of religious terrorism is manifest all over the world, the Middle East has been a hub of terrorist activities since the 1970s. Leading terrorist groups in the Middle East are mostly among violent Islamist movements like Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbolla, Hamas, ISIS etc. These groups have destroyed many lives and properties, bombed facilities and brainwashed gullible young men and women with their radical ideologies. "They see themselves as defending sacred territory or protecting the rights of their coreligionists. They view people who practice other versions of their faith, or other faiths, as infidel or sinners. Because the true faith is purportedly in jeopardy, emergency conditions prevail, and the killing of innocents becomes, in their view, religiously and morally permissible. The point of religious terrorism is to purify the world of these corrupting influences"[297] These groups are transnational in their approach, wrecking havocs in various countries around the world and influencing some other surrogates in other parts of the world who also take to acts of terror to advance their motives.

Outside the middle East, some of these religious terrorist groups include; Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Jandullah, Jewish Underground, etc. "Most of these religious terrorists promote a mixture of religious and material objectives, for example, acquiring political power to impose a particular interpretation of religious laws or appealing to religious texts to justify acquisition of contested territory."[298] Most of them see terrorism as a war strategy against the state or against those who oppose their ideologies. But they randomly attack targets that happen to be at the wrong place at a wrong time. And they still justify these attacks on innocent victims with Scriptural passages as radically interpreted by their charismatic leaders. This is why likes of Jessica Stern argue that "religious ideology is the easiest and most persuasive motivation for terrorist activities that is why religious terrorists groups are more violent than their secular counterparts."[299] This is because in spite of the material objectives of their tasks, their extremism is further intensified by their reliance on radical misinterpretation of some violent texts of the scriptures that give them more justification and reasons to carry on. A consideration of some of these violent texts that fire them up into such radical actions is worthwhile.

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[297] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the name of God,* xiv.
[298] Jessica Stern, xx.
[299] Jessica Stern, xxii.

2.3 Violent Texts and Speeches: the Canonicity of Religious Violence?

Experience reveals that most extremists, who commit violence in the name of religion, usually draw their motivations and justifications from the sacred texts of their religions. This is why violence has been very much associated with religions of the book—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These Abrahamic religions apart from sharing some historical relations, comprise what is essentially referred to as monotheism that profess belief in an Supreme Being whose relations with humans is encoded in sacred writings revered by adherents as the word of God. Jews and Christians call theirs the Holy Bible—albeit Christians added some extra text. The Muslims refer to their sacred texts as the Holy Quran. These texts contain the authoritative narratives about relationship with God as well as the basic principles and instructions of spiritual and moral life. Most of these narratives and instructions present an omnipotent God who as the subject of allegiance and devotion fights and is fought for. Suffice it to say that "religions of the Book, have texts: verses, commands, episodes, narratives, that if understood literally and applied directly would not merely offend our moral sense. They would also go against our best understanding of the religion itself."[300]

The exclusive tendencies inherent in monotheistic religions as discussed above, give the God of religion some absoluteness that allows for violence. Unlike the polytheistic deities with specialties and weaknesses, monotheism presents a composite God who possesses the perfection of everything especially of power. According to Nelson-Palmer, "the principal character trait of this composite God that emerged was violence. God in the midst of many competitors proved to be God through superior violence."[301] The superiority of force makes this one God sole proprietor and ultimate judge of human character whose power and duty it is to see to the triumph of good and justice in every human affair. Here "real problems intensify dramatically because God is understood in the Hebrew Bible, the Christian New Testament and the Quran to be powerful, and because power is identified with violence. There are many similarities and differences to be found in the sacred texts of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. But one point of undisputed agreement, unfortunately, is that God's overwhelming character is that of a violent, punishing, pathological deity who uses unfathomable violence to both reward and punish, either within history or at history's end."[302]

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[300] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 207.
[301] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 42.
[302] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 39.

It should be acknowledged that in these texts there are also effective narratives and injunctions that encourage nonviolent options, but the preponderance of the violent narratives in a bid to demonstrate the Omnipotence of God betrays the violence in this superiority. Hence these hard texts not only justify God's violence as means of punishing or salvaging humans, they also empower followers of this violent God to use these means on His behalf. They provide theological legitimacy to followers who basking in their heightened sense of chosenness, resort to violence in a bid to execute "God's will." "Divine favouritism of one people over others (central claim of Jewish, Christina and Muslim "sacred texts") is never a good foundation for universal blessing. This is because, conflict is likely when groups make competing claims based on incompatible "divinely inspired" passages."[303] The Jews find in the Hebrew bible justifications for being authentic people of God just as Christians draw their legitimacy as God's elect from the New Testament and Muslims from the Quran.

The Hebrew bible (Tanakh)—the Christian Old testament—encodes stories of God's relation with his chosen people of Israel who as descendants of Abraham saw the hand of God in the evolution of their history. The "writers tried to make sense out of historical highs (real and imagined) and historical lows by placing violent images of God at the heart of the three key story lines in the Hebrew Bible: the exodus, the exile and the apocalyptic worldview."[304] The exodus presents liberation stories weaved alongside a God's violent intervention in the conquests that made Israel favourite possessors of the lands by displacing its original inhabitants. These narratives present God as a warrior who kills and commands killing, thus creating a "violence of God tradition". "One people is created through the massive displacement and destruction of other peoples …laying claim to a land that had belonged to others, and conducting a bloody conquest under the banner of divine will."[305] Instances of these violent narratives and commands that characterise the exodus experience abound in the Bible especially in the Torah, the books of Joshua, Judges and Samuel and Kings: In the Bible God murders all firstborn of Egypt (Gen 11), kills the entire army of pharaoh (Gen 1:28b), and sanctions violent land thievery and genocide. In Genesis 15:18-21 God says, "to your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Raphaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." And in Deuteronomy 7:1-2 the bible reports, "when the Lord your God brings you into the land that

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[303] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 32.
[304] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 42.
[305] Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain*, 57.

you are about to enter and occupy… he clears away many nations before you…, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them, show them no mercy."

It is obvious that God in exodus story creates opportunities to prove his credentials through superior violence.[306] This violent characteristic is not just an exception; it is rather a prevalent theme that is central to Israel's liberation and settlement story. It is good to consider few other verses in the exodus storyline where violent land grabbing and genocide enjoy divine approval. These verses speak of a Warrior God who terrifies people, grabs lands and subdues tribes by conquest, genocide and plunder:

> For this time I will send all my plagues upon you yourself, and upon your officials, and upon your people, so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and stuck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. (Exod 9:14-16)

> The Lord, the God of Israel, has conquered the Amorites for the benefit of his people Israel…. Should we not be the ones to possess everything that the Lord our God has conquered for our benefit? (Judges 11:23-24)

> The Lord has conquered Amorites, and handed them over to Israelites to be utterly exterminated. (Judg 11:23a, Josh 11:20)

> The lord is a warrior the lord is his name pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea. (Exod 15:1-4a)

> You stretched out your right hand the earth swallowed them…. Terror and dread fell upon them. (Exod 15:11-12, 16a)

> You shall give chase to your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. (Lev 26:7)I will bring terror on you; (Lev. 26: 16) You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. (Lev 26:7)

There is always the tendency to give a justifiable interpretation to these hard texts, in a way that presents them as contest and triumph of good against evil, fight for justice and liberation of the oppressed. Most people tend to sanitize the violence at the heart of the

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[306] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 37.

exodus experience in favour of liberation narratives by ignoring the problem of violence it presents. "According to this liberation interpretation, the exodus is a story about God's liberating violence which justifiably defeats empires and achieves victory for the oppressed.... Liberation reading therefore reinforces a violence of God tradition, justifies human violence done in God's name, and legitimates violent means as the way to achieve justice."[307] Such interpretation resonates even in modern practice where preachers relate the violent dispossession of America from the natives to Israel's possession of Canaan. There are evidences of some "puritan preachers referring to Native Americans as Amalekites and Canaanites who, if they would not be converted, were worthy of annihilation. By examining such instances in theological and political writings, in sermons, and elsewhere, we can understand how America's self-image as a "chosen people" has provided a rhetoric to mystify domination."[308] Such references and justifications can be seen manifest in various situations of religiously sanctioned violence since in these hard texts, the divine provides standards for human emulation as in Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal (2Kings 18:35-40). If the "Hebrew God is vengeful and militant, ruthlessly killing and commanding killing on a chauvinist basis, His chosen people are by implication instructed to implement his fury against inferior peoples that are accursed from the moment of their inception, like the Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites."[309]

The violent image of the Hebrew God also reflects in some divinely approved violent rituals and punitive measures found in the Bible. Some of these measures involve killing of innocent victims as in the case of Jephthah's ritual sacrifice of his daughter (Judges 11). God severely punishes and avenges with violence: He commands Moses to kill disobedient children, adulterers, and homosexuals (Lev 20:9-10, 13), and to stone to death those who gather sticks on the Sabbath (Num 15:32-36). He caused the flood to swallow every living thing on earth for their sins (Gen 7:23), and sent bears to maul people for insulting a prophet (2kings 2:23-24). Here are some other reports about God's violent revenge and punishment of sins in the Hebrew bible:

> If anyone secretly entices you saying, let us go worship other gods.... you shall surely kill them...Stone them to death for trying to turn you away from the Lord your God.... (Deut 13:6-11)

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[307] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 42-43
[308] Robert Allen Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," in R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 293.
[309] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 367.

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I myself will fight against you (Israel) with outstretched hand and mighty arm, in anger, in fury, and in great wrath. And I will strike down the inhabitants of this city, both human beings and animals; they shall die of a great pestilence. (Jer 21: 3-6)

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Avenge the Israelites" So Moses said to the people, "go against Midian, to execute the Lord's vengeance on Midian…." They did battle against Midian as the Lord had commanded Moses, and killed every male…. And even when the Israelites took women, children and properties as booty after burning the town, Moses became angry with the officers and ordered them to kill every male among the little owns, and kill every women that is not a virgin. But keep all young girls who are still virgins to themselves. (Num 31:1-3,7,9-11,14-15,17-18)

For our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over, to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering and to utter shame, as is now the case. (Ezra 9:7)

The Lord says: Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in accordance with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals…. I will scatter them among nations...and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them. (Jer 9:13-16)

God used empires as instruments of punishment (Isa 9, Jer 25)

So if God approves violent punishments for sins, believers consider it a holy responsibility to punish and deter offenders with violence in line with the holy experiences revealed in the sacred texts. Consequently, extremists who take to the literal interpretations, find in such violent portions of the holy book sacred demands for moral obligations, the same way they find moral instructions from pacific portions of the same texts. We also see this sense of violence sustained in the apocalyptic visions of the prophets who not only interpreted Israel's exilic plight as consequence of her unfaithfulness, but also envisioned the coming of a messiah who will come in the end to judge the world with violence. Apart from providing anti-violent and pacific themes for good moral living, "the Hebrew Bible, like its counterparts in other ancient Near Eastern civilizations, is a remarkably militant text that includes an extraordinary range of aggressive themes and models, often confusing and

contradictory. Violence is evident in the image of God, his treatment of humanity, the manner in which he demands to be worshipped, and the rules he sets forth for social control. Violence is also apparent in the chronicles of the Israelites, replete with war, genocide, and internecine conflict, as well as in prophecies that envision a turbulent end of times."[310]

God plays an active role in the whole narrative of violence in Hebrew Bible, a role that puts Him in a position of superior violence within the cycle of violence that characterise the biblical history of the chosen people. "God proved to be God through superior violence, defeated pharaoh and his armies, and planted the chosen people in a land occupied by others. When the people did something wrong, God used empires to punish them, sent them into exile as a consequence of disobedience, and then promised to destroy those empires as part of a glorious historical reversal. This promise would be fulfilled through God's violence. Hence, this entire violent scenario in the Hebrew Bible indicates that liberating violence gave way to punishing violence, which gave way to a new round of liberating violence in which the oppressed people of God would become oppressors"[311]

This apocalyptic expectation of a triumphant messiah flowed into the New Testament understanding that connects to the Hebrew Bible as its actual fulfilment. It brings a twist to the whole narrative about God's powerful influence in the violent experiences. In the New Testament tradition the Almighty God who incarnated in Jesus Christ becomes a powerless victim of violence. His first disciples too were victims of violence and suffering, and this brought a spiritual twist to the experience of violence and victimhood. Of course, the New Testament takes a different approach in its view about the fulfilment of the violent traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Hence "the violence-of-God traditions at the centre of the exodus, exile and apocalyptic storylines in the Hebrew Bible are contrary to the views of many Christians, at the heart of the New testament as well."[312] This violent tradition of the Old Testament thoroughly overlaps with that of the New Testament in a way that presents God as the controller of History. As liberator, He conquered nations for his people, as just judge, He punished them with exile, as apocalyptic messiah, He will reward good and punish evil on the last day. "This presumption of God's punishing violence is central to the Christian New Testament understanding that the death of Jesus is an atoning sacrifice that saves us from the

[310] Aran & Hassner, 364.
[311] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 51.
[312] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 54-55.

consequences of our sin."[313] This is because the retributive attribute of the violent God of the Hebrew bible requires a sacrificial atonement which the violent death of Jesus fulfils.

The consistency of violence-of-God traditions throughout the Bible is clear when we remember that the New Testament writers present Jesus as the ultimate sacrificial lamb or as the scapegoat on whom the sins of the world are placed. Jesus stands between a wrathful deity and sinful humanity. His death substitutes for our own.[314] Christians ritualise this atonement through the Eucharist in line with the Jewish Passover lamb to commemorate Jesus' sacrifice by which he mediates and expiates for human sinfulness while breaking the cycle of violence. In the NT, Christianity tends to resolve positively the scandal of violence of God by substituting violence and suffering with Divine mercy and grace which resonates all through the NT narratives and at the same time so fragile to be misinterpreted in the fundamentalist way due to ambiguity of the language of NT. "Equally prominent, however, were New Testament affirmations that Jesus life and death could best be understood in continuity with the violence-of-God traditions rooted in apocalyptic and messianic expectations."[315] New Testament texts consistently promise eternal damnation and violent punishments to sinners who will suffer hell fire:

> Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the world. I did not come to ring peace, but a sword. (Matt 10:34)

> God in killed Ananias and Saphira in Acts (5:5)

> Matthew on punishments with hell fire (13:40-42. 22:13. 24:50-51. 25:26a, 30, 45-46)

> John the Baptist warned the people of the wrath of God who with his winnowing fork will clear his threshing floor gather the wheat into the granary and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt 3:12)

> Those who worship the beat and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, they will also drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfure in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Land (Rev 14:9-10)

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[313] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 59-60.
[314] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 62.
[315] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 64.

In this context, New Testament apocalyptic expectations reaffirm God's violent power that would surely resurface through Jesus, who would violently judge and destroy enemies of God at the end of time. It goes with a central counsel that champions the supremacy and triumph of non-violence in the whole enterprise of biblical retributive justice where the non-violent Jesus who atones for offences by suffering violence, will eventually crush evil and bring eternal salvation. This is the same retributive sense that characterised the Quran in its blunt distinctions between good and evil, infidels and believers, insiders and outsiders. As the holy book of Muslims, the Quran presents Allah as all-powerful and retributive. It maintains that Allah conquers in everything and enjoys the superiority of violence. "Almost every Sura in the Quran presents fear of God's wrath as the foundation for belief and action…. Muhammad's Allah advocates specific actions and threatens people guilty of noncompliance with an "awful doom" or "grievous penalty." …God's violence or threatened violence is so pervasive in the Quran that it is difficult to capture its full weight or describe its many manifestations."[316] It enjoins all faithful to mirror these strong qualities of God and to even minister punishments and violence on His behalf. Some of these violent texts in the Quran can be seen bellow:

Then fight in Allah's cause (4:84)

Allah did take them down from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts, so that some ye slew, and some ye made prisoners. And he made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and a land which ye had not frequented before (33:25-27).

Slaughter the enemies (8:67)

This is the book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt to those who fear Allah (2:2)

For Allah will collect the hypocrites and those who defy Faith all in Hell. (4:140).

Yet for their sins we destroyed them. and raised in their wake Fresh generations to succeed them. (6:6)

And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. (2:191, 2:217)

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[316] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 75.

Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject fight in the cause of evil (4:76).

But when forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war; (9:5)

Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, Nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (9:29)

Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors…. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust (5:51)

It is an obligation to wage war against disbelievers (3:141)

They but wish that ye should reject faith, as they do and thus be on the same footing as they: So take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah from what is forbidden. But if they turn renegades, seize then and slay them. (4:89)

And fight them [unbelievers] on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah. (8:39)

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and his messenger and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution or crucifixion or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is their in the hereafter (5:33)

Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers in fight, smite at their necks; (47:4)

Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs in return is the garden of paradise: they fight in his cause, and slay and are slain (9:111)

O prophet rouse the believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the unbelievers (8:65)

"ye shall be summoned to fight against a people given to vehement war: then shall ye fight, or they shall submit." (48:16)

I will instil terror into the hearts of unbelievers: smite ye above the necks and smite all their finger tips off them. this is because they contended against Allah and his messenger….. o ye who believe! … It is no ye who slew them; it was Allah (8:12-17)

The spiritual violence that characterises the Quran presents Islam as a religion of force and fear as epitomised in Mohammad's embodiment of both the fiery charisma of a prophet who pronounces Allah's threats of hell and the violent character of a warrior who conquers nations. Military victories are consequences of faithfulness in Allah while defeats are results of infidelity. According to Nelson-Pallmayer, "the military and political successes that resulted in creation of an Islamic Empire are understood to be consequences of fidelity to Allah…. But historical prominence gave way to crisis because Muslims had been unfaithful to Allah, the Prophet and the Quran."[317] Could this be the reason why most religious militants and insurgents point to the social ills in the society as the reason for their violent actions and so claim to be fighting a good course of saving society from the consequences of infidelity to God? An average Muslim believes that creating an Islamic state is ideal for perfect political governance under God. Evil persists in a nation that is not governed by Islamic laws and morals. The Quran is considered as definitive word of God encoding divine imperatives that are adopted as a paragon. The words therein are enveloped in an aura of sacred factuality-that makes them so appealing and inspiring to the extent that secular legalities can be breached if they conflict with religious truth. Hence when it describes Allah as all powerful holy warrior who punishes with violence those who disobey His words, it calls for total and unreserved obedience to these words even when they prescribe violence.

The violence-legitimating passages in the Quran breeds extremists who get easily inspired and motivated by literal interpretations as they ascribe God's authority to the hard texts that sanction and sanctify violent activities in service of Allah. "It is sobering that the Islamic terrorists who flew airplanes into the world trade towers and the pentagon could have had any of many dozens of verses from the Quran in their hearts or on their lips." [318] Little wonder Sam Harris assumed, that "the danger of religious faith is that it allows otherwise normal human beings to reap the fruits of madness and consider them holy….We are, even

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[317] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 78.
[318] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 91.

now, killing ourselves over ancient literature."[319] It is therefore imperative to have a properly authorised form of interpretation of these ancient sacred texts since most of most of its mandates come with threats of violent sanctions that many not be literally relevant in our time. "Hard texts need interpreting; without it, they lead to violence. God has given us both the mandate and the responsibility to do just that. We are guardians of his word for the sake of his world."[320] Hence reliance on literal interpretation of texts can lead to error, and error can lead to terror and damnation.[321] This is why Catholic tradition insists on teaching authority for proper interpretation of sacred texts.

Where interpretation is arbitrary and literal, sacred texts are open to manipulations of fundamentalists and can be harnessed by a wide range of ideological leanings. "That is why fundamentalism is so dangerous and so untraditional. It refers to many things in different contexts, but one of them is the tendency to read texts literally and apply them directly: to go straight from revelation to application without interpretation. In many religions, including Judaism, this is heretical."[322] Fundamentalists are so parochial and impatient in their ideas and approach to interpretation of sacred texts. They consider the sacred texts as complete and unchanging words invested with the ultimate authority of God for every generation. Hence they are ready to kill or die for the sacred injunctions in these texts since "everyone who dies in war or is killed by the enemy is considered a martyr."[323] These extremists champion ideologies that are backed up with their own interpretations of sacred canons that support violence in order to advance arrays of interests that often contrasts changing circumstances.

The violence-of-God traditions at the heart of the story lines in the Hebrew Scriptures carry over into the New Testament and the Quran. These stories make justifications for fundamentalist distinction between those deserving of rewards and punishments. The spiral of violence imbedded in these "sacred" texts spills over into human violence in real history and within scripture itself.[324] It is true that today every group relies on these ancient texts to justify vicious ideas characterised by oppression, discrimination and hate that set the stage for potential deadly conflicts. For instance "black Americans had had to peruse Christian scriptures to find a way of understanding their own suffering as an indication of their special chosen standing in the plans of a provident deity. White Christians had used the same

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[319] Harris, *The End of Faith*, 73.
[320] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 208.
[321] Sullivan, "This is a Religious War"
[322] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 208.
[323] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, 90.
[324] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 53-54.

scriptures in order to justify their claims to be separate from and superior to blacks."[325] Hence the violent image of God projected by these hard texts gives authoritative inspiration to the violence that is seen from among the various religious traditions. And when these texts are literally interpreted by charismatic extremists, they have the ability of creating a monster that destroys in the name of the Holy.

Moreover, it is plausible to assent to the claim that religion is good, necessary, and life-affirming because it concerns issues of ultimate meaning and consequence. Hence "an honest assessment of the destructive role violence-of-God traditions within "sacred" texts play in a world fractured by violence, inequality, war, intolerance, and hate, reveals how much these hard texts give religious legitimacy to human violence."[326] One would agree to the appropriateness of analysing how much influence these religious texts have on extremists who draw motivations and justifications from them in their violent acts and threats of terror. This is because, for religion to have creative and positive impact in the world ravaged by injustice and engulfed in a spiral of violence, it will be necessary to consider the nature and effects of these influences in order to know how best to apply the word to the world.

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[325] Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things,* 6.
[326] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?*, xvi.

PART TWO: Religion and Contemporary Terrorism

Question: What effects have terrorism on contemporary attitudes towards faith?

Chapter III: Is Religious Extremism a Major Cause of Contemporary Terrorism?

3.1 Terrorism in the Contemporary World

Terrorism is one of the most discussed issues in the world today. It is a different problem from other threats the world has faced in the past. This is because just as remarkable situations of violence with their serious security consequences change the course of history, terrorism has charted the course of contemporary era. Of course Hannah Arendt was right to acknowledge this fact when she noted that "the physiognomy of the 20th century was determined by the wars and revolutions that distinguished it from the 19th century."[327] Hence it will not be out of place to say that the unprecedented fear and threat of violence that characterise the terror we have faced since the 9/11 attacks changed the 21st century world in a tremendously unique way. There is no doubt that "the early twenty-first century is designated as the "Age of Terror" since the threat we face has assumed an unprecedented potential for inflicting violence in a mass scale."[328]

The new era of terrorism we live in today reveals the various complexities that characterise this contemporary threat. Terrorism is not new to the world but the significance of the new turn it has taken in the 21st century makes it an object of major concern. That is why twenty first century world leaders in their resolve to fight this global threat, pointedly acknowledged its unconventional nature and sophisticated approach which through the instrumentality of modern global technology kept the entire global society terrified and vulnerable. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair echoed this fact that "the threat we face is not conventional. It is a challenge of a different nature from anything the world has faced before. It is to the world's security, what globalization is to the world's economy."[329] The unconventional nature of the threats we face makes terrorism uniquely dangerous and challenging to the point that it only takes a handful of individuals to inflict untold terror on the society in a characteristically indiscriminate and indeterminate way using sophisticated and unsophisticated weapons. Most of the perpetrators are often home-grown terrorists operating in shadowy networks within and across national boundaries in order to "strike at any place, at any time and with virtually any weapon"[330] without counting costs. Little wonder "western strategists are disturbed by the necessity for confronting 'stateless'

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[327] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 11.
[328] Frank Furedi, *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown* (London: Continuum, 2007), 1.
[329] Blair's Speech, cited in *The Guardian*, March 5, 2004, accessed March 9, 2017, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2004/mar/05/iraq.iraq
[330] Office of the Homeland Security (2002), *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*, Washington DC, p. 1 http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/whitehouse/nat_strat_hls_2002.pdf

opponents for the very simple reason that such foes appear to have little to defend and to lose…. This is a war with no obvious targets."[331]

Former U. S. President George W. Bush was the first to use the term "war on terror" after the 9/11 attacks while referring to this new war as a "crusade that is going to take a while."[332] Since the attacks, scholars have increasingly committed numerous volumes to discourse on terrorism yet no universally acceptable definition sufficiently captures the severity of this new threat. Of course "there are almost as many theories as definitions of terrorism."[333] But the issue is that as much as new theories attempt to respond to issues raised by previous theories they create room for further debates. Each instance of terror reveals unique characteristics that feed into the whole narrative of terrorism. Of course, "terrorism covers a wide range of phenomena, which have been experienced in many countries not only in the contemporary world, but also throughout history."[334] It possesses special elements that distinguish it from other forms of political violence even though some of these elements may be seen partially reflected in these other forms. As a special kind of violence, contemporary terrorism is war of a very different kind that involves faceless, ruthless, reckless and unpredictable assailants who may or may not have clear objectives, obvious targets, and conventional military formations, but appear to be resolute in all their attacks, with little or nothing to defend or lose. It follows therefore that "the threat potential of […] terrorism, which currently dominates our concern, is greatly enhanced by the intent that such acts cause mass casualties and—central to the associated policing nightmare—by the perpetrators' willingness to sacrifice their own lives in committing these acts."[335]

Terrorists focus on two major objectives; threats of terror and acts of terror. "They are not simply interested in inflicting terror but also want to cause mass casualties."[336]Acts of terror are destructive actions poses danger to targets while threats of terror are terrifying massages and gestures that excite passions in a way that defies analytical thinking. They have a way of being in control both of their audience through passionate sensitizations. "Terrorists carry out their activities before a number of different audiences— potential recruits, their own memberships, states and politically interested groupings ("sentiment pools") in societies in

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[331] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, 5.

[332] Kenneth R. Bazinet, "A Fight Vs. Evil, Bush And Cabinet Tell U.S."" *Daily News*, New York. 17 September 2001. Archived from the original on 5 May 2010. Accessed October 10, 2017,

[333] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, xx.

[334] Paul Wilkinson, "The Utility of the Concept of Terrorism", in *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism,* Richard Jackson and Samuel J. Sinclair eds. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 12.

[335] Marianne Wade, and Almir Maljević eds. *A War on Terror?* (New York: Springer, 2010), 3.

[336] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, 7.

which they operate, the media and its imagined readership, audiences in enemy societies, and the audience of "world public opinion." These audiences are both sources of potential support and foci of vulnerability for terrorism."[337] According to Lieutenant Harry R. Jackson, "There are five crucial components of terrorism; an involvement of an act of violence, an audience, the creation of a mood of fear, innocent victims, and political goals or motives."[338] Inundated by deep feelings of fear and trepidation, the society becomes vulnerable to the ploys of these militants who create a sense of wartime insecurity and fatalism among civilian population in a time of peace. This made terrorism to become an 'overriding security concern' after the 9/11, since the adversaries do not need military backgrounds or trainings, may not require definite targets that may be combatants or non-combatants, and must not use sophisticated weapons to create a wartime situation in a peace time. An attack can be carried out by a youth with no military experience against unsuspecting civilians, using an airplane as weapon like the 9/11 hijackers. "Modern conflict now rarely consists of well-matched armies facing each other off on the battlefield. Instead militia-leaders, state forces, warlords, demagogues and terrorists engage in paramilitary and terrorist adventures where often the highest number of casualties is found among civilians rather than uniformed and armed combatants."[339] In this type of war anywhere is a battle ground, any time is wartime, any one may be soldier or target and anything can be weapon.

However, many distinctions are needed to bring more clarity to what we consider to be contemporary terrorism. We begin with "a sharp distinction between violence and terror which the contemporary literature too often blurs. Violence may well be a universal phenomenon that is inseparable from the human condition…of frustration and anxiety. To justify violence we usually argue that the persons we want to hurt either deserve punishment for misdeeds or that they deserve it because they can hurt us and intend to do so. A very different kind of logic is required to justify terror. The victims do not manifestly threaten us; they are innocent by conventional moral standards or by the evidence of our own senses."[340] Implicitly, the justifications and targets of terrorism may be arbitrary but this could not be said about other acts of violence. Acts of terror or terrorism are special forms of violence but not all acts of violence are categorised as terrorism. Another distinction can be made between

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[337] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism: Some Implications of 9/11. Panel on Understanding Terrorists in Order to Deter Terrorism.* Neil J. Smelser and Faith Mitchell, editors. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press), 2.

[338] Harry R. Jackson, *Understanding Terrorism: A Thesis*, Presented in partial completion of the requirements of The Certificate-of-Training in United Nations Peace Support Operations , Published by United States Navy: Peace Operation Training Institute, 4. accessed October, 26, 2017, https://d1quhl37gh6ot5.cloudfront.net/theses/jackson.pdf

[339] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence*, 20.

[340] David C. Rapoport, "Introduction" in Rapoport and Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism*, xiii.

terrorism and other acts of terror. Harry Jackson saw "Terrorism as an attack on unrelated and or undefended persons and or property for political objectives committed by either an individual, non-state organization, or legitimate government. It is the use of illegal force and methods to steal or punish or to bring about change against the will of the greater part. The principal targets are political, destructive violence is used, and the actions are carried out by groups operating clandestinely and sporadically."[341] On the contrary, acts of terror may not necessarily be systematic or organised as terrorism. It may not even be caused by human agency. "Natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes can undoubtedly cause terror among the people caught up in them, but terrorism is a result of human intention. It is a special type of violence, not a synonym for political violence in general. It is the use and credible threat of extreme violence to create a climate of fear to intimidate a wider target than the immediate victims of the terrorist attacks."[342] Implicitly, although both acts of terror and terrorism stoke embers of fear and helplessness on victims, there are notable elements that distinguish them from each other such as agency, organisation, motive, method, political connection and nature of perpetrators. An ordinary armed criminal gang can cause terror to any given community without being a terrorist. Suffice it to say that not all acts of terror are terrorism but terrorism is always an act of terror.

The basic elements that distinguish terrorism from terror are similar and subtle. That is why a terrorist may belong to an armed group but not all armed groups are terrorists. Acts of terror can be experienced from radical syndicates, psychopaths, serial killers, cultist gangs, violent secessionists, militant activists, insurgents and even from natural disasters as stated above, yet as similar as their activities may be to terrorism, they may not conclusively be so. This is because terrorism has more to show than these; it is characterised by violent acts that have some political link to an acclaimed extremist network with the capacity of threatening the existential wellbeing of a state and its innocent citizens through means that are often strategically unpredictable and randomly executed. "It is the hidden and unpredictable qualities of terrorism that makes it so peculiarly frightening."[343] As Jeffery Gettleman noted, "these days it is increasingly difficult to figure out who is a terrorist – or what that even means. Terror - as opposed to terrorism - may be inflicted by any loner with a vague political

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[341] Harry R. Jackson, *Understanding Terrorism*, 10.
[342] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?" 11-12.
[343] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror,* xxviii.

grievance and a gun."[344] Terrorism embraces elements of other acts of terror with complexly limited scope.

The term terrorist, for example, normally referred in the past to state activities; now it seems that we can only visualize terrorists as rebels.[345] This brings us to the distinction between state terrorism and non-state terrorism which shows that "terror is not only an instrument of government; it also appears as a tactic for insurrection,"[346] The reason for this is that "non-state terrorism involves attacks on civilian, symbolic and random targets, most frequently using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and usually, though not exclusively, aimed at bringing about political change. Regime or state terrorism is used to intimidate the civilian population into submission. State-sponsored terrorism occurs when a regime hires a group to silence or intimidate exiled dissidents or to create a climate of fear in a state designated as an 'enemy' by the regime."[347] The concept of state-terrorism has historical link to various regimes' preponderance of coercive power that made them carry out terrorist acts on mass scale using secret police and armed forces for internal repression and social control. Regime/state terrorism was popular during the Nazi and Soviet regimes that perpetrated state stationed terror arbitrarily and indiscriminately on a massive scale. Some dictatorial regimes like Gaddafi's in Libya are often regarded as major perpetrators of state-sponsored terrorism. "It is no accident that regimes which routinely use terror as a weapon of domestic policy also have a tendency to employ it as a tool of foreign policy."[348] They even go a long way to sponsor terrorist clients and mercenaries to conduct attacks abroad for strategic influence.

On the other hand, non-state terrorism involves groups of militants who challenge the state by causing terror in the community. Some of these groups may have political motives or agitations. These groups are designated terrorists and enemies by the state, for their anti-state deviance. But "sometimes, when the relationship with the enemy improves, the terrorist label is withdrawn and the 'ruthless terrorist leader' is recycled as a responsible statesman. Jomo Kenyatta, Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela are amongst the well-known leaders of their country who were once castigated as fanatical terrorists."[349] It is intriguing to notice how much the narrative about terrorism has changed over the years from being solely reflective of

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[344] Jefferey Gettleman, "Terrorism vs. terror, When Just one Gun is Enough," *The New York Times*, accessed October, 26, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/27/weekinreview/terror-vs-terrorism-when-just-one-gun-is-enough.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Week%20In%20Review&action=keypress&region=FixedLeft&pgtype=article

[345] Rapoport, "Introduction" in Rapoport and Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism*, xiv.

[346] Rapoport, xiv.

[347] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 12.

[348] Wilkinson, 14.

[349] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror,* xxix.

government's repressive strategies to being analogous to some kind of anti-government dissidents. "By the late nineteenth century the term terrorist, originally used for those who made unjust mass arrests in the name of the state, became more strongly associated with anti-state violence."[350] This means that terrorism is a value-laden concept that is determined by the circumstances of personal judgments. "Thus in attempting to determine whether a specific action (or series of actions) is terroristic or not, the scholar should be aware that he is making a value judgment about the perpetrators of the alleged act, and about the circumstances of their actions."[351]   This is evident in the various debates that reveal the complexities characterising terrorism as a concept and object of analysis. Suffice it to say that "so much confusion surrounding the definition of this term is due to the fact that it is not simply an objective analytical concept but also a moral statement on the behaviour of the terrorist."[352]

This normative approach to the debate goes a long way to analyse whether designating something as an act of terror is a matter of taking sides based on ones affiliations and underlying motivations. Most of these affiliations may be political and moral but one special feature in these motivations is the need to have superiority of argument. "Moralizing statements about terrorism have a double purpose: first to condemn and stigmatize, but also to claim authority for occupying the moral high ground."[353] So when the state designates a violent action as terrorism, it does not only express its monopoly of legitimate force, it proves its claim for superiority of judgment. For according to Claudia Card,"to identify someone as a terrorist is to render judgment on them, not simply to make a discovery."[354] This confirms the political bias that characterises some of these designations. That is why contemporary terrorism shows some complexities in these prejudiced characterizations that aim to criminalize and disapprove acts deemed to be terrorist. These acts may be state sponsored terrorism masterminded by regimes in a criminally brutal manner such as the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, the genocide in Bosnia, the ethnic cleansing against Albanians in Kosovo, the Nazi holocaust and Mussolini's bombing of the Abyssinians. It may also come from violent reactions of some radical individuals professing or defending an ideological stance like Boko haram in Nigeria, Taliban, al-Qaeda, and ISIS in the Middle East, and al-Shabab in Kenya. "There is of course ample evidence that in the early decades of the twenty-

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[350] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 13.
[351] Paul Wilkinson, *Political Terrorism* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 21
[352] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, xxix
[353] Furedi, xxxi
[354] Claudia Card, "Making War on Terrorism in Response to 9/11", in J. Sterba ed., *Terrorism and International Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 178.

first century, we face difficult challenges from both terrorism by non-state actors and regimes."[355]

The new terrorism that emerged in the aftermath of the 9/11 comes with a renewed interest and intensity among non-state armed groups. Since this attack, "the way in which terrorism was understood changed forever" and "terrorists had achieved the unthinkable and were now able to pose threats to states that previously only other states had."[356] These non-state terrorists express attributes that make them key security and strategic concerns. That is why Anthony Vinci makes "the case that armed groups are autonomous actors that exist within an anarchic system…. They have an army (or semi-professional to professional group of armed men), leadership, bases of operation and even a government-like organization."[357] In the same vein, the 2002 National Research Council document titled "Discouraging Terrorism" described "terrorist organizations as typically far-flung networks that rely on secrecy, invisibility, flexibility, extreme commitment on the part of members, and coordination of military-like activities as their trademarks. These features are sources of both strength and vulnerability."[358] Since terrorist attacks are arbitrary, unpredictable and indiscriminate, it is always difficult to monitor its possibilities and to mitigate its consequences. "The threat represented by mass-casualty terrorism is not confined to its capacity for destruction. Public dread of this phenomenon is underpinned by the assumption that this is a threat that is unpredictable and random, and its effect incalculable."[359] The potency of the threat depends on its unpredictability and randomness. This randomness leaves a constant feeling of helplessness and fatalism that make people believe that terrorism is inevitable and to "insist that unlike other violent threats to people's security, acts of terrorism cannot be prevented."[360]

The nature of contemporary terrorism also shows that it can be reflected in other forms of violence such as insurgency, armed gangsterism and guerrilla wars. Gerald Holton in his book *Reflections on Modern Terrorism* presented three categories of terrorism namely; 'Type I' Terrorism, 'Type II' Terrorism and Type III terrorism. He explained that "Type I terrorism consists of acts by individuals or small groups that aim to impose terror on other individuals and groups, and through them indirectly on their governments. Type II terrorism

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[355] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 13.
[356] John Gearson, "the Nature of Modern Terrorism" *The Political Quarterly*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002) 7. accessed March12, 2017, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-923X.73.s1.3/epdf.
[357] Anthony Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power* (London: Routledge, 2009), 5.
[358] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism*
[359] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, 7.
[360] Furedi, 8.

is the imposition by a government on groups of local or foreign populations."[361] The 'Type I' terrorists can be seen among rebels, freedom fighters, militants of Justice, or insurgent groups challenging an oppressive regime that usually regard them as terrorists. Type II terrorism shows the despotic character of a state when it oppresses citizens with organised covert terror. In contemporary terrorism we see a "historic transition in which Type I terrorism and Type II terrorism are being combined…. The new type of terrorism — Type III — is carried out by a substantially larger group of individuals, is aimed directly at a national population, and has all the components for success…. This new terrorism, at very little psychic cost on the perpetrators, disrupts personal and historic memory through large-scale catastrophe organized for that purpose. Type III terrorism is made easier by the ready availability of high-level technology. Target nations will not have open to them the conventional responses, and will have to devise new, preventive measures."[362] This new type of terrorism is fuelled by ideological motivations which are usually political, religious, ethnic or economic, with some level of organizational structure.

From the above analysis, one would recognise the major elements that characterise contemporary terrorist activities which include; their clandestine networks of organization, their capacity to use new technologies, and the particular ideologies they live by. These basic elements are fostered by some contemporary factors like: "the great asymmetry of economic, political, and military power in the world; the availability of weapons of mass destruction; and the permeability of world society occasioned by processes of globalization."[363] It is true that globalization has brought tremendous economic and technological progress, but terrorists have taken advantage of these strides and new opportunities to execute their unprecedented violence. Hence contemporary terrorism has turned the uses and the power of modern technologies into dangerous means of empowering and facilitating terrorist activities. It is true of course that "the terrorist dangers we face expand exponentially with technical progress."[364] This is because, "the very fruits of human development and prosperity that ere until recently seen as essential for providing society with protection and security have become a source of concern because they have the potential to serve as instruments of terrorist destruction…. It can therefore be rightly said that any technology can be transformed

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[361] Gerald Holton, "Reflections on Modern Terrorism" in *Edge*, 2nd march 2002, accessed April 20, 2017, https://www.edge.org/conversation/reflections-on-modern-terrorism
[362] Holton, "Reflections on Modern Terrorism"
[363] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism*, 2.
[364] Ulrich Beck. 'the Terrorist threat; World Risk Society Revisited', Theory, Culture and Society, Vol. 19, no. 4, pp.39-55 accessed April 21, 2017 http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/hale/ENVS5200/Beck%20--%20The%20Terrorist%20Threat.pdf

in to a terrorist weapon. From this perspective a technology has dual usage"[365] Globalization has trapped us in between contending forces of progressively sophisticated technology and radically destructive terrorism. In the words of David C. Rapoport, the foremost expert in terrorism studies, "more specifically, weapons became more destructive, cheaper, readily obtainable, and easier to conceal: "The technological quantum jumps from the arrow to the revolver and from the gun to the Molotov Cocktail." Mass Communications and transport allowed insignificant individuals to travel and/or contact each other quickly and efficiently, to coordinate activities of small numbers over vast spaces."[366]

Consequently, the modern society has been exposed to the various motivations, complexities and sophistications that characterise today's terrorist activities. These bring about an inflated sense of vulnerability that turns the entire public into helpless victims of terror. Since any technology has the potential to become a terrorist weapon, a heightened sense of vulnerability and helplessness reigns supreme. "Technological innovation and the evolution of an efficient network of cooperation are represented as a source of vulnerability rather than of prosperity and resilience. This vulnerability-led perspective tends to regard society one-sidedly as a target, and people as victims."[367] The modern terrorists capitalises on this vulnerability-led response to ignite a politics of fear and champion their ideological motives through massive casualty-producing violence that keeps the community constantly on its toes. "The 2019 Global Terrorism Index report shows that the number of global deaths from terrorism has reduced by 15.2 % in 2018, but the number of countries affected by extremists have increased as compared to previous years. 71 countries have suffered at least one extremists/terrorism-related death in 2018, while 103 countries recorded at least one terrorist incident."[368] Hence taking cognisance of the fact that terrorist groups have organizational structures, means of warfare and objectives, there is a strong argument that its asymmetrical and unconventional nature makes it a complex problem difficult to tackle. But we might be able to reduce this confusion and make sense of this problem when we look at the various categories of contemporary terrorism.

3.2 Categories of Terrorism

Terrorism activity is not entirely homogeneous. "Every terrorist movement and regime has its own particular aims, beliefs and modus operandi. It would be foolish to try to

[365] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, 12.
[366] Rapoport "intruduction" in Rapoport and Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism*, xii.
[367] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror,* 14.
[368] GK today, *Global Terrorism Index (GTI)* by Institute of Economics and Peace IEP accessed April 27, 2019
https://www.gktoday.in/current-affairs/global-terrorism-index-2019-by-iep/

apply a 'one size fits all' theory of how and why each variety of terrorism arose, why terrorism was chosen as a weapon, what the organizers of the terrorism hoped to achieve, to what extent their terrorist strategy and tactics were effective in securing their stated aims and their wider impact on national/international politics and society."[369] Terrorism is a broad phenomenon dealing with a wide range of elements, motivations, objectives, organization, scope, means, strategies and methods. These elements determine the various categorizations of terrorism which provide the basis for analysing the basic distinctions between terrorist groups. Some of these distinctions could be made between state/regime terrorism and non-state terrorism, or between internal/domestic terrorism and international terrorism. But most experts prefer to classify contemporary terrorist groups according to their objectives and principles.

Moreover, terrorism could be used as a strategy or ancillary for other violent activities like war, repression and insurgency, but one must acknowledge that "the concept of terrorism can be distinguished from these closely related concepts such as insurgency, war and repression, and so should not be employed as a direct synonym for political violence in general."[370] Anthony Vinci in his analysis of armed groups and the balance of power clarified this distinction. He is of the view that since the cold war, different categories of armed groups have participated in the international system. This is possible now as a result of the internationalisation of violence brought about by the connecting forces of globalization that can be "attributed to multiple factors, including the improvement in transport technology, proliferation of information and communication technology, deregulation of international markets, and an increase in migration which have allowed many types of non-state actors (NSAs), including armed groups, to break their local bonds."[371] He acknowledged that these armed groups have relative powers independent of states and can compete with states in asymmetrical warfare which makes them relevant international actors.

Vinci noted that, "it is possible to differentiate at least three different types of armed groups that have relevance to international relations—insurgencies, warlord organizations and terrorist groups. The guerrilla insurgencies, such as the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) that fought a civil war against the Sudanese government in 1983, control territories and tend to use a relationship with civilian society for support of their violent activities. The warlords and their organizations, such as Charles Taylor and the National

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[369] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 15.
[370] Wilkinson, 15.
[371] Vinci, *Armed Groups*, 1.

Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) that fought and took over the Liberian government, sets up a parallel government as they fight for take over. The terrorist groups, such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) uses bombings and other attacks against civilians to advance ideological goals. They often appear as networked organizations with 'cellular' structures and symbolically use barbaric violence against civilians to cause disorder and bring 'widespread attention to a political grievance and/or [to provoke] a draconian or unsustainable response'.[372] He clearly emphasised that "each of these groups differs in organizational structure, means of warfare, tactics, targets, recognition of war zones and goals. They have an army (or semi-professional to professional group of armed men), leadership, bases of operation and even a government-like organization."[373] This distinction clarifies what we may categorise as terrorism or not.

David Rapoport is popular for dividing the historical trajectory of terrorism into four successive waves, each simultaneously spanning about a generation and characterised by particular goals and tactics in various countries namely: Anarchist terrorism, Nationalist/Anti-Colonial terrorism, the terrorism of the New Left/Marxist, and Religious terrorism. He believes that "modern terrorism has occurred in four dominant and successive international waves, each lasting for about forty years. Although heterogeneous groups are found in each of the four "aggregations" …the dominant energy of a wave is discernible. It emerges, peaks, and recedes in a wavelike pattern."[374] Of course the nature of terrorist activities is not monolithic since there is no singular strategy for all terrorist attacks to make us assume behavioural homogeneity. Hence, it would not be out of place to "begin with the assumption that terrorism is a tactic or family of tactics adopted by political groups engaged in asymmetrical struggles with more powerful groups."[375] Rapoport in this theory sought to emphasise the variations among terrorist engagements and tactics which manifest from decade to decade, places to places and from one reason to another. Old terrorist groups are displaced by the emergence of new ones that operate not necessarily from same location and for same reasons. So "what is salient in one wave is not likely to be equally salient in preceding and following waves."[376]

The First Wave (Anarchist terrorism) began when Russian anarchists attacked public conventions and assassinated public authorities as a strategy for overthrowing political

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[372] Vinci, *Armed Groups*, 3-4.
[373] Vinci, 5.
[374] Jean E. Rosenfeld, ed., *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: the Four Waves theory and political Violence* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 3.
[375] Karen Rasler and William R. Thompson, "Looking for Waves of Terrorism" Jean E. Rosenfeld, ed., *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,* 13.
[376] Rasler and Thompson, "Looking for Waves of Terrorism", 15.

systems. "The second was driven by national self-determination, the third claimed to bolster democratic reform whereas the current wave seeks to combat both liberal democracy and secularism." [377] Each of the waves follow similar pattern but with different motivation which bothers on a radicalised identity determination be it cultural, political, economic, social or religious. That is why we notice similar patterns such as hijackings, assassinations, mass killings, destruction of properties, and lucrative kidnappings for concessions and/or ransoms, most of which are done randomly but without excluding specific targets. This similarity also reflects on how terrorists spread their ideologies, recruit, train and deploy operatives who execute orders from their charismatic leaders. "The general pattern is thus not one of random and unstructured violence. Each wave has a life cycle with initial expansion and contraction phases, which are influenced by the number of terrorist organizations in operation and the intensity of their attacks."[378] This wave metamorphosis often goes along with transformations in the world order. Every new wave ushers in a new world order that affects behaviours, policies and attitudes. We see these changes in some remarkable incidents like the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of the Austria-Hungarian empire that triggered the World War I, United States war in Vietnam, agitations for self-determination that ended colonialism, the Iranian revolution that overthrew the Shah, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which exported waves of revolutions to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Israel, and the 9/11 attacks that unleashed the new reign of terror.

The conceptualisation of terrorism in successive periodic waves is based upon a long historical legacy that shows that "doctrine, not technology, is the ultimate source for terrorism."[379] These doctrines reflect the ideological convictions/motivations that create a 'culture of fear' amidst economic, political, technological and religious dynamics. "The new terrorist personifies this fear and provides a focus for cultural anxieties regarding the trajectory of change."[380] The central motivation for terrorism in each wave is distinctive, as are the tactics that are most likely to be employed. The violence is carried out by non-state organizations and is directed at states and their populations deemed to be antagonistic to the aims of revolutionary organizations. Terrorists, including some of their targets, are apt to view their conflict as warfare, albeit an unconventional form of warfare.[381] This trend is

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[377] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism: Past and Present"
[378] Rasler and Thompson, "Looking for waves of terrorism", 17.
[379] Rapoport, "Introduction" in Rapoport and Alexander, eds., *The Morality of Terrorism*, xiii.
[380] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, 25.
[381] Rasler and Thompson, "Looking for Waves of Terrorism", 17.

characterised by prevailing political, cultural, social and economic conditions that distinguishes each context. From the above analysis the following categories of terrorism can be adduced.

3.2.1 Ethno-Separatist Terrorism

This category of terrorism involves groups of radical militants who engage in acts of terror as means for seeking national independence for a particular ethnic group. Their motivation stems largely from their cultural backgrounds and orientations. They emphasise their ethnic identity and uniqueness in their struggle against domineering ethnicities. In the quest for self-determination, group of militants emerge to give teeth to such ethno-nationalist agenda. Such groups perpetrate violence to draw attention to their quest for autonomy. "On one hand, what terrorists value is found in large part in the context of their cultural beliefs, in the ways they organize themselves, and in their motivational and group psychology."[382]

3.2.2 Ideological Terrorism

Ideologies provide rational basis for acts of terrorism. This is because, terrorism appears to be irrational due to the random and unpredictable nature of its strategies and executions that seem to lack rational judgements, but ideologies give reasons to the violence and devastations of terror. Hence terrorism becomes rationalized from the backdrop of its ideological underpinnings. These ideologies may be political or economic in a way that creates a passionate response that is rash but rational and makes the radical proponents see reasons for resorting to violence against an opposing system. Ideological terrorism is seen from among situations of polarity and rivalry between violent forces championing political ideologies like liberalism against conservatism or economic ideologies like communism against capitalism. In that case, "terrorists are campaigning to replace a particular national government with a system of rule in accord with a political ideology of the extreme left (e.g., neo-Marxism) or an ideology of the extreme right (e.g., neo-Fascism)."[383]

With respect to political context, terrorism appears to be fostered by political agitations occasioned by clash of ideologies that makes militant groups fight for the triumph of their own preferred political system. Suffice it to say that "terrorism and its supporting audiences appear to be fostered by policies of extreme political repression and discouraged by policies of incorporating both dissident and moderate groups responsibly into civil society and the political process."[384] The same goes with respect to the socio-economic rivalries that

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[382] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism*, 2.
[383] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 15.
[384] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism,* 2.

result to violence from economic mafias who unleash terror for economic benefits. "Many societies that foster terrorism are characterized by high population growth and large numbers of disadvantaged youth and by extreme economic inequality and poverty. When these conditions combine with strong—sometimes religiously reinforced—anti-Western ideologies, a fertile field for supporting terrorism is generated."[385]

3.2.3 Single-issue terrorism

This involves the violent activities of self-inspired terrorists. It is also known as lone wolf terrorism or lone actor/operator terrorism carried out by a violent individual with no affiliation to any organised group. Although the violent actions of such lone-ranger may be influenced or motivated by the ideology of a known terrorist group or in support of such group, his decision is largely unilateral. We see such single-issue terrorist attacks in situations like when "extremists prepared to use extreme violence to further a particular cause such as opposition to abortion (e.g., army of God) or to alleged abuse of animal rights (e.g., Animal Liberation front)"[386] Some suicide bombings and mass shootings carried out by single individuals may be associated with lone wolf terrorism, especially when the provocation and execution are self-inspired but without totally excluding affiliation or solidarity with any known terrorist organisation. Most of such cases are often linked to the individual's pathology, whereby as psychopaths or deranged individuals they involve in extreme violence. A typical example is the Las Vegas mass shooting in 2017 by the lone wolf terrorist Stephen Paddock with no trace of any organisational affiliation, killing about 59 persons and injuring up to 869 persons.

3.2.4 Religio-Political Terrorism

This category of terrorism "combines extreme religious beliefs with an extreme political agenda (e.g., al-Qaeda and its affiliates)."[387] The motive of religious fanaticism is an important characteristic of the new terrorism. This form of terrorism is inspired by the religious impulse that makes extremists involve in violence to defend or support their extreme religious ideologies. It fits into the last wave of Rapoport's analysis that reveals that tremendous influence of religion in today's terrorist activities. "Though religious elements could be detected in earlier waves, religion became the defining characteristic of this fourth wave, which did not seek to establish a secular order. Starting with Shi'a movements in Lebanon, this wave spread to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, the Philippines,

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[385] National Research Council (2002) *Discouraging Terrorism*, 2.
[386] Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 15.
[387] Wilkinson, 15.

Indonesia, and Israel. Al Qaeda is the most dramatic contemporary manifestation of this trend."[388] In simple terms, religious terrorism is one that is perpetrated by radicalised religious fundamentalists who consider their violence as motivated and justified in support or defence of their religious identity and rigid ideologies.

This version of terrorism appeals to religion in carrying out acts that instil feelings of terror and helplessness, even when the underlying objective may be political. Of course most of the terrorist groups today could be closely associated with one religion or another due to the manifest connections the motivating ideologies have with religious beliefs. The persuasive impulse of religion provides the propensity that serves other secular needs like the political for the most significant of this religious orientation is centered on a radical version of Islam which is usually referred to as radical Islamic terrorism or Islamic radicalism, or militant jihadism; designations used for terrorists who profess and invoke Islam as a religious stimulus to their terrifying violence. Arguably so, Karen Hughes remarked that "it is difficult to know what to call the ideology that we are up against because it is a perversion of Islam…. Because…they are mass murderers who pervert their religion."[389] However, there are other terrorist groups with strong affiliation to other religious traditions. These militants brandish religion as the bone of contention and so justify their acts of terror on religious grounds by labelling and targeting those who don't agree with their ideologies infidels and enemies. To understand this category of terrorism, it is plausible to analyse if there are religious elements that facilitate acts of terror.

3.3 Religious Elements of Terrorism

The anxiety about terrorism is strongest when it has religious characteristics around the very narratives of terror. That is why most of the world's terrorist organizations have religious affiliations. "The religious element reinforces a strong tendency commonly present in the scholarly and sub-scholarly literature on terrorism to treat it as something like an ideology or a comprehensive, belief-driven outlook. There is an equally strong tendency to treat it as always immoral. These tendencies were clearly evident in the aftermath of September 11, where the good-versus-evil divide was massively invoked in the rhetoric of "the war on terror," and Biblical and Koranic analogies were freely deployed in different quarters."[390] There is a kind of religious identification that stands to designate religious backgrounds of terrorists as satanic or evil, a religion of terrorism. Such designations show

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[388] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism: Past and Present"
[389] Cited in Anne Gearen, "Hughes: Fixing US Image May Take Years", *Associated Press*, 28 September 2006.
[390] C. A. J. Coady, *Morality and Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 155.

that religion possesses elements of social identity formation along the lines of parochial proclivities and ideologically-centred prejudices. Lloyd Steffen noted that "religious identity formation inevitably foments a politics of anger and resentment and beyond that—violence. When religion is characterised by ideologies, it divides and builds barriers. Barrier building generates a politics of insiders and outsiders, saved and lost, winners and losers; barrier building is inherently violent."[391] Hence social profiling goes along with religious identity in a way that carries some political dynamism that divides; since religion is a social phenomenon dealing with relationships that involves fundamental beliefs affecting human behaviours, there is a possibility of a rivalry for relevance and dominance.

Most terrorist organizations identify themselves with a religious tradition and so consider their terrorist activities as a fight for survival against a domineering civilization that would completely destroy their religious identity. It follows therefore that "social identity becomes more important—and therefore politicized—when it is threatened by forces of domination and/or assimilation (like colonialism and globalization)."[392] An average Jew, Christian or Muslim does not consider his/her religion as merely a system of worship, but primarily as a unique identity that must be protected. This identity politics involves the threats and pressures that characterise sudden contacts with new realities in a way that heightens the fear of survival of their religious identity. "Religion plays a part in this only because it is the most powerful source of group identity the world has yet known"[393] Some adherents of traditional religions are afraid that contact with modern or foreign cultures threatens the survival of their traditional beliefs. Religion possesses this element that makes believers contest with novelties for fear of extinction and this is evident in the 20th and 21st centuries. Under such intense pressures, there is a tendency to resort to violence in defence of a threatened cultural existence and identity. "Terrorism is therefore not an inevitable result of strict ideology but rather a reaction to the perception of threatened extinction or decline and loss of status."[394]

Moreover, the absolutist concepts in religion may lead extremists to express some totalitarian ideologies. It is obvious that when religious belief becomes an ideology, it systematically legitimises hatred and violence against non-believers. In other words, absolutist ideologies breed fundamentalist religious inspirations. These extremist ideologies

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[391] Steffen, *Holy War*, 40-41

[392] Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy* , 6.

[393] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 101.

[394] Amanda Munroe and Fathali M. Moghaddam, "Is Religious Extremism a Major cause of Terrorism?", Jackson and Sinclair, *Contemporary Debates*, 122.

are both utopian and divisive in the sense that it does not only present one size-fit-all perfect picture of what reality should be, it also emphasizes the influence of religion (i.e., transcendent purpose) as the dominant motivation for terrorist threats. Holy terror can be compared to utopian communities because religious groups "seek undivided and exclusive loyalty from their members."[395] Rabi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin likened this totalitarian tendency to the tower of babel. He "sees babel as the first totalitarian state. The 'shared words' of its builders were a denial of the diversity of human opinion. Dissent was forbidden. Those who expressed it were threatened by death. Utopian-sectarian communities pride themselves in their unity, but it is secured at too high a price: hostility to those who do not share their views."[396] These ideologies motivate with such persuasive power that makes extremists commit terror in the name of God. "The divine imperatives of the religious tradition, including violence, are not open to question by nonbelievers, and secular legalities can be breached if they conflict with religious truth."[397]

Apart from this totalitarian narrative, there is also a moral side of the story in which religion creates a moral dichotomy. Religion serves as a major source of morality for adherents. It guides people in the paths of what is good as opposed to what is evil, what is right as opposed to what is wrong. Religion stipulates moral principles in accordance to religious ideals, and so creates moral imperatives without which one becomes immoral. Each religion raises its doctrines to the level of moral imperatives that must be adhered by all. As such non-adherents are considered evil and morally depraved. The moral dualism created by this tendency often leads to violence between believers and non-believers, as believers consider it a moral responsibility to convert or confront depraved unbelievers. Suffice it to say that "our radius of moral concern has limits. The group may be small or large, but in practice as opposed to theory, we tend to see those not like us as less than fully human. The same is true of religion. The world's great faiths have said sublime things about love, compassion, sacrifice and charity. But these noble sentiments have often been confined to fellow believers, or at least potential fellow believers. Against non-believers—members of another faith or of none, and those of our own faith we deem to be heretics—religions can be brutal and pitiless."[398] By so doing, religion provides a moral imprint to the evil of violence against non-believers. Little wonder most religiously motivated terrorists regard their acts of violence as engaging in a holy war, or jihad. They not only consider their terrorist activities

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[395] Rosenfield, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,* 5.
[396] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 227.
[397] Selengut, *Sacred Fury,* 6-7.
[398] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 31.

as a moral demand, they also see is as a sacred duty which must be fulfilled even at the cost of their lives.

Furthermore, there is a missionary responsibility attached to the notion of terrorism as a religious demand. Every adherent has a religious obligation to spread the faith even at the cost of life. This is because, if religion confers to followers a moral obligation and holy duty to advance and profess the faith, it puts a high premium on dying in the course of this sacred duty. The concept of mission and martyrdom are basic religious principles. Every believer is expected to profess the faith, win converts and possibly die for the faith. As a result of this responsibility, some sects make the mission of winning converts a do or die affair in a way that they are justified if they kill or are killed for it. They see themselves as possessing the mandate of cleansing the world of infidels through conversion or destruction. Consequently, they are celebrated whenever they die performing such noble obligation. Martyrdom is a highly esteemed sacrifice that rewards those who participate in it with elevated status in life and afterlife. Most suicide missions or massacres were executed with such intent. For instance "thirty-seven groups exploited the Islamic concept of *istishhad* (martyrdom) to conduct suicide attacks."[399] Contemporary terrorists sustained and spread the culture of martyrdom to encourage members to participate in suicide missions and volunteer to become human bombs in order to cause harm to infidels and achieve a blissful reward. They have to build and maintain a 'cult of martyr' that systematically deflects the hurtful effects of the suicide with the nobility and rewards of the sacrifice which makes relatives of the deceased swallow the bitter pill and celebrate the death with a commonly reiterated response: "I am sad that my son had gone but I am happy because of his sacrifice".[400] Put simply, the missionary character of religion coupled with its indoctrinating and domineering tendencies motivate one to do the unthinkable even if it means paying the ultimate price for it.

Another religious element that plays out in terrorist tendencies is the apocalyptic and messianic motives. Most religious traditions are teleological. They profess belief in life after death which is the ultimate goal of every believer. These traditions demonstrate an apocalyptic vision of the end of time that involves a final judgment that condemns the unfaithful and rewards the faithful, as well as an Armageddon that ensures the total triumph of good over evil. The end time theories carry an apocalyptic vision of ultimate justice and reward which happen to be the greatest and most persuasive incentive that motivates terrorists to fight onto death. There is a growing obsession with the end of the world which

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[399] Ton Blair Institute for Global Change, *Global Extremism Monitor*, Violent Islamist Extremism in 2017, 10.
[400] Jason Burke, T*he New Threat from Islamic Militancy* (London: The Bodley Head, 2015), 99.

fuels an apocalyptic propaganda among contemporary terrorists who motivate themselves not only with earthly rewards but also with afterlife promises. Some of these apocalyptic interpretations are drawn from sacred texts which as earlier discussed, are considered inerrant. "ISIS has begun to evoke the apocalyptic tradition much more explicitly, through actions as well as words. Having captured *Dabiq*, a town understood in some versions of the narrative to be a possible location for the Armageddon (final apocalyptic battle), and declared its intent to conquer Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), in keeping with prophecy, it believed it has positioned itself for the end."[401] "It is good to note that this Dabiq epic battle will take place between Muslims and Christians."[402] It references the judgment day and heralds the emergence of a messiah who will lead the final battle of belief versus unbelief. Hence many interests in apocalyptic narrative have grown among Muslims since 9/11 and the consequent American inversion of Afghanistan and Iraq; significant events for apocalyptic terrorists who increasingly use the apocalyptic expectation to motivate and appeal. A Sunni Muslim once said of ISIS fighters; "If you think all these *mujahideen* came from across the world to fight Assad, you are mistaken. They are all here as promised by the Prophet. This is the war he promised—it is the Grand Battle."[403]

The apocalyptic element is central to many religious traditions. This expectation is often expressed today with either messianic or millenarian visions, and often serves to satisfy the passionate yearning for social justice among religious people. The apocalyptic thought prevalent in these traditions (Muslim, Christian, and Jewish) projects an impending end of the world when "a messianic figure will return to the earth, and God will pass judgment on all people, justly relegating some to heaven some to hell."[404] "Messianic expectations erupted periodically, and it would seem that as long as the religious traditions that make messianism conceivable prevail, an outburst is always possible."[405] "The Muslim apocalyptic thought is diverse and complex. Its account of the final days declares that Constantinople will be conquered by Muslims; the antichrist will appear and travel to Jerusalem; a messianic figure (in some instances Jesus and in some instances the Mahdi) will come to earth, kill the antichrist, and convert the masses to Islam. The world's non-Muslim territories will be conquered."[406] The impulse provided by the apocalyptic vision brings a sort of moral balance that makes apocalyptic terrorists justify their violence and see themselves as instruments of

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[401] Jessica Stern and J. M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (London: HapperCollins Publishers, 2015), 220.
[402] Andrew Hosken, *Empire of Fear, Inside the Islamic State* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2015), 257.
[403] Jessica Stern and J. M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 222.
[404] Stern and Berger, 221.
[405] Rapoport, "Introduction", xv.
[406] Stern and J. M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror,* 221-222.

ultimate justice and final triumph of good over evil. "One Reason may be that many radical revolutionary cults have views of the world that retain elements of the Messianic vision. In both faiths, all existing moral and legal rules will be supplanted. Human nature will be transformed, paving the way for a higher condition of moral existence where oppression, inequality, and even the state (as we know it) disappears."[407] With the centrality of this apocalyptic vision among militants, "millenarian thinking once limited to poor and ill-educated Shia communities and eschatological literature once consigned to a 'lunatic fringe' of Sunnis had become much more widespread over recent decades."[408]

These apocalyptic groups are brutal and barbaric in their onslaughts which also have a political vision towards the establishment of a one faith community. "They see themselves as participating in the ultimate battle and their actions are also significantly harder to predict than the actions of strictly politically motivated groups."[409] However there are some elements of political nationalism in their religiously motivated actions. Hence we can divide religious terrorists into two major kinds namely; the fundamentalist group—advocating for purely unilateral religious worldview as against diverse variations—and the ethnoreligious group—advancing religious ideology amidst nationalistic concerns. Little wonder Resenfield observed that the "religious wave exhibits a somewhat surprising preoccupation with nationalism. Ideological terrorism, in general, presents a mixed bag of political and religious motivations among … terrorist groups."[410] "A religious [terrorist] group, then, is a terrorist group that advances a religious ideology; this category includes both ethnoreligious and fundamentalist groups."[411] This nationalistic element supports the claim that although religious energy provides stimulus to terrorism, terrorist groups are largely motivated by political and territorial goals, not only by religious goals.

There is no doubt that violence is an exhibition of the force of power. Religion is largely pacific and persuasive, but its persuasive ability points to a political potency that expresses the force of power. "Religion and power are two different things altogether, even if both in their distinct ways and different senses are political."[412] In the words of Lloyd Steffen, "violence is always political, even when undertaken for religious reasons or with religious sanction. Politics is always susceptible to being affected by the religious dynamic,

[407] Rapoport, "Introduction", xv.
[408] Burke, *The New Threat*, 137.
[409] Stern and Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, 223.
[410] Resenfield, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,*5.
[411] Peter S. Henne (2012) "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1, 40, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817
[412] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 223.

for religion is concerned with power relationships—the subject matter of politics. Politics is concerned with violence in that violence is one way that people attempt to define, and construct or rearrange relationships. Religion comes to the fore when people refer violence to the realm of ultimacy for legitimation."[413] Of course it is not accident to say that Religion and Politics were originally two sides of one coin in history. History reveals political power as derivative of religious power, in that, ancient monarchs were not only regarded as direct descendants of deities but also personification of godly powers. "It follows, incidentally, that the first fully articulated religions were integrally linked to politics, a word that itself derives from polis, meaning 'city'. Religion was the metaphysical grounding of the social structure, and thus the basis of political order. The head of state was the head of the religion. The king, ruler or pharaoh was either a god or a son of the gods or the chief intermediary with gods."[414] This interplay between religious and political powers shows how religious power gives legitimacy to political power, and how political power gives potency to religious power. Until the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, most monarchies were accorded religious powers just as some religious leaders had political powers too. Although the spiritual and the secular has been separated since then, we still have some states that have a reasonable combination of both powers, such as the Islamic states, and to some degree the United kingdom where the monarch is the head of the church.

When a religious ideology is utilized in instances of political violence, it can lead to combatants perceiving their struggle as a sacred one, and becoming disassociated from local factors.[415] According to Harry R. Jackson, "most terrorist groups display by their membership, a strong religious component, such as the IRA, the PLO, and the Red Hand Commandos. Despite this relationship, the dominant motivations for these groups are political, not religious. Violence and terrorism assume a transcendental dimension for the religious terrorist. It becomes a holy duty or obligation to fulfil some sacred imperative."[416] The impact of this blend is more brutal when the perceived enemy professes another faith, then it becomes a complete contest of two religious forces. It reveals the real political side of the faith traditions where each tradition competes for supremacy and dominance. And if politics involves the ways and means of power, then religious terrorism highlights the political elements of religious practice—the contest of gods. "The world of politics is essentially polytheistic in the sense that every centre of power, however small and

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[413] Steffen, *Holy War*, 37.
[414] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 38.
[415] Henne, "The Ancient Fire", 39.
[416] Jackson, *Understanding Terrorism*, 6.

insignificant it may be, has a tendency to posit itself as an absolute entity in the world, regardless of the simultaneous existence of other centres which deem themselves equally absolute."[417]

When politics and religion are discussed within the context of violence, some theorists speak of the political elements of religious violence while others speak of the religious elements of a political violence. Both sides of the discussion are relevant to the analysis of religious terrorism. However there is need for a charismatic leader to motivate and drive the agenda. He will become a role model and a rallying point like a priest that leads and influences a faithful community. This leader is often educated, eloquent, brilliant and socially prominent. He is capable of influencing a sizeable group of people who rally around him to receive a fundamentalist version political and religious education. By so doing, he creates a community of believers who rely on him for sustenance and support. These loyal followers are motivated to participate in the terrorist agenda. Relying on the violent scriptural texts, the leader convinces his indigent followers to believe that their present social condition is an evil that contradicts their fundamental beliefs. So he challenges them to rise against it with violence. History leaves no doubt that such religiously motivated leaders can motivate their followers to willingly unleash terror in the name of their sacred convictions or political goals. This group may eventually grow into becoming a network with the help of a technology that proliferates their grievances and spreads their violence. Islamic terrorism is most significant here although other religious traditions seem to join in the fray. Theorists discern three successive ripples of the Islamic wave of terrorism. "The first ripple consisted of "founders" who were mature, educated, and socially prominent; the second ripple consisted of middle-class expatriates who created a "common Muslim identity" as a means of overcoming their sense of alienation in the West; but the third ripple derives from a more acculturated, if less educated and affluent, diaspora group of young men who want to be heroes, but who are not notably religious."[418]

Religious extremists usually consider themselves as 'interpreters of history', claiming to have monopoly of true knowledge and thus considering themselves to be the 'chosen ones' who reserve the sole absolute right to interpret divine will. As a result of this, they hold on to ancient hatred and historical grievances rooted in ethno-political conflicts like land disputes, wars and oppressions as basis for justifying perpetual enmity and religiously sanctioned

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[417] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 230.
[418] Rosenfield, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,* 4.

violence. These religious elements show that "terrorism could be justified, however, on religious grounds, and there are some striking and enormously significant examples."[419] Terrorist organisations like the Assassins of Medieval Islam represent a premodern analogous example whereas contemporary terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, Taliban and ISIS in the Middle East, American Christian white supremacists, as well as Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria are modern day examples. It is on record that a great percentage of fatalities from armed conflicts are trace to religiously motivated terrorism. "Vast proportions of these deaths were conflicts involving Islamic extremists though not all clearly were killed by the militants themselves."[420] A look at the Nigerian experience of religious terrorism would bring clarity to our analysis.

3.4 The Nigerian experience

In the continent of Africa, religious battles between the Christian and the Muslim communities have taken place in many countries, with particularly violent encounters in Nigeria.[421] No doubt, Nigeria is the 3rd most terrorised countries in the world according to 2019 GTI report.[422] Since 2011, it has been counted among the 10 deadliest countries in the world for extremist violence, alongside Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Egypt, Pakistan, Lybia, and Mali. The most notorious terrorist group in Nigeria, "Boko Haram— which translates literally to "Western education is forbidden"—was in 2015, at the height of its influence and control of territory, ranked the world's deadliest terrorist group by the Global Terrorism Index, ahead of the Islamic State group (ISIS). This group has since 2009, killed tens of thousands of people in Nigeria, and displaced more than two million others."[423] One wonders why the rate of extremist violence is high in Nigeria even as it is considered the largest economy in Africa. But we must acknowledge that "although extremist ideology is the key driver of this violence, there are other unique social, political, ethnic, and economic contexts that also affect the directions extremists take."[424] These contexts determine the complex realities that characterise spate of religious violence in the country. "As a complex

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[419] Rapoport, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,* xv.
[420] Burke, *The New Threat*, 7-8.
[421] Selengut, *Sacred Fury*, 5.
[422] GKToday, "Global Terrorism Index 2019", November 22, 2019, Accessed February 15, 2020, https://www.gktoday.in/current-affairs/global-terrorism-index-2019-by-iep/
[423] 423 Madiha Afzal, "From "Western Education is Forbidden" To The World's Deadliest Terrorist Group Education And Boko Haram In Nigeria", *Foreign Policy at Brookings*, April 2020, 2. Accessed April, 17, 2020 https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FP_20200416_nigeria_boko_haram_afzal-1.pdf
[424] Tony Blair Institute, *Global Extremism Monitor*, Violent Islamist Extremism in 2017, 23.

and linguistically and culturally diverse country, Nigeria is certainly a fascinating case study for those interested in not only security studies but also development."[425]

Nigeria harbours great diversity of cultures, ideas, languages, orientations, religions, ideologies and worldviews. Being the most populous black nation and the 7th most populated country—with an ever growing young population and fertility rate, Nigeria has the third highest ethnic and linguistic diversity in the world. Nigeria's experience of terror can be rightly understood from the background of its socio-political and ethnoreligious complexities. The violent conflicts are direct consequences of these structural disparities. According to Mike Smith, "one must first look backward, not only at the formation of Boko Haram itself, but also at the complex history of Nigeria, Islam in West Africa and the deep corruption that has robed the continent's biggest oil producer, largest economy and must populous nation of even basic development, keeping the majority of its people agonisingly poor. One must look at colonisation and cultural differences between Nigeria's north and south, the brutality of its security forces and the effects of oil on its economy."[426] Most cases of terrorism in Nigeria have religious connection. To understand the historical developments of the impact of religion on armed conflicts in Nigeria, one needs to look "at how the history of Islamist fundamentalism, anti-establishment relativism, and religious identity in northern Nigeria has influenced the emergence of violent contestation and insurgency."[427]

Islam started spreading in Nigeria centuries before Christianity. According to Virginia Comolli "whereas Christianity and Islam today are by far the two most dominant faiths in Nigeria, Islam has a much older heritage in the region."[428] Islam entered Nigeria as far back "as the 9th century when Ara traders of Trans-Saharan trade plied their trade with religion in Bornu in the North Eastern Nigeria."[429] But through the radical evangelization and jihad championed by Usman Dan Fodio a Fulani preacher, Islam was spread all over the northern region of the country from 1808 ever before the advent and spread of Christianity in the south. With this jihad, Dan Fodio incorporated most of the territories that formed today's Northern Nigeria into the Sokoto caliphate which ruled the North-Western Nigeria until the region was conquered in 1903 by colonialists led by Fredrick Lugard with his West African Frontier Force. Hence the southern region has a good population of Christians who embraced western education while the Northern region became populated by Muslims who rejected

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[425] Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamic Insurgency* (London: Hurst and Co. Publishers, 2015), 5.

[426] Mike Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War* (London: I. B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2015), 18.

[427] Comolli, *Boko Haram,* 13.

[428] Comolli, 13.

[429] N.I.O and D.L-B, *Boko Haram: Between Myth and Reality* (Marston Gate: Amazon.co.uk, Ltd.), 9.

western education on the basis that "going to the Whiteman's school will make the northerner become a Christian and turn his back on Islam."[430] Hence, "very few signs of modernity were to be observed and the relatively few Christians present in the North led segregated lives and faced many limitations on their involvement in social and public life. Historical accounts reveal that the Muslim Northerners generally despised the south which was considered 'pagan' and 'alien' and which 'might well belong to another world'."[431] Feelings of rivalry, hatred, antagonism and stereotypes characterised the relationship between the Christian dominated south and the Muslim dominated north of Nigeria.

Some accounts claim that the unpopularity of western education in the Muslim North was a colonial strategic move to earn the loyalty of the northern people. They made a diplomatic alliance with the Islamic oligarchy that became vassals of the colonial powers in an indirect rule that satisfied the interest of both the oligarchs and the colonialists. The colonialists allowed the oligarchs keep their Islamic authority and direct influence in order to maintain their political and economic control. "By upholding sharia provisions, the colonial administration institutionalised the inferior status of non-Muslims."[432] They made the North less-educated as a way of keeping them loyal and less critical, by limiting the efforts of the missionaries to educate and evangelise. Alex Perry captured this thus, "restricting enlightenment was not only shrewd colonialism, it was cheap, too. Lugard ruled through a handful officials who co-opted structures of the emirates. In this way, the emirs' interests were also protected. Several felt the added protection of British authority made them untouchable and became little more than tyrants. The emirs too saw the value in limiting education and drew on their religious authority to reinforce their anti-enlightenment stance with piety since education often came in the form of Christian missionary schools, it was to be resisted in the name of God. Islam had to be protected. The people had to be insulated. Western education was a sin."[433] One could therefore rightly claim that "there is a lack of northern buy-in for the Nigerian state's post-colonial, federally-imposed Westernized system of education because many northern Muslims see this system as ideologically incompatible with their beliefs and as insufficiently representative."[434] Little wonder most cases of

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[430] N.I.O and D.L-B, *Boko Haram:*15

[431] V. Comolli, *Boko Haram,* 17. (the designation of non-Muslims as pagans and aliens who might well belong to another world is attributed to Saudana of Sokoto 1949, the political Godfather and now ancestor of Northerners as written by Martin Meredith in *The State of Africa* (London: Free Pres, 2005), 75. Note that the Colonial masters in 1914 amalgamated completely different nations to form what we know today as Nigeria for their interest.

[432] Comolli, *Boko Haram,* p. 17

[433] Alex Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram: Investigating the Terror Tearing Nigeria Apart (*Germany: Newsweek Insights, 2014), 20. (Lord Lugard was the British governor in charge of Nigeria as a British Colony)

[434] Madiha Afzal, "From "Western Education is Forbidden" 1.

religiously related terrorism in the country are witnessed in the North due to "the centrality of denouncing Western education in Boko Haram's ideology and the group's terrible violence."[435]

The diversified richness of Nigeria has generated strenuous dichotomies especially along ethno-religious lines. It is not disputable that "religious identity has been defined as a determinant of, among other factors: orientation towards authority; tendency to conflict; and the possibility of conflict resolution."[436] The intellectual richness of people from the southern part of the country merited them places in the public and professional sector whereas the Northern aristocracy inherited political authority from the colonialists who needed to maintain control. Being educated became a disadvantage for people from the south since being less educated was suitable for colonial convenience and so made the northerners less critical political favourites of colonial decisions. Lord Fredrick Lugard the governor general who amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates that formed Nigeria, confessed that "southerners' superior education, was a particular problem. Education has brought to such men only discontent, suspicion of others and bitterness, which masquerades as racial patriotism, and the vindication of rights unjustly withheld."[437] The Northern region's political advantage enabled the superiority complex that dared the southern region's professional advantage. "The Muslim Northern region operates with the megalomaniac philosophy of 'born to rule' (which became officially the motto of one of the northern states) and does not believe in parting with power."[438] "A united Nigeria, then, was a fiction founded on colonial convenience and prejudice. The idea might have been expected to die at independence. But by the time freedom arrived in 1960, the concept was ingrained in government structures and many southerners had developed a customary deference to northerners. Accordingly, the northern elite dominated the new Nigerian independent government and its army from the outset. It was more than three decades before a southerner became president."[439] Giving that "Nigeria is a creation of colonial expediency"[440] as Alex Perry rightly puts it, one cannot put the entire blame on the colonial influence. This is because, it is indisputable that "the colonial system laid the foundation of Nigeria's cleavages, but various postcolonial actions and events exacerbated them. Scholars have

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[435] Afzal, 3-4.
[436] Comolli, *Boko Haram,* 21.
[437] Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram,*19.
[438] Oforka , *The Bleeding Continent*, 354.
[439] Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram,* 20-21.
[440] Perry, 18.

offered reasons including elite manipulation and conspiracy, leadership deficit, ethnic manipulation, religious bigotry, and the ethnicization of politics."[441]

Since Nigeria's independence from colonial Britain in 1960, the state was declared secular—to be run in a western style—and so, Christianity has been accused of making inroads into the north.[442] "This first republic, however, became riddled with corruption and inefficiency. …within six years of independence, Nigeria became 'a cesspool of corruption and misrule. Public servants helped themselves freely to the nation's wealth. Elections were blatantly rigged. The subsequent national census was courageously stage-managed; judges and magistrates were manipulated by the politicians in power. The politicians themselves were pawns of foreign business interests. All this was the aftermath of the tragic colonial manipulation of the foundation of Nigeria. This situation dictated subsequent events in the history of this populous nation."[443] The ethno-religious challenges that characterised Nigeria as a colonial contraption and 'amalgam of irreconcilables' resulted in various political tussles, agitations, military coupes, uprisings and eventually a civil war—known as the "Nigerian-Biafra war" or "the Biafra war"—between the south-eastern secessionist state of Biafra and the Nigerian state which claimed millions of lives. Reports have it that "tension between young Hausa Muslims and Christian Igbo from eastern Nigeria, who dominate the country's petty trading sector, has always been near the surface. It erupted in its most violent form in the ethnic massacres that preceded the 1967-70 civil war."[444]

Consequently, the mutual suspicions, stereotypes, mistrusts and prejudices that followed, led to pockets of violent conflicts along religious and ethnic lines. The Northern dominated military junta and politics of corruption gave rise to total deprivation, unemployment, and impoverishment. "Nigeria's own anti-corruption watchdog estimated that its rulers stole $300billion in oil revenues between 1960 and 1999."[445] Population kept growing without commensurate infrastructural development, youth employment, and productive education across the country especially in the less educated Northern region. Karl Maier, author of 'Nigeria in Crisis', describes Nigeria as "a non-productive economy addicted to petrodollars, ruled by a coterie of army officers and bureaucrats growing fat on contract kickbacks and siphoning off the oil revenues".[446] "The list goes on even as tens of millions of

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[441] Lucky E. Asuelime and Ojochenemi J. David, *Boko Haram the Socio-Economic Drivers* (New York: Springer, 2015), 3-4.
[442] Mebd Ruane, "Taking a Hard Look at Nigeria" *The Irish Times*, Friday, April 6, 2001, Accessed April 29, 2020, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/taking-a-hard-look-at-nigeria-1.298736
[443] Oforka, *The Bleeding Continent,* 151.
[444] Mebd Ruane, "Taking a Hard Look at Nigeria"
[445] Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram,* 22.
[446] Mebd Ruane, "Taking a Hard Look at Nigeria"

Nigerians live in deep poverty…. Hence, as many as 50 million young people in Nigeria may be unemployed or underemployed, a situation which…. was a time bomb if not addressed. And the Boko Haram insurgency shows the clock is ticking and time is running short."[447] These show that the scourge of insurgency and terrorism that has ravaged Nigeria were consequences of cumulative failures of the leadership class to harness the human and economic resources of the country. The indigent population are rendered hopeless and frustrated to the point of resorting to inter-ethnic or inter-religious blames that often lead to conflicts. Even the civil war was a direct consequence of such ethno-religious tensions.

It is true that the Biafran war had some religious connotations which readily highlighted the role of religious tensions in civil conflict (alongside ethnic and political rivalries), religious conflict intensified in the late 1970s and manifested in numerous intra-religious fights, i.e. among Muslims; inter-religious tensions, i.e. between Muslims and Christians; and conflicts between the state and religious activism which prepared grounds for outright religious insurgency or terrorism. Meanwhile the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 inspired demands for the adoption of sharia law across Nigeria.[448] The poor economic conditions and the massive marginalization of the common citizens caused by corruption and ineptitude of the political class, amplified the displeasure and disaffection of the masses who sought consolation in their religious denominations. The large population of poverty-stricken uneducated masses in the Northern region attribute the blame to the influence of western education on the leaders who have turned their backs on their Islamic values. This is because they consider the western-styled system of government and education practiced by the post-colonial Nigerian government as an incompatible imposition that contrasts the Islamic system they are familiar with during colonization. Unlike people from the Sothern region, a vast population of the Northern region has found it difficult till date to identify with and embrace Western education. This is why "in the north of Nigeria there has been a simmering feeling that Muslims are being relegated to the background, and that Islam is being stampeded out of existence by Western education. They are feeling marginalised. You find it especially among the youth."[449] By virtue of the unfamiliarity and disaffection, they blame the imposed Western system for limiting their opportunities for development because only the corrupt few who belong to the political class get the dividends. Madiha Afhal analysing the Northern Nigeria's grievances against Western education said, "The lack of job opportunities faced by

[447] Smith, *Boko Haram,* 66.
[448] V. Comolli, *Boko Haram,* p.19
[449] Mebd Ruane, "Taking a Hard Look at Nigeria"

even the educated in the north made people see Western education as a symbol of "dashed expectations," leading to the youth "tearing up their certificates," or degrees. Also Western education is considered a symbol of the Nigerian state's corruption because it is Western-educated politicians and elites who are seen as presiding over that corruption."[450] Angered by rising unemployment and poverty, they increasingly view these Muslim elites as collaborators of the corrupt system.

The radical antagonisms against the Western-styled education by Nigeria's Muslim dominated North, gave rise to various ethnic and religious conflicts often championed by militant activists under the leadership of a charismatic Imam. Non-Muslims were often attacked by Islamic activists like Daawa, Yan Izla, and Maitasine in the 1980s. The Maitasine was an anti-western ideology group whose aim was to purify the Nigerian society by waging a jihad to annihilate non-Muslims and install the sharia as rule of law. They "preach a strong compulsion to kill because they believe that if they are able to kill 'Arma' (infidels) who don't believe in Allah, they will go to heaven".[451] So they "direct their anger against: the secular state, and the Sufis and more traditional establishments that either supported or were indifferent to the increasingly westernised state."[452] Although their killing spree lasted till 1985 when the security agencies decimated them, but their actions became a prelude to an impending devastating terrorist organization *Jamaatu Ahlisunnah Lidawati Wal Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad) popularly known as Boko Haram.

The ethno-religious polarisations caused significant crises and violent reactions to slightest religious provocations such as the murder and beheading by a fundamentalist mob of Gideon Akaluka, a young Igbo Christian trader who was accused of desecrating the Koran in December 2004, and a new outbreak of riots that followed,[453] and no less the 2005 miss world pageant crisis that claimed lives of many non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria.[454] In Nigeria, even provocations from far away countries in Europe like the Charlie Hebdo crisis of February 2006 and the Danish 'Jyllands-Posten's' cartoon controversy in 2005 triggered violent attacks against non-Muslims who are usually made scapegoats of such Islamists' mob

[450] Afzal, "From "Western Education Is Forbidden" 1.
[451] Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram,* 40.
[452] Comolli, *Boko Haram*, 19.
[453] Karl Maier, "Beheading stirs Nigerian tension" *Independent,* Wednesday 16th August 1995 Accessed March 3, 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/beheading-stirs-nigerian-tension-1596448.html
[454] The 16th November 2002 *ThisDay* Newspaper publication on the *Miss world pageant* proposed to be hosted in Nigeria made a comment that the Islamic prophet Muhammad would probably have approved of the Miss World competition, sparked an uprising that killed more than 200 non-Muslims in the various cities in Northern Nigeria.

actions.[455] It is clear that the North of Nigeria is always on a knife edge. There were series of religious and political agitations which led to the incorporation of the sharia into the Nigerian criminal law by some states in the Northern region. "beginning with Zamfara state, a total of twelve northern states had, to varying degrees, adopted sharia law by 2001…. Hence, deadly clashes in Kaduna, Jos and elsewhere did nothing to prevent the states of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto and Yobe from following in Zamfara's footsteps."[456] Sporadic outbreaks of ethnic and religious violence continued until the emergence of the unprecedented radical group founded by Mohammed Yusuf called Boko Haram which literally translates "boko" (Western Civilization/Education) is "haram" (sinful/forbidden).

Boko haram is the image of Nigeria's contemporary terrorism. It reflected the discontents and animosities of some young unemployed Muslims from the North of Nigeria against the perceived corruption and inefficiency of the western-styled secular state and culture. Led by the charismatic Imam Mohammad Yusuf, this group agitated for total implementation of sharia law and the course for an Islamic state which for them remains the only solution to the social challenges they face. In the spirit of Dan Fodio's anti-authoritarian, revivalist Islam and his opposition to an avaricious, distant elite", Yusuf championed an anti-western campaign that promoted hate against everything non-Islamic and western. He castigated western education for bearing no productive dividends. "Why bother with Western-style education, Yusuf would ask in his sermons, when there were no jobs even for graduates?"[457] Yusuf was not only popular for his anti-western advocacy, he was also an admirable charismatic preacher who attracted many followers, provided them social and financial support and led them in this radical movement against Westernization. "He felt that British colonialism and the creation of Nigeria had imposed an un-Islamic way of life on Muslims through all the various layers of a modern state—Western schools, a Western legal system, Western democracy, and on and on. He advocated the development of an Islamic state where Muslim principles and sharia law would be obeyed, and denounced northern Nigeria traditional Leaders, including the sultan of Sokoto, the country's highest Muslim

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[455]Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten's cartoon on 30 September 2005 depicted Muhammad as a terrorist with a bomb. This incited Muslims in the north of Nigeria to attack local Christians as part of the usual battle for influence and superiority, See Ian Fisher, "Italian Quits over Cartoons, 15 die in Nigeria", the New York Times, February 19, 2006, accessed March, 6, 2020https://web.archive.org/web/20150107223657/http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/international/europe/19cartoon.html?ref=danishcartooncontroversy. Whereas February 8, 2006, French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo published cartoons of Mohammed, saying: "It's hard to be loved by imbeciles;" this triggered killings in the highly religiously polarised and inflammably charged Northern Nigeria.

[456] Comolli, *Boko Haram,* 20.

[457] Perry, *The Hunt for Boko Haram,* 51.

spiritual figure…. He was a fundamentalist in the strictest sense of the word, believing very literally in all of that he took away from the Quran."[458]

Ultimately, the rise of Boko Haram is inextricable from post-colonial identity formation in Nigeria, a singularly diverse state, where the Westernized method of schooling already adopted by the Christian south during colonial times was imposed on the Muslim north post-independence, resulting in dangerous fissures and tensions.[459] Through his Islamic schools and mosques sessions, he succeeded in building a legion of followers from among the poor youths who were not only disenchanted with the status quo but also were ready to do his bidding come what may. He also got support from some local leaders and foreign affiliates[460] that made the movement progress from Maiduguri its original base/capital to other parts of Northern Nigeria. Yusuf radicalised the message that western education has favoured Christians and Christianity in Nigeria as he accuses Muslim traditional leaders and emirs of abandoning their roles as ambassadors of Islam. He formed a mini government structure, administered under Islamic laws with various sectors of social development like micro-finance businesses, social investment programmes, building Islamic schools, military camps and stockpiles for defence against impending attacks from the secular government. With Yusuf, insurgency in Nigeria started building formidable roots for a long tragic ordeal. "It could also be argued that some northern politicians supported the group in the hope of using it to attack its political rivals but soon lost control of what had in fact become a monster."[461] The group soared in violent crimes like armed robberies, kidnappings for ransoms and lootings as means of financial support and advancing jihad against non-Muslims.

The terrorist group did not emerge in a vacuum: Yusuf capitalized on grievances that already existed in Nigeria's north against the country's Western education system.[462] The situation escalated from June 11, 2009 when Yusuf was arrested and extra-judicially killed after his group's violent clash with security operatives.[463] But his death sparked the beginning of an unprecedented terror under the leadership of his Lieutenant Muhammad Abubakar Shekau; a bloodthirsty militant who exacerbated the insurgency and made Boko haram a globally recognised terrorist organization. Of course "the extra-judicial killing of Yusuf …

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[458] Smith, *Boko Haram,* 84.
[459] Madiha Afzal, "From "Western Education Is Forbidden", 2.
[460] Alqaeda, Al-Shabab and ISIS
[461] Comolli, *Boko Haram*, p.79
[462] Madiha Afzal, "From "Western Education Is Forbidden", 1.
[463] Some reports say that his extra-judicial killing after arrest was politically influenced. "There are indications that if Muhammad had lived, he would have revealed who his backers and financers were. Maybe, some people in high places did not want this revealed so the order was given and the man was silenced." N.I.O. and D.L-B, *Boko Haram*, 25.

not only left the group thirsty for revenge but also paved the way for a change in leadership, embodied by second-in-command turned supreme leader Abubakar Shekau. The latter altered the nature of the movement which, from this point on, took a more radical and violent turn becoming the fully-fledged insurgency Boko Haram has become known as."[464] The group grew exponentially in strength, number and notoriety. It is undisputable that "Boko haram's expansionist vision is underpinned by a Salafi-Jihadi ideology that it uses to justify attempts to overthrow the Nigerian government and implement its version of sharia law. The brutal tenets espoused by the group validate its violent tactics against the Nigerian population. Seventy-one percent of the group's attacks in the Lake Chad basin targeted civilians in a campaign that was more focused on civilian targets than that of any other extremist group. Boko Haram is known for launching attacks against civilians in some of Nigeria's 36 states."[465]   With Shekau Boko haram declared war on Nigeria and "has carried out regular bombing and shooting missions in many parts of northern Nigeria."[466]

The personality of the new leader Shekau manifested in the brutality of the violence perpetrated by the terrorists. According to Virginia Commoli, "the radical turn under Shekau was evident from his personality which contrasted markedly from Yusuf's. Those who met him described him as a coarse individual, an avid hashish user and "somehow more fearful than Yusuf".… In fact, since the change of leadership it has become increasingly difficult to reach out to the group…."[467] Yusuf was a more articulate and open leader who granted media interviews, participated in public seminars and evangelisation of his ideologies. He projected the image and ideology of the group in the open unlike Shekau who turned the group into a faceless terrorist organisation. Shekau was an introvert who "does not even deal directly with his followers, let alone the media, and prefers to give orders and distribute or collect money through his lieutenants."[468] Reports have it that Shekau has been a psychopath who even criticised Yusuf for being very 'liberal'. He is a hyper-religious bigot swallowed up by radical religious narrowmindedness so much so that he feels nothing presiding over unprecedented terror in the name of faith. "His religious drive was such that it won him the nick-name of *Darul Tawheed*, i.e. specialist in *Tawheed*, or Islamic doctrine. He was ambitious and extreme in carrying out his operations without any consideration, so much so that it was not just a mission but a pleasure to exert terror. In his words; 'I enjoy killing anyone that God

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[464] Comolli, *Boko Haram*, 53.
[465] Tony Blair foundation, *Global Extremism Monitor*, 32.
[466] N.I.O and D.L-B, *Boko Haram*, 27.
[467] Commoli, *Boko Haram*, 60.
[468] Commoli, 60-61.

commands me to kill the way I enjoy killing chickens and rams.'"[469] He took the killings to another level and considers it a religious duty to destroy every structure of western civilization with the view of replacing it with a theocratic Islamic state. Owning up the attack in one of his videos Shekau said; "We are the ones who carried out the attack…. We are the *Jamaátu Ahlus-Sunnah LiddaÁwati Wal Jihad* that have been maliciously branded Boko Haram…. My message to my Muslin brethren is that they should know that this war is a war between Muslims and infidels. This is a religious war"[470]

He has consistently emphasised that these killings were morally right as he draws inspiration and justification from the sacred scriptures. He believes that he is obliged to fight against everything that is not in line with his religious beliefs. Hence he is doing the work of god by cleansing the corrupt Nigerian society with jihad which would restore the reign and glory of Allah. Suffice it to mean that the acts of terrorism engineered by him were both religious duty and moral obligation. He said; "everybody should be judged according to his conscience. What I am doing is written in the Holy Qurán and the Hadith and I will not stop. I challenge all the clerics of the world to question my deeds. Those underrating my capacity should have a re-think. I will never allow democracy to thrive…. The concept of Government of the people by the people for the people will never be possible and will never exist. Democracy shall be replaced only by the government of Allah from Allah and for Allah."[471] This is why from 2010 till date; the group has kept Nigeria on its toes with numerous attacks, bombings, suicide bombings, abductions, armed robberies, shootings, video threats, and confrontations with security operatives. There attacks were mainly in the North eastern Nigeria and border towns in neighbouring countries like Chad, Cameroun and Niger—albeit sometimes they carry out pockets of attacks in other parts of Nigeria like the North west and North Central.

The Global Extremism Monitor GEM records the various terrorist incidents that take place against a backdrop of intercommunal and sectarian violence in Nigeria, where roughly half the population is Muslim and roughly half is Christian.[472] Boko Haram during its rampage, targeted schools, hospitals, markets, malls, churches, police stations, army barracks, courts and international organisations, mosques and Muslim institutions that are critical of the sect. It was so unfortunate that this insurgency and terrorism escalated and peaked when a Christian president from the south, Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) whom the North never

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[469] Commoli, 61.

[470] Smith, *Boko Haram,* 106.

[471] Commoli, *Boko Haram,* 62.

[472] Tony Blair foundation, *Global Extremism Monitor*, 32.

favoured was in power. Their activities were also given political interpretations especially as the North region was pushing to grab power. "Many believe that Boko Haram is a Northern Region political weapon in disguise, intended for the destabilisation of the government of Jonathan with a view to reclaim political power."[473] As arguable as this might be, a lot of facts point in support of this claim, especially as some northern politicians used the group as tugs for rigging elections. Jonathan disbelieved that the group would engage in suicide bombings because according to him "Nigerians don't want to die. Suicide bombers possessed traits alien to the nation which are usually inculcated from abroad."[474] Until 16th June 2011 when one Muhammed Manga carried out the first suicide bombing at the Nigerian Police Headquarters Abuja, which he justified in a video footage before the attack, as being more valuable than his life. Since then Boko Haram has spared nothing to destabilise Nigeria. They were involved in recruiting followers, brainwashing and abductions especially of young school girls who they use for suicide bombings. Boko Haram has used more female suicide bombers more than any other terrorist group "Seventy-nine percent of suicide bombings involving female perpetrators were recorded between 2008 and 2018, with over 48 percent of deaths in this period being attributed to Boko Haram."[475]

One of the most significant attacks Boko Haram carried out was at the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja, through a suicide bombing that claimed many lives. Shekau boasted in a video after the attack saying; "my Muslim brethren, you should be happy with this incident in Abuja, which is a forum of all the global evil called the UN. May the wrath of God be on them. This forum is better called the United Nonsense, as we've been calling it even before we went to war, because this is a centre of Judeo-Christian plots. My Muslim brethren, you should obey Allah. Allah has in many places in the Qur'an forbade Muslims from cooperation with the Jews. And Allah has told us that any Muslim who goes into partnership with the Jews and the Christians is one of them…. People should understand that we are not after worldly things…. So don't take pride in killing us. To us, killing us is a source of pride. What we seek is martyrdom."[476] The increasing attack of Boko Haram was one of the major reasons Jonathan lost the re-election in 2015 as he was criticised for not managing the crises, and his opponent—Mohammadu Buhari, the eventual winner of that election—promised to end Boko Haram once elected. Since then, Boko Haram's attacks has

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[473] Oforka , *The Bleeding Continent*, 154.
[474] Smith, *Boko Haram,* 114.
[475] Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism index GTI 2019*, 63: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Sydney, November 2019. Accessed, April 20, 2020. http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/11/GTI-2019web.pdf
[476] Smith, *Boko Haram,* 118.

reduced in intensity but their tactics have changed as they have turned into splinter groups carrying out attacks in many parts of the country. However there are other violent groups attacking other parts of the country for many reasons. The Niger Delta Militants have destroyed oil installations and also abducted and attacked foreign oil workers in the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria. They claim to be fighting for indigenous control of the oil resources from their region that have been exploited by the central government to develop other regions while their region has been left impoverished.

More so there are reports of the rampaging Fulani Militia—a group of semi-nomadic pastoralist mostly from the Muslim Fulani tribe—attacking farming communities in the Middle belt region and the southern region of Nigeria. "This clash between Muslim herders and Christian fermers mainly has claimed more than 500 lives in 2017, according to Amnesty international. The conflict, which is triggered largely by competition for scarce land and water resources and exacerbated by climate change, risk escalating further because it is increasingly framed along the country's ethno-religious fault lines."[477] Although there are many twists to the story—along socio-political and ethno religious lines—there is an obvious violent attack by these nomadic herdsmen wielding AK-47 rifles against these farming communities in the form of invasion or takeover of their arable land resources in order to feed their animals. Some have tagged it ethnic cleansing, some call it invasion while some call it farmer's herder's clashes, depending on the side you belong. But the Fulani militia has been tagged the 4th most dangerous terrorist organisation and have even carried out more terrorist attacks than Boko Haram in 2018 according to GTI 2019.[478] They have attacked and destroyed farming communities in terrorist-styled attacks that have left people suspecting they are one of the splinter versions of Boko Haram. According to GTI, "Deaths from terrorism in Nigeria rose to 2,040 in 2018, a 33 per cent increase. This increase…was due to a substantial escalation of violence by Fulani extremists, whilst Boko Haram recorded a decline in deaths from terrorism. Violence between Nigerian herders and farmers intensified in early 2018 with approximately 300,000 people fleeing their homes…. In Nigeria, terrorist activity is dominated by Fulani extremists and Boko Haram. Together, they account for 78 per cent of terror-related incidents and 86 per cent of deaths from terrorism…. Of 297 attacks by Fulani extremists in 2018, over 200 were armed assaults. Over 84 per cent of these armed assaults

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[477] Tony Blair Foundation, *Global Extremism Monitor*, 32.
[478] *GTI 2019,* 21.

targeted civilians."[479] An estimated statistics[480] of religiously motivated terrorist attacks in Nigeria is figuratively illustrated in the Figures below.
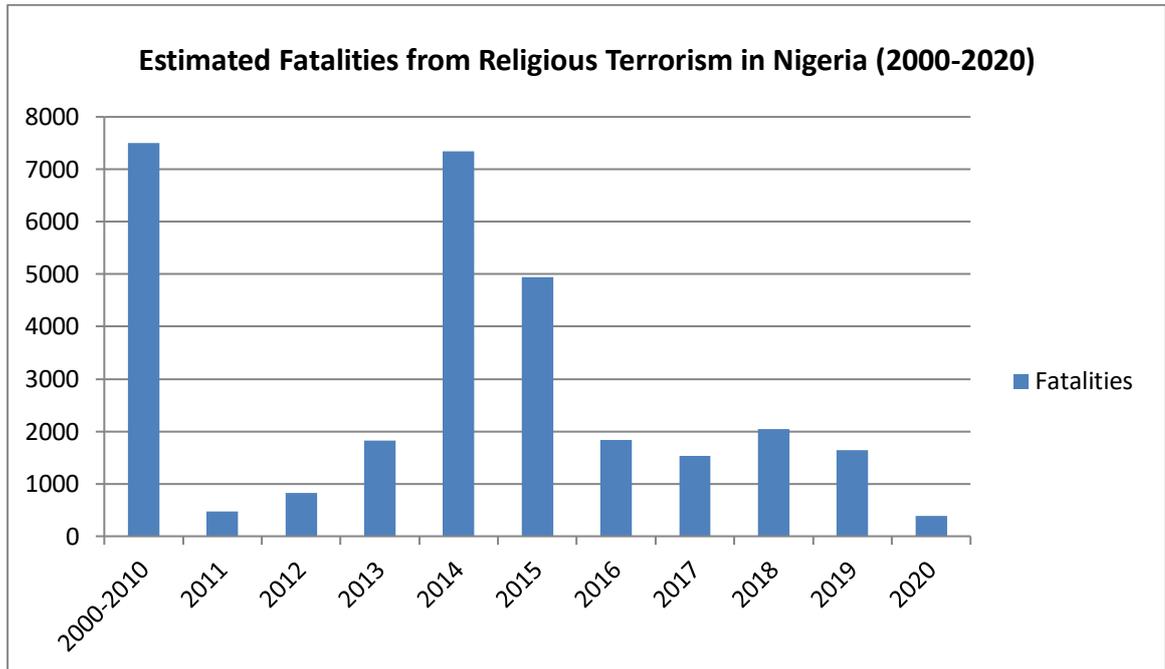
Figure 1 Estimated Fatalities from Religiously Motivated terrorism. Sources: data taken from Global Terrorism Index (2012-2019) Go to http://economicsandpeace.org/?s=Global+Terrorism+Index

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[479] *Global Terrorism index GTI 2019,* 21.

[480] *Global Terrorism index GTI*, Accessed, April 20, 2020. http://economicsandpeace.org/?s=Global+Terrorism+Index, Timeline of the Boko Haram Insurgency from *Wikipedia* Accessed, April 20, 2020
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Boko_Haram_insurgency#2010_2
Herders Versus farmers Conflicts in Nigeria from Wikipedia, Accessed, April 20, 2020
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herder%E2%80%93farmer_conflicts_in_Nigeria
GTI 2019, Accessed, April 20, 2020.http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/11/GTI-2019web.pdf
GTI 2017, Accessed, April 20, 2020.http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf
GTI 2015, Accessed, April 20, 2020.http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf
GTI 2012, Accessed, April 20, 2020.https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/156010/2012-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report1.pdf
GTI 2018, Accessed, April 20, 2020.http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018.pdf
GTI 2014, Accessed, April 20, 2020.http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Global-Terrorism-Index-Report-2014.pdf
GTI 2016, Accessed, April 20, 2020.https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%202016_0.pdf
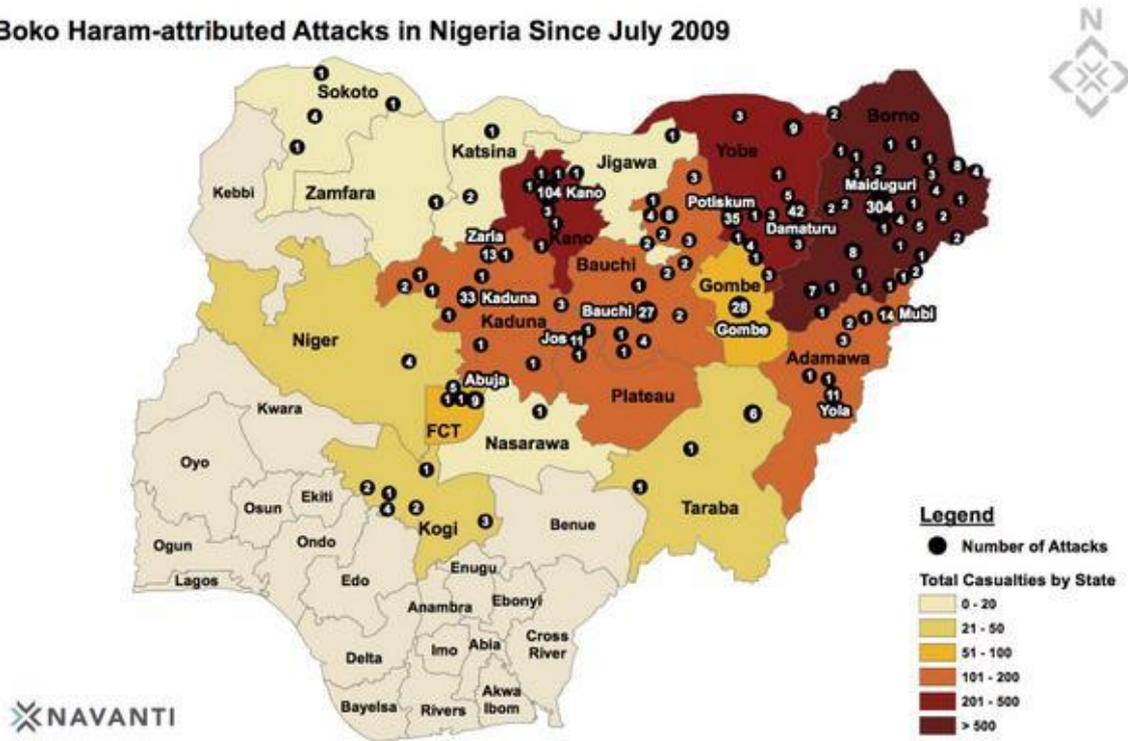
Figure 2 Map of Boko Haram affected areas since 2009, source: https://jaguda.com/social-issues/map-showing-boko-haram-attacks-casualties-since-2009/
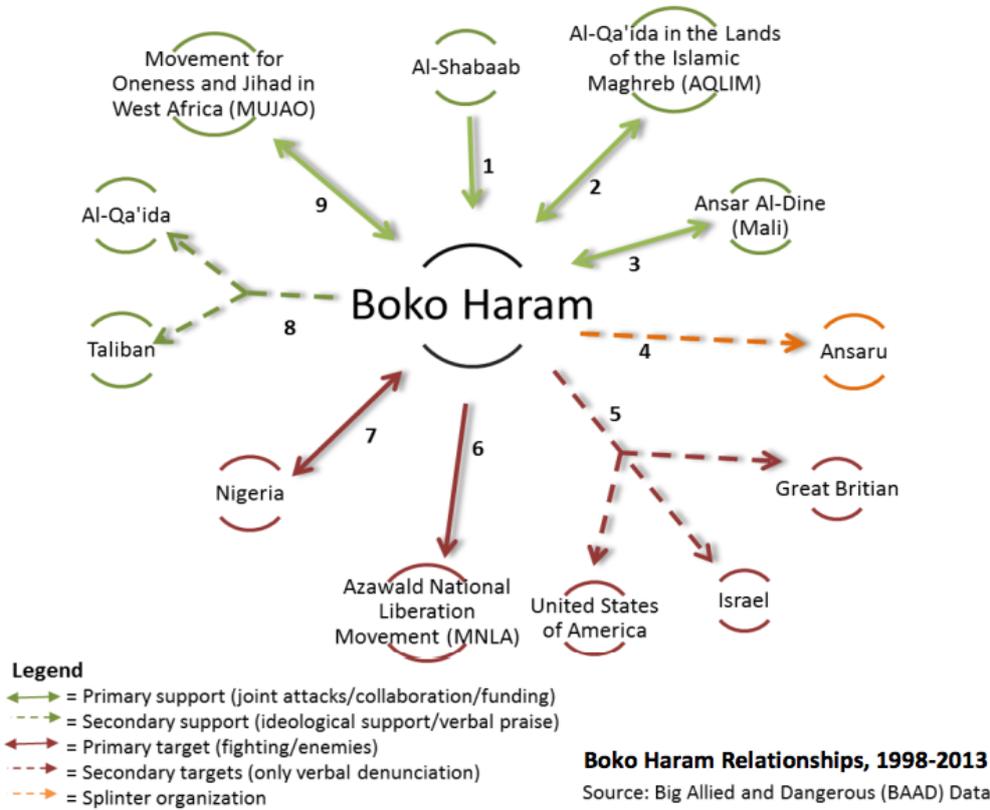
Figure 3 Boko Haram's Network with Affiliate Terrorist groups
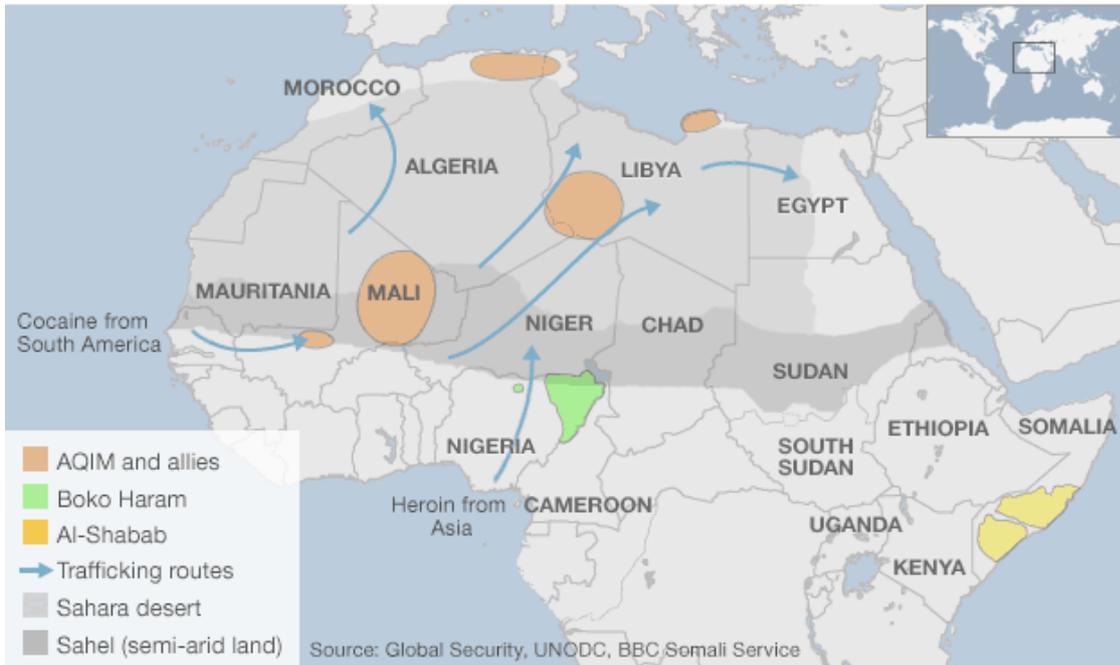
Figure 4 Islamic Terrorism in Africa
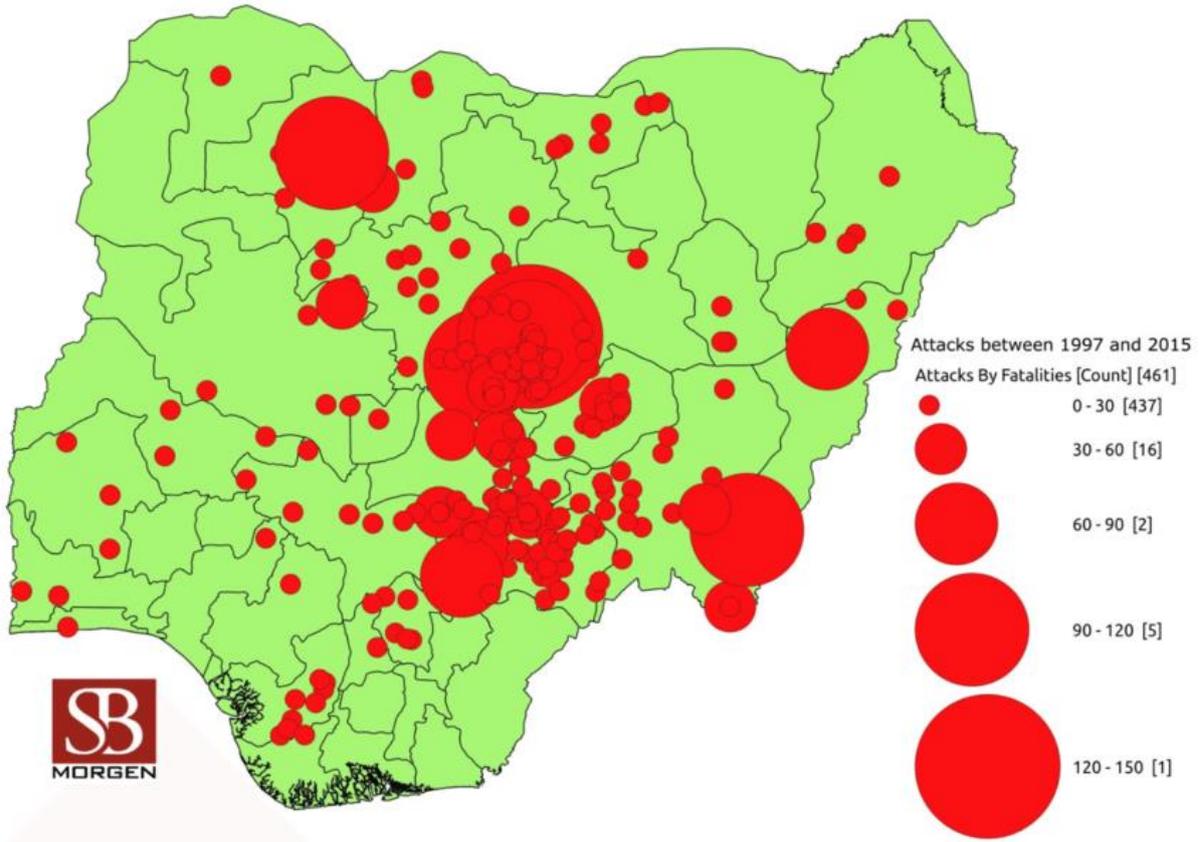
Figure 5 Map illustration of areas affected by Fulani Herdsmen terrorist attacks. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Fulani-Herdsmen-Attack-1997-2015_fig1_323391528

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The Nigerian government has invested so much in the fight against terrorism and extremism. But this fight seems to be far from over, mostly because there are reports about conspiracies from the security and administrative agencies who see in this war a lucrative business that earns them unending profits. "One of the realities the army is trying to come to terms with is that there are 'Trojan horses' a euphemism for fifth columnists, within their rank and file who may be sympathetic to the cause of the insurgents. This probability is responsible for the ability of boko haram to get important intelligence on military deployments and troop movements, information they have used to good effect…. The ease and regularity with which Boko Haram strikes successfully at military targets is attributed to inside knowledge provided by competent officers."[481] Politicians have accused each other of ineptitude and collision, the military has been suspected of compromise whereas the civilian population who are greatly affected by the scourge, point accusing fingers along ethno-religious lines. "This lack of faith in both the government and the military has remained one of the most important reasons why the insurgency has not stopped…."[482] The most precarious of these circumstances is the manifest human right abuses of the brutal security operatives against civilians from the local communities the insurgents have ravaged. These civilians who are survivors of Boko Haram onslaughts end up becoming victims of heavy-handed response of the military who recklessly torture these vulnerable civilians in the name of intelligence gathering. They are sandwiched between the attacks of the Boko Haram that terrorise them and the brutality of security forces that abuse and accuse them of complicity. According to Amnesty International, "there is a vicious cycle of violence currently taking place in Nigeria. The Nigerian people are trapped in the middle. Since 2009 devastating acts of violence have been carried out by the Islamist armed group known as Boko Haram and security forces have responded with serious human rights violations."[483] They arbitrarily detained locals accused of links to Boko haram, subject them to extreme torture, extra-judicial execution or forceful disappearance. This gets them terrorised into the dilemma of choosing to join Boko haram to protect themselves from extra-judicial killings or to avenge the extrajudicial killings of their relatives. This protects them from the brutality from both sides because it is never safe to be in the middle.

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[481] Anayochukwu Agbo, "Boko Haram and the Enemies Within," in *Tell*, (Lagos: tell Communications Ltd, April 7, 2014), No. 14, 23.
[482] N.I.O & D.L-B, *Boko Haram*, 14.
[483] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, 1 November, 2012, Accessed April 14, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR44/043/2012/en/

Boko Haram has splintered into various groups like Ansaru and Islamic State West African province ISWAP that became affiliated to ISIS in March 2015, when "Abubakar Shekau's, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant,"[484] this group specialised in kidnaping school children and attacking security agents and bases. The terrorists in Nigeria also maintain links with counterparts like al-Shabab and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). "There are reported communications, training, and weapons links between Boko Haram, al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Shabab, and al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, which may strengthen Boko Haram's capacity to conduct terrorist attacks."[485] The wave of terrorism in Nigeria has manifested some deep rooted grey areas in the nation's life and history. These areas reflect most, the ethno-religious sensitivities that has made people suspicious of one another. As one educated Muslim affirms, "It is the suspicion that Christianity could change the whole religious landscape of this place that has been consciously or unconsciously has been responsible for the repeated religious crises we have had,"[486] Amidst this complexity, "it is important to note that terrorism is also symptomatic of a wider disease of extremism and hate which is escalating worldwide in many different guises. While populist right-wing extremism has been growing in the west since 2007",[487] religious extremism has over the years, especially since the wake of the new millennium given rise to holy wars, jihads and unprecedented terrorism in a way that makes us question the various standards of our value justifications.

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[484] United Nations Security Council, "Islamic State West African Province", Accessed April 20, 2020 https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/islamic-state-west-africa-province-iswap-0

[485] US Department of State, "Abubakar Shekau. Up to $7 Million Reward", *Reward for justice,* 2013 Accessed April 20, 2020 visit https://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/abubakar_shekau.html

[486] Karl Maier, "Beheading Stirs Nigerian Tension", Independent, 16th August 1995, Accessed April 20, 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/beheading-stirs-nigerian-tension-1596448.html

[487] Geneva Centre for Security Policy GCSP, *Global Terrorism Index 2019*, Institute for Economics and Peace, 25 November 2019, Accessed April 20, 2020, https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/global-terrorism-index-2019

Chapter IV: Terrorism, Jihad, and Holy War: Implications and Provocations

4.1 Religious Terrorism and the Challenges of Value Justification

Terrorism is not simply a term of description. It represents a judgment of value—a moral condemnation of an act which also serves as a political statement about an enemy.[488] The claim that what passes to be terrorism is in the eyes of the beholder reiterates the common saying that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." This shows that the designation of terrorist activities depends on one's value justification. Thus the value of every terrorist activity is relative to the considerations of the one who is justifying or condemning it. This is because, when adherents of religious traditions participate in acts of violence like holy wars or jihads, they see themselves as doing something good because they have justification for these acts. Perpetrators of religious terrorism therefore claim to be fighting for values higher than the lives of what they destroy. This point is very important to the analysis of religious terrorism and to the task of determining the evaluative fittingness of the whole discourse of religious violence against the backdrop of contentious claims that religion lacks epistemic rationality. Brian Ballard while analysing the complexities characterising the epistemic rationality of religious beliefs observed that "faith can be misplaced" if its propositional object is "false", "bad" or "neutral". For him, there are two independent standards of determining the objective fittingness between faith and its object namely:

(a) Factual Fittingness which shows that faith in some way requires the object of faith to be true or factual.
   Factual Fittingness: Faith that-p is fitting, only if p is true.
(b) Evaluative Fittingness shows that faith in some way requires a positive evaluative attitude towards the faith object.
   Evaluative Fittingness: Faith that-p is fitting, only if p is good.

Conversely, the epistemic rationality of religious faith has two determining conditions namely: Factual Rationality: Faith that-p is epistemically rational, only if it is epistemically rational to in some way affirm that-p. Evaluative Rationality: Faith that-p is epistemically rational, only if it is epistemically rational to in some way regard p as good. Evaluative rationality is crucial for determining the epistemic rationality of religion because according to the Ballard's Universal Generalization, any evaluative attitude that can satisfy the evaluative condition on faith is assessable for epistemic rationality. This is why most of the perpetrators

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[488] Furedi, *Invitation to Terror*, xxix.

of religious violence try to justify their actions with recourse to some values they consider to be prevailing in their evaluative choices that determine such violent actions. In the evaluative rationality of their religious actions, they consider the object of their religious action valuable and justifiable. The big question that comes to mind here is; what are those values that make terrorists feel justified in their actions?

As discussed above, violence is part of man's social behaviour which reveals his mostly latent but radically harmful and offensive nature. It stems from some kind of internal disagreement that is expressed in a hurtful way. So religion as a social phenomenon is not violent by accident. This is because, every encounter between persons begins as social confrontation that generate understandings and misunderstandings. "We are potentially violent because, as social animals, we form groups to compete for resources and survive against other groups. Unlike non-human social animals, we can choose non-violent ways of interacting with other groups, but sadly all too often we do not. There is such a thing as in-group violence, but for the most part it is contained….[489] As social animal therefore the religious man recognises the value of identity and identifying. Religion provides him a social framework he/she feels specially part of, an in-group that identifies him with, and distinguishes him from others. This value of identity and identifying is necessary for man's survival since it stems from his special inclinations as social animal. "We hand on our genes as individuals, but we survive only in groups…. We are the most effective of all life forms in creating and sustaining groups. We are the most social of animals…. We co-operate and we compete. We co-operate in order to compete. One man will not survive against a lion. But ten or hundred might, if they formed an effective team."[490] It is our need for social identity that makes religion controversial especially when there is clash of interest which religious identity obviously allows.

Identity is a fundamental value and a task every individual strives to realise and protect with every sense of responsibility and reverence. Religion offers high premium to the value of identity especially as it deals with things of deeper knowledge and meaning. Religious identity is one of the strongest affiliations in human history that has impacted so much in human and world affairs, and has also become very manifest in contemporary times. Mark Jeugensmeyer admits that "the new world order that is replacing the bipolar powers of the old Cold War is characterized not only by the rise of new economic forces, a crumbling of

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[489] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 31-32.
[490] Sacks, 29-30

old empires, and the discrediting of communism, but also by the resurgence of parochial identities based on ethnic and religious allegiances."[491] These parochial identities represent the compartments of loyalties that manifest in the form of valuable in-groups where individuals draw their sense of order and meaning. Religion represents the strongest form of seeking ultimate order and meaning to life. It creates unique identities that enable "humans find meaning by being able to identify themselves with others."[492] This meaning is much deeper and stronger than that derived from belonging to a tribe, clan, social or science club. This is because people express their religiousness in their sense of belonging by which they "find themselves transcending their world of material existence in a bid to assert whatever ultimate order and meaning they can find.[493] Finding some semblance of ultimate order and meaning is not an easy task. And when I think I have found it, I do not like that order and meaning disturbed by the presence of someone who does not seem to belong.[494] Opposition comes from the realisation that I am confronted by someone or something that belongs to a different in-group. This is the beginning of most violent activities. For "the violence that leads to war and terror is between groups, and it is precisely this that leads to in-group solidarity and cohesion, and fear, suspicion and aggression towards outgroups."[495]

Every religious tradition constructs a community of identity for adherents in the form of in-groups that can be distinguished from other religious identities. Adherents become integrated into their religion by identifying strongly with the articles of faith that form imperative elements for their being and behaviours. "While integral in helping to construct community, religion is also, historically, a force of divisiveness"[496]. The identity constructs from a religious community contrasts with those of another in a way that breeds conflicts. Hence the violence created by religious divisions often primarily bothers on clash of incompatible identities. These identities with regard to religion involve ultimate reality, meaning and value that may possibly be expressed in absolutist ways. Religion creates a unique identity that is greatly valued sometimes more than other identities—like tribe, nation, and profession, class—because of the centrality of ultimacy in religious dealings. "The concept of ultimacy identifies the heart of religion."[497] However, one can argue that although as a social animal man identifies with one group and not with the other, it does not imply that

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[491] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (California :University of California Press, 1993), 1-2.
[492] Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things*, 218.
[493] Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things*, 19.
[494] Wentz, 21.
[495] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 31-32.
[496] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War*, 7.
[497] Steffen, 24.

he must be an enemy of one in order to be loyal to where he belongs. The social construct of a religious community does not mean division. That one adheres to one religion does not mean he must be in enmity with other religious traditions. It is an abuse of man's social nature to exclude or fight, no matter the reason. Opposition, hate and exclusion are anti-social characteristics that manifest when man neglects his real social make up. Rather than justifying terrorism with man's tendency to disagree with anything unfamiliar, it is more plausible to acknowledge that it is an act of sociability to disagree in order to agree, to resolve misunderstandings and to bring oneself to relate with people even when they have different opinions and beliefs.

Being religious is never a value-free experience because when people identify with religion, they do so with the believe that religion not only provides the cultural form whereby human beings meet basic spiritual needs for community, for meaning, for identity, for love, and for acceptance, it also contributes to intellectual, moral, emotional and aesthetic growth,[498] values that are imbued with ultimacy. But when ultimacy becomes associated with absolutism as analysed earlier in this work, it becomes fraught with the potential for creating violence especially when it comes in contact with divergent ultimate views. When something is absolutized it becomes a value that should not be compromised. Religious identity in its absolutist sense becomes an enviable value that gives justifiable reasons for violence. "Absolute claims do not admit of compromise or negotiation; divisive identities make empathy or even impartiality difficult; and passionate beliefs often burst the bounds of rational self-control. Thus, at the level of conceptual analysis, these qualities of religious belief do seem likely to foster violence."[499] So when religious people take to violence in the name of religion, they fight both for the identity it gives them and the absolute ultimacy that makes everything about it uncompromising. "Such behaviours appear when absolutism authorizes in the name of ultimacy, violence, hatred, destruction, repression of freedom, and at the furthest extreme, killing."[500] Hence most justification for religious terrorism stems from these absolutist tendencies characteristic of extremists who resort to violence for fear that compromise makes them lose their religious identity. "Research with animals and plants shows that sudden contact, involving the coming together of groups with little or no previous

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[498] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War*, 22.
[499] Murphy, "Religious Violence Myth or Reality?, 480.
[500] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War*, 29.

history of contact between species with low pre-adaptation, can result in rapid decline or even extinction of one or both groups in contact."[501]

Contemporary religious terrorism reflects this culture clash in a way that highlights how fundamentalist ideologies are repugnant and incompatible with new and modern cultures and traditions. "Under intense pressures associated with sudden contact in the twenty-first century, some groups and individuals feel seriously threatened. This threat is not only concerned with material resources, but also with cultural and identity characteristics. Groups and individuals faced with surviving in a globalised world are forced to deal with both macro and micro level changes that threatened their distinct identities. Individual worries and constructions of meaning are reflective of macro-level concerns for group extinction…. Sudden contact poses threats and heightens group and personal perceptions of morality. Violence is a meaningful response to this threat."[502] This is the interpretation some analysts give to the antagonistic attitudes of Islamists towards the new wave of globalization. "It has been argued that Islamic societies are experiencing an identity crisis in the global context as western values and lifestyles 'invade' Islamic societies and put pressure particularly on Islamic traditionalists and fundamentalists. These developments are resulting in a backlash against globalization on the part of Islamic fundamentalists, and a radicalization of even Islamic traditionalists. For example, the rapid modernization in the 1960s and 1970s in Iran resulted in a radical revolution spearheaded by Muslim fundamentalists, topping the pro-American Shah. Similarly, funded by sources in Saudi Arabia, the rise of Wahabbism and Salafist traditions can be seen as a reaction to the threat of globalization."[503]

The repulsive and incompatible attitudes of religious extremists towards the influence of foreign religious traditions and modern cultures breed resistance and make violence inevitable. Such attitudes have links with deep-rooted tendency of nationalism that strives to protect national identity from contacts with foreign or nonindigenous influences. As Peter Henne would put it "the most dramatic violence may arise when groups with religious motivations are fighting in the context of a nationalist struggle. Alternately, nationalism, repression, or economic deprivation may be more important than religion in determining the severity of suicide terrorism."[504] If such attitudes are not addressed among religious people

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[501] Amanda Munroe and Fathali M. Moghaddam, "Is Religious Extremism a Major cause of Terrorism?", Jackson and Sinclair, *Contemporary Debates,* 122.
[502] Amanda Munroe and Fathali M. Moghaddam, 122.
[503] Munroe and Moghaddam, 123.
[504] Peter S. Henne (2012) "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:1, 38-60, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2011.608817

through measures like dialogue, they lead to feelings of rivalry, antagonism and animosity towards other traditions. Hence when religious terrorists like their nationalist counterparts commit acts of terror they consider themselves fighting for survival or in defence of their identities and values against rival ideologies—values they can readily pay the ultimate prize to protect. But a critical look at the sudden contact arguments reveals that culture shock is a normal social phenomenon that happens at every initial contact with something new or strange. It cannot be grounds to justify any form of violence. It takes a higher and more advanced social nature to get over the shock and integrate. When people come in contact with new cultures, provocations are bound happen. But as time goes on, a much more process of understanding is developed as anxieties get resolved by healthy communication. It is good to acknowledge that the paradigmatic nature of culture—which is central to its values does not in any way negate its dynamic character—which is susceptible to change.

The obligation to protect these ancient sacred values is passed on from generation to generation because identity is sustained when one preserves his history and determines his destiny against every form of domination. This is why religious ideologues show tolerance to the extent that they possess the dominant view. In the face of contending opinions there is always a resistance against domination that leads to generational hatred and stereotype. "Islam was tolerant when it controlled the territory and called the shots. When it lost territory and saw itself eclipsed by the West in power and civilization, tolerance evaporated. This is because Islam considers it proper and natural for true believers to rule misbelievers, since this provides for the maintenance of the holy law and gives the misbelievers both the opportunity and the incentive to embrace the true faith. But what is truly evil, unnatural, and unacceptable is the domination of infidels over true believers. It leads to the corruption of religion and morality in society and to the flouting or even the abrogation of God's law."[505] Religious terrorism is therefore seen as a fight against the domination of strange beliefs which manifests as ancient rivalry and historical hatred.

In the midst of problems rooted in land, oppression, discrimination, or any number of other historical grievances, religion is often called on to justify human violence with subtle or not so subtle reference to "sacred" texts, divine mission, or moral purpose.[506] This is why religious extremists consider themselves 'interpreters of history', who possess the sole knowledge of directing the course of events. They regard themselves as the 'chosen ones'

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[505] Sullivan, "This is a Religious War",
[506] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us*, xi.

with the prerogative of interpreting divine revelation in their mostly selective recourse to the sacred texts, tradition and heritage. In their ultra-narrowmindedness, every given situation is evaluated to suit their parochial considerations and those who profess different beliefs are considered historical enemies who pose existential threats to their identity, just as ultra-nationalists think of foreigners. In the words of Beverley Milton-Edwards, "It is my contention that these wars and conflicts, in which ethnicity, religion, clan and tribe stand at the foundation of ancient hatreds, symbolise our inability to 'sell' the modern, secular global age to certain constituencies."[507] This is very much characteristic of most Islamic communities "who seem to be using faith against a globalised world,"[508] and condemn as eternal enemies, those who have different perspectives. It is such historical hate that pushed some "Islamists to fly airplanes into the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, and justify what they did as service to Allah. They understood themselves to be instruments of God's will, agents of deserved punishments, and bearers of divine justice against enemies sufficiently evil so as to do away with the category of innocent civilians. Terrorist actions were for them a faithful response to historical grievances on a faithful reading of their sacred text."[509] It appears to be like a historical contest for legitimate identity which is reflective of Rene Girard's theory of mimetic desire and sibling rivalry.

For Girard, the mimetic desire is central to every form of violence, especially religious violence. It entails a passionate quest for a value mutually desired by another, which leads to a mimetic rivalry. According to Girard "the principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model."[510] "Man is the creature who does not know what to desire, and he turns to others in order to make up his mind. We desire what others desire because we imitate their desires."[511] Hence Girard acknowledges that violence and dominance are consequences of mimetic desire and rivalry. This is the case because, "two desires converging on the same object are bound to clash. Thus, mimesis coupled with desire leads automatically to conflict. However, men always seem half blind to this conjunction, unable to perceive it as a cause of rivalry."[512] Girard's analysis supports the claim that acts of religious terrorism reflect this mimetic quest and contest that comes in the

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[507] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence*, 21.

[508] Al-Rasheed and Shterin eds., *Dying for Faith*, xvii.

[509] Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, 5-6.

[510] Rene Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightening* (New York: Orbis books, 1999), 11.

[511] Rene Girard "Generative Scapegoating", Robert G. Hamerton-kelly, Ed. *Violent Origins* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987), 122.

[512] Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 146.

form of sibling rivalry; a kind of favouritism contest that puts people of faith against each other. "It is now clear why Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been locked in a violent, sometimes fatal embrace for so long. Their relationship is sibling rivalry, fraught with mimetic desire: the desire for the same thing, Abraham's promise."[513] This mutual desire highlights the claim for authenticity and the mission of becoming the dominant religion of all nations which is central to every Abrahamic religion and in line with Abraham's becoming the father of all nations. "At the heart of all three faiths is the idea that within humanity there is one privileged position—favoured son, chosen people, guardian of the truth, gatekeeper of salvation—for which more than one candidate competes. The result is conflict of the most existential kind, for what is at stake is the most precious gift of all: God's paternal love. One group's victory means another's defeat, and since this is a humiliation, a dethronement, it leads to revenge. So the strife is perpetuated."[514] There is a cycle of violence that is sustained by such historical rivalry which keeps the parties jostling for the precious value. Girard observes that in "sibling rivalry the brothers are condemned to rivalry by their very proximity; they fight over the same heritage, the same crown, the same wife, because one's possession can only be at the expense of a dispossessed brother."[515]

Discussions on sibling rivalry are often done within the context of scarcity of desired resources. It follows that when a desired value is in short supply, the possibility of mimetic rivalry cannot be ruled out because everyone competes to be favourites. Scarcity intensifies mimetic rivalry in a way that leads to division, for "it is the nature of the mimetic urge to polarize"[516] Girard captures this point by admitting that "rivalry is too much the rule, especially among the males of our species, to be always ascribable to scarcity or to the fortuitous convergence on the same object of two or more desires that arise independently of one another."[517] One could therefore understand and analyse violence in religion from this backdrop of scarcity that breeds favouritism and rivalry. It is the case that divine favouritism is central to many religious hostilities. This is because, there is a likelihood of conflict when there are competing claims of limited divine favour or approval. Does it mean that "these are in short supply, such that if God gives them to you he must take them from me?"[518] Some writers answer in the affirmative with the claims that religious hostility has its root in the assumption that divine benefits are in short supply. According to Regina Schwartz, "Scarcity

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[513] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 98.
[514] Sacks, 99.
[515] Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat,* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 128.
[516] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 126.
[517] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 122.
[518] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 102.

is encoded in the Bible as a principle of Oneness (one land, one people, one nation), and in monotheistic thinking (one Deity), it becomes a demand of exclusive allegiance that threatens with the violence of exclusion."[519] This is why sibling rivalry is a dominant theme in the Hebrew Bible right from the first religious act of offering from Cain and Abel which resulted to fratricide. The brothers competed for one prize: God's favourite.

Schwarz would ask in this regard, "what would have happened if [God] had accepted both Cain's and Abel's offerings instead of choosing one, and thereby promoted cooperation between the sower and the shepherd instead of competition and violence? What kind of God is this who chooses one sacrifice over the others, who casts some out, is a monotheistic God—monotheistic not only because he demands allegiance to himself alone but because he confers his favour on one alone."[520] The gross scarcity that characterises the sibling rivalry manifests in attitudes of religious terrorists. This mimetic rivalry explicates the attitudes of extremists who fight to monopolise religious influence by destroying other beliefs. Mimetic desire for scarce religious influence leads to mimetic rivalry which breeds violence. It follows that, "by imitating my brother's desire, I desire what he desires; so we mutually prevent each other from satisfying our common desire. As resistance grows on both sides, so desire becomes strengthened[521] and violent rivalry inevitable. This mimetic rivalry that follows mimetic desires often results in 'cycles of violence' that sometimes culminate in scapegoat effect.[522]

The notions of ancient hostilities, mimetic rivalry, and exclusivist dominance characteristic of some acts of terror, produce successive violence and counter-violence that creates a 'cycle of violence' described in liberation theology's concept as *spiral of violence.* Some terrorists have some reserved animosity against their targets which influences their view of terrorist acts as avenging a long standing violence. Girard admits that "this diffusion of mimetic violence beyond the boundaries of the initial conflict is called vengeance. And the mimetic process being what it is, there is no reason for vengeance to be limited to a single act. It can transcend all limitations of time and space and turn into the interminable vendetta or blood feud."[523] Violence creates an imbalance, a vacuum in the equilibrium of life, always seeking for closure which never comes with violence. "Violence strikes men as at once

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[519] Regina M. Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*, 3. This vision of a monotheistic God was abolished in New Testament tradition as reflected in the parable of the prodigal son and his rival sibling. It provides a deeper understanding of monotheism as not anti-pluralism but as approving of pluralism of sons (brothers) and as a way to encourage tolerance, reconciliation and mutual love instead mortal rivalry.
[520] Regina M. Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*, 3.
[521] Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 130.
[522] Girard, *The Scapegoat*, 127.
[523] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 124.

seductive and terrifying; never as a simple means to an end, but as an epiphany. Violence tends to generate unanimity, either in its favour or against it. And violence promotes imbalance, tipping the scales of Destiny in one direction or another."[524] One act of violence begets another. Religious terrorists relate violently to their targets not just because they pose ideological threats in the contest for preference, but because they see them as existentially dangerous in a way that cause them physical harm which they ought to respond. There is a sort of "generalized "mimetic crises" that dissolve cultural differentiations into the dreadful reciprocity of chaotic violence."[525]

The spiral of violence in the context of religious terrorism demonstrates a sequence of reciprocity of violence in the form of consistent interplay of violence. Liberation theologians like Archbishop Helder Camara, articulated three key dimensions or spokes of this cycle as violence 1, 2, and 3. "Violence 1 speaks of institutionalized violence and social injustice characterised by oppression, hunger, and poverty. Violence 2 is characterised by rebellion which is the expected response to and predictable outcome of violence 1. Violence 3 is the repressive violence used by elite forces against these who protest or rebel."[526] The oppression-rebellion-repression pattern of this spiral is further expanded by scholars of religious violence to include Violence 4 which is dysfunctional deflective violence involving poor people striking out at other poor people because they are nearby and not because they are understood to be power brokers in an unjust system. This is a way of shifting people's anger away from the unjust repressive system and making scapegoats of the vulnerable. There is violence 5; spiritual violence which explains human misery as God's will and describes predicaments as God's punishment. Here, human desire for vengeance is projected onto God within or at the end of history. In this case, predicaments like Hurricanes, and 9/11 attack are God's making.[527]

In line with the successive reciprocity of violence characterised by mimetic rivalry, religious terrorism finds justification in this cycle whereby oppression triggers rebellion which is repressed in a way that makes the oppressed deflect their hostility to the vulnerable or resort to a spiritualised violent response in the form of vengeance that is justified through appeals to the divine. "In this context of a never-ending spiral of violence at the heart of

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[524] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 152.
[525] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 124.
[526] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Reliion Killing Us?*, 21-22. Helder Camara gave a detailed explanation of the "cycle of violence" in his book *Spiral of Violence* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971) published during the US-Vietnam war, where he challenged the youth to break this spiral which has been escalated and sustained by their elders.
[527] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 23.

violence-of-God traditions, God becomes an instrument of human revenge."[528] With mimetic desire, the dynamic reciprocity of these conflicts, their tendency to escalate, becomes immediately intelligible. The problem with this type of escalation among men is that is can become infinitely destructive.[529] Little wonder religious terrorists commit themselves as instruments of divine nemesis in faithful response to historical grievances against any unwanted system/enemy they feel so obligated to defeat even at the cost of their lives. Hence they seek justification from sacred texts in order to legitimize their violence as noble service to divine will. "Not surprisingly 'divine will' in both text and their mind's desire, frequently conforms to their own wishes and desires for conquest, revenge, land, resources, justice, revolution, counterrevolution or power."[530] This can be seen in Osama bin Laden's distorted recourse to the sacred texts to justify calls for a fight against America and Israel. He said, "our encouragement and call to Muslims to enter Jihad against the American and the Israeli occupiers are actions which are engaging in as religious obligations."[531] He called Muslims of all nations to unite against a common enemy. "It must be underscored that the West, and in particular, the U.S., is widely believed to have been unjust to the Muslim world. Accordingly, terrorists might not only justify their action against these enemies as a form of vengeance but also due to the shared justification among the populace, which themselves might not necessarily be terrorists."[532] So in spite of their ethnonational differences, religion was a binning force, a common identity and a shared value to be protected from the threats of a common enemy. "The paradox of the mimetic cycle is that men can almost never share peacefully an object they all desire, but they can always share an enemy they all hate because they can join together in destroying him, and then no lingering hostilities remain, at least for a while."[533] To religious terrorists like Bin Laden, it is all about divine vengeance against an unjust system and they are justified to implement this pay back even at the cost of their lives.

The obligation to uphold and protect the faith against such enemies even at the expense of one's life has created a culture of suicide attacks in the guise of martyrdom. "Suicide terrorism is an attack in which the attacker does not expect to survive the mission and often employs a method of attack . . . that requires his or her death in order to succeed.''[534] When terrorists volunteer to become human bombs in order to inflict harm on

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[528] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 54.
[529] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 125.
[530] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Reliion Killing Us?,*10.
[531] Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1.
[532] Asuelime and David, *Boko Haram the Socio-Economic Drivers*, 31-32.
[533] Girard "Generative Scapegoating", 128.
[534] Henne, *The Ancient Fire,* 40.

the enemy, they consider their decisions and actions in the spirit and theology of martyrdom in order to dignify the courageous decision of dying for the greater value they earnestly feel obligated to protect. They consider their lives to be sacrificial offerings for the bigger course. Hence there is an understanding in many traditions that justifies the individual who paid the ultimate price for the faith as one who performed the most virtuous act of sacrifice. He or she is justified among the living and dignified among the saints. These beliefs incentivise dying for faith in a superlative way that is greater and more dignifying that makes it very attractive a burden for the faithful to participate without hesitation. The burden of this duty which requires terrorising the unfaithful, gives the perpetrators some sense of responsibility to the faith. It is therefore true to acknowledge that "in the process of mobilizing Muslims to wage a holy war against the infidels, a new tactic, suicide bombings, emerged, as did a strong emphasis on attacking U.S. targets in order to encourage American withdrawal from the Middle East."[535]

Moreover, there is a broader way of understanding the terrorists' "aim of sustaining and spreading of a culture of martyrdom and suicide attacks…. The individual who becomes a human bomb may cost an organisation less than a missile but any militant hoping to deploy suicide attackers needs to invest heavily and systematically in propaganda designed to build and then maintain a 'cult of the martyr' if they are to avoid a backlash from relatives, friends and their wider circle. It is not natural for a mother or father to celebrate the death of a child. I have heard identical response: I am sad that my son had gone but I am happy because of his sacrifice. This has to be learned, and the victims need to be turned from other human beings into a faceless, dehumanised enemy."[536] The martyrdom effect puts a positive and motivational twist to the pain of human sacrifice, it dignifies and justifies it. Little wonder, "there was a debate about whether this was suicide or sacrifice. Suicide is forbidden under Islam; you are not allowed to kill yourself. However, self-sacrifice is not only permitted but is encouraged in defence of noble cause."[537] So the task of making it have the meaning of self-sacrifice rather than suicide gives it some spiritual justification even though the actual motives may be far from anything religious. Those who justify suicide in the guise of martyrdom do not do justice to what dying for faith clearly entails. There is a difference between martyrdom (being killed for faith) and religious suicide (killing oneself for faith).

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[535] Karen Rasler & William R. Thompson (2009) Looking for Waves of Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, 21:1, 31-32, DOI: 10.1080/09546550802544425.
[536] Jason Burke, *The new Threat from Islamic Militancy* (London: The Bodley Head, 2015), 99.
[537] Azzam Tamimi, *In Conversations on Religion,* 161.

For you cannot turn yourself into a "holy" weapon for killing others and yourself in the name of religion and then claim the glorious prize of holy martyrdom. Martyrs demonstrate their strength against oppositions by offering their lives to save others, and this is good, whereas suicide missionaries demonstrate their fears against oppositions by using their lives to harm others, and this is evil. So the culture of religious suicide terrorism cannot be justified with the theology of holy martyrdom.

There are indications that the actual justification ground for terrorist actions tends quite often to be on non-religious ground; hence, its religious façade is a mere decoy.[538] But contemporary terrorists have often played the religious card to sustain what they have "considered as a sole weapon available to the political powerless, making it not only to be seen as a necessary but also a justifiable means of expressing—if not addressing their grievances against the perception of inequality and oppression."[539] The socio-political element may be the driving force but the religious element sustains the persuasive impulse. So it is right to say that "Hamas is not a religious group but a political organization that derives its guidance from Islam."[540] There is a greater tendency of not giving up if the fight has a religious twist than when it is based on solely secular or socio-political reasons. "Violence and terrorism assume a transcendental dimension for the religious terrorist. It becomes a holy duty or obligation to fulfil some sacred imperative. Coupled with a sense of alienation and isolation the terrorists can use religion as a means of justification and legitimization.… The religiously motivated Islamic Shi'a, the messianic Jewish fanatics in the Middle East, and American Christian white supremacists are examples of such groups that twist religious text and dehumanize their victims to motivate their members to carry out terrorist acts to fulfil the political agenda of the organization."[541] And we must realise that the fact that all major world faiths have at times sanctioned the use of violence to protect or to promote their own sectarian interests allows religious terrorists today to claim moral justification for their actions.[542]

By appealing to sacred values, religious terrorists find justifications to commit these acts of violence with special recourse to the sacred texts. These injunctions from scriptural traditions are considered, inerrant, absolute and final. Suffice it to say that "the divine

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[538] Asuelime and David, *Boko Haram,* 32.
[539] Asuelime and David, *Boko Haram,* 31.
[540] AzammTamimi, *In conversions on Religion,* 160.
[541] Jackson, *Understanding Terrorism,* 6.
[542] Oliver McTernan, "Let us not prey", *The World Today* | february & march 2017, 32. Accessed March 9, 2018 https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/twt/religious-violence-has-long-history

imperatives of the religious tradition, including violence, are not open to question by nonbelievers, and secular legalities can be breached if they conflict with religious truth."[543] It is true that the sacred texts are deposits of crucial ideas and the richness of the survival of religious traditions. They are considered to be encyclopaedic since they contain abundance of materials that addresses every issue, including those that support and oppose violence. Consequently, it is "a reservoir that could be harnessed by a wide range of ideological leanings or historical requirements in a way that gives legitimacy to a vast array of interests and moral stances by providing them with a ''traditional'' authority."[544] If that is the case, then when religious terrorists justify the use of lethal violence against targets, they draw inspiration from sacred passages that justify the use of violence in service of God's will. And since these sacred texts are considered inerrant and infallible, extremists take them as ultimate reference points to justify violence and an unalterable guideline for violent behaviours. "Terrorists across religions find justification in religious texts to do what they want to do, in ISIS's case, rape, pillage, and plunder. While an appeal to sacred values may make conflicts more intractable, one wonders why ISIS draws to the parts of the text that would seem to justify slavery, rape, and murder."[545] Of course the sacred texts are seen as infallible and unalterable divine imperatives genuinely believed by adherents for many generations as preserving absolute truths of God even if they are violent. "Parties in any given conflict can call upon competing "sacred" texts or competing passages within the same "sacred" text to justify violence, hatred, and war. They can do so because matters of ultimate consequence and meaning are said to be at stake in their conflict with the other."[546] Hence, in so far as the issue of violence is concerned, the sacred passages are of critical importance. This is because, terrorists are ideologically motivated by them, for they serve as a paragon and justification for terrorist actions. "They are enveloped in an aura of factuality that makes them easy to identify with and to be inspired by. These biblical stories function as mytho-history: a narrative recounting significant past events that a group tells itself about itself. It narrates where the group comes from and where it is heading, its roots and destiny. Consequently, it defines its collective identity and marks its collective boundaries. To the degree that this (more or less) fictional story is intellectually persuasive and moving, it is

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[543] Selengut, *Sacred Fury* , 6-7.
[544] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 365.
[545] Stern and Berger, *ISIS,* 207.
[546] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Is Religion Killing Us?,* 10.

effective in guiding actual behaviour. This holds true for the violent episodes that the Bible is charged with."[547] If God wills it, I believe it, so I am justified to do it.

One of the major aims of religious terrorism is to restore or uphold the authentic version of religion. Fundamentalists consider themselves as true worshipers of God and proud bearers of authentic truth of any religious tradition. They not only adopt a literal understanding of the sacred texts, they also apply them directly and abhor any form of interpretation or contextualisation. They are ultra-traditionalists who have no regard for the hermeneutical elements of change and time because for them the sacred texts are imbued with absolute truths and invested with ultimate authority of God himself. And since for them "without infallibility, there can be no guarantee of truth,"[548] they consider interpretations as adulterations of the authentic message, which has destroyed our world. Hence the world is evil because interpretations have blurred access to the original message. Leave them as they are; do not attempt 'to apply the word to the world'. Do not try to adapt the scriptures to the changing circumstances because interpretation corrupts religion but the original message contains the pure version of religion. "A radical thinker decides that the religious establishment is corrupt. In his eyes it has made its peace with the world, compromised its ideals and failed to live up to the pristine demands of the faith. Therefore let us live by the holy word as it was before it was interpreted and rendered pliable and easy-going."[549] Consequently, they consider themselves harbingers of authentic traditions which must be restored from error of interpretation at all cost in order to save the faith. They believe that this responsibility of saving the faith from corruption will be done through conversion or annihilation of infidels. Sacks observed that "it is hard to identify with one whom you believe to be fundamentally in error, except with a view to converting him or her."[550] So religious terrorists justify violence in defence of their aim to spread a "pure" version of religion, citing the depravity of unbelievers and God's will to keep them at bay. They view the present injustice and system failures as God's punishments for infidelity and aberration, and the need to punish those responsible as an essential act of faith which they must observe.

Ultra-traditionalists of today's world show great aversion to globalisation. They believe that globalisation with all its components meshes cultural identities in a way that liquefies the rigidity of traditional standards, compromises the authenticity of divine truths

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[547] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 370.
[548] Sullivan, "This is a Religious War"
[549] Sacks, *Not in God's Name,* 209.
[550] Sacks, 183.

and threatens the very existence of religious paradigms. They see globalization as an evil that has bedevilled us and would rid the world of its value standards. Little wonder they have feature prominently in the longstanding feud between ethno-nationalism and cosmopolitanism, ultra-conservatism and Neoliberalism, globalism and tribalism. Kimball acknowledge this when he said, "contemporary debates about globalism versus tribalism or the clash of civilizations raise important questions about the future of human civilization. Religiously based conflict figures prominently into such debates."[551] These anti-globalists advocate for an extremely narrow minded view of the world, a sort of uniformity that projects a single-minded straightjacket-like attitude towards reality. This causes them to constantly oppose the globalising forces of the world even as they make use of its instruments. This is in line with Oliver McTernan's fears about the possible end of religious terrorism when he said "as we see with Islamic State, they make effective use of modern technology in their efforts to impose their mono view of the world. Given this mindset, I doubt if the world will ever succeed in completely eliminating the threat of religiously inspired terrorism."[552] These people are persistent in their calls for a return to the past ways of life because for them, the past is better than the present.

How do we make sense of people who seem to be using faith against a globalized world, and who endorse violence in a world where weapon production and sales are still the monopoly of states, corporations, and arms dealers?[553] How do we make sense of people who employ the use multilateral instruments of globalisation to propagate a unilateral agenda? To react to these questions, one must understand that "past tradition is not just a fixed rigid body, a fossil, imposing itself on passive consumers of tradition. It is a vital and open-ended organism that lends itself to a wide variety of understandings and manipulations."[554] "Yet the traditionalist project confronts tradition with an attitude that ranges from conservation to innovation. Naturally, the traditionalists who harness tradition to achieve their objectives tend to repudiate its inventive and adaptable nature and have uncompromising pretentions of faithfully returning the present to what they grasp as the authentic representation of the past."[555] As interpreters of history, ultra-traditionalists also assume an apocalyptic responsibility of acting as messiah who would rescue the authentic faith and restore all things to its original position. They treat every aspect of modern civilisation as anti-religious as they

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[551] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 26.
[552] Oliver McTernan, "Let us not prey",
[553] Al-Rasheed and Shterin eds., *Dying for Faith*, xvii.
[554] Aran and Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 365.
[555] Aran and Hassner, 365-366.

champion a messianic mission of destroying everything that is not of God. Most of them describe the contemporary times as the apocalyptic "end of days" when as messianic soldiers of God, they would triumph in the Armageddon, the final battle against the forces of evil. Hence their mission is to realise the imminence of salvation through a revolutionary consciousness that would stand against the opposing forces of globalisation and purge the world of its impacts. "Some Muslims, a radicalized minority, combine militancy with messianic visions to inspire and mobilize an army of God whose jihad they believe will liberate Muslims at home and abroad."[556] That is why they justify violence as fulfilling a religious destiny by demonstrating anti-globalist tendencies with a more radicalised spirit of apocalyptic messianism.

As a matter of necessity, religious terrorists believe that they are fighting a just war; a justifiable holy war. They believe that terrorism is in line with the just war principles. "Interestingly, people who defend terrorism often employ arguments familiar from "just war" discussions to support their claims."[557] Some of these writers have analysed the quality and plausibility of this justification. "Many religious leaders gave their blessings to the U.S. war against terror, saying that it conformed to Just War principles. President Bush said confidently that God is not neutral in conflicts such as these, implying that God is with us in our noble cause of hunting down terrorists."[558] Although some theorists are of the view that it is regrettable to argue for or resort to a justified war because war is evil in every ramification. But just war tradition has survived since medieval times. St. Augustine[559] championed the just war principles to provide conditions that justifies armed conflict as a last resort. The just war theory "consists of two parts, the first concerned with what makes it right to go to war (the jus ad bellum – what justifies waging a war) and the second concerned with the right way to conduct a war (the jus in bello—what means are justified morally and what means are not."[560] In simple terms, the just war theory seeks to articulate the various moral conditions necessary to engage in a warfare as well as prescribe the rules of conduct for engaging in any war. In other words, "just war theories usually involve a set of stipulations about when it is permissible to wage war (jus ad bellum) as well as a set of norms regarding proper conduct in

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[556] John L. Esposito, *Unholy war, Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, In c.,2002), 27.

[557] Virginia Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong, Morality and Political Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2008), 143.

[558] Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, 15.

[559] St. Augustine, "Contra Faustum Manichaeum", tr. Richard Stathert, in Philip Schaff (ed.) *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. IV. (Buffalo: Christian Literature, 1887), 151-365. In this work and other works like *De Libero Arbitrio, Epistle 189 to Boniface, and De Civitate Dei,* St. Augustine developed the conditions that constitute the possibility for a war to be just.

[560] Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 58.

war (jus in bello)."[561] Hence a war can be considered morally justifiable under the following conditions: (1) If it is declared and waged by a legitimate authority, (2) If there is a just cause for going to war, (3) If going to war is a last resort, (4) If there is a reasonable prospect of success, (5) If the violence employed is proportionate to the wrong resisted, (6) If the war is fought with the right intentions, (7) if the war would preserve values that otherwise would not be preserved, and (8) If non-combatants are protected from harm.[562]

This theory poses to address the debates on idea of legitimate violent defence against unjust aggression. It argues that the "defiance of the normal moral constraints against killing another human being is based on the right to defend one's life against unjustified attack, and this seems to be an unequivocal and fundamental moral entitlement."[563] The theory is interestingly employed to support arguments in defence of religious terrorism. Be mindful that "Just war theory does not exist to justify war, but to frame rational debate. It points to common, universally valid concerns that would attend any conversation or debate over the issue of using force and doing so in a morally justified way."[564] Most religious terrorists and their sympathizers believe that some terrorist acts are in line with "just war" discussions. Their point is that some acts of terrorism are last resort options and self-defensive mechanisms. But when it comes to the question of proportionality, there are numerous concerns. This is because one special element of terrorism as a strategy is the "indiscriminate" nature of its attacks in which "no distinction" is made that might exempt the innocent from being targets of such attacks"[565] some argue that as an ideological "program of revolutionary struggle", terrorism is often used as a last resort but the effects of its indiscriminate violence is incomparable to those of conventional war and to the extent of this limitedness, it may be justified. In other words, "it may be justified as certain wars can be. Its casualties and violence are very limited compared to war. A program that includes terrorist acts may in his view be the only realistic means to counter state-inspired terrorism, and, if its cause is just and success likely, terrorism may thus be justified."[566]

As we have already seen in the aforementioned criteria for measuring a justifiable warfare, it must be approved by legitimate authority, and non-combatants must be protected. This is not always the case with terrorism's revolutionary randomness. Little wonder some experts question the conclusiveness of state's monopoly of legitimate force. They argue that

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[561] Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence*, 95.
[562] Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 63. Also Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 243.
[563] Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 63.
[564] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 245.
[565] Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong,* 141.
[566] Held, 142.

"the just war tradition regards the moral credibility of the state as a given and therefore stigmatizes any entity that poses a challenge to state sovereignty and monopoly. The social reality presupposed by this paradigm is hardly confirmed by contemporary experience. Most recent wars are intrastate, and in only a few of them, if any, can the state lay claim to any moral merit."[567] Hence in some extreme cases, this legitimacy is not an exclusive reserve of states. Courtney Campbell argued that "mere possession of political power and military might is not a sufficient condition of legitimate authority to govern, let alone grounds for claiming a monopoly over the use of violence. Instead, legitimate authorities must conform to certain moral requirements, such as active seeking of the common good, right reason, or protection of the "inalienable rights" of the governed, which are typically grounded in a version of natural law."[568] After the Arab wars some Islamic scholars laid down some codes of conduct for waging a military jihad which could be seen in two ways: first, as a "collective duty" (*fard kifaya)* done by the military and second, as an "individual duty"(*fard 'ayn*) of every Muslim against an enemy that pose threats to Islam and violates Muslim rights. In *fard 'ayn,* there is an emergency situation that makes it necessary to permit the forbidden like allowing women and children to participate in the struggle. However, John Kelsay clearly states "that without a doubt, Islam's understanding of *fard 'ayn* is inconsistent with the killing of civilians."[569] However, Kelsay used Islamic jurisprudence to show the various conditions that allows use of force in a Rebellion against "an unjust caliph" namely: First, its resistance must be unequivocal and "go beyond speech", Second, its convictions must be based on Sacred sources (the Qur'an or the Hadith), and finally, the rebels must have "a sizable and organized membership"[570] Suffice it to say that this intensifies the arguments about what is justifiable in wars and revolutions—that revolutions can be justified like some wars. "If it is possible for some wars to be morally justified, then it is hard to resist the extension of the justificatory patterns to the case of revolution. Certainly, some regimes seem to have committed such wrongs against their own populations or against sub groups within those populations as to create at least a prima facie case for violent redress. Nazi Germany and Uganda, under Amin,

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[567] Simeon O. Ilesanmi, "Just War Theory in Comparative Perspective: A Review Essay", *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), 150. pp. 137-155 Published by: Blackwell Publishing Ltd on behalf of Journal of Religious Ethics, Inc Stable, accessed 15-05-2020, URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40015280

[568] Courtney S. Campbell, "Moral Responsibility and Irregular War." Johnson, James Turner, and John Kelsay, eds. *Cross, Crescent, and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition* (New York: Greenwood Press. 1990), 109. 103-28

[569] John Kelsay, "War, Peace, and the Imperatives of Justice in Islamic Perspective: What do the September 11, 2001, Attacks Tell Us about Islam and the Just War Tradition in P. Robinson, ed., *War and Justice in World Religions* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2003). See Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God, Why Religious Militants Kill,* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 298.

[570] John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 88-90.

seem to present such cases."[571] It follows therefore that the demand for a legitimate approval in the just war doctrine is not definitive anyway.

But in the case of attacking non-combatants, some just war theorists analyse the extreme circumstances of imminent defeat and possible annihilation of an entire community or culture where a window of exemption is allowed to relax the rules of war and subject moral reasoning to utilitarian calculations. This is what Michael Walzer calls "the utilitarianism of extremity, for it concedes that in certain very special cases, though never as a matter of course even in just wars, the only restraints upon military action are those of usefulness and proportionality."[572] Under such "supreme emergency," Walzer claims that utilitarian calculation can force us to violate the rules of war, by not exempting non-combatants as targets in such survival attacks. This is allowed in "special cases where victory is so important or defeat so frightening that it is morally, as well militarily, necessary to override the rules of war."[573] Consequently, some theorists argue that under these "limits of the realm of necessity", "we might conclude that if the massive violence of war can be justified, which is dubious, terrorist acts can also be, if they have certain characteristics."[574] This is because massive wars which may be adjudged just for fulfilling the just war conditions produce more casualties—even among innocent non-combatants—than unconventional skirmishes like terrorism under the same just war conditions. So "if comparable good results can be accomplished with far less killing, an alternative to war that would achieve these results through acts intrinsically no worse than those that occur in war would be more justifiable."[575] Being less fatal than war, they argue that under just war principles, terrorism will always be better than war which is the ultimate form of violence. Their point is that if waging "war to prevent the success of those who cause war can be justified, lesser uses of terror and violence can also sometimes be justified."[576] Also it is good to add that terrorists don't make exceptions also because they perceive the civilian population as accomplices to the unjust oppressive system. Bin Laden would say "we do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned [Americans] are all targets"[577]

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[571] C. A. J. Coady, *Morality and Political Violence*, 167.
[572] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). 231.
[573] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).132.
[574] Virginia Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 143.
[575] Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 143.
[576] Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 143.
[577] Alex Schmid, "Terrorism-the Definitional Problem, *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 36 (2, 3), 384.

One would likely ask, whether this is a debate on the inconsistency and hypocrisy of applying different models of morality to state's use of violence in war and nonstate revolutionary armed conflicts. Coady is one of the frontline critics of this double standard consequentialist and utilitarian views that place morality under servitude of superior whims and powers. "A situation where you apply utilitarian or consequentialist standards to morally legitimate the intentional killing of noncombatants, so that such acts of state terrorism as the bombing of Dresden are deemed to be morally sanctioned by the good ends they supposedly serve, does not merit the noble approval of just war principles. However, it is surprising to see the same people make the move to higher ground when considering the activities of rebels or revolutionaries and judge their killing of noncombatants by the intrinsic standard. This inconsistency and hypocrisy in applying the moral standards to both situations morally defeats the very core and aims of the just war tradition. For it is unintelligible that in the case of the revolutionary or insurgent, the thought is that even if the cause is just and the revolution legitimate, the methods are morally wrong because of what they are or involve. Whereas in the case of the state and its instrumentalities, this thought is quietly abandoned and replaced by those utilitarian considerations which are denied to the revolutionaries."[578]

However, justifying acts of terror with the just war principles is challenging, this is because acts of terrorism go against the basic conditions of the theory, and so cannot be justified by the fact of statistical comparison with conventional wars. "When applying the just war criteria, justification for a use of force does not rely on meeting selected criteria: all of them must be met; all not just some, must be satisfied."[579] Terrorism is like guerrilla wars with no rules, it is a war that targets everyone without exceptions, so to justify it with just war principles is not plausible. And to admit its permissibility on the ground that it is a much lesser evil—with regard to the magnitude of casualties—than some justified wars, undermines the high standards of moral principles. It therefore follows that "no degree of oppression and no level of desperation can ever justify the killing of innocent civilians. While there may be compelling views that would justify resort to violence and terrorism in order to address grievances, it appears quite often that two wrongs hardly make a right."[580] It is morally wrong to violate the rights of innocent people in order to avoid defeat or fight back oppressive regimes. "The Just war theory leads to a kind of practical pacifism because the criteria are so stringent, and so hard to meet, that in fact very few uses of force ever do meet

[578] C.A. J. Coady, "The Morality of Terrorism", *Philosophy*, Vol. 60, No. 231 (Jan., 1985), 57-58.
[579] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 247.
[580] Lucky E. Asuelime and Ojochenemi J. David, *Boko Haram,* 33.

them, even after an initial justification has been established. Just war theory provides the means of justifying."[581] Terrorism in this contemporary time cannot be justified for any reason because there is always nonviolent means of expressing grievances available that can still be explored. "Just war theory provides the structure of moral analysis that allows persons to condemn acts and projects of force devised to respond to injustice."[582] To show that contemporary terrorism cannot be justified by any moral principle even if it is motivated by religious ideas, there is need to examine the identity and operations of some religious terrorist groups.

4.2 Versions of Religiously Motivated Terrorist Groups

Religious terrorism has come in various versions under various terrorist groups. We would describe these versions under the following themes; Ethno-Religious State Terrorists, Religious Insurgent Groups, Violent Sectarian Syndicates and Religious Lone Wolves. Some of these groups may share similar characteristics such as strong nationalistic sentiments, apocalyptic visions, messianic missions, fundamentalism, ideological prejudice and religious stereotypes. "Due to their religious worldview, the new terrorist organizations have extremely broad and diffuse goals. In some cases, the sacred nature of these goals makes them appear as unbound, at least in comparison with specifically defined and politically driven objectives.... More specifically, according to the new terrorism perspective, religion is also said to affect the use of violence by making it more indiscriminate."[583]

4.2.1 Ethno-Religious State Terrorists

The very notion of terrorism started with state-sponsored terror against citizens. This occurs when an oppressive regime intimidates the civil population into submission. State terrorism is common in countries ruled by dictators. Here the regime either uses its legitimate armed forces like police or mercenaries like commandos to oppress citizens they consider as dissidents and enemies of the regime. Some religious states demonstrate an overwhelming preponderance of coercive power in a way that has caused untold terror and damage to the population. They use torture, random executions, covert assassinations, concentration camps, secret prisons, disappearances, destruction of properties, genocides, death squads, and extrajudicial killings to compel people to submission. "Throughout history, it has been

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[581] Lloyd Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 250.
[582] Steffen, *Holy War, Just War,* 250.
[583] Alejandra Bolanos, "Is there a 'New Terrorism' in Existence Today?", Richard Jackson and Samuel Justin Sinclair eds., *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism,* 31.

regimes with an overwhelming preponderance of coercive power which have been the most deadly perpetrators of terrorism on a mass scale. They habitually use their secret police and armed forces both as instruments of internal repression and social control and as a weapon of external aggression."[584] These regimes use terrorism as an "auxiliary weapon" to impose their influence and expand their control. Countries that are governed as religious states or under religious laws demonstrate some dictatorial tendencies and abusive characters. It is true that this dictatorial element of the leadership may be seen as an instrument of stability for the regime, but this stability is realised through repression rather than conciliation and true leadership.

Most religious states share some autocratic characteristics with their secular counterparts like Nazism and communism. Today, most religious regimes especially Islamic states like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia etc carry out unjust mass arrests, tortures, assassinations, crackdowns and public executions as control mechanisms. They use terror as a weapon of internal repression and also support and sponsor terrorist clients and mercenaries to carry out operations abroad. These Islamic states often use religious principles as basis for most of their totalitarian ideas and operations which they use to restrict people's freedom in order to compel conformity. For example, the recent assassination of a Saudi "dissident" journalist Jamal Khashoggi by hitmen suspected to have been sent by the Saudi government, and cases of numerous brutal punishments meted on the civil population for mere misdemeanours or simple religious misconduct shows how some religious regimes can use terror as a form of repression. Although these cases are not constant, they happen in special situations that demonstrate these totalitarian characteristics. Hence, "regime/state terrorism did not disappear with the ending of the Cold War. Many regimes continue to use torture and extrajudicial killing. In the Arab spring of 2011 there were numerous examples of peaceful protesters being shot dead in the streets where they were demonstrating. In Libya, the Gadhafi regime, a major perpetrator of state-sponsored terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s, deployed its heavily armed military against civilian protesters in an attempt to terrorize them into submission. Sadly, there is a long way to go before we see an acceptance of the values of the rule law, democracy and human rights throughout the international system."[585] It is also good to acknowledge that although religion is always at the centre of their justifications, some of these activities are motivated by ethnic or nationalistic goals. But most of what we

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[584] Paul Wilkinson, "Is Terrorism a Useful Analytical Term?", 12.
[585] Wilkinson, 12.

experience today as contemporary terrorism are perpetuated by non-state actors like insurgent and separatist groups.

4.2.2 Religious Insurgent/Separatist Groups

Insurgent groups are groups of militant rebels fighting against a legitimately recognized authority. Insurgent groups are revolutionaries. They oppose the government in various manners and for various reasons. Some of these reasons may be political, ethnic or religious. These reasons often develop into crisis that ends in a civil war or fight for independence against an incumbent regime. Most insurgent groups have separatist agenda which they implement by creating a kind of quasi-government in some part of a sovereign territory. Hence they operate an organised military force, control a geographical location, and have the ability to administer and govern people within their territory of control. Religious insurgents are not different from other insurgent groups in their revolution against an incumbent regime. Religion is at the centre of their political conflict because their areas of influence and control have different religious beliefs from other parts of the country. Religious insurgency is usually experienced in multi-religious countries where extremists easily take advantage of denominational dominance to champion separatist sentiments within geographical area. Some religious terrorist groups fall within the category of insurgents who acquire and control territories, engage in guerrilla warfare with the state through indiscriminate destruction of lives and properties. It is common among religious insurgents to impose their extreme ideologies on others and to be violent against every dissenting opinion. Sometimes, religious insurgency is seen from among minority religious groups feeling marginalised for their religious affiliations by a larger part of the country that profess a different belief. For instance the Chechen rebels come from a minority Muslim community of the country, and so fight against marginalisation through insurgency. The Irish Republican Army consists of insurgents generally made up of devout North Irish Catholic Nationalists who fought to reunite Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. This explains the obvious inseparable link between people's religious beliefs and political leanings.

A good number of religious insurgent groups are fundamentalists who hold extreme religious views and fight to impose them on the larger religious community. They always do that with politically motivated expansionist and domineering tendencies which end up in not only taking up arms against the state but also fighting to make their acquired territories a religious state according to their own extremist beliefs. This is common among Islamic extremists who try to impose extreme Islamic rule through violence like executions and

harmful punishments against offenders of Islamic principles. "The GEM has sought to record all activities of violent islamist groups, whether offensive, defensive or ritualistic. Their application of extreme punitive measures on civilians has been relatively consistent across groups that espouse a Salafi-jihadi ideology, regardless of their affiliations. Groups that apply punishments have appropriated convenient aspects of Islamic legal jurisprudence to force discipline on their subjects and spread fear among people under their rule. This trend reveals how efforts to hold onto territory are common across groups, signifying a long-term mission beyond insurgent activities."[586] These religious extremists attack soft targets and use guerrilla tactics against military bases to expand their level of influence and control in their acquired territories. Some examples of religiously motivated insurgents include; ISIS, Boko Haram, and Taliban. In their anti-government campaigns they are consistent in targeting government institutions and state representatives who they regard as unbelievers and enemies that deserve to be killed and destroyed.

4.2.3 Violent Sectarian Syndicates

This group of extremists are similar to the insurgents in many ways because some religious insurgents also fall in this category. There uniqueness lies in their asymmetrical and global nature. They are radically violent syndicates motivated by religious ideologies with the objective of enforcing a global transformation agenda that would reflect and realise their ideological ends. They may not have separatist agenda, rather they operate as global network of violent extremists with messianic and expansionist motives that are political and domineering. These ideologues have organised leadership, international affiliates and strong military. They attack public places and target both combatants and noncombatants to realise their political goals or compel governments to compensate them economically. This form of global-oriented ideological terrorism is common among Islamists. A closer look at the activities of some Islamist groups show that; they profess violent ideologies, they see violent jihad as an obligation, they identify with a global struggle, they have a narrow interpretation of Muslim identity, they support expansion of Muslim lands, and their goal is to restore Islamic governance everywhere. "Such contentions underscore the argument that an intimate link exists between Islam and conflict and thus assert that the dimensions of resolution are repudiated in favour of jihad and global Muslim domination."[587] Some of these Islamist syndicates include; Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Ansaru, ISIS, Al-shabab, etc. However, this category of terrorism is not only found in Islam, other religious traditions have groups with

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[586] Tony Blair Foundation, *Global Extremist Monitor*, 15.
[587] Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), ix.

such characteristics like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) a US-based white supremacist hate group formed by Christians.

This category of terrorists fight to change the course of the world's order using religious ideologies in tandem with political drives aimed at highlighting the pre-eminence and predominance of their extreme ideologies. They are evangelical 'transformists' or reformists with missionary ideas and actions that are implemented violently to realise a uninformed vision of the world that reflects their extreme ideologies like in the case of the violent Islamist extremist group like the Salafi-jihadi al-Qaeda franchises that operates all over the world. The Global Extremist Monitor adequately explains this instance by acknowledging that "violent Islamist extremism comes in many varieties, but what drives all violent Islamists is a belief in the obligation, on theological and political lines, to establish and enforce an absolute reading of sharia law as the underlying principle of public and state life. Violent Islamists all seek a restoration are legitimate methods to overcome perceived enemies of Islam that restrict the success of this project."[588] These groups of extremists violently oppose and challenge the state security forces to compel the government to do their biddings. They also use the unconventional tactics of targeting civilians and attacking non-combatants in order to exercise their influence and spread their publicity in what they seem to justify as a holy mission to change the world for better through a bloody cleansing. "Although the targeting of civilians has created a contentious debate across ideologues in the global violent jihadi movement, attacks on non-combatants are limited to groups like al-Qaeda or ISIS."[589] This is because, this unconventional violence makes them more powerful and difficult it deal with. When they attack innocent civilians, their influence grows rapidly alongside their ideologies, and the governments are pressured to meet some of their demands, thus making their mission a successful one. "To coerce a state into a group's demands, divert resources away from conflict zones or damage public morale, extremists increasingly see civilians as legitimate and strategically valuable targets."[590] They achieve this in various ways like sporadic mass shootings in public places, suicide bombings, kidnapping for ransoms, and public display of threats and execution of captured victims. These attacks may be carried out by groups of armed militants or by suicide mission of a single member who are sent to bomb or shoot unsuspecting targets sometimes in faraway countries to send a strong message. This is why they work as a network with members and affiliates all over the world

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[588] Tony Blair Foundation, *Global Extremist Monitor*, 15.
[589] Tony Blair Foundation, 14.
[590] Tony Blair Foundation, 14.

and their global influence and effects are increasing rapidly through their extensive but interconnected impacts.

4.2.4 Religious Lone-Wolves

Many individuals have carried out terrorist activities as a way of expressing their grievances and opposition against the situation of things as it affects their faith. They are lone soldiers fighting in protest against what they hate or in support of an ideology or agenda they believe in. These attacks happen as single issue cases. They are often self-incited by the individual who goes on a lone violent-spree for the sake of religious ideology. Some of these lone-wolves may be affiliated to any of the organised terrorist groups that send them on missions or they are individuals who feel motivated to carry out attacks on their own or in support of these terrorist networks. Although some terrorist groups take credit of some of the lone-wolf attacks because they plan the attacks to be executed as a single member mission, some of the lone-wolf attacks are based on a general mandate from the terrorist groups, that obligates affiliates and sympathizers to take up a mission without being officially sent. In 1998 al-Qaeda mandated every Muslim to commit to lone-wolf mission in these words; "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threated any Muslim."[591] "The lions of Allah who are all over the globe—some call them lone wolves—should know that they are the West's worst nightmare."[592]

4.3 The Effects of Religious Terrorism

Terrorism is a scourge with glaring effects. Some of these effects can be seen in the various challenges it has caused man over the years, which include:

4.3.1 Religious Challenges

Our analysis of both religion and terrorism exposes the fact that terrorism is modern day's greatest challenge to religion. This is because religion has taken the big hit of the great challenges posed by contemporary terrorism. Religion has been blamed as the ideology behind the evil of terror. People have killed and died in the name of religion and that is why religion is seen to provide compelling motivations that have vicious effects on people. This underscores the claim that religion causes violence and so provides the basis for

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[591] Tony Blair Foundation, 17.
[592] Tony Blair Foundation, 16-17.

contemporary terrorism. Consequently, religion has been accused, condemned and vilified for endangering human life and safety through its ideologies. People who come from certain religious backgrounds have suffered stereotypes and discriminations for practicing their faith. It is therefore not by accident that religious terrorism has amplified the level of religious intolerance in the world. Religious intolerance has given rise to criticisms from antireligious atheists who argue for the relegation of religious matters to the private domain. The hysteria and the antagonism that has followed religion during this time of terror are unprecedented. During this time religion has become an instrument of division, hate, discrimination, incessant fear and disillusionment. A lot of religious conspiracies brandished and proliferated to great proportions made people of faith consider it normal to build hate cleavages and show support to extremist groups and their dangerous ideologies. Thus the practice of faith became lost in the wave of fear mongery and sheer rivalry, as preachers kept encouraging hate instead of love, war instead of peace, and cruelty instead of compassion, drawing strength from the same Holy Scriptures that enjoins us to love even our enemies. Today, people of faith comfortably encourage hate against people of different faith, they build communities that give a totally different impression of what we think religion should be; a course for good.

It is pertinent to note that far from being a result of extremist ideologies, terrorism has been seen as a technique in the service of some religions. It has become a means and a working tool for some religious groups to actualise some goals that are not religious. As a result of this, religion plays the role of an impressive veil that disguises the ulterior motives of terrorists. Religion uses the golden rule principle to propagate esteemed virtues of love, peace, justice and nonviolence. The new era of terrorism brings a dynamism that allows and justifies violence even to the point of sacralising it through the appropriation of divine revelation in a way that permits the use of religion for extreme repression, and even terror. "In this way the political machinations and developments of the modern age are subject to a re-interpretation through a primarily theological lens. Paramilitary pastors, militant Mullah's, radical rabbis and politically motivated priests populate a landscape of conflict and violent carnage. They are joined by the padres, priests, imams and rabbis who bestow their blessings on the soldiers of national state armies despatched into battle."[593] As a result of this institutional imprimatur, blood has been spilled for religion's sake. For instance, Islamists feel empowered by hard scriptural texts like; "therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers, smite at their necks" (Q. 47:4) but neglect the noble verses like "take not life which God has made

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[593] Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence,* 22.

sacred" (Q. 6:153). This selective interpretation of religious texts is a perversion of religion because it makes people feel righteous for destroying human lives and property. Thus terrorism causes a misrepresentation of religious principles, values and teachings. This is so because religious ideals are those of peace, love and unity and only those who know little abuse it, since ignorance leads to aberration.

4.3.2 Physical Challenges

Terrorism causes real physical harm against man and his environment. This physical effect is unprecedented and obvious. This is because when terrorists use lethal force on targets, there is always a damaging physical effect. Lives and properties are usually immediate targets of terrorist groups. They attack people and physical structures like buildings, schools, churches, markets, and mosques, causing great physical impacts through "drive-by shootings, bombings, armed assaults and assassinations. In fact 2011, saw the broadening of targets beyond the 'favourite' police stations and military barracks. Schools (guilty of spreading Western education), hospitals, bars, Muslim clerics who had dared to criticize the sect, mosques, local village heads, markets and average citizens all became targets."[594] Terrorism persists and continues to happen because it has physical effects that make people tremble, lament and suffer. The physical harm is direct and existential. In fact, terrorism would become a mere empty threat if there were to be no physical harm. The physical challenges of terrorism therefore showcase the direct effects of terror which activates other attenuating effects. Acts of terrorism are real because people are not only scared of the threats they pose, they suffer physical harm or loss and so tremble that it may happen again. People are displaced, kidnapped, killed and dispossessed of their valuables. These physical challenges are the leverages that make terrorism a predicament to be always considered.

4.3.3 Social Challenges

Terrorism is antisocial. It goes against the social nature of man. Being motivated by hateful and stereotypical ideologies, terrorism destroys man's social life. "Terrorism has had a negative impact on the people regardless of status and the society at large. It has disrupted and offset the normal social life and a good number of innocent lives have been lost. Terrorists' activities have dislocated people from their usual bases to different unintended locations. The mass movement of people creates refugee problems with substantial costs to

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[594] Comolli, *Boko Haram*, 63.

the individual, host communities and the government. In addition, these episodes of violence has hit strongly against and disorganized the socio-cultural tranquillity, the fragile religious tolerance among the people and polluted the serene and spiritual base of the environment."[595] Terrorism affects man's relation with another. The typical terrorist may appear sociable in ordinary life, but his extreme beliefs keep him repulsive to social contacts especially with people that hold different opinions.

Another way to look at the social effect is to consider how terrorism albeit caused by social mistrust, has exacerbated the mutual suspicions among people in the society. Social ties are broken because everyone has become a threat and at threat. Social life disappears because people can no longer gather in harmony, families are torn apart and communities are destabilised. This plays out in Rene Girard's *mimetic theory* which makes man's social nature a point of departure that turns out to be counterproductive. "The mimetic theory stresses the social nature of man, but it also highlights the many conflicts that can arise as a result of cohabitation. Man's social nature often transforms into an "unsociable sociability" [*ungesellige Geselligkeit*], to borrow a phrase from Kant that aptly summarizes the potential consequences of mimesis."[596] It is interesting to note that this theory in the process of demonstrating the intricacies of man's social nature exposes a social challenge whereby man's social nature carries along some antisocial attitudes that end up in violence. "Girard's mimetic theory finds itself between the two poles—Aristotle's and Aquinas's optimistic *homo homini amicus*, or "man is a friend to man," and Hobbes's pessimistic *homo homini lupus*, or "man is a wolf to man"—and can be characterized by its proximity to the anthropology of Augustine. In Augustine's words, "The human race is, more than any other species, social by nature and quarrelsome by perversion."[597] This is to say that although terrorism is ipso facto a creation of social imbalance, it widens the gulf of social challenges to an unprecedented magnitude. Think about the stereotypes and stigmatisation that are often associated with experiences of terrorism. The social instability that is at the background of most terrorist activities is made worse by the very act of terrorism.

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[595] Rawlings Akonbede Udama, "Understanding Nigeria Terrorism, its Implications to National Peace, Security, Unity and Sustainable Development: A Discuss" *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science,* Volume 8, Issue 5 (Mar. - Apr. 2013), e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. 112. accessed December 2, 2017 http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol8-issue5/L085100115.pdf?id=6092

[596] Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girard's Mimetic Theory,* trans. Gabriel Borrud (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 37.

[597] Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* XII. 28. trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Classics, 1972), 508.

4.3.4 Economic Challenges

Terrorism has a serious economic consequence. Of course physical catastrophe leads to economic meltdown. When lives and valuables are destroyed, the economy is adversely affected. "A good example of economic terrorism is vandalism of resources that are of direct or indirect on a nation's economy."**598** Of course economy and security are like Siamese twins, that is why violence always has an economic repercussion. A look at the countries experiencing the scourge of terrorism reveals a corresponding economic deprivation. This is because, economy is security conscious; it is sensitive to the security situations of any society and so does not thrive in unsafe territories. Consequently, insecurity leads to economic instability. It is not surprising that most terror-infested counties are among the poorest countries in the world such as Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Afghanistan. Economy is sensitive to the security situation of individual countries. People like to invest in places where they feel safe to carry out their businesses. Rawlings Udama Captures this appropriately in these words, "Extreme violence repels rather than attracts business investors as in the case of the activities of Boko Haram.... The violence afflicted in northern Nigeria has affected business and economic activities have slowed down. Moreover, the movement of people to these zones that would have buster economic activities have been stalled. Terrorism has already worsened the development space of the region as it has scared foreign and local investors alike and limited the earnings from tourism.... There is no doubt that wars, terrorism had led to political instability which in turn have a significant negative effect on the economies in which they take place. Terror attacks are known to cause decrease in aggregate private investments…. The violence has caused the destruction of lives and property in the north thereby paralyzing economic activities in the region in spite of its natural endowment in agricultural productivity. It has succeeded in creating fear and terror that has hunted everybody and the productivity of people has been stalled. Most economic activities have come to a halt due to uncertainty in the country."599

The economic effects of terrorism manifests in the massive poverty, unemployment and total collapse of infrastructures that leaves people dejected and frustrated to the point of resorting to acts of criminality and terrorism. "With the intensification of the insurgency,

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598 Sonua Quadri, "Terrorism in Nigeria" in *Inner Temple OOU*, March 8 2017, accessed December 2, 2017 https://innertempleoou.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/337/
599 Udama, "Understanding Nigeria Terrorism," 112-113.

economic challenges remained."[600] Like vicious circle, economic instability leads to terrorism and terrorism worsens the economic collapse.

4.3.5 Political Challenges

The unprecedented violence that characterises acts of terrorism destabilises the political life of the society. If terrorism destroys physical infrastructure, economic and social wellbeing, then it is inevitable that it has grave political consequences. Terrorist attacks breeds anarchy and disrupts law and order in the society. These attacks are often anti-government and chaotic because they are usually executed in a guerrilla and indiscriminate manner that causes political instability. "Different murderous gangs roam the nooks and crannies of the cities, streets and villages day and night exploding bombs, shooting and killing innocent people. They set homes and business premises on fire, destroying places of worship, and attacking security agents and institutions. The process has promoted anarchy by causing confusion and widespread panic among people."[601] Terrorism thrives when political stability is dislodged. This is because most terrorist activities have political causes and political effects that keep the state politically vulnerable to terrorists as they challenge the state's political control.

Terrorists preside over mass killings and destructions that violate civil rights and liberties. The protection of human rights and properties is one of the basic priorities of government. To stand up to this responsibility, many governments have used excessive force to regain control and protect vulnerable individuals from the terrorists, some of these counterterrorism measures have damaging consequences to the polity as government forces violate the same rights they seek to protect. Out of desperation, government forces resort to unconventional and extra-judicial methods in order to be in control. If this political instability is not resolved, a state of anarchy reminiscent of a banana republic is inevitable. However, terrorism is often politicised by political elites who take advantage of the instability to increase their political and economic capitals. This is because, by undermining the political stability, terrorists' activities spread fear across the length and breadth of…the entire country especially among the political elites. It pushes further its political polarization."[602]

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[600] Moki Edwin Kindzeka, "Fear of Boko Haram Hits Food Prices in Cameroon During Ramadan," *Voice of America* 2 July 2014, accessed December 2, 2017 http://www.voanews.com/author/23003.html.
[601] Commoli, *Boko haram,* 93.
[602] Commoli, *Boko haram,* 93.

4.3.6 Psychological Challenges

Robert Audi argues that we should include mention of psychological harm in any definition of violence, alongside physical harm.[603] The psychological challenges of religious terrorism cannot be overemphasised. It follows therefore that "modern terrorism is a form of psychological warfare in which terrorist organization attempts to terrorize the country's population."[604] This is supported by the claims that most terrorists are arguably psychopaths. It is not surprising that terrorism causes great threat and trauma which have lasting psychological effect on both the victim and the perpetrator. Of course the dread of terrorism has great impact on our psychology of religion. "Harm can be inflicted through psychological as well as physical pressure, and the injuries caused by violence may be both psychological and physical."[605] This is to say that that just as terrorism has tremendous physical, economic and social effects, its "violence can contribute significantly to the psychological health of oppressed peoples."[606] This damage to psychological health is not exclusive to the victims, it equally has damaging effects on the terrorist. Terrorism can cause psychopathology for the one who commits terror. "Another dogma, cherished among psychologists and public health researchers, is that violence is a kind of disease."[607] This is why people who cause terror are not seen as normal or psychologically stable.

It is sometimes argued that the causes of such actions are primarily psychological rather than political or intellectual and that certain psychological profiles "explain" the acts of terrorists and others who commit violent acts better than does attention to their beliefs.[608] This is because, although most religiously motivated violence is characterised by what people believe or what they refuse to believe, some of those who take to violence reflect a failing psychological condition than a dissenting belief. As a psychological weakness, "terrorism is a form of asymmetrical warfare—a tactic of the weak against the strong—which leverages the psychology of fear to create emotional damage that is disproportionate to its damage in lives or property."[609] There is an overwhelming psychology of fear that surrounds the entire crisis of terrorism. The terrorist lives in fear, acts with fear and causes fear. "The ups and downs of terrorism, then, are a critical part of the history of violence, not because of its toll in deaths

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[603] Audi, Robert. "On the Meaning and Justification of Violence", *Violence*, Jerome A. Shaffer, ed., (New York: David McKay, 1971), 52.
[604] Boaz Ganor, "Are Counterterrorism Frameworks Based on Suppression and Military Force for Effective in Responding to Terrorism?", in Jackson and Sinclair, *Contemporary Debates*,141.
[605] Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 127.
[606] Held, 138.
[607] Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 75.
[608] Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 113.
[609] Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, 273.

but because of its impact on a society through the psychology of fear."[610] This sense of danger and fear distorts the stability of our moral psychology. The overwhelming psychology of fear that characterises the frequent experience of terrorism eventually leads to moral desensitisation whereby everyone becomes immune to the horror of these threats and violence. Hence this psychological challenge leads to moral challenge. "However, we are still left with the need to understand how some persons with given psychological tendencies toward violence are led to commit actual acts of political violence whereas others are not, and we still need to understand the component of the action that was affected by such beliefs and by the social and cultural contexts in which these beliefs were formed and acted on."[611]

4.3.7 Moral Challenges

Terrorism is not only a political or sociological problem, it is also a moral challenge. Most acts of terror are morally conscious acts that deserve the attention of moral inquiry. There is moral responsibility for every terrorist activity. This is because acts of terrorism are violent and harmful engagements of an acting person that qualify to be considered morally wrong. This does not overlook some instances where ones moral responsibility is questioned when a person is used or induced to carry out terrorist activities. Many questions have been raised about the moral implications and challenges of religious terrorism. These questions are pertinent to the extent that they probe the moral relevance of all actions performed within the terrorist crisis situation. The moral inquiry seeks to know whether all acts of terrorism are morally responsible. If so, "what shall we say about those acts of moral agents in which violence or terror is used to achieve moral objectives? Can they ever be justified?"[612] Hence the threats and acts of terrorism carry a lot of moral implications that cannot be neglected.

Morality is central to our analysis in this work. Most terrorist activities are imbued with moral responsibility. When terrorists attack a place, the damages they cause are evil and morally culpable. But it is good to note that some terrorists are coerced to participate in destruction of lives and properties, some are conscripted to become human bombs in suicide missions. Hence, although one would consider their acts to be evil, the perpetrators cannot be considered morally responsible since their will and sometimes their reason were mortgaged during these actions. The culpability of their actions goes to the grand planers of their mission, the real terrorists hiding behind the veil of their innocence. When real terrorists commit acts of terror, they justify their actions as morally permissible, their perception of

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[610] Pinker, 273.
[611] Virginia Held, *How Terrorism is Wrong*, 113.
[612] Held, 127.

right and wrong becomes lost in their passion to fulfil their mission and their rage against their targets. They believe that what they do is good and inevitable because failure to do that would bring evil upon them. So they kill, destroy, kidnap and terrorise with every conviction that they are achieving good. But what the victims experience is evil in its unprecedented proportion. They get overwhelmed by the threats and massacres that has become part of their modern lives. They find it difficult to grapple with the rationale behind these nefarious actions and so they wonder why moral principles and value for life fall flat to the pressures of this existential evil. Both terrorists and victims face moral challenges. They bear a very heavy moral burden that has to do with moral desensitization that comes with the proliferation and frequency of the evil of terrorism. We shall analyse this later in the last part of this work. But the fact that the evil of the violence fades in our eyes because of the frequent reoccurrence and the reciprocal dehumanization of victims and terrorists alike, makes terrorism a big subject of moral inquiry even though it has political and social consequences. Sometimes the moral justification for terrorism conflicts with its political counterpart on many grounds, especially as it affects how we respond to the evil of terror. "And if we deem a given political system so thoroughly corrupt and productive of harm that it cannot be repaired, we may consider whether we would be morally justified in engaging in violence to rid human beings of the violence it inflicts or to express our outrage."[613] That is why it will be good to analyse the role of religion in counter terrorism.

4.4 Religion and Counterterrorism

The war on terrorism is fought on many fronts. Counterterrorism requires a good understanding of the mechanisms necessary for an effective and legitimate response to terrorism. This can only be possible if we take into consideration the motivation and operational capabilities of terrorist groups such as; ideologies, incentives, intelligence, armaments, experience, special equipment and operational knowledge. According to Boaz Ganor, "Terrorist attacks can be prevented by either reducing the organization's capabilities or by reducing the perpetrators' motivation. Reducing one of the variables to nil can seemingly prevent terrorist attacks from taking place altogether. Thus even if a group is motivated, but lacks operational capabilities, terrorist attacks will not occur. The opposite is also true: when a terrorist organization has the capability but members and leaders are unmotivated, an attack will not take place."[614] Interestingly, there is an implicit understanding which shows that to stop terrorism you must know why it happens and how it operates. From

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[613] Held, 129.
[614] Boaz Ganor, "Are Counterterrorism Frameworks Based on Suppression", 139.

this understanding, no one would deny that religion has a role to play in religiously motivated terrorism.

Analysing the various responses to terrorism through special consideration to various approaches and measures that are employed to fight terrorism is an important task. We can only achieve this task by evaluating past strategies and dynamics of counterterrorism with the view of identifying what has gone right or wrong, and engaging a more effective and legitimate response to terrorism. Terrorism is an organised violence and so requires an organised response. "But whether violence is local or global, it tends to be both patterned and innovative. It elicits chaos, but can be reduced to an orderly paradigm, model, or theory, depending on the methods and data scholars utilize to understand the beast. Consequently the application of an orderly, evidence-based understanding of terrorism, national identity, and political legitimacy may be the most effective weapon we could employ in any "war on terrorism" now or in the future."[615] There are two unique approaches to the counterterrorism response; the soft/carrot approach and the hard/stick approach. The carrot approach focuses on the underlying social circumstances and the motivations that produce the provocation elicited by terrorists. The stick approach is based on the proactive and reactive military measures aimed at deterring and countering terrorists' plans and actions.

The hard military response to terrorism is usually the task of the state or state surrogates. It involves the proactive and operational-offensive activities that are deployed against a terrorist group such as intelligence efforts, strategic deterrence, military strikes, and targeted killings. "This deals with one of the two variables in the terror equation, namely, counterterrorism operations intended to reduce the terrorist organization's operational capabilities."[616] These operational activities are either proactive or reactive, in that they disrupt the organization and disable its ability to sustain attacks. It begins with a proper and viable intelligence by which security forces process and use tactical information defensively with regard to knowing terrorists' intentions and operations, or offensively with regard to knowing their bases, resources and functions. There is no proper counterterrorism without a viable intelligence. It is a basic proactive pre-emptive way of penetrating the minds and activities of the terrorists with the view of foiling their attacks before they happen. This calls for activeness on all grounds, an alertness and attentiveness to all details relating to their motivating ideologies, initiatives, interests, planning, recruiting, public relations, funding, arms stock piling, training, preparations, networking, transportation, and other stages of

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[615] Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy,* 9.
[616] Ganor, "Counterterrorism Frameworks", 138.

activities preceding the attacks. "Proactive offensive operations rely heavily on sensitive, specific and up-to-date intelligence. Such accurate information is available only through a small number of sensitive and loosely guarded intelligence assets."[617] Hence, without tactical intelligence, disruptive proactive operations cannot thwart terrorist attacks. However, such "intelligence, infiltration, and related activities should be directed at points of vulnerability of terrorist organizations—their reliance on audience, their ideological inflexibility, their problems of maintaining commitments, and their potential for organizational failure."[618]

Another component of this proactive operational response to terrorism is deterrence. "Deterrence, understood conventionally as the direct use of threats, punishments, and inducements to prevent enemy action, has a viable place in dealing with terrorists."[619] It is like a show of superior force that intimidates and pushes terrorists back from carrying out a planned attack they are afraid to lose. Deterrence involves various actions and strategies that communicate fear of great loss and grave consequences aimed at discouraging terrorists attacks. "Deterrence as a known strategy is demonstrated to have a positive role in contending with terrorists, though terrorism poses special problems that limit its effectiveness and call for modifications. Among those problems are (a) difficulties in getting unambiguous and credible threats across to terrorists, (b) the unwillingness of terrorists to communicate except indirectly and on their own terms, (c) exceptionally high levels of mutual distrust, (d) uncertainty about how to affect what terrorists value, and (e) uncertainty about the targets to which threats should be directed."[620] However, the difficulty in applying some of these elements of conventional deterrence namely; availability of channels of communication, credibility among communicating parties, and knowing what adversaries value, to contemporary terrorist situations, makes reliance on direct deterrence somewhat more effective. In addition, direct threats and perceived overretaliation may have counterproductive effects with respect to generating support for terrorist groups and activities by previously uncommitted audience.[621] Hence deterrence entails a reassuring communication of the state's operational superiority in a way that does not motivate the terrorists to avenge.

The actual combative component of counterterrorism "involves operational-offensive activities against the terrorist organization. These activities are designed to undermine the

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[617] Ganor, 141.
[618] Neil J. Smelser and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Discouraging Terrorism:Some Implications of 9/11*, Panel on Understanding Terrorists in Order to Deter Terrorism, National Research Council, (Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2002), 3.
[619] Neil J. Smelser and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Discouraging Terrorism,* 31.
[620] Neil J. Smelser and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Discouraging Terrorism,* 1.
[621] Neil J. Smelser and Faith Mitchell, eds., *Discouraging Terrorism,* 3.

terrorist organization's ability to perpetrate attacks."[622] There are two types of operational-offensive activity namely; proactive and reactive action. Proactive offensive activity as discussed above deals with those "pre-emptive actions that are meant to foil terrorist attacks before they come to fruition."[623] Pro-active actions are based on tactical intelligence and can be used to disrupt operations, even if they are covert. This is why "the importance of proactive disruptive action has been so effective in confronting suicide attacks. It is not only a vital or important tool in the arsenal of counterterrorism, but the exclusive means to thwart such attacks and save innocent lives."[624] The proactive actions are the best military strategy for counterterrorism. Another strategy is the reactive action. "Reactive action is an offensive operational action usually taken after brutal and deadly terrorist attacks in the state and constitutes an immediate or late response to terrorist attacks."[625] This reactive counterterrorism action is better referred to as offensive reprisal actions to rid it of the negative retaliatory impression that it incites a 'cycle of violence.' However these offensive reprisals are necessary military measures used by the state to confront and neutralise terrorist attacks with the view of avoiding a boomerang effect which escalates the violence. This is why proactive pre-emptive offensive actions are preferable in tackling terrorism. Such "preventative pre-emptive action is meant, among other things, to demoralize the organization's operatives and supporters, while at the same time to strengthen the morale of the state's citizens and strengthen solidarity and psychological stamina against further attacks."[626] Proactive actions that take the group unawares and render them demoralized and ineffective include, capturing their leadership and sponsors, destroying their base and armoury, intercepting their source of finance and supplies etc. These must be carried out with a carefully tactical strategy that would neutralize reprisals.

It is therefore good to acknowledge that overreaction leads to escalation and boomerang effect. "Overreaction" to terrorist acts has often cost victimized states more in terms of casualties and financial expenses than the acts themselves…. Hence, it would be a wiser and less costly response to non-state terrorism for states and peoples to refrain from counterproductive and self-destructive overreaction and to exercise self-control, restrain their reactions, and, in particular, their desires to react."[627] A good example can be found in the Israeli killing of Hezbollah's leader which resulted in the bombing of Israeli embassy in

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[622] Boaz Ganor, "Counterterrorism Frameworks", 138.
[623] Ganor, 139.
[624] Ganor, 140.
[625] Ganor, 138.
[626] Ganor, 141.
[627] National Research Council, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 3.

Buenos Aires by Hezbollah in 1992. This is why counter-terrorism responses and offensives should be done tactically with substantial intelligence gathering. Other notable examples of counterterrorism offensive measures include; "state-led coalitions such as the US-led anti-ISIS coalition and French-led counter-offensive in the Sahel, nonstate actors such as Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq and Syria and vigilante groups such as the Civilian Joint Task Force fighting Boko Haram in Nigeria."[628] These military counterterrorism responses and offensives cannot be the only options for solving terror, that is why it is necessary that as these measures extinguish the fires of violence, there is need to accompany them with a proper analysis of the violent ideologies that motivate terrorist actions as well as an assessment of how effective military responses would be in curbing these ideological extremism. Hence, "while a military response to this global violence is vital, the cost of security measures internationally requires a sustained analysis. This cannot be done adequately without comparing data over time on violent Islamist activity and state and nonstate responses."[629] Military response to violent extremism must be carried out with special consideration to basic moral and legal principles that give it legitimate grounds to be seen as an act of self-defence which allows the use of deadly force as a last resort. "It can therefore be determined that offensive military measures are an important part of the war on terror, and in some cases, such as the case of suicide attacks, the proactive offensive operation is a vital if not an exclusive component in thwarting these attacks. This becomes a duty, a moral obligation based on the right to self-defence of a society assaulted by terrorism."[630]

The soft approach to counterterrorism focuses on the motivations and central narratives that drive the ideologies of terrorist groups. For religious terrorists, there is always a religious narrative which persuasively fans the embers of violent ideologies aflame. These narratives are championed by charismatic leaders and preachers who often determine the magnitude of terrorist actions with their sophisticated sermons. For instance, "ISIL's communication technology delivers a coherent ideology. It combines a political narrative (a new and just world order, an expansive and global caliphate), a moral narrative (hypocrisy of the West). It uses religious narratives and it deploys sociopsychological strategies. Counter terrorist approaches will need to deploy counter-narratives that are equally sophisticated."[631] Hence the soft approach to counterterrorism begins with a counter narrative that drives a

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[628] Tony Blair Foundation, *Global Extremism Monitor*,15
[629] Tony Blair, Foundation, 15.
[630] Boaz Ganor, "Counterterrorism Frameworks", 143.
[631] Global Terrorism Index 2019, 84.

better idea that appeals to terrorists more than their ideologies. If their ideology is religious, a more appealing and superior religious narrative should be promoted. This counter narrative must be far-reaching and progressive. It must be able to communicate these superior ideas through suitable means that provide better alternatives to extreme ideologies. That's why all "direct efforts to deter should therefore be accompanied by working through all available third parties—societies hosting terrorist organizations, countries trusted by host societies, or… allies—who may have more credibility with and influence on terrorist organizations than this country, as enemy, does."[632] By driving the narrative with superior ideas, counterterrorism agents make terrorist ideologies unfashionable for members of the group and host societies. This gives room to the process of deradicalization and healing.

Terrorism is like a hydra which sprouts multiple heads. We can attempt to destroy the threat with kinetic power and drone attacks, but according to Ali Soufan, "the real battle lies in the battle of ideas and the methods that terrorists are using to recruit, if we are not able to counter those, this war will never end." Counterterrorism efforts therefore should concentrate on combatting effective extremist narratives and their means of delivery via communication technologies.[633] Hence the process of deradicalization begins with effective communication. This communication can be made possible through effective means and valuable contents. Terrorists have desires and values which reflect in their extreme narratives. Some of their recruits connect to these narratives because they consider these narratives as valuable sources for the meaning and purpose they seek in life. The search for meaning and purpose is often a spiritual task which religion serves, and that is why religious narratives provide easy driving forces for ideological terrorism without which they would lack the persuasive dynamism that pushes people to such passionate reactions. In the words of Rosenfeld, "it is the intrinsic human drive for meaning itself that can produce the provocation and response elicited by "mobs," "terrorists," "freedom fighters" or the state, and the phenomenon of generation-long waves of global violence."[634] Consequently, counterterrorism narratives are expected to carry some persuasive religious characteristics that serves people's quest for meaning and purpose in life, yet making them not take to violence when this purpose is challenged. This is why religion remains a valuable tool for counterterrorism, for what it does is to change the narrative with a more persuasive means and a superior content that prescribes that religion should command virtues and work for good. This would make these terrorist to realise in

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[632] Smelser and Mitchell, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 3.
[633] Global Terrorism Index 2019, 84.
[634] Rosenfeld, *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy* , 9.

their voyage of discovery, the best path towards realising life's purpose is the path of good instead of evil, the part of peace instead of violence and the path of love instead of hate.

Another way of realising a change an ideological change for terrorists is by limiting the outreaching ability of the terrorist extremist messages. This could be done through state strategic intelligence policies. "Whenever possible, policies should be directed toward distancing and alienating relevant audiences from terrorist organizations and activities."[635] By limiting the followership and separating their audiences from these messages, there is a vacuum that allows for a possibility of providing better perspectives from superior counternarratives that give a comprehensive picture about their concerns. This is because, people's perspectives are usually shaped by what they hear always. This is the reason why terrorists are good in communication. It follows that when their audience are separated from them, there is always a shortage in their lifeblood and when a perspective is withdrawn, there is need to replace it with something better. This creates an interesting opportunity for dialogue and interchange of perspectives. "To keep the bicycle going, it is important to avoid breaks in negotiation."[636] Therefore as a complement to influencing the perspective of the audience who are potential recruits, there is need to bring these groups on board to become stakeholders in the state of affairs of the entire community. This is always successful in situations where terrorism is a form of agitation. Such protestant terrorism is better addressed in the early stages when signs of extremism indicate possible involvement in violent practices. The group is called to a round table to be part of the discussion and decision making. Alienation is always at the centre of every violent agitation. Hence, "the incorporation of potentially extremist political groups into the civil society of actual and potential host societies is especially important."[637] The act of changing the narrative therefore goes along with educating perspectives and incorporation into the spheres of things.

By incorporating these hitherto extremist groups into the system, counterterrorism provides them opportunity to become part of the solutions to the social conditions they protest. Of course it is the deplorable social conditions that constitute the main object of their violent actions but incorporation brings them into a form of agreement which enables peace process to begin. When people are fed-up with their abysmal social conditions and lose trust in the ability of the system to fix it, they take laws in their hands. But when they are given the opportunity to become part of the solution, they are motivated to rebuild trust. As we know,

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[635] Smelser and Mitchell, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 3
[636] Jonathan Powell, *Talking to Terrorists* (London: Vintage, 2015), 206.
[637] Smelser and Mitchell, Eds., *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 3

"building trust, or more often rebuilding it, takes generations and only implementation can create trust."[638] Implementation begins with improving the social conditions of these host communities. It begins the practical step towards healing the communities and building peace. "The social conditions fostering the use of terrorism are complex and include demographic, economic, political, and educational factors. In the long run, preventive strategies should include improving these conditions in countries vulnerable to terrorist organizations and activities, as a means of diminishing the probabilities of their emergence and crystallization."[639] Religion plays a major role in the integral and sustainable development of terrorized communities. As driver of the counterterrorism narrative, religion could use its social and prophetic role to impact on the socio-economic development of deprived people. Through its missionary activities, religion has provided social services like good education, healthcare, basic amenities, and other social benefits for impoverished communities. Religion has also challenged governments to rise to the responsibility of improving the social conditions of the people. This is typical of the Christian religion especially in mission territories like Africa. "Missionaries of various kinds descended on Africa in great numbers in the nineteenth century… they were involved also in the suppression of slavery and the slave trade, introducing the alternative legitimate commerce and in general forwarding the modernization of African society through European technology and education."[640] Consequently, religion is a big stakeholder in ensuring that the government fulfils its social contract to the people. Its social services accord it a commanding influence on extremists who would see religion as a compassionate arbiter and readily trust religious leaders when they call for peace.

The soft approach to terrorism is very delicate and complex, it is still the most effective means of tackling terrorism. This is because military conquest of terrorism cannot bring lasting solution to the scourge of terrorism without dialogue. However, break in communication may make the terrorists go back to violence. That is why even if a terrorist group is decimated by military operations, there is need to bring them to the dialogue table for talks that would initiate remedy steps, without which a return to violence is inevitable. For instance, "the eventual success of the coalition forces to dislodge Islamic State from the territories it occupies in northern Iraq and Syria should not delude us into thinking that the war against terrorism, and in particular terrorism that is religiously motivated, can be won on

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[638] Jonathan Powell, *Talking to Terrorists*, 207.
[639] Smelser and Mitchell, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 3
[640] Richard Olaniyan, "Africa and External Contacts", *African History and Culture*, Richard Olaniyan ed., (Lagos: Longman Nigeria Limited, 1982), 74.

the battlefield. The capture or killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the self-styled caliphate, may satisfy the thirst for revenge or for what others perceive to be justice. His demise would be equally likely to serve as a rallying cry for other self-designated messiahs to pick up his mantle of leadership."[641] To forestall this from happening, there is need for extreme carefulness in the negotiations and implementations in order to build trust and achieve peace. Reaching an agreement is a difficult task, but failure to implement one as soon as possible is more disastrous. According to Jonathan Powell, "the easiest way to kill off an agreement straight away is to fail to deliver on promises made."[642] This is evident in the Oslo accords of 1993 between Israel and Palestine which was not implemented, and so led to the deterioration of the conflict between them. Consequently, the government must be ready to make concessions that would motivate the terrorists to give in. It must "attempt to reduce the motivation to perpetrate attacks and the instrumental motives for terrorism while systematically dealing with the root causes behind the activities of terrorists and terrorist organizations."[643] There is need to provide these surrendering terrorists a viable means of livelihood that would keep them away from the lucrative business of terror. It is difficult to reintegrate fighters into war-ravaged economies where there are no jobs.[644] That is the more reason improving social conditions is necessary.

We have analysed in the preceding pages that terrorists have values. These values are for them objects of provocation and negotiation. They cause provocations when they are undermined and are used by governments to negotiate with terrorists. "On one hand, what terrorists value is found in large part in the context of their cultural beliefs, in the ways they organize themselves, and in their motivational and group psychology. On the other, according to the logic of deterrence, the appropriate strategies are to threaten to take away, impair, or destroy what they value—or, alternatively, to offer inducements that are meaningful in terms of what they value—so that they will be prevented from launching attacks."[645] This strategy has been used to bring terrorists to the negotiating table. Once terrorists are confronted with something they value, they tend to lower their weapons. But this must be done by an appropriate authority. Some governments employ the aid of foreign governments or institutions to intervene in mediation with domestic terrorists. This strategy is not always successful. "A United States Institute of Peace study has suggested that Western intervention

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[641] Oliver McTernan, "Let us not prey", 32.
[642] Powell, *Talking to Terrorists*, 280.
[643] Ganor, "Counterterrorism Frameworks", 138.
[644] Powell, *Talking to Terrorists*, 300.
[645] Smelser and Mitchell, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 2.

has helped increase domestic religious terrorism in states with high Muslim populations, especially in states experiencing conflict. Foreign interventions have weakened state institutions, making states more vulnerable to conflict, crime and terror."[646] This is why the soft approach to counterterrorism is delicate and sensitive to the extent that any mistake in choices of representatives, terms, concessions and requests may be counterproductive. Hence, "the one sure conclusion emerging from this report about strategies for countering terrorism is that there are no silver bullets or quick fixes available. It is possible to specify more effective and less effective deterrent and preventive policies at various levels and under different conditions. However, the general policy approach has to be adaptive, opportunistic, and multisided. The conventional problem-solving logic so attractive in American culture— find a problem and then fix it—is of limited utility, and a longer term, more contextualized approach is necessary."[647] Counterterrorism aims at analysing the characteristics of terrorism with a view of realising a possible response to its motivating ideologies and ravaging violence. To realise this, there is need to consider the ethical implications of religious terrorism with the view of examining whether the ethics of non-violence in religious traditions would provide a suitable response to the evil of terror.

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[646] Global Terrorism Index 2019, 82.
[647] Smelser and Mitchell, *Disocuraging Terrorism*, 4.

PART THREE: Ethical Analysis of Religious Terrorism

Question: What moral motivations and Implications have Religious terrorism?

Chapter V: Perceptions of Terror and the Clash of Moral Attitudes

5.1 Moral Provocations of the Challenges of Religious Violence

The arguments that are proposed in this chapter seek to understand where morality stands in the face of the complex realities of religious terrorism. Religious violence has provoked a lot moral questions on the motivations and implications of acts of religious terror, on the moral attitudes and value sensitivity of the religious terrorist, and on the dynamics of the dehumanization that happens when people act violently in the name of faith. "Understanding this moral platform is essential for understanding how people who have developed morally to be persons of a certain sort also choose to be religious in certain ways. Conversely, how people who choose to be religious inevitably expresses moral anchors in the personality for which religion itself cannot account."[648] This shows the relevance of the evaluative rationality in the task of discovering the epistemic rationality of religion. The moral evaluation of violence in religion enables us to know what religion is or ought to be. Thus, if the practice of religion is a relevant subject of moral evaluation, then the reality of religious violence remains an important phenomenon that makes it necessary to subject religion to moral scrutiny. It is true that both religion and morality abhors violence, but violence has often been a subject of interaction between religion and morality. Whenever religion is linked to violence in any way, morality comes into play. This is because, in the face of violence, the "sense of what religion is and what it ought to be is always grounded in what is at its heart a moral, rather than a religious, understanding."[649] Of course there is no doubt that a moral analysis of religious violence is plausible and inevitable in so far as religion still postures itself as a reliable anchor for good values and actions. As David Rapoport puts it, "no aspect of terrorism can be more important than the moral questions it raises."[650] Thus there is need to ask, what moral evaluation accounts for the motivations, ideologies, attitudes and actions characterising the violence that is perpetrated in the name of God? Numerous scholars on violence have attempted explanations to the social circumstances that allow such moral impasse where evil is committed in the name of good.

The enormity of this complexity provokes a whole discourse on the value standards that influence moral considerations as well as the quality of response that is attributable to this influence. Those who profess to be religious consider themselves as people seeking something good, true and salutary. Therefore if religious people turn to violence for the sake

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[648] Steffen, *Holy War,* 10.
[649] Steffen, *Holy War,* 265-266.
[650] Rapoport and Alexander, *The Morality of Terrorism*, xvi.

of religion, a presumed understanding would be that it is for a higher value. Of course we have discussed their various justifications for participating in such evil in previous chapters, but there is need to highlight moral explanations and implications that would put everything in perspective. To ask why religious people commit terror in the name of God even when religion stands for life and wellbeing, is a moral question. Jonathan Sacks raised this question using a much more elaborated paradox; "how is it that people kill in the name of the God of life, wage war in the name of the God of peace, hate in the name of the god of love and practice cruelty in the name of the God of compassion?"[651] The religion-violence connection is considered a paradox because of the life-affirming characteristic attributable to religion. It is this characterization that makes religious terrorism a subject of moral inquiry. "As this very brief characterization suggests, terrorist activity raises a wide range of moral questions, questions pertaining to both moral fact and prescription. The term moral fact refers here to the description of circumstances, like the moral contexts terrorists thrive in, the moral pictures they have of their world, the relationship between religious and secular justifying doctrines, and to explanations of how the process of attracting moral sympathy by committing outrageous actions work. Questions of prescription, or moral discussions in a more classical mode refer here to the evaluation of moral arguments such as whether or not terrorism can ever by justified."[652]

Scholars like Lloyd Steffen prefer to make the violence argument more of a moral scrutiny than a religious one by putting the blame on human choice. For him, "whenever violence is chosen as a legitimate vehicle for the expression of religious belief or commitment, that violence, from a moral point of view, is consistent with an actual choice people make about how to be religious."[653] It is people's conceptions of ultimacy that translates to violent extremism when they are overtaken by absolutist ideas. This is because "an absolutized ultimacy asserts a power capable of breaking the bonds of moral restraint and drawing people into extremist attitudes and actions."[654] Hence, "religion is morally speaking what people do with it, which is subject to moral interpretation and evaluation…. Religion can create identity and sustain community at the expense of "others" who are barred and excluded and, finally, demonized."[655] That is to say that people are demonised by religious people because they [religious people] choose to do so as a result of an absolutized notion of

[651] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 29.
[652] Rapoport and Alexander, *The Morality of Terrorism,* xvii.
[653] Steffen, *Holy War*, 10.
[654] Steffen, 265.
[655] Steffen, 41.

ultimacy. Consequently, the act of violence perpetrated by religious extremists is normalised when they choose to demonise their victims. This implies that violence is a human creation, it is a product of choice, but the condition of that choice and what informs the quality of that choice remains a moral inquiry. So it is not a religious problem but a human moral problem. This is so because according to John Docker in *The Origins of Violence*, "rather than violence being abnormal, it is an intrinsic characteristic of human activity. The history of humanity is the history of violence: war and genocide; conquest and colonization and the creation of empires sanctioned by God or the gods in both polytheism and monotheism; the fatal combination of democracy and empire; and revolution, massacre, torture, mutilation, cruelty.[656] So what happens to the religiously violent person is a much more complex issue for moral inquiry because it triggers an analysis of religion in the context of violence and vice versa in order to determine the integrity of our moral vision and consciousness of what is good and what is evil as we analyse whether religion serves or destroys. Getting to the root of this would enable us realise why people dehumanise in the name of religion.

Some scholars have argued that the quality of the moral consciousness behind religiously inspired violence is determined by fear and hate. They prefer to focus on hate and fear as the driving forces and the reasons why people take to violence. For them, religious people believe that religion represents everything good and life affirming, and so anything that stands in opposition is evil and death dealing. Intolerance is characteristic of these reactive religious communities. They consider those who do not belong to their faith communities enemies to be feared and hated because they regard their contrary views as evil and infectious. Some argue that these intolerant behaviours reflect the natural tendency of man to love his own kind and hate those who are different. "Because man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction. In normal times this passion exists in a latent state, it emerges only in unusual circumstances; but it is a comparatively easy task to call it into play and raise it to the power of a collective psychosis."[657]

As it was in the cruelties of insurrection, the lust for aggression and hate against victims always played out due to the underlying fear that they would corrupt the innocent. Religion manifests a sort of groupishness that unites and divides, separating angels from demons, and pitting us against them. Those who are with us are the angels on our side but those who are against us are the demons on the other side. "Parties to religious conflicts obviously sought to justify their own position, while casting the actions and motives of their

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[656] Docker, *The Origins of Violence Religion*, 2.
[657] Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, 208.

opponents in as negative a fashion as possible. The same act of violence could be treated either as zealous defense of the faith or as the angry raving of a tyrant, depending on the position of the observer."[658] There is an existential fear among those who belong to the community; who feel threatened by those who are different. "Under threat to their way of life, individuals who flock to strict religious communities are often socialized into a rigid ideology, one that thrives on authoritarian systems of governance and black-and-white definitions of right and wrong. This unquestioning acceptance of authority makes such individuals especially attractive to recruiting terrorist organisations today, the '**us-versus-them**' mentality increasing the individual's capacity to dehumanize their opponent threatened by oppressive factors they cannot control, individuals have a need to displace aggression. Fundamentalist religion provides both a welcoming community and an expression for that aggression. Looking for a way out, the individual moves from religious fervor toward terrorism, finding what feels like a justified escape."[659] This virulent hostility is exacerbated by the way most extremists interpret their sacred texts to justify their ruthless enmity. Enemies are demonised in order to be dehumanised. The strength for this is argued to have come from a destructive instinct that is submerged in the unconscious which hates what is different and dehumanizes what is hated.

One wonders if dehumanization manifests as a result of psychopathology, nature or happenstance. What happens to the moral consciousness of the religious person who dehumanizes must therefore be very interesting. This is because experts have observed that some of the dehumanising acts of violence like terrorism are not products of hate and aggression but consequences of numbness of moral sensitivity. It is possible for a self-conscious violent action to be imbued with moral insensitivity. Roy Baumeister, a social psychologist set out to analyse this during his observation that "people who perpetrate destructive acts, from everyday peccadilloes to serial murders and genocides, never think they are doing anything wrong."[660] He analysed this from the psychological point of view, stressing that evil in the form of violence appears to be a myth which is perpetrated by people of all kinds in a way that makes it look normal. Baumeister, with psychological spectacles still affixed, calls this the myth of pure evil. The mindset that we adopt when we don moral spectacles is the mindset of the victim. Evil is the intentional and gratuitous infliction of harm for its own sake, perpetrated by a villain who is malevolent to the bone, inflicted on a victim

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[658] Gaddis, *There is no Crime*, 14.
[659] Munroe and Moghaddam, "Does Religious Extremism Cause Terrorism?", in Jackson and Sinclair, *Contemporary Debates,*127.
[660] Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature,* 378.

who is innocent and good. The reason that this is a myth (when seen through psychological spectacles) is that evil in fact is perpetrated by people who are mostly ordinary, and who respond to their circumstances, including provocations by the victim, in ways they feel are reasonable and just."[661] Baumeister highlighted the normalization of dehumanization which is instantiated in the evil of religious violence.

Moral Philosophy agrees with the idea that you don't need to be a monster to commit an extreme evil and still feel normal or even justifiably good about it. "This is because various instances of moral insensitivity in the world reveal possible depersonalising ways of treating human beings."[662] Depersonalization could be seen as a moral equivalent of dehumanization because "it is in the moral life that we have one of our primary experiences of persons."[663] These terms became commonplace in intellectual discourse after the unprecedented evil of the holocaust. It follows therefore that unprecedented depersonalising atrocities in history like the violence of slavery, Holocaust and terrorism have exposed the moral challenge that characterises the perception of evil in the face of violence because when man commits violence of that magnitude against another, there is a lapse in his ability to morally perceive or respond. The quality of man's response to moral values reveals his attitude and sensitivity towards some moral actions. Violence in every form, especially when committed in the name of a good course like religion, usually commands a vitiating effect on one's moral sensitivity. A lot of evidence has given credence to this view; "that people with normal psychological profiles can become extremely destructive and aggressive in certain conditions (Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 2007)."[664] Milgram and Zimbardo took up the task of analysing human psychology with the view of understanding and explaining this challenge. Milgram used his famous test on human obedience to authority to demonstrate how possible it is for normal individuals to inflict extreme violence on others in loyal response to the command of an authority at the expense of their sensitivity. He exposed the psychology and the danger of blind obedience and how it determines personal sensitivity. Zimbardo simulated the prison culture where randomly selected normal individuals who acted as prison guards maltreated those randomly selected to act as their prisoners, to show that it is context, not persons that determine prison behaviour. He therefore "illustrates how ideology is used to justify this fatal movement from good toward 'evil'."[665] The above behavioural experiments

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[661] Pinker, 384.

[662] Anthony Chukwuebuka Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness, A Discovery of Banality in the Actions of Persons", *Quaestiones Disputatae*, William Tullius ed., Vol., 9, No. 2 Spring 2019, 174.

[663] John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 9.

[664] Munroe and Moghaddam, "Does Religious Extremism Cause Terrorism?", 122.

[665] Munroe and Moghaddam, 122.

set out to understand what makes responsible individuals easily participate in extreme violence of dehumanization with no sign of moral hesitation. "Thus from the social-psychological standpoint we know that particular situations can lead ordinary individuals to do extraordinary things. Determinate in this process are circumstances guiding systems and dominant ideologies."[666]

Philosophers and sociologists committed volumes of ideas and theories to this moral challenge. Hannah Arendt's curiosity about articulating the scope of evil motivated her "quest to discover how the entire respectable moral maxims that determine social behaviour and the religious commandments that guide conscience virtually vanished during the Holocaust."[667] Having participated as a reporter in the trial of Adolf Eichmann the Nazi Bureaucrat who masterminded the "final solution" of the Jewish question, she narrowed her analysis to the understanding that unprecedented evil like the holocaust defies the boundaries of absolute or radical evil by destroying the traditional basis for understanding morality. So Arendt expressed an "extraordinary confusion over elementary questions of morality"[668] because her experience of the Eichmann trial destroyed her basic understanding of morality. In her famous but most controversial book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) she changed her previous stance on the evil of the holocaust as radical/absolute evil—which she promoted in her earliest works *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and *The Human Condition* (1958)—and settled with the phrase "banality of evil" as a suitable encapsulation of the experience of the holocaust. Her position is "that many of those who implemented the Final Solution… were faceless bureaucrats implementing government orders, more out of obedience than hate."[669] In her words, "the immediate impulse came from my attending the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. In my report of it I spoke of "the banality of evil." Behind that phrase, I held no thesis or doctrine, although I was dimly aware of the fact that it went counter to our tradition of thought literary, theological, or philosophical about the phenomenon of evil. However… I was struck by a manifest shallowness in the doer that made it impossible to trace the incontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer at least the very effective one now on trial was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. There was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives, and the only notable characteristic one could detect in his past behaviour as well as in his behaviour during the trial and throughout

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[666] Munroe and Moghaddam, 122

[667] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 177.

[668] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1983), 295.

[669] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 9.

the pre-trial police examination was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but thoughtlessness."[670] Hence she set the stage for the discussion about whether under certain circumstances, morally conscious persons are capable of distinguishing between good and evil. Many scholars of terrorism apply Arendt's ideas to their analysis of the insensitivity that characterises the evil of terrorism. Jessica Stern has this to say, "I had no hesitation saying that terrorists are morally wrong. It doesn't matter how compelling their grievances, or how familiar their pain, it's terribly wrong to kill innocents. But I have come to think Hannah Arendt's conception of evil certainly applies—the unthinking evil of the person who follows rules that are morally wrong—and *wrong* is too weak a word. The person who commits atrocities. That is what they do—they commit atrocities. I decided it was important to learn something about evil in order to take a stand."[671] Hence Arendt never treated this as a unique issue that is symptomatic of particular kind of behaviour or emblematic of some category of persons. That is why she admitted "there is an Eichmann in all of us."[672]

In a similar vein, Dietrich von Hildebrand narrowed down his analysis of such evil to what he referred to as moral value blindness. Blindness in this case points to the absence of a given quality of moral perception which renders the moral value content of an action numb. "Like physical blindness, moral blindness figuratively describes a quality of one's moral sensitivity when his perception of moral value content becomes numb. It presupposes an absence of a norm just as physical blindness is an absence of sight. Hence being morally blind points to the loss of perception of the moral content of an action, a defect that makes one indulge in outrageous evil with some level of terrifying normalcy."[673] Von Hildebrand points out the gross insensitivity that manifests in responsible interpersonal relationships. He believe that man's moral behaviour is like a response to a value which may be hindered by some dynamic social circumstances. In his *Fundamental Moral Attitudes* (1950), von Hildebrand emphasised that,

> As long as a man blindly disregards the moral values of other persons, as long as he does not distinguish the positive value which inheres in truth, and the negative value which is proper to error, as long as he does not understand the value which inheres in the life of man, and the negative value attached to an injustice, will he be incapable of moral goodness. As long as he is only interested in the question of whether something is subjectively satisfying or not, whether it is agreeable to him or not, instead of asking whether it is something important, whether in itself it is beautiful, good, whether it should be for its own

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[670] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1978), 3-4.
[671] Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, xxiii-xxiv.
[672] Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgement* (New York: Random House, 2003), xiii.
[673] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 176.

sake, in a word, whether it is something having a value he cannot be morally good.[674]

Hildebrand therefore brought to fore the moral challenge of detecting the viability of a sensible response to moral values and the effects it has on individual moral character. He based his analysis on what he calls "value response" through which a person grasps things "important in themselves", as opposed to responding to something "merely agreeable" or "merely subjectively satisfying". Blindness in this sense comes from one's inability to perceive and grasp things as important in themselves as a result of common human characteristics such as pride and concupiscence. So he sees moral blindness as a defect of the moral impulse of an acting person in whom "pride and concupiscence or both together have silenced the reverent, loving, value-responding centre,"[675] hindering his ability to perceive things as important in themselves or the metaphysical throne and moral relevance of that value. It is true that moral insensitivity may manifest in a person as a result of external influence of an authority who commands blind obedience as testified above by Milgram, Zimbardo and Arendt, von Hildebrand's emphasis is on the internal vitiating impulses of the pride and concupiscence. Suffice it to say that "one opposite of personal acting is coercion, a rather obvious opposite. The other is a certain blindness of acting. By reflecting on this opposite, too, we can come to understand personal acting."[676]

Hence we can understand religious terrorism through an analysis of the underlying moral blindness that characterises it. A religious terrorist therefore has a defective value response which incapacitates his ability to decipher the good and evil in the in the object of interest, and so manifests gross insensitivity to the moral content of the value he is out to destroy. Hildebrand acknowledged in his *Christian Ethics* that "the notions of good (bonum) and of evil (malum) indicate precisely this property of a being which enables it to motivate our will or to engender an affective response in us."[677] Therefore, "man's sensitivity to values is precisely the capacity to grasp things important in themselves, to be able to be affected by them, and to be motivated by them in his responses."[678] Hildebrand focused on the existence of an attitudinal indifference or neutrality in a man which is consequent to an inappropriate value response that renders a person clueless before a value, i.e., standing neutral and indifferent before a value and finding no goodness or badness in it, in a way that makes it neither appealing nor appalling to the acting person. Von Hildebrand places value blindness

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[674] Dietrich von Hildebrand, "Fundamental Moral Conscience Attitude" , in *EWTN*, Accessed September 17, 2020, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/fundamental-moral-conscience-attitudes-10042

[675] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Graven Images: Substitutes for True Morality* (New York: David McKay, 1957), 13.

[676] John Crosby, *Selfhood of the Human Person,* 214.

[677] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics* (New York: David McKay, 1953), 20.

[678] Von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics,* 203.

at the lower level of the hierarchy of response to values—being neutral or subjectively satisfying—which lacks the character of transcendence. It resides in the levels of subjectively satisfying because it is engendered by the subjective impulses of pride and concupiscence which often represent subjective perspectives. In his words, "value blindness is in no way the result of mere temperamental disposition, but rather of pride and concupiscence. Because here a point of view other than the value dominates the approach to reality; the point of view, namely of what satisfies our pride and concupiscence: we are therefore blinded to certain values."[679]

In line with Hildebrand's analysis, when a religious terrorist commits extreme violence in the name of God, there is a feeling of contempt and value indifference towards the victims which blurs his grasp of the gravity of his damage and numbs his sensitivity towards the horrific evil. He is overwhelmed by the impulses of satanic pride and concupiscence which neutralises the moral quality and the value content of his evil actions, incapacitates his moral restraint against such evils and makes him feel justified and glorious in doing them. Hildebrand said "the man dominated by satanic pride is totally value blind, i.e., pride bars from his sight the very nature of important-in-itself. Yet in contradistinction to the brute-like concupiscent man who is also completely value blind, he is aware of the metaphysical 'throne' of all values. Because of this 'throne' he sees in all values a rival to his own superiority; and as a result wage war against them and ultimately against God, their source."[680] This is exactly what happens in the mind of the religious terrorist. He feels that his ideologies or way of life is challenged and threatened by the presence or the ideas of the other person. So he doubles down in pride to assert how valuable these ideologies and beliefs are, at the expense of the value of this other person. His pride blocks his moral vision from recognising the other as a person and not a mere rival in the value struggle. Such mimetic experience puts him in a position where the need to hold on to these ideologies diminishes and swallows up the value of his rival who becomes depersonalised in his eyes. According to von Hildebrand, "the value appears unimportant, value-neutral or contemptible to the acting agents, who stand clueless before it like completely unmusical people before the beauty of a melody. It is important to see that this cluelessness is actually based on a blindness and not on

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[679] Von Hidebrand, *Christian Ethics,* 41.
[680] Von Hildebrand, *Graven Images,* 12.

an error in judgment"[681] This blindness replicates the culpable thoughtlessness that Hannah Arendt refers to as 'banality of evil.'

The idea that moral blindness may be responsible for the mindless atrocities committed with gross indifference and lack of moral restraint was further popularised by Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis who in their co-authored book titled *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* discussed this from the backdrop of what Bauman refers to as liquid modernity in a bid to analyse "some themes that are central to Bauman's earlier works namely: What are the lessons of the Holocaust? How can one act ethically in a consumer-driven world of liquid modernity? and Is it possible to balance rationalization and efficiency with sensitivity to others?"[682] For Bauman, the concept of liquid modernity interprets modern culture as becoming increasingly fluid as a result of the continuous liquefaction of its basic solid paradigmatic components. Bauman argues that culture is evolving from a solid phase to a liquid phase. The solid phase represents unchanging paradigms at the service of the status quo, binding space and time. Whereas the liquid phase is characterised by continuous change, flow, spill, flood, fluidity, and flexibility. It never maintains a definite shape for a long time but always ready to change it by taking the form of its solid enclosure. Bauman therefore believes that modernity is a process of liquefaction which continuously dissolves every pre-existing solid paradigm and keeps social relations in constant flux. "Liquid modernity therefore presents a culture of constant flux an flexibility, which melts every pre-existing paradigm of social forms and operates as an impermanent mechanism of indeterminate forms."[683] in the words of Bauman, "It can [therefore] be said that in liquid modern times, culture … is fashioned to fit individual freedom of choice and individual responsibility for that choice; and that its function is to endure that the choice should be and will always remain a necessity and unavoidable duty of life, while the responsibility for the choice and its consequences remains where it has been placed by the liquid modern human condition—on the shoulders of the individual, now appointed to the position of chief manager of "life politics" and its sole executive."[684] This is post-paradigmatic culture that poses to place all pre-established norms under the control of individual whims of endless possibilities where everything possible is permissible and

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[681] D. von Hildebrand, *Morality and the Knowledge of Ethical Vales: A Study of Some Fundamental Issues of Ethics,* translated by Robin D. Rollinger, Unpub., 17. (The Original version of this unpublished translated copy was sent to me by Prof. John Crosby in July, 2015.)

[682] Siobhan Kattago , *In the shadow of Antigone: Resisting moral blindness,* in "Journal of Political Power", Vol. 7, Issue 1, 2013, find link: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2013.846556

[683] Anthony C. Ohaekwusi, "Bauman on Moral Blindness: Analysing the Liquidity in Standards of Moral Valuation", *Forum Philosophicum,* 23 (2018) no.1, 72.

[684] Zigmunt Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 11.

morality is disconnected from pre-exiting reference points. Under these compelling conditions, "the liquefying impact of modernity sprinkles tranquilizers that neutralizes the moral consciousness in the face of horrible ills and so reduces to nullity the essence of a morally based relationship with another."[685]

Bauman sees moral blindness as a defective consequence of continuously changing culture which is subject to the dictatorship of individual will that conditions morality at the behest of personal preference and indifference. He employed the term adiaphorization of human behaviour to demonstrate how evil has been trivialised, even in its most terrifying forms, due to the liquefying impacts of contemporary social systems that have championed moral indifference and encouraged dehumanization. He said, "all social organization consists therefore in neutralizing the disruptive and deregulating impact or moral behaviour." "Organization", he continued, "does not promote immoral behaviour; it does not sponsor evil, as some detractors would hasten to charge, yet it does not promote good either, despite its own self-promotion. It simply renders social action adiaphoric (originally, adiaphoron meant a thing declared indifferent by the Church)—neither good nor evil, measurable against technical (purpose-oriented or procedural) but not moral values. By the same token, it renders moral responsibility for the Other ineffective in its original role of the limit imposed on `the effort to exist'."[686] Moral blindness in Bauman's view does not only tranquilize moral consciousness of acting agents in the course of evil activities, it immunizes their sensitivity from recognising the evil ever before they indulge in it. He said, "by *adiaphorization* I mean stratagems of placing, intentionally or by default, certain acts and or omitted acts regarding certain categories of humans outside the moral-immoral axis—that is, outside the "universe of moral obligations" and outside the realm of phenomena subject to moral evaluation; stratagems to declare such acts or inaction, explicitly or implicitly, "morally neutral" and prevent the choices between them from being subject to ethical judgment—which means pre-empting moral opprobrium (a contrived return, one could say, to the paradisal state of naivety preceding the first bite of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil…). To me the term "adiaphoric" does not mean "unimportant", but "irrelevant", or better still "indifferent" or "equanimous."[687] Consequently, there is an anesthetizing effect which normalises one's moral sensitivity towards horrible evil. "Evil lurks in what we tend to take as normality and

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[685] Zigmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, *Moral Blindness: The loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 150-1.

[686] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 215.

[687] Bauman and Donskis, *Moral Blindness,* 40.

even as the triviality and banality of mundane life, rather than in abnormal cases, pathologies, aberrations and the like."[688]

In the eyes of Bauman's morally blind, there is no good or evil regarding the value or disvalue in question because, moral sensitivity before acting is numbed, moral consciousness of the action is neutral, and moral conscience after the action is blunted. That is to say that "Adiaphoric acts are those exempted by social consent (universal or local) from ethical evaluation, and therefore free from carrying the threat of pangs of conscience and moral stigma. Courtesy of social (read, majority) consent, the self-esteem and self-righteousness of the actors are apriori protected from moral condemnation; moral conscience is thereby disarmed and made irrelevant as a constraining and limiting factor in the choice of actions."[689]   The unique aspect of Bauman's analysis is that it draws its basis from the systemic structures of human society, a liquid modern culture which produces adiaphorized individuals like Arendt's Eichmann. "Thus modern society, by creating such an adiaphorizing mechanism, demonstrates a new kind of moral worldview that dehumanizes victims and cedes space for such cruelties as the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide—endemic inhuman history—to happen."[690] Not surprisingly, Bauman agrees with the idea that the evil of dehumanization is no longer exclusively reserved for monsters who heartlessly express brutality against others, it can also be found in the ordinary lives of a friend, relative or neighbour who stands unmoved in indifference or rather stands to capture the moment for himself, when radical evil is staring in the face. So "evil" he believes "is not confined to war or totalitarian ideologies. Today it more frequently reveals itself in failing to react to someone else's suffering, in refusing to understand others, in insensitivity and in eyes turned away from a silent ethical gaze."[691] Hence, Bauman's conception of this sort of moral blindness shifts the entire domain of radical evil from being the exclusive reserve of monsters or devils to something with the potential to include within its scope some "frighteningly normal" person or other, whose loss of sensitivity—often resulting from the prevailing influence of consumer-driven tendencies in our society—renders the sanctity of moral values worthless."[692] In this respect therefore, Bauman is not far from Hannah Arendt's thought,…her disappointment with the evil of the new world. Everyone expects to see a monster or a creature of hell, but actually sees a banal bureaucrat of death whose entire

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[688] Bauman and Donskis, 36.
[689] Bauman and Donskis, 41.
[690] Ohaekwusi, *Bauman 's Moral Blindness,* 80.
[691] Bauman and Donskis, 10.
[692] Ohaekwusi, *Bauman's Moral Blindness,* 80.

personality and activity testifies to an extraordinary normality and even high morality of duty."[693]

The very many instances of contemporary religious terrorism have been described by religious violence experts in the light of the banality that resonates with perpetrating untold cruelty with such extraordinary normalcy. "In this "banal" form of evil", Jessica Stern remarked, "perpetrators shut off the knowledge that their victims are human beings. It is this kind of evil that I observe in the terrorists described in these pages. The Evil One does not possess them. They love their families, they give alms to the poor, they pray."[694] But they know what they do, and they are happy doing them. According to Jonathan Sacks, this idea of "banality of evil" in the context of religious terrorism is a "deadly phenomenon that can turn ordinary non-psychopathic people into cold-blooded murderers. He calls this *altruistic evil: evil committed in a sacred cause, in the name of high ideals.*"[695] This idea demonstrates the insensitivity that characterises the activities of terrorists when they kill their victims. They are very committed to the course of killing but they are indifferent to the lives they destroy. Sacks by using the term altruistic evil, accepts the reality that religious terrorism is an evil that is glorified for the sake of the holy. "In real history the great evils are committed by people seeking to restore a romanticised golden age, willing to sacrifice their lives and the lives of others in what they regard as a great and even holy cause. In some cases they see themselves s 'doing God's work'. They 'seem happy'."[696] Sacks proceeded to analyse the various possible reasons why people commit heinous evil for a good God, practice hate for a loving God and fight for a peaceful God and still feel happy they have done very well. Like Bauman he exposed the revolutionary secularization of modern culture which has undoubtedly reformed the dynamics of knowledge, power, culture and morality in a way that posed a threat to the needs, standards and meaning that religion provides. According to Sacks, what is happening with these violence is a sign that in the wake of the rising anti-religious paradigms, religion is fighting back to return to its place because "twenty-first century has left us with a maximum of choice and a minimum of meaning… and it is hard to live without meaning."[697]

Those who resort to violent reprisals against anti-religious structures and tendencies consider themselves fighting God's fight for the survival of their identity, culture and life.

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[693] Bauman and Donskis, *Moral Blindness,* 9-10.
[694] Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, xxiii.
[695] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 9.
[696] Sacks, 10.
[697] Sacks 13.

This is because the threat of disorientation created by the changing culture gives them a feeling of loss and fear which transforms into hate that spreads rapidly with the aid of a contagious internet media that has worldwide impact. The hateful impact creates a groupish divide between a good us and a bad them which limits our radius of moral concern with an in-group bias that makes us feel that any evil against them is a good for us. Because there is what Sacks refers to as "*pathological dualism* that sees humanity as radically, ontologically divided into the unimpeachably good and the irredeemably bad. You are either one or the other: either one of the saved, the redeemed, the chosen, or a child of Satan, the devil's disciple."[698] When these holy warriors confront those who don't belong to their side, they see meaninglessness and emptiness that threatens to overwhelm the spiritual substance and fulfilment they derive from belonging to the religious side. That is why they see themselves as altruists committing altruistic evil when they set out to terminate every evil threatening this sublime goodness. Suffice it to say that pathological dualism leads to altruistic evil.

Sacks believes that "altruistic evil is not normal. Suicide bombings, the targeting of civilians and the murder of schoolchildren are not normal. Violence may be possible wherever there is an Us and a Them. But radical violence emerges only when we see the US as all-good and the Them as all-evil, heralding a war between the children of light and the forces of darkness. That is when altruistic evil is born."[699] What pathological dualism does is to create a binary vision about reality where those on our side are good and those on the other side are evil and condemned. There is an uncompromising polarity in moral perspective which reflects devaluation of the personality of those who do not belong to their faith group. Pathological dualism begins with dehumanising and demonising the enemies with the view to disparage and make them easy to kill. "In other words, the sacralisation of violence is often accompanied by the demonization or dehumanization of 'the other'. The other, the enemy category is thus extended to widespread segments of the population who are deemed unbelievers, uninitiated, or apostates. As such they become viable targets."[700] Of course, dehumanization keeps them disdained whereas demonization keeps them despised. It is not an accident that this also amounts to depersonalization of these victims. David Rapoport agrees that "terrorists normally avoid speaking of their victims as persons. Depending On the context, the victims become symbols, tools, animals or corrupt beings. To be a terrorist one

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[698] Sacks, 51.
[699] Sacks, 48.
[700] Alejandra Bolanos, "Is there a 'New Terrorism' in Existence Today?", Jackson and Sinclair, *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism*, 31.

must have a special picture of the world, a specific consciousness."[701] This uncompromising dualism between good and bad goes beyond despising the disdained "other" to include victimizing oneself in order to relinquish responsibility for any evil committed against the actual victim of terror who becomes responsible. This appropriation of victimhood deactivates any impact of moral sensitivity and restraint left in the religious terrorist who makes the victim deserving of the suffering. Consequently, indulging in heinous evil becomes not only normal but altruistic. The perception of evil vanishes from his eyes because evil in this regards means nothing as good. For instance the Nazis represent evil but they believe that they are involved in a moral movement that if focussed in realising racial purity for the good of the nation. That is why those who are different are considered barbarians: "hateful and loathsome 'other' who can be killed and abused without remorse or regret."[702]

One thing that is clear in this analysis is that whatever ignorance breeds fear, fear unchecked breeds hatred, and hatred unchecked breeds violence. According to Sacks, "pathological dualism presents the world to us in the form of a binary opposition that divides humanity into absolute categories of good and evil, in which all the good is on one side and all the evil on the other, and you will see your own side as good, the other as evil. Evil seeks to destroy the good. Therefore your enemies are trying to destroy you. If there is no obvious evidence that they are, this is a sign that they are working in secret. If they deny it, this is proof that the accusation is true, else why would they bother to deny it? And since they are evil and we are good, they are the cause of our present misfortunes and we must eliminate them so that the good to which we are entitled, the honour we once had and the superiority that is our right can be ours again. That is the *pathological dualism* that leads to *altruistic evil* with murderous consequences."[703] Lack of knowledge about something different exposes ones gullibility and susceptibility to conspiracy theories that complicate one's fears by creating some form of fatalistic evil dilemma that condemns the victim to an omen, leaving no benefit of possible innocence. Hence destroying the enemy becomes an interestingly salutary thing to do, an altruistic evil caused by pathological dualism. It is dualism because the agent creates within him two divides of moral evaluation: those whose injury is evil and those whose injury is good. This dualism is pathological because it defiles moral traditional standards of moral evaluation, giving that it makes such destructions similar to what monsters

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[701] Rapoport and Alexander, *The Morality of Terrorism,* xiii
[702] R. Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics, and Counter-terrorism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 60.
[703] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 65.

do yet not exclusive to them since ordinary bias or fear could awaken such dualistic impression.

Nothing, perhaps, could be more banal than the role of violence in awakening desire. Our modern terms for this phenomenon are sadism or masochism, depending on its manifestations; we regard it as a pathological deviation from the norm. We believe that the normal form of desire is nonviolent and that this nonviolent form is characteristic of the generality of mankind.[704] But it is clear that the perspectives we have analysed above set out to provide an appropriate response to the evil of extreme violence that has come from unexpected personalities. There is always a tendency to look away when confronted with such evil from strange places, in order to avoid being contaminated. But Jessica Stern is in agreement with Susan Nieman's idea, that "morality demands that we make evil intelligible."[705] This would help us not only understand the source of this anomaly, it would point us to the direction of possible remedies to it. Religion is associated with the holy and its enemies are often regarded as unholy, but when people use it to kill, maim and destroy the enemies of religion, where would you place that holiness? There is a belief that "the near daily spate of suicide bombings, torture, rape, and enslavement of those not of like religious mind purportedly in the name of holiness or *jihad* underscores the demonic elements of a religious term normally associated with an edifying notion of sanctity. It is simply not enough to dismiss these actions as unholy or profane since many of them are committed with a sincere religious conviction in their sacredness."[706] Is this a kind of culpable indifference or a pragmatic moral apathy?

It is true that the level of moral neutrality expressed by some agents who indulge in acts of terror cannot be attributed to mere lack of knowledge about the victims. For it is not enough to kill someone on the grounds of ignorance, rather there is something more especially on the side of the terrorist that makes altruistic evil a plausible argument. One discovers that there is some sort of "mob morality" in play where nothing matters except what the mob wants and every rational conversation is put aside or supressed by the unilateral mob-like fiat. This is why terrorists consider themselves doing good when they perpetrate evil for the mob they represent. "In their own minds terrorists are altruists," and altruists may endure pain or death in pursuit of their transcendent goals. They are inspired by "community

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[704] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 144.
[705] Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, xxii.
[706] Alan L. Mittleman, *Does Judaism Condone Violence? Holiness and Ethics in the Jewish Tradition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 227. Reviewed by James A. Diamond, University of Waterloo accessed April 27, 2020 https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/does-judaism-condone-violence-holiness-and-ethics-in-the-jewish-tradition/

concern" more than material gain or secular power. Participation in a collective endeavour to save the world may inoculate them against weighing the pragmatic costs and benefits of their actions."[707] The anaesthetic effect that manifests from the mob culture numbs the religious terrorists from recognising the moral implications of this evil, and since as the saying goes, "the mob has no soul", no moral principle applies because everyone is under the influence of radical indifference. "The indifference is not simply a reflection of the lack of focus on moral issues. Much more significant than that, they are also brushed aside with the constantly reiterated, never analysed tiresome cliche, "one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter."[708] It follows that the expression of moral insensitivity in terrorist activities is not devoid of some egoistic motives as rightly propagated by von Hildebrand in his categories of response to values. When terrorists fight, they have interests which they passionately fight for. These interests are priorities that determine how they evaluate the morality of their actions and the value of their allies and adversaries.

However, there is no definite profile for a religious terrorist. This is because "it has been shown that neither socio-economic status (Krueger and Malecova, 2002), high levels of psychopathology (Crenshaw, 1981; Rub, 2002), nor level of education (Winthrop and Graff, 2010; Atran, 2003b) are directly linked to terrorist activity."[709] Although these features may be observed in individual terrorists, they are not necessary determinants of terrorist actions. Acts of terror may vary for many reasons such as when people resort to terror because of economic deprivation, or political reasons, when people terrorise their political adversaries, or ideological reasons when people use terror to champion their ideologies. All these factors may vary or change but the act of terror itself is still the same likewise the morality of these actions. It follows therefore that the morality of terrorist actions centres not just on the harm caused but more on the moral relapse that relegates moral sensitivity to impotency that makes extreme violence ordinary. In other words the moral fibre of every terrorist becomes impotent during terrorist activities. This relapse is common among terrorists of all motives: it comes in the form of indifference, dryness or neutrality of moral sensitivity which incapacitates moral consideration, numbs moral alertness, and makes moral restraint inconsequential. Consequently, John Teehan argues that "killing other human beings, then, is not a pathology; it is not (necessarily) the work of twisted, evil people. It is a behavioural strategy in the competition for reproductive success. He is of the view that killing is a natural part of the

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[707] Rosenfeld, ed., *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy* , 3.
[708] Rapoport and Alexander, *The Morality of Terrorism,* xvi.
[709] Munroe and Moghaddam, "Does Religious Extremism Cause Terrorism?", 122.

human condition…that murder comes readily to our species. …but the moral revulsion we often feel at the thought of killing other humans is part of our nature too. And it stems from our evolution as a social species."[710]

Teehan by implication admits that killing is not strange to humans because it is not exclusive to a particular profile of persons. There is always a restraint that is breached which results deactivating ones moral sensibility whenever anyone takes the terrorist option. Killing becomes an easy thing under such circumstance because "human societies have developed means for overcoming this psychological barrier to killing – very successful means, we must add. The basic strategy is simple: If the prohibition is against killing other humans, then portray the enemy as other than or less than human. Dehumanization of the enemy is, of course, a familiar phenomenon. …these dehumanizing strategies involve methods for triggering aspects of our evolved psychology."[711] The consequence of dehumanization is lack of empathy because the terrorist cannot put his victim in the same position and vice versa. The victim's pain is his joy, so no regrets or remorse for killing. However, it must be understood that "some people are born with less empathy than others. Absence of empathy can be a trait (as in biologically based psychopathy) or a state. Empathy can be temporarily and sometimes necessarily shut off, as when a surgeon needs to cut into flesh to save life."[712] In this case it is not wrong to do so, but when the terrorist shuts off empathy to kill a victim, it is evil.

Lack of empathy is not necessarily natural or pathological. It can manifest through constant repetition of any act that hurts someone. It is true that psychopathy can lead to lack of empathy "but empathy can also become attenuated, such as when a person is too often severely frightened, too often victimized, or too often involved in perpetrating violence. Frequent exposure to savagery is one way to reduce a person's capacity to feel. When a person is trained, or trains himself, to feel less empathy and its absence becomes a trait, he becomes capable of dehumanizing others, putting him at risk of acts of extreme cruelty. In our view, ISIS is using frequent exposure to violence as a technology to erode empathy among its followers."[713] There is a great surge in moral desensitization from all sides (victims and villains) as a result of the frequency and rapid proliferation that has made violence common and less horrible. Whenever violence is proliferated and habitualised it becomes common, both to the perpetrator and to the onlooker. This is what von Hildebrand calls

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[710] Teehan *In the Name of God*, 155.
[711] Teehan In the Name of God, 156.
[712] Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, 206.
[713] Stern and Berger, 206-207.

blindness by desensitization. We are in the age of information revolution where with sophisticated communication technologies and social media information spreads rapidly, and the more people experience terror through these information channels whether from the terrorists themselves or from media networks, people get increasingly desensitised. Today people experience mass shootings on daily basis and feel no restraint in capturing the moments for the social media. Terrorists have taken advantage of this desensitisation effect as a perfect strategy both for terror and for recruitment. "According to this argument, the constant and increasing portrayal of gruesome and cruel spectacles on television and other mass communication outlets has made people less responsive to shocking depictions. This, in turn has forced terrorists to magnify the terrorizing effect by increasing the lethality of their attacks."[714] The limit of moral restraint is continuously stretched through this desensitisation strategy. In *My battle against Hitler,* von Hildebrand observed "that many people who began with a strong opposition to Nazism could not persevere in this stance; as time passed the force of their opposition weakened and their sense of the evil of Nazism became blunted. They 'got used' to the Nazi regime. They did not necessarily change their judgment about Nazism, but they ceased to feel the evil of it."[715] Von Hildebrand therefore admonished on the need to beware of the natural impact of habit, the act of getting accustomed to something whether good or evil. This is because "habit is...a force that can diminish the spiritual alertness of a person, which is the foundation of all true moral and spiritual life."[716] It follows therefore that the proliferation of monstrous evil leads us to putting up with a disvalue, and "gradually getting used to atrocities and death makes it possible for an agent to ignore the suffering of the victims and to suppress feelings."[717] Of course, "familiarity breeds contempt" and frequency keeps something normal and neutral.

Michael Walser acknowledged this effect in comparison to the moral desensitization that was experienced in World War II times. In his *Just and Unjust Wars* he said, "to live for any length of time under the constant threat of destruction creates certain psychological effects in most human beings-fright, hostility, callousness . . . and a resulting indifference to all the values we cherish. Such conditions will transform us into barbarians . . . . Surely we are no more barbarians now than we were in 1945. In fact, for most people, the threat of destruction, though constant, is invisible and unnoticed. We have come to live with it

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[714] Alejandra Bolanos, "Is there a New Terrorism in Existence Today," 31.

[715] Dietrich von Hildebrand, My Battle against Hitler, Transl. and Eds. John Henry Crosby and Jon F. Crosby (New York: Image, 2014), 258.

[716] Von Hildebrand, *My Battle*, 258.

[717] Manfred Deselaers, *And your Conscience Never Haunted You* (Auschwitz-Bikenau: Auschwitz-Bikenau State Musuem, 2015), 369.

casually."[718] It is obvious that desensitization is a form of moral blindness and can happen to us as a result of regularity of violent happenings, but it becomes more chronic when this violence is religiously inspired. Suffice it to say that religious terrorism is often considered to be more brutal than secular ones because it takes the individual into a deeper oblivious level of desensitization by adding some elements of demonization to the dehumanizing effect. Demonization is a religious concept that serves to designate someone as not just devalued and condemned, but also as devilish and dangerous. Hence dehumanization can reduce the value of the individual without considering him harmful but demonization exacerbates the negative stereotypes. Hence when religious terrorists brutalize their victims, they are killing demons who they consider threats that need no empathy or moral sensitivity in eliminating. For them it is a good work, the work of God, and if it is evil, then it is an altruistic one. But is it not possible that religion is also a victim instead of a catalyst of this brutality?

5.2 The Moral Vulnerability of Religion in the Face of Violence

The argument from antireligious activists that the more religious one is the more violent he becomes but the less religious he is the less violent he becomes, indicts religion as facilitator of the evil of violence even more than secular factors. One of the critical questions some experts in violence ask is whether religiously motivated violence is more brutal than those motivated by other factors. Stern agrees with Bruce Hoffman in the claim that "Religious terrorist groups are more violent than their secular counterparts and are probably more likely to use weapons of mass destruction."[719] The Generalized Estimating Equation GEE shows that suicide attacks by groups with a religious ideology are more violent than those with nationalist or leftist ideologies; this finding holds up even if the effect of both fundamentalist and ethnoreligious groups are accounted for.[720] This is why some scholars have argued for the contrary to exonerate religion from this evil. According to them, the problem bothers on indicating what religion actually means: the act of belief or the content of belief? This is because religion has been used to mean different things but in this essay, we focus on religious traditions since these have been visibly used or abused in many ways to commit violence.

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[718] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 271.
[719] Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, xxii. Quoting from Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 87–130.
[720] Henne, "The Ancient Fire", 39.

Over the years, religion has positioned itself as a moral guide for many people, and rightly so, people have relied on religion for moral guidance. This is because "at the heart of the world religions—including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—the concern with good and evil has been central. Every religion seeks to characterise what is good and evil—and how we are to combat the evil that lies within us and within the world. From the perspective of monotheistic religions, it is God who is the source and ground of our morality—the basis for distinguishing good and evil."[721] Consequently, some scholars argue that religion as a positive moral force is not immune to manipulations and influences that result in evil practices like violence and deception. Religion can be used to achieve any individual or group interest in so far as it persuades compliance. Hence they argue that it is people that use religion and not the other way round. According to Richard Wentz "how is it possible, I constantly ask myself, for people to be so convinced of the righteousness of their causes that they justify murder and the burning and destruction of home and temple? I know why that is so and I know that religion is not at fault. People are at fault, and their religion often tell us why."[722] The first part of this argument holds that violence is part of man's social life that takes place when conflicts of great interests are settled by bloodshed. It follows therefore that although religion may be the reason for a disagreement, it does not necessarily trigger the violence. Conflict is part of 'brutish' human nature which one resorts to at any given instance. Man naturally fights for everything he believes in—religious or secular. This fight albeit begins with disagreement on issues, is not necessarily encouraged by these contentious issues because one could disagree without fighting. But what determines a violent conflict is the desperation to win a contest or ensure the superiority of one's position. It is one thing to disagree but it is another thing to fight when we disagree. The fact that the majority of believers never resort to violence to prove their religious points shows that religion is not necessarily linked to these violence, one could do without fighting and there is more to this fight than religious motives. There are a host of other aggregate factors that push religion into violent conversations.

Terrorism experts like Jessica Stern invested a lot in answering questions like; "how is it that people who profess strong moral values, who, in some cases, seem truly to be motivated by those values, can be brought to do evil things? Is there something inherently dangerous about religion? How can it be that the same faith in God that inspired Michelangelo, Mozart, Simone Weil, and Sister Miriam Therese also inspires such vicious

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[721] Richard J. Bernstein, *The Abuse of Evil,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 82.
[722] Wentz, *Why People do Bad Things,* 1.

crimes? Why, when they read religious texts, do these terrorists find justification for killing innocents, where others find inspiration for charity?"[723] Without going back to the debates we have already considered earlier in this work, we must acknowledge that what is obvious here is that religion is not the problem, rather human beings are because there is a potential for serious conflicts when religious beliefs are based on competing claims. From the moral point of view, to say that religion is itself good or bad is counterintuitive since moralising religion in this way accords it moral personality. In line with Richard Wentz, "there is no such thing as "science" and there is no such thing as "religion," in the sense of personification. There are human beings who are involved in science and religion, who find themselves transcending the world in which they exist, trying to assert whatever ultimate order and meaning they can find."[724] By implication, religion is, morally speaking, what people do with it. When people do good with religion, religion is good, and when people use religion to commit evil, religion is evil. Religion is considered to be always at the behest of the individual whims. Its moral scorecard is determined by what believers do with it. When adherents use it for contest or competition, there is a possibility of violence. Suffice it to say that "people choose the manner in which they are religious."[725]

For instance, there is always a potential problem when each religious tradition claims to be the locus of exclusive or decisive Truth in contrast and contradistinction to other traditions. "Every religion—especially monotheistic ones—is guilty of this. Jews claim to be God's chosen people, recipients of land, special promises, and noble mission. Christians say Jesus fulfilled Hebrew scriptural promises—a claim denied by Jews—that Jesus is the only way to God, and that evangelizing the world is a Christian obligation. Muslims believe they have received the final and definitive word from God. The Quran is Allah's divinely inspired corrective to the errors propagated through the texts and conduct of Jews and Christians. It is the religious duty of Muslims to struggle (jihad) against unbelievers in order to establish a world in accord with Allah's intent. We have one powerful God, three competing claims to Truth, three "sacred" texts revealing God's definitive will for humanity, and three groups claiming their particular understanding of universal mission is the one pleasing to God."[726] All these claims would result to no bloodshed if believers don't make their belief a subject for competition or imposition. These traditions claim monopoly of authentic salvation in a way that condemns unbelievers to eternal damnation. Some sacred texts express violence albeit

[723] Stern, *Terror in the Mind of God*, xiii.
[724] Wentz, *Why People Do Bad Things*, 19.
[725] Steffen, *Holy War,* 11.
[726] Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Why People do Bad Things*, 33.

largely interpreted as spiritual struggles rather than physical contests. Without neglecting the need for violent self-defence when necessary, believers prefer to see violence in religion as belonging to the domain of the spiritual and more reflective of a spiritual struggle against evil. Hence most of the violent scriptural verses are usually given spiritual interpretations and those who act violently as a result of these hard texts are considered guilty of misinterpretations.

Misinterpretations of religious texts lead to abuses and aberrations in a way that allows the influence of nonreligious factors into religious matters. Violence is a consequence of a 'show of force' often used as a political strategy and religion has tremendous persuasive characteristics that could readily be exploited by individuals' quest for power and relevance. "Religion, thus presents itself as a power, then as a dangerous power; to the extent that this power influences people's actions it is subject to moral critique."[727] Religion in this case has been misused and abused by those who wish to exploit its persuasive characteristics to realise personal political ends. We must acknowledge therefore that "violence is always political, even when undertaken for religious reasons or with religious sanction."[728] This can be seen as corruption of religion because according to Richard Bernstein, "when any individual, sect, or denomination presents itself as possessing the exclusive or definitive understanding of good and evil, when "evil" is used as a blanket term of condemnation to advance a dubious political agenda, then there is a corruption of religion. Religious believers and nonreligious persons should passionately oppose this invidious form of corruption."[729] Religion is easily used to motivate violence whenever it involves itself with power relationships central to political undertakings. In this way, its persuasive character is abused for political reasons. "Violence is what happens when you try to resolve a religious dispute by means of power. It cannot be done. Trying to resolve ultimate issues of faith, truth and interpretation by the use of force is a conceptual error of the most fundamental kind. Just as might does not establish right, so victory does not establish truth…. You cannot impose truth by force. That is why religion and power are two separate enterprises that must never be confused."[730] Violence and power contests are not principal objectives of religion rather they are political elements that serve personal and parochial interests. "It is true, of course, that many such acts of violence are transparently manipulative and self-serving, with little or no authentically religious motivation. And, as is more often the case, devout young religious actors may be led to

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[727] Steffen, *Holy War,* 11.
[728] Steffen, 37.
[729] Bernstein, *The Abuse of Evil,* 100.
[730] Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, 225.

violent acts by self-serving mountebanks."[731] When religion is imbued with self-serving and political elements it gets corrupted by fundamentalist attitudes that make violence inevitable. Of course, religion has been used as a readily persuasive tool at the disposal of political agents who perpetrate violence to achieve political goals. A look at some instances of past political violence shows that religion tends to be easily employed as a strategic medium of inspiration for violence even when it has no self-evident connection to religion. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the interplay between religion and politics produces catastrophic results because one "notices that in our postmodern era the often-antagonistic relationship that has long existed between politics and religion within several areas of Western culture and civilization has increased globally to dangerous, sometimes violent, levels."[732] If politics seeks dominance of opinion and religion has persuasive abilities, then is religion is not just a mask used by political movements to rally support and push people into violence?

Fundamentalism is an abuse of religious belief. It is fundamentalism that made those Islamists hijack and fly a plane into American buildings in the name of religion. It is a way of belief that corrupts religious people into extremely vicious tendencies. Since our analyses here show that it is human beings not religion that determine what is evil by the way they practice and abuse their religion, fundamentalism becomes moralised when human beings act under the influence of its ideologies. "How people are religious is the result of moral decision making and determined by moral formation of the personality."[733] A good number of acts of religious violence are motivated by fundamentalism; a fanatical adherence to religious traditions in a very domineering way that stifles freedom and abhors criticism. This happens when people build ivory towers around religious and cultural rituals as a result of their fear of the dynamics of changing paradigms. Thus it is the fear of change from how things were originally that pushes their minds to a radically defensive mode. "Scholars agree that in spite of the differences among them, all fundamentalisms share some general features: adherence to fundamentals, dependence on modernity to trigger their response, reactivity, and "doing jujitsu."[734] This is why they identify fundamentalism as a deviation from authentic practice of religion which makes religion the enemy of progress. Fundamentalism is so extreme that its ideals and practices are often at odds with the interests of ordinary believers who often stand in opposition to its extremism and violent consequences. The moral difference between these

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[731] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* , 30.
[732] Peter Redpath, "Invisible Hands in the New World Order: Reflections on Metaphysics, Science, Religion, and Politics in the postmodern Era", in *Polityta a Religia*, Piotr Jaoszynski, Pawel Tarasiewicz, Imelda Chlodna, eds. Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik trasl(Lublin: Katedra Filozofi Kultury, 2007), 45.
[733] Steffen, *Holy War,*11.
[734] Matty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good,* 31.

two forms of adherence is the attitude of believers towards others who disagree with their beliefs and interests. "In that sense, Sullivan was right to affirm that "this surely is a religious war—but not of Islam versus Christianity and Judaism. Rather, it is a war of fundamentalism against faiths of all kinds that are at peace with freedom and modernity. This war even has far gentler echoes in America's own religious conflicts—between newer, more virulent strands of Christian fundamentalism and mainstream Protestantism and Catholicism. These conflicts have ancient roots, but they seem to be gaining new force as modernity spreads and deepens. They are our new wars of religion—and their victims are in all likelihood going to mount with each passing year."[735] Fundamentalists have done great harm to religious beliefs and adherents especially through of their tendency to extreme violence. However, we must reaffirm that although most instances of religious terrorism have links with fundamentalism and radicalisation, not all cases are perpetrated by extremists. Our earlier analyses have shown that you don't need to be a fundamentalist to be capable of committing extreme violence in the name of religion.

Many antireligious scholars have advocated for the abolition of religion or the relegation of religion to the private domain because of its susceptibility to violence. But counter arguments say that even non-religious systems and ideologies also motivate people into violence. Some are of the view that non-religious ideologies and systems incited more violence than religious ones. "As for empirical evidence, the secular ideologies of the twentieth century led to more killing than all the religious violence in world history combined."[736] According to Marty and Moore, clearly, religion can cause trouble, even of the most deadly kind. The frequency and near universality of religiously motivated violence can make any reasonable person wonder if religion and politics might best be kept completely separate. Better to cordon off religion from politics before passions get out of hand. Yet many twentieth-century attempts to replace religion with non-religion have only issued in more violence. The century's totalitarians, intending to be non- and antireligious, opposed the historic faiths. Yet the concentration camps and gulags, the famines induced by bad politics, the destruction of sacred art in cultural revolutions, the murder of priests behind barbed wire, and genocidal policies were effected not in the name of Allah or Yahweh or the Father of Jesus Christ or any of the gods. Who can speak credibly in the name of the natural humaneness of non-religion? If religions have a spotty historical record when it comes to violence and nonreligious alternatives have fared no better, what's left?... people will gather

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[735] Sullivan "This is a Religious War",
[736] Murphy, "Religious Violence",

together on the basis of various identities, including religious ones. So the question remains: do religions have a proper place in the political sphere, or will they cause more trouble than other means of organisation?"[737]

William Cavanaugh popularised this view with the phrase "the myth of religious violence" which contrasts the peculiarities of violence-prone nature of religion with those of its secular counterparts. He believes that it is hypocrisy to say that "religion is necessarily more inclined toward violence than are ideologies and institutions that are identified as secular."[738] This is because the same characteristics that make religion violent can also be found in the secular systems. So he argues that it is absurd to distinguish religious institutions from secular ones with the claim that religious traditions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, are essentially more prone to violence—more absolutist, divisive, and irrational—than the secular ideologies and institutions such as nationalism, Marxism, capitalism, and liberalism. He said, "it is this claim that I find both unsustainable and dangerous. It is unsustainable because ideologies and institutions labelled secular can be just as absolutist, divisive, and irrational as those labelled religious. It is dangerous because it helps to marginalize, and even legitimate violence against, those forms of life that are labelled religious."[739] This is a myth to the extent that secular ideologies are given a powerful leverage in contrast to religious institutions. "The myth of religious violence helps to construct and marginalize a religious Other, prone to fanaticism, to contrast with the rational, peace-making, secular subject. This myth can be and is used in domestic politics to legitimate the marginalization of certain types of practices and groups labelled religious, while underwriting the nation-state's monopoly on its citizens' willingness to sacrifice and kill."[740] The logic of this argument rests on the fact that religion comprises some socio-political elements that motivates people to confront and fight just as non-religious ideologies and institutions. Therefore it will not be plausible to consider religion the enabler of violence when it is actually vulnerable to be used for such evil. From the foregoing therefore, we must acknowledge that religion has enormous influence on people's behaviours. This influence is often persuasive and compelling to the extent that if it can be used to motivate violence, then it can be harnessed to discourage it.

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[737] Marty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good,* 39.
[738] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* , 5.
[739] Cavanaugh, 6.
[740] Cavanaugh 4.

5.3 Common Philosophical Grounds for Religious non-Violence

In order to break the cycle of violence, peacemakers must take into account the long-term horizon of protracted intermediate conflicts and wars, and develop a comprehensive, multifaceted strategy for ending the violence and for achieving and sustaining reconciliation.[741] This is a call for non-violent resistance which is the best plausible and potent countermeasure against violent confrontations. Violent conflict is a consequence of disagreement and division which is secondary to the fundamental unity of men that presupposes non-violence. That is to say that as the opposite of violence, non-violence can be regarded as an original position of human social order. In other words, man fundamentally lives and relates with others in a non-violent way. When in a state of rest or inaction, he does not act violently, so he strives to act and relate in a way that would reflect and maintain this non-violent original position, even in the face of disagreements. This forms the basis of the moral norm of human action in contrast to the Hobbesian brutish state of nature. Although Hobbes argues that human nature is violent and chaotic, it is not arguable that this chaos is a product of dynamic relational disagreements which is contrary to the non-violent nature of man's fundamental unity. No man wakes up to fight from nowhere, something happens before the conflict which disrupts a pre-existing order that is non-violent. Without a pre-existing non-violent original position, it would be counterintuitive and impossible for Hobbes to analyse for a social contract that creates order from disorder. What happens here is that the social contract returns man's actions to its fundamental metaphysical unity instead of creating a new order, because violence is a practical consequence of a preceding misunderstanding or disruption of each man's original state of non-violence. It is a deviation of human action in relation to others; it is not a normal human relational practice that is why it causes disorder and depersonalises. Violence is natural to man to the extent of his cultural and relational differentiations. If violence is a practical problem, non-violence should provide practical solution. If violence depersonalises, non-violence should embody and validate the personalistic norm.

Religion supplies for man's ultimate search for meaning which is fundamental to his existence and so calls him to action towards its fulfilment. That is why according to Lloyd Steffen, "being religious is never a value-free experience, and religion itself can be identified as one of the goods of life that promotes human flourishing."[742] It is good to the extent that it provides for man's natural yearning for order and meaning which believers consider

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[741] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 18.
[742] Steffen, *Holy War*, 22.

themselves fortunate to identify with in the various traditions that fulfil this purpose. To this extent it is plausible to claim that religion is nonviolent and peaceful because in principle it advocates for good values that are antithetical to the evil of violence. "Religiousness is a universal human characteristic. It is important to understand that this religiousness is not only a matter of thinking, belief, or reflection. It is also expressed in actions. The scholar of religion calls some of these actions "rituals." To be human is to be a ritualist."[743] When religiousness is put into action, it bears moral consequences. It is in this realm of action that we discover violent acts that manifest as religious promptings. "Whether made explicitly or implicitly, that choice to be religious is grounded in the moral rather than the religious realm of meaning. To ask, therefore, why some people opt to express themselves by means of violence is to provoke a moral rather than a religious question."[744] Since the religious search for meaning is a non-violent one, then it is right to say that all religious traditions are faith processes imbued with principles of non-violence, love and peace. But when interests clash in the process of this search, there is always a tendency of violence. All religions of the world are seen to be characterised by non-violent principles and norms but violent conflict is a matter of practical expediency especially when a good is attacked, and "to avoid conflict here would involve a neglect of good and evil, as if values were without importance."[745] That is why nonviolence is considered a default element of religiousness and "many critics argue that violence is the logical end of all religious faith."[746] But religions of the world can take advantage of their common non-violent ground to engender peace in a way that trumps the various conditions that trigger violence.

It is characteristic of religious authorities to dissociate their faith from the murderous actions of their co-religionists. But it is not enough to denounce these religious terrorists as mere fringe groups. Religious involvement in ensuring a non-violent image should be integral and active. Almost every religion extols empathy which is a catalyst for nonviolence. "But empathy alone is not enough to explain the decline in violence. Another variable that supports non-violence is the recognition that there is a universal human nature. Reason allows us to move beyond our personal experiences, and to frame our idea and experiences, in universal terms. This leads us to recognize the ways our actions might harm others. The interchangeability of perspectives is the principle behind the Golden Rule and its equivalents,

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[743] Wentz, *Why People Do Bad Things*, 17.
[744] Steffen, *Holy War*,11
[745] Alfred Marek Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle for Liberation: Towards a Personalistic interpretation of the principle of non-violence* (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1992), 165.
[746] Marty and Moore, *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good,* 29.

which have been discovered and rediscovered in so many moral traditions. ISIS rejects this universal moral principle, in a way that repulses and disgusts not only "children of the Enlightenment" but most observers, including jihadi ideologues."[747] It is clear that the golden rule provides a common philosophical ground for non-violence among religious traditions. It is a basic moral maxim common to all religions to the extent that it provides a generally shared principle, a fundamental point of moral convergence and the lowest common denominator of the non-violent character of religious traditions. It stems from the basic axiological truth about man that everyone wants to be treated with dignity. The maxim appears as an injunction which states: "do onto others as you would have them do unto you". It recommends an ethic of axiological reciprocity whereby every individual expects to be treated as a value in-itself and so bears the moral duty of extending this axiological treatment to others. As a conscious and free being, man's dignity demands that he cannot treat another as mere object just as he cannot be treated as a mere object. By so doing it affirms the dignity of oneself and other selves in a way that enables *One* not to do harm to *Another*.

The golden rule is a maxim of altruistic reciprocity that is common to all religious traditions in positive or negative terms. In positive terms it states "treat others the way you would like others treat you" and in negative terms it states "do not treat others in ways that you would not like to be treated." It is central to the ethical traditions of the Abrahamic religions and can be found in their sacred writings. In Judaism, the golden rule is encoded in the Torah. The Hebrew Bible presents it in various versions as represented in various verses such as in the book of Leviticus 19:18 which states, "Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him, but love your neighbour as you love yourself" (TEV). And in verse 34 says, "treat foreigners who live in your land as you would a fellow-Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt I am the Lord your God" (TEV). These and many other verses of the Hebrew bible emphasise the golden rule as a basic moral principle and the central legal framework of the Jewish tradition. The golden rule in the Jewish tradition stems from the fundamental recognition of man as image of God (*Imago Dei*) which accords dignity to humanity from creation.

The Christian tradition provides a more comprehensive reflection of the Golden rule in both the Old and New Testament. Apart from the Leviticus and other passages of the Hebrew bible, the Christian Old testament also speaks of the golden rule in the deuterocanonical books such as the book of Tobit 4:15 which states: "Never do to anyone

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[747] Stern and Berger, *ISIS*, 207.

else anything that you would not want someone to do to you" (TEV), and in Sirach 31:15 which says, "Be considerate of the other people at the table and treat them the way you want to be treated" (TEV).   The New Testament presents a more detailed version of this Old Testament principle which forms the fundamental principle of the entire tradition of love. Jesus re-echoed the golden rule in most of his teachings that extolled love, peace and non-violence. The golden rule reflected in his life and teachings which explicitly condemn violence and retaliation. In his sermon on the mount Jesus referenced the golden rule as a summary to his teaching thus, "do for others what you want them to do for you: this is the meaning of the Law of Moses and of the teachings of the prophets" (Matthew 7:12 TEV), and in Luke 6:31, "do for others just what you want them to do for you" (TEV). That is why the Christian gospel and the entire New Testament morality are summed up in the famous commandment "love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 19:19, 22:39; Mk 12:31-33; Lk 10:27; Rm 13:8-9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8).

Loving neighbour as one loves self presupposes the common dignity of humanity. According to Karol Wojtyla, "all men are neighbours by virtue of their personal being, the authentic participation of living together in community presupposes a genuine sharing in the humanness of the other.[748] "The concept of 'neighbour'", in the words of Alfred Wierzbicki, "expresses the fundamental unity and nearness of all men. All other human relations have their root in the fact that all men are neighbours."[749] Jesus expressed this nearness and common dignity in his parables, especially of the Good Samaritan who saved the life of a stranger because he recognises him as neighbour. The Christian morality therefore finds its basis in the recognition of this unity and common dignity of all men which is essentially non-violent. It draws from the Old Testament concept of man as *Imago Dei* (Image of God), as basis for this universal dignity of all humans that is "greater than and distinct from the world of things by virtue of this resemblance."[750] That is why the NT extends this love of neighbour to enemies even when they persecute, to show that non-violence reveals the basis of the moral norm which is the universality of human dignity. For instance when Mt 5:44 says "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" and Lk 6:27. 35 says "love your enemies and do good to those who hate you… and you will be sons of the Most high, for he is good to the ungrateful and the wicked," they emphasise the centrality of human dignity in every moral consideration and thus brings clarity to the oft-misconstrued OT teeth-for-tat

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[748] Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979), 349.
[749] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 161
[750] Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility* (New York, William Collins and Co Ltd., 1981), 40.

morality that encourages vengeance at all levels and perpetuates the cycle of violence. Note that the OT morality find sits basis in the principle of "Love of Neighbour" which negates and discourages the teeth-for-tat vengeance. The NT morality therefore maintains the fundamental moral norm by affirming the person for his own sake rather than depersonalising him as a result of lived experience of harm and injustice. This is what Karol Wojtyla calls the personalistic norm[751] "It is also the norm of Love. The personalistic norm, despite it general formulation, corresponds to teach specific case of moral experience; in every case, it is an absolute the absoluteness of this norm is dependent on the real value of any human person, a value which is a cognitively given fact in every particular encounter between persons."[752] Hence the NT morality is driven by a personalistic norm that is fundamentally non-violent and commands believers to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12:21). This is why some scholars argue that "the Bible and Biblical monotheism are not the source of religious violence."[753] Because if Christian morality has its roots in the personalitic norm which manifests love and non-violence then the Christian morality is by inference non-violent.

Islam is also a religion of strong morals, with ties to the golden rule. Muslims believe in altruistic reciprocity as well as in retributive justice. Many people argue that the Golden Rule is not central to Islamic morality since it is not explicitly expressed in the Quran. However in Quaran there are similar injunctions like "Serve God … and do good – to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess [the slave]" (Q:4:34)[754] Quran in many verses also encouraged "paying back evil with kindness"(13:22, 23:96, 41:34, 28:54, 42:40). It is clear that the golden rule is implicitly expressed in some verses of the Qurán but is explicitly declared in the sayings of Muhammad (the Hadith)."[755] In the Hadith, the Islamic morality expressed elements of the golden rule through the injunctions attributed to the prophet that says, "As you would have people do to you, do to them; and what you dislike to be done to you, don't do to them. Now let the stirrup go! [This maxim is enough for you; go and act in accordance with it!] (Kitab al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 146)."[756] In another parts of the Hadith the prophet said, "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself (Forty Hadith-Nawawi)", "Do unto all

[751] Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 40-41.
[752] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 153.
[753] Ronald Hendel "The Bible and Religious Violence", biblical views, March/April 2016 , 66.
[754] Mike Ghouse, "Golden Rule in Islam - Treat Others as You Wanted to be Treated", *Quraan Today,* Jan 16, 2014, http://quraan-today.blogspot.com/2014/01/golden-rule-in-islam-treat-others-as.html
[755] Henry Epps, *The Universal Golden Rule: A Philosopher Perspective* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 78.
[756] Henry Epps, *The Universal Golden Rule*, 80.

men as you would wish to have done unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourselves (Abu Dawud)."[757] The Islamic morality shares with the Christian and Jewish traditions the belief in the universality of human dignity. Muslims believe that human life is precious and must be valued. The golden rule provides the basis for this belief that extends kindness to strangers and enemies. However, the sharia has provided legal frameworks that justify actions antithetical to this fundamental moral norm and has served as a source of motivation for those who commit violence and reject non-violence in the name of faith. But one thing that is clear is that Islamic morality stems from a background that upholds this golden principle.

Other traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism and African traditional religion make the golden rule the nucleus of their faith based morality. In Hinduism, the rule of Dharma commands one to "treat others as you would like them treat you" and to "desist from inflicting on others injuries you would not like to receive." Buddha also made this principle the focal point of Buddhist morality whereby the condition for achieving happiness is dependent on how you treat others seeking happiness like you. Hence the Buddhist morality operates on the principle of "not hurting others in ways one would find hurtful." Because one would not achieve happiness if one oppresses others with violence. African traditional morality places high premium on the principles of justice and equality. The golden rule is a pillar of African morality. It reflects in every standard of moral judgement among African communities. Traditional Africans used proverbs to preserve their ethical codes. Some of these proverbs serve as guiding principles for good living. They are strongly rooted in the recognition that every human life is valuable and should be treated with dignity. This is because, African morality stems from the communitarian philosophy that accords every individual member of the society equal value and dignity that must be preserved by all, for the good of the community. The *Igbo* people of West Africa are typical example of this communitarian morality that guides and protects the society from violent evils. Hence every member of the community sees everyone as part of a unified family. That is why the concept of family in African tradition is broad and holistic. Its basic connection to the golden rule can be seen expressed in some of the proverbs such as, *egbe bere ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebela nku kwaa ya* (let the kite perch and let the eagle perch, anyone that resists the other from perching would suffer a fractured wing). This corresponds to the moral principle of *live and let live*, that encourages the need to accommodate and collaborate in order to create a

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[757] Ghouse, "Golden Rule in Islam",

peaceful society, and when we are inconsiderate of others, we suffer some losses. A modified version of this proverb was developed to express the mutual empathy and collaborative responsibility that is reflective of the communitarian morality of the Igbo culture in these words, *egbe bere ugo bere nke si ibe ya ebela ya gosi ya ebe o ga ebe* (let the kite perch let the eagle perch, anyone that resists the other from perching should show it where to perch). Consequently it is not only a moral norm to accommodate and show empathy to others, it also calls for a greater responsibility of being charitable even when it is inconvenient.

It is good to recognise that almost all religions believe that human life is a sacred gift. The need to respect this sacred gift is therefore not only a moral duty but also a sacred responsibility for every believer. The golden rule is extoled among all religious tradition as a principle of respect for the human person and the basic moral code for good life. It shows that the moral doctrine of every religion is founded on non-violent principle of "treating others as you would want them treat you." It is from this non-violent foundation that all religious traditions draw strength to promote non-violent countermeasures against violent motivations from religious experiences. Hence through the golden rule, every religion tasks the individual believer to hold on to its non-violent moral foundations. "Non-violence in an individual person is usually a stance taken in the face of violence; it is not an action in the proper sense of the term. Often this personal attitude is un-violent rather than non-violent. An un-violent attitude consists in refraining from violent acts; non-violence reacts against violence."[758] As a philosophical basis for non-violence, the golden rule does not deter one from violence for arbitrary reasons or for the sake of convenience, it goes to the roots of recognition of personal dignity which is common to all humans and sacrosanct in all religions. That is why it is not enough to be un-violent but to be non-violent because non-violence presupposes a free and conscious stand against violence. More than an attitude, it is an action, a product of choice against violence. Wierzbicki observes that "non-violent action may be motivated either by moral principles or by practical expediency. Where practical expediency motivates non-violence, there may be a greater effectiveness in non-violence than in violence; at the same time, fear of suffering or death can motivate some people to non-violence, as is the case in some forms of pacifism. Non-violence based in expediency can be applied selectively and may be replaced by violence, should violence later prove to be more expedient. The moral principles motivating non-violence may be: respect for the human person, the will to convert an enemy or the rejection of any use of violence. Non-violence motivated ethically centres on

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[758] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 179.

the value and dignity of the person whereas non-violence as expediency is dependent on the situation."[759]

It follows that the morality of a non-violent action is determined by the motivation of the action. This is because a non-violent response could be passive or active. It could come in the form of abstention of action or in the form of a consciously moral action. But "if the action is motivated by ethical principle, any consciously chosen but morally wrong objective would contradict this principle. In contrast, non-violence as expediency can serve any end, whether it is morally right or wrong."[760] Although expediency is a better reason for non-violence than resorting to violence, its moral quality is frail because it lacks the command of ethical obligation but relies on the actor's whims and convenience. It bears the character of non-violence but lacks the quality of a strong and sustainable moral response. That is why non-violence is not just about refraining from violence but more about actively promoting values and virtues that discourage harm and violence even in the face of oppression. It is common experience that violent resistance leads to a spiral of violence that sustains oppression. "Oppressed people who violently resist injustice almost always lose because those responsible for oppressive systems generally hold overwhelming advantages in lethal power. Violent resistance justifies repression and often insures defeat."[761] This is why non-violence is a viable weapon for religions against the dangers of violence. It goes to the core of basic religious morality that is centred on the dignity of the human person. Religious leaders are expected to use their positions of influence to lead people to the recognition of the personalistic norm which is antithetical to the ideologies of religious terrorists. As leaders, they should explore and amplify the effective non-violent options in the sacred texts which are fundamental to the faith, in order to overcome the violent stories that are usually exploited by extremists to trigger and deepen violence for God's sake. These fundamental non-violent elements of their sacred stories and texts should be used to challenge and overcome the violent narratives that are enshrined in the texts. Because "we are unlikely to break the spiral of violence in real history until we challenge the sanctification of violence in our sacred texts."[762] This is why there is need for proper interpretation of traditional reading of these hard texts that encourage violence. In this case, the role of hermeneutics is to take into account *ethical consistency* of the whole of religious doctrine.

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[759] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 179-180
[760] Wierzbicki, 180.
[761] Nelson-Palmer, *Is Religion Killing Us?,* 43.
[762] Nelson-Palmer, 46.

It is Unfortunate that some ordinary believers are not always sufficiently grounded in the teachings and practices of their own tradition to counter arguments based on scriptures and doctrines carefully chosen for their seeming endorsement of violence or ambivalence about its use.[763] This ignorance/naivety makes them gullible and malleable to the persuasive influences of these hard texts that deviate from the fundamentals of faith that are basically non-violent. In this case, it is the prophetic element of religion that shows forth to guide and guard them to the realisation of what is true and what is merely persuasive. This prophetic power is often misused and misguided to suit personal or parochial ends that are largely non-religious. That is why most terrorist leaders are charismatic preachers who manipulate ordinary believers to fall victim to their nationalist and irredentist ploys. By implication, if it is the prophetic power of religion that motivates people into violence, then religion can likewise use its prophetic power to activate its non-violent nature. "Girard rejects any natural aggressive drive and argues that human beings can overcome their violent nature. In this sense, Girard holds the Sermon on the Mount—or Jesus's call for nonviolence—as a plausible, objective, yet very complex attempt to argue for an overcoming of violence. He is vehemently against any theory that sees violence as an "ineradicable trait of human nature, an instinct or fatal tendency that is fruitless to fight."[764] It is true that in today's world a lot of movements are popular for opposing violent tendencies of believers by using these conciliatory ethics that are fundamental to religious traditions to counter the aggressions from hard texts. This is why fundamentalism remains a scourge and omen that must be defeated without doing harm to the religion.

Evaluating the concept of religion from the moral point of view allows us to say with some confidence that religion promotes goodness, particularly the good of human relationship to ulltimacy. Religion can thus be counted as one of the goods of life and can serve to promote greater human flourishing.[765] The special relationship religion promotes stems from the belief in the personhood of man which conditions human beings and provides them with means of access to constantly aspire for relationship with the mysterious. For "it is in the nature of God to be mysterious but it is in the nature of man to unravel mysteries" (Proverbs 25:2). The activity of unravelling demonstrates that as the image of God, man explores and masters his environment for good. This process is predicated on a good and progressive relationship with others which often gets corrupted by clash of vested interests.

[763] Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, 17.
[764] Palaver, *Rene Girard's Mimetic Theory*, 35.
[765] Steffen, *Holy War*, 41.

That is why non-violence is considered as the default position that maintains the balance in this progressive process. It is the characteristic that sustains the basic value of the human dignity in the task of unravelling and mastery of the world and nature. It is the only sustainable measure that successfully stands against any disruptive unjust structure in the scheme of human activities without diminishing the dignity of the adversary. It therefore brings authentic moral liberation to the oppressive systems that breed hate and violence. "Non-violence seeks the liquidation of an unjust structure of oppression through either moral conversion or non-violent conquest of the adversary. In the former case the adversary is morally purified and elevated in his humanity; in the latter case, though non moral change occurs in the person of the oppressor, he is at least not violated in his dignity as a person. By its nature, non-violent coercion can always bring about a conversion; even where pressure is applied, its goal is not the violation of the oppressor but his moral liberation."[766]

A typological analysis of non-violence reveals that non-violence in its various kinds may affirm or contradict the axiological truth about man. Thus non-violence, understood merely as an abstention from physical force, is a necessary but not yet sufficient condition for the affirmation of the person for his own sake.[767] This is because the character of being non-violent is not just about the effectiveness of passivity to violence it requires more of an effective sustainable activity. This is possible when one allows the humaneness of humanity manifests the true nature of actions that reveal man as a person, when one's non-violent nature dominates the undercurrents that drift him into violent actions. "The intensity and sophistication of the anti-violent current can serve as a weathervane for the strength of the impulse towards violence. After all, the former functions primarily as polemic to counteract the latter."[768] Little wonder most proponents of non-violence are also champions of human rights and values who use activism to demonstrate the strength of non-violence. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."[769]

The activeness of non-violence as a force against violence is emphasised by Mahatma Ghandi in what he calls Satyagraha—which means truth force or reliance on truth. According to Ghandi, "its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it Love-force or Soul-force. In the application of Satyagraha I discovered in the earliest stages

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[766] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 184.
[767] Wierzbicki, 183.
[768] Aran & Hassner, "Religious Violence in Judaism", 356.
[769] John Schwab, "Martin Luther King Jr. Quotes on Nonviolence", *Inspiring Alley*, April 12, 2019, https://www.inspiringalley.com/martin-luther-king-jr-quotes-on-nonviolence/

that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self."[770] Ghandi presents Satyagraha as a non-violent spiritual force that enables individuals and communities to stand in negation of the every force of violence with the realisation that "there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him and that the latter always yields to it."[771] More than a passive resistance or abstention of violence, Satyagraha is an active pursuit of truth that eschews all violence. The darkness of error is violent and can only be conquered by the bright light of truth. This is why Satyagraha excludes every form of violence and focused on the truth about dignity of the human person within the context of violent conflict. Ghandi said, "I discovered that pursuit of Truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For, what appear to be truth to one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but one's own self."[772] Thus, Satyagraha as a non-violent strategy stems from the personalistic norm that focuses on the upholding the value and dignity of the human person even in the midst of violent struggle. It constitutes a personalistic response to violence i.e., "a value response to the dignity of the human person in the context of the struggle for liberation."[773] Hence it is good to note that personalistic norm is explained in ethics by the philosophical theory of the person, but when real morality is concerned, it is not necessary to know the theory of person in order to have an experience of the obligation to affirm the human person for his/her sake. It follows therefore that ethics and morality allows us to interpret Gandhi's Satyagraha as practical, albeit not theorethical (philosophical) demonstration of the personalist norm.

As a non-violent social movement, Satyagraha may be carried out in a passive or active way with the view of upholding the personalistic norm. "The moral motivation of satyagraha is linked to the experience of human dignity in its violation, with the recognition that all men involved in an injustice are bearers of this dignity. Satyagraha aims to replace this violation with an affirmation of the dignity of every person involved in injustice. In other words, the non-violence of Satyagraha consists of responding to evil by doing good. Any

[770] M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance* (New York: Schocken Books, 1951), 6.
[771] Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, 35.
[772] R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1967), 167.
[773] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 184.

violence in response to violence, save in the case of necessary self-defence, can only reduce further violation. Thus in satyagraha, non-violence is a moral exigence of affirmation within the struggle for liberation."[774] In this non-violent technique, truth triumphs over error, love over hate, peace over conflict, tolerance over intolerance and compassion over cruelty. These are all practical steps that amplifies the dignity of the human person and neutralise the violence that attacks it. They are tools used to liquidate oppressive structures through a moral conquest and conversion of the adversary. This moral conquest dismantles the false and extreme ideologies by providing a true and superior alternative that dismantles the evil impulses of violence and stimulates the shared values of the human person that moves the conscience of the aggressor to retrace its steps. It changes the structures of man's moral response to oppression by recognising the primacy of human dignity in the whole situation of violence. In the words of Wierzbicki, "Satyagraha is personalistic; it recognises the ontic and axiological priority of the person to any social structure…. it affirms the human person for his own sake, doing justice to his value. In philosophies of violence, justice is missing, since, being concerned only with the totality, one overlooks or subordinates the value of the individual human person, satyagraha, on the contrary, transforms the totality by reconstituting relations among men in response to the value of the human person."[775]

This form of non-violent action promotes personalistic values among religious traditions and believers especially in the context of violence. Some of these qualities manifest when believers express tolerance, love and compassion to those who don't practice their faith instead of fighting them. It brings believers to a better interpretation and understanding of the sacred texts in order to give more spiritually positive interpretations to the violent stories. For instance, Christian exegesis has provided better hermeneutics of the hard texts of the scriptures in a way that discourages fundamentalism. In the same vein, Muslims are encouraged to interpret jihad to mean a spiritual discipline necessary to follow God's path rather   a physical battle against unbelievers. The dignity of the human person is always at the centre of every religious doctrine and practice to dissuade every tendency towards violence. Tolerance and respect are extoled because human dignity is considered first above every other doctrine. This is why non-violence has essential link with the personalistic norm. However, to claim that religion should be rejected in order to avoid engaging in violence is therefore counterintuitive to the whole analysis of the value of human dignity. This is because, according to Richard Wentz, "religiousness is a high human characteristic; it is

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[774] Wierzbicki, 184.
[775] Wierzbicki, 185.

fundamental to human nature. It is expressed in many ways that people are not accustomed to call "religion." This religiousness of ours is universal. The bad things that are done in this world are not done because some people are religious and others are not. The violence is not the result of the religiousness of people. It stems from those who misunderstand the nature of our religiousness."[776] Hence rejecting religiousness is by implication rejecting my human nature, my freedom, my dignity and my transcendence. "In the end, it must be recognised that the nonviolent method in itself is not enough. Its special merit is that it allows scope for love, but it is no substitute for it. In the end, the nonviolent revolutionist must care more about constructive action to build good society now, about effective revolution of the spirit now, than about attacking evil."[777]

5.4 Possible Remedies: Intensifying the Centrality of Person in Religious Traditions

Martin Luther King Jr said that "peace is not absence of violence but presence of justice." We cannot win the war against religious violence without dealing with those underlying *axiomoral* issues that push religious people to make violence an option. Our analysis have identified that most of these issues have to do with the moral dynamics of personal identity and identification within the context of human relations. This is because it is the same moral framing that makes a terrorist terrorise makes a racist dehumanise; the difference is only in the intensity of their actions. Those who resort to religious terrorism as a means of expressing dominance or resistance have issues with the personalistic norm; their axiological cognition of man which is central to their moral experience is vitiated. When the *axiomoral* experience of the other which is the morality associated with valuing the other as a person-in-himself even in disagreement is defective or completely lacking, anything is possible. Because the real value of the human person diminishes as a result of the motivating passion. Arendt calls it "the banality of evil", von Hildebrand, Bauman and Donskis refer to it as "moral value blindness", and Jonathan Sacks sees it as "altruistic evil" caused by "pathological dualism".

We must acknowledge that the impact of this axiomoral defection on the personalistic norm reveals the need to rediscover the centrality of personalism in religious experiences. This is because, if Wojtyla's idea that "action reveals the person"[778] and "moral value

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[776] Wentz, *Why People Do Bad Things*?, 21.
[777] W. R. Miller, *Nonviolence: A Christian Interpretation* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), 95.
[778] Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 11.

remains immanent to being a person"[779] is right, then we must admit that the actions of religious terrorists is determined by their axiomoral consideration of the victim as a person. Of course the morality of such actions has basis in inter-human encounters that triggers one's faculty of valuation by which he recognises the value of others. Bauman agrees with Emmanuel Levinas that "moral behaviour … is triggered off by the mere presence of the "Other' as a face, that is, as an authority without force."[780] Hence the encounter with the Other is not just a moral process, it is also a personalistic process. It reveals the truth in the process of value response which leads to self-transcendence and to the complete realization of the acting person as a value-responding agent. This is what Wojtyla calls participation. Man realizes himself fully when he acts within a community rather than in isolation. This is a fundamental characteristic of the acting person because "when persons open themselves to each other, and form community among themselves, a community which is not a collectivity but an authentic communion personarum (communion of persons), then their selfhood is presupposed and lived."[781] Alienation or isolation disrupts the personalistic norm and can be found in the attitudes of those who practice cruelty in the name of religion. Religion is usually practiced as a communitarian experience whereby people are unified in some value just as a single person would. This highlights the unifying power of values and to how much values create community of persons. But this unification with regard to religious violence is seen to be formed against an outgroup of persons in a way that contrasts the personalistic norm. The communitarian nature of religion should therefore recognise the unity in the dignity of all persons as fundamental before highlighting the differences that create credal compartments of community of persons. Hence, it is counterintuitive to neglect the fundamental personalistic norm that inheres in the "community of persons" in general, in the process of demonstrating the axiomoral uniqueness of a particular sect. the objective value of personal dignity is a commonly shared value; it is the value not for a part, but for the community of persons in its entirety. This shows the rationale behind the claim that religion is divisive because those who participate in religious violence do not consider the personalistic norm as a general principle when they undermine the personal dignity of those they hurt. Note that the personalistic norm is rooted in the golden rule, as its fundamental expression in particular terms. To say that the personalistic norm is central to the beliefs of every religious tradition is to reemphasise the obvious, it exposes the divisive tendencies

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[779] Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wjtyla: The thought of the Man who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapis, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997), 149.
[780] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust,* 214.
[781] Crosby, *Selfhood*, 205.

among believers. However, "it is good to note that the consideration of "community of persons" does not imply that an isolated individual person is an incomplete substance. Of course, a community is made up of individual persons. All our actions are in relation with the actions of others, and the fulfilment of our actions lies in acting together."[782]

Our argument is that the complex situation of religious terrorism is largely a problem with the personalistic norm in particular and in a more generalised sense, a problem with the golden rule. It is a problem of human dignity within the context of interpersonal relationship, because you have to strip a man of his dignity before you kill him. "Our ideas about the values that constitute man determine the way and manner that we relate with and treat one another. When we consider another human being as a person or less, it guides our attitude and behaviour toward him. For instance, during the Rwandan Genocide, the killers considered the victims "Inyenzi" (cockroaches) as they murdered them."[783] The axiomoral aspect of interpersonal relationship determines how much we put personal dignity at the centre of our relationships even when we disagree. It exposes the thin line between othering and brothering in interpersonal relationships. Religious violence betrays the axiomoral link every religion has with the personalistic norm. That is why there is need for reawakening and revival of the non-violent fundamentals that show how central personal dignity is to every religious tradition. "The axiological truth as regards the human person demands a transformation that affirms the dignity of all human persons. Thus, non-violence is a condition and a crucial test of genuine personalism…."[784] Thus the challenges of religious terrorism call for a rediscovery of the personalistic foundations of religion especially in the context of the axiomoral implications of maintaining integration, participation or community of persons.

It is true that the person is fundamentally superior to the community because it is the person in relation with other persons that constitutes a community. Nevertheless, community provides an axiomoral influence in the constitution of a full person. Wojtyla argues that "the person is fulfilled by participation and degraded by alienation."[785] He may realise his transcendence as an independent self but he does not realise his fulfilment in isolation of other selves. That is why relationship provides a person the axiomoral context for self-fulfilment within the community of persons. The selfhood of the human person is fully realised in his belongingness to the humanity of others as well as in his actions that reflect the

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[782] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 186.
[783] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 187.
[784] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 188.
[785] Wojtyla, *Acting Person*, 261-300.

axiological priority of human dignity. Alienation leads one to depersonalise and instrumentalize other selves in the community of persons. But participation leads one to the recognition of the self within the personality of other selves, and to the ultimate discovery of his contingency in relation to the divine person. "The person, in his personal being and dignity as a subject, self-conscious, self-determining, transcendent and capable of participation, seeks the ultimate reason for his being the entity he is. The person cannot understand himself without discovering a real relation to the Divine Person; this experience is called 'to have religious sense.'"[786] Suffice it to mean that religion is fundamentally personalistic and communitarian for being intrinsically linked to the dignity of man and the totality of his personal being. This manifests in the 'I-thou' relationship as against the 'I-it' relationship in man's actions towards others. "It presupposes an anthropology in which man realises himself through the other man and not by separating himself from him and assumes therefore, that the community forms a constitutive dimension of personal realisation."[787] It follows therefore that "man does not act in isolation; he realises himself through the other when he acts, and the value of his person is made known to him though the recognition that the other person affirms such value. This is an "interrecognition" of personal values, whereby in acting alongside others, one realises oneself not in solitude but within a community of acting persons. Participation is therefore an indispensable element of the acting person."[788]

The community of persons is analysed in various forms of intersubjective relationships, between "I" and "thou", "One" and "Other", or "Self" and "Otherselves". This intersubjectivity is not presented as an "Us-Them" relationship which presupposes division, competition and conflict. This contentious view about human relationship creates a "pathological dualism" whereby those who belong to "Us" are friends to be appreciated whereas the "Others" who belong to "them" are enemies to be despised, even when members of both divides share common humanity. "Us-Them" relationship in religion contrasts the personalistic foundation of religious beliefs. It breeds constant conflict and violence that undermines the dignity of other human beings. "Us-Them" does not capture the idea of community of persons that is realised through the participation of individual persons. It contrasts the "I-Thou" which "personalises, humanises and connects people by establishing a relation which is determined by the common good. The relationship between an 'I' and a 'thou' is realised in the form of a deep trust, a mutual self-giving and—something that is

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[786] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 150.
[787] Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 170.
[788] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 187

specific only to the human being—a sense of belonging."[789] In the "I-Thou", the "Other" is considered a neighbour whereas in the "Us-Them", the "Other" is an enemy. Put differently, in the former, "One" sees himself in the "Other" whereas in the later "One" sees himself against the "Other". Consequently, the quality of "One's" relationship to the "Other" is determined by the nature of othering. For othering is determined by the degree of affectivity which may be favourable or antagonistic.

We must note that affectivity is part of human nature that expresses one's deepest sense of impactful experience, the entire nature, structure and quality of the deepest experience of one's feelings. It is often associated with the acts of the will, intellect and emotions but it is not the same with them. According to von Hildebrand, "affectivity is by no doubt a great reality in man's life, a reality which cannot be subsumed under intellect or will. In literature and in ordinary language the term "heart" refers to the center of this affectivity."[790] Von Hildebrand therefore sees the heart as the faculty of affectivity, the "organ of all affectivity", "the root of all affectivity" and of course "the central core of all affectivity". He refers to the heart as "the center of affectivity, the very core of this sphere", in the sense that when we say "something struck a man's heart" we are not contrasting the heart with the will and the intellect, rather we are indicating the depth of its affective impact, how deeply this event affected him. We want to express not only that a given incident irked or angered him, but that it wounded him in the very core of his affective being.[791] Without going into details of the metaphysical distinction between these human faculties, we must acknowledge the reality of the heart which—in collaboration with the will and the intellect— harbours the depth of affectivity. Affectivity refers to feelings of love, hate, sorrow, happiness, joy, empathy, anger, mercy, pride etc, that require more than the will, reason and emotion. Hildebrand made reference to the words of Jesus in the bible, "For where thy treasure is, there thy heart also will be" (Mt 6:21), to show that it is the heart that expresses affective value response towards the object that engenders it. Hence, affectivity has a qualitative character which impacts on us in an intimate way the presence of the object in our soul. "In this context, "heart" means the focal point of the affective sphere, that which is most crucially affected with respect to all else in that sphere. Whereas the heart as the root of affectivity implies no special connotation of any specific depth, that is, no antithesis to more peripheral levels of affectivity, the heart in this typical sense has the connotation of being the

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[789] Marek Slomka, *Who is Man? The Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla* (Lublin, Poland: KUL, 2017), 59.
[790] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Heart*, (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2012), 21.
[791] von Hildebrand, *The Heart*, 21.

very center of gravity of all affectivity."[792] Hence the relationship between "One" and "Other" is an affective experience in which we find the highest expression of the heart's affectivity. As the center of affectivity, the heart is central to the personalistic morality, because it manifests the affective value responses that revere the dignity of the human person. We speak of the heart when speak about love which is the most affective value response. "I love you with all my heart" and "I hate you with all my heart", are common expressions. On the other hand we say that "a man is heartless" when we try to portray him as lacking in basic expression of affective value response. For instance, when one expresses acts of wickedness, insensitivity or hate, we are likely to call him "heartless" for being deficient of the very core of this sphere, "the heart". It follows that from the above analysis, that which made Hannah Arendt settle with "banality of evil", which made von Hildebrand and Zigmunt Bauman speak of "moral blindness", and led Jonathan Sacks to consider "pathological dualism" as the cause of the "altruistic evil" of religious violence, could therefore be plausibly referred to as "heartless otherization."

"Heartless otherization" is an attitude of insensitivity which stems from a deficient affective value response and results in viewing or treating the "Other"—in a very negative way—as intrinsically not possessing the same human value as "oneself." To be "heartless" connotes lacking in affective value response, feeling or consideration, and to "otherize" simply means to consider or view a person or group as essentially different from or alien to oneself and treating them differently as a result.[793] Hence "heartless otherization" captures both the internal numbness in one's (the acting subject's) "center of affectivity" which manifests externally in viewing and treating another in an undignifying way. As stated above, othering is determined by the degree of one's affectivity. This explains why we treat people close to us better than those alien to us and why we feel more comfortable with familiar faces than with strange ones. But it does not explain the loss of human dignity. That is why the term "heartless" is employed to describe this affective deficiency that undermines the value of the one who is different. This analogy is evident in the "us-them" mimetic relationship that always results in conflicts and violence. Religious terrorists suffer from "heartless otherization". This is because, when a religious believer is motivated in a way that makes the heart unable to express affective value response, he sees the "Other" as an enemy to be treated without dignity in an Us-Them violent intersubjective experience. This in a way gives

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[792] Von Hildebrand, 21.
[793] *Macmillan Dictionary*, s. v. "otherize" accessed April 29, 2020,
https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/other_2

explanation to what necessitates some acts of religious violence, because since the heart is important in the practice of religion and the personalistic morality which is central to every religion is expressed from the heart of the one who acknowledges the other as possessing dignity. When the religious "one" otherize heartlessly, there is always an "Us" vs "Them" which results in religious violence. To save the situation, religion needs to restore the "I-thou" relationship in a more intensive way.

Intersubjectivity of persons realises the 'Self' in relation with and not in opposition to 'Others'. It reveals man as a coexisting responsible subject. As a matter of fact, the "Other" behoves the "Self" to act morally. Emmanuel Levinas is right in his call to discover morality in the face of the "Other", because interpersonal encounters create moral imperatives whereby "to be for the "Other" means to be good."[794] For "I know that the 'Other' is a free human being and represents much more than what appears on the surface. The 'Other' becomes like myself, a second edition of the self."[795] This shows the moral relevance of community not merely as collectiveness or aggregate of individuals but as a participation of persons in the community of persons. It possesses an organic moral character that recognises the value of every person and the responsibility to protect this value. In this community there is a coexistential dynamics that is centered on the personalistic norm. A relationship where the self participates in the life of other selves, the "I" sees the "Thou" with dignity, and "One" fulfils himself in being with an "Other". Community relationship is therefore a relationship of "One another". "The relationships between the subject "I" and the subject "thou"—between the "one" and "the" "other"—forms a coexistential dynamics, where in "one another," the individual is not swallowed up in the community, and vice versa. This is because the community is constituted by "one-an[d]-other," for we see the subjective "I" and "thou" fully represented in both their individuality as "one" and their separateness as "an-other," as well as in their unanimity/communality as "one another." In participation, a "one" as a subjective "I" relates with "another" subjective "thou" to constitute a community of "one another." This is an intersubjective relation of persons where the value of one is the same as the value of the other and, of course, all."[796] In this relationship every "One" sees the "Other" not as an alien but as a neighbour. "For man recognizes in other persons a common level of

[794] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, transl. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 261.
[795] Deselaers, *And Your Conscience*, 247.
[796] Ohaekwusi, "Moral Blindness", 189

being, in virtue of which no one can be a stranger but all are fellow egos, other persons, and neighbours."[797]

Those who perpetrate religious violence have no value for others. Our belief and value systems are formed within the context of interpersonal relationships with axiomoral consequences. This is why the religious terrorist is seen to be under the influence of value blindness, pathological dualism or of course heartless otherization. "Indeed, this moral blindness," according to Wierzbicki, "relieves the potential subject from the obligation of moral knowledge. In certain cases this relief can be total. Yet value-blindness is the consequence of acts; it does not occur without guilt and responsibility on the part of those capable of knowing moral values. Their lack of moral knowledge does not render moral obligation less universal. For the universal validity of moral norms is not dependent on the universal acknowledgement of these same norms. There are a variety of possible reasons for the lack of such an acknowledgement, and among these is value-blindness."[798] Hence the religious terrorist, in so far as he is capable of knowing moral values brings himself to undermine the personalistic norm by perpetrating violence in the name of religion and causing chaos in the community, bears the moral responsibility of his actions even if he acts in heartless otherization. The problem here lies in identifying the 'Other' as an opposition, an unacceptable outsider who does not belong to the community of 'one-another'. "Religious identity formation inevitably foments a politics of anger and resentment and beyond that, violence. Barrier building generates a politics of insiders and outsiders, saved and lost, winners and losers; barrier building is inherently violent."[799] By so doing, the "Other" is idealized as an existential threat to One's own identity. "Idealizing the other in this way means inevitably denigrating oneself and everything connected to oneself. This denigration of self can then be projected outward against the demonized 'Other' in acts of violence."[800] Since the other is idealized as possessing less value and identity that is inimical to one's existence, antagonism sets in to make this idealization overpower the empathic personal connections and create a politics of division that splits into the "Us" versus "them" domains of thought by designating a chosen people apart from others in a way that elevates them above all others and allows one the sacred privilege to dispense divinely sanctioned justification for violence toward those outside the boundaries of chosenness. "The danger

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[797] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle,* 161.
[798] Wierzbicki, 159.
[799] Steffen, *Holy War*, 40-41.
[800] James W. Jones, "Why Does Religion Turn Violent? A Psychoanalytic Exploration of Religious Terrorism," *Psychoanalytic Review* 93, no. 2 (April 2006): 186.

here is that, in establishing an Other who is essentially irrational, fanatical, and violent, we legitimate coercive measures against that Other."[801] That is why Schwarz remarks that "violence is not only what we do to the Other. It is prior to that. Violence is the very construction of the Other."[802]

Violent conflict demonstrates how "One" sees an "Other" not as a second self but as an enemy. "Conflict can lead to alienation, to where the other is no longer seen as another self: he is reduced to being a mere opponent or even enemy. By this reduction, the other is alienated, inasmuch as his dignity is not affirmed for his own sake. The situation of conflict, which arises through harm and injustice, alienates the whole interpersonal relation within the community or society where the injustice has occurred. Yet unconditional and absolute affirmation is due, the same to an opponent or an enemy as to any human person. The enemy is but a neighbour."[803] No matter how we otherize the "Other" he still remains an "Other". "In virtue of his personhood, the other is not a stranger but a neighbour. The concept of "neighbour" expresses the fundamental unity and nearness of all men. All other human relations have their root in the fact that all men are neighbours."[804] There is a metaphysical unity, an ontic brotherhood that is represented in the community of persons. This community is built on a common human dignity that is drawn from the personhood which gives every individual an equal value as persons and a common level of being. If religion recognises this metaphysical unity of the community of persons as basic to its identity and practice, then the acts of the religious terrorist that violates this fundamental moral norm cannot be deemed essential since it falls short of moral obligations of this metaphysical unity.

Wierzbicki while analysing the universal power of moral obligation acknowledged the ontic brotherhood, the metaphysical unity and the shared personhood that necessitates the community of mankind and explained how this community is grounded. According to him, "the community is founded on human dignity. Each person, just in his humanity, brings to those he meets the special gift of his personal presence."[805] He demonstrated this with the biblical creation of man arguing that Adam recognised in Eve an incomparably shared human dignity which he never found in other creatures. This is the same experience a man has when he "recognises in other persons a common level of being, in virtue of which no one can be a

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[801] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 5.
[802] Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*, 5.
[803] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*,166.
[804] Wierzbicki, 161.
[805] Wiezbicki, 160.

stranger but all are fellow egos, other persons and neighbours."[806] Consequently no one should suffer violence from another for any reason because although a person is one unique subject, this uniqueness is understood within the ambience of "one another", a shared personshood that evokes moral consciousness. A person is first a person to other persons, every other identification—Christian, Muslim, believer, Atheist, Black, White, Friend, Enemy, Good and Bad—is qualitative and secondary. So hurting him for these secondary identifications violates the personalistic norm upon which every identity is founded. He is still a person, a neighbour, even if we see him as enemy.

Wojtyla agrees with the analysis that "membership of any community presupposes the fact that men are neighbours, but it neither constitutes nor abolishes this fact. People are, or become, members of different communities; and in these communities they either establish close and even friendly relations or they remain strangers—the later reflects a lack of the communal spirit—but they are all neighbours and never cease to be neighbours."[807] Of course, your neighbour is not necessarily your friend but it doesn't change the fact that he or she is your neighbour. Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan[808] explains the use of this term (neighbour) to demonstrate our shared personhood and the need to respect the dignity attached to it. "As all men are neighbours, in virtue of their personal being, the authentic participation of living together in community presupposes a genuine sharing in the humananness of the other, in what is proper to every human person. No authentic participation can be obtained where the humanness of others is disregarded, violated or alienated."[809] On this ground, we must acknowledge that being an enemy does not deprive a person the basic quality of being a neighbour. An "opponent" or "enemy" is also a neighbour. Indeed, he is a neighbour first, before he is an opponent or enemy. One becomes an enemy through divisions and conflicts; these can be acute and profound. Yet no division or conflict among men can be so deep to abolish the fact that all men are neighbours."[810] The acuteness of the divisions and conflicts that result in enmity between one and another sometimes overwhelm one's firm grasp of the other's basic personhood because he is no longer to be seen as human but as something distasteful, he is the enemy whose presence means threat and danger. Karl Marlantes said, "psychologically I had become identified with the threatened group, and the advancing enemy was no longer human. I didn't kill people, sons, brothers,

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[806] Wiezbicki, 161
[807] Wojtyla, *Acting Person*, 349
[808] In Lk 10:25-37 Jesus in answering the question, "Who is my Neighbour?" told the story of a victim of violence who was saved by a stranger, the Good Samaritan to show that all men are Neighbours.
[809] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*,161
[810] Wierzbicki, 161

and fathers. I killed "Crispy Critters, infidels, towel heads, imperialist pigs, the list is as varied as human experience. This dissociation of one's enemy from humanity is a kind of *pseudospeciation*. You make a false species out of the other human and therefore make it easier to kill him. The touchdown feeling combined with dissociating the enemy was in full glorious effect."[811]

It is of course a false consciousness of the other that makes us not affirm the enemy as a human person for his own sake. This is what happened during slavery, holocaust, and other genocides such as the Rwandan genocide. But one intriguing thing is that this false identification happens not just against victims of terror but also against terrorists themselves. According to R. Jackson, "Terrorists are always depicted as 'the others', the bad guys and that other is dehumanized: "'Hun', 'japs', 'gooks', 'rag-heads', and 'skinnies' are the means by which fellow human beings—who are also husbands, sons, brothers, friends—are discursively transformed into a hateful and loathsome 'other' who can be killed and abused without remorse or regret. The term 'terrorist' is simply the latest manifestation of this discursive process—today's terrorists are the new 'gooks'."[812] Hence, to dehumanise the other there is always a tendency to change one's recognition of his identity as a person, in order to strip him of his value and see him as an enemy with no dignity. The fact of his personhood disappears from one's consciousness in a way that allows one to disaffirm and violate his human dignity by treating him solely as an enemy. On the contrary, notwithstanding one's impression of him, "one's enemy is, as a matter of fact, a human person who ought to be affirmed for his own sake. Though such an affirmation may be more difficult to achieve than the affirmation of a friend, it does not cease to be possible, despite difficulties psychological, social, political or otherwise. In fact, it is ethically necessary, in the midst of conflict, to fulfil the moral obligation of affirming the person for his own sake. This obligation remains, for it is necessary, categorical, unconditional and absolute."[813] This is in line with the biblical maxim, "love your enemies", which affirms the dignity of the other, even when he is an enemy, and thus the ontic unity of all human persons. "To treat someone, even an enemy, as if he were solely an enemy rather than a human person, is to deny a truth about man."[814]

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[811] Karl Marlentes, *What it is Like to go to War* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 40-41.
[812] R. Jackson *Writing the War on Terrorism,* 60.
[813] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle,* 161-162.
[814] Wierzbicki, 167.

Girard believes that "Our neighbour is the model for our desires"[815] because no man is intrinsically complete. There is always need for coexistence and complementarity with others since man as a social being is dependent on relations to others. When one deviates from relating with the other as a neighbour who is part of one another, he loses human value in one's eyes and one treats him as a mere thing. He becomes alienated from the community of persons because one looks upon him with heartless otherization. But when one's consciousness acknowledges everyman as participating in the community of persons, man realizes his completeness. "We can recognize another's personhood as a value when we cognize him as belonging or participating in the community of persons to which we belong; the commonalities will dominate our minds more than the differences, and his value as a person stands stronger in us."[816] In the words of John Caputo, "a person thus… is not a thing but a power that radiates from a central point. The "I," the "self," signifies a centre around which a world is grounded in ever widening circles. If I am thrust out into the world amidst others, the "I" names the point of origin of the thrust. That is why a law of inverse proportions governs the relations between selves, and … if one self is absolutized, every other self will be expelled. For as the other appears within the horizon of my world, so I appear within his life, like mine reaches out in all directions from the point of origin called "I." we are each continually giving birth to a world structured from our own point of view…. the total human community is a system of competing an overlapping circles, of horizons of influence, of fields of presence. The life world is an infinitely complex interweaving of interacting centres, the field of all fields. The life world is filled with gods."[817] Being conscious of the other implies being morally sensitive. This is a "pure value response", but attitudinal indifference or neutrality towards moral value is an inappropriate response, as "value deserves an appropriate response from us."[818]

The African traditionalist society provides a good context for analysing a community-centred moral system with a fundamentally wholistic perspective that showcases one's unity with God, with others and with the world. "The African worldview presents the individual, not as an isolated entity, but always in-relation-to-the-whole."[819] The African system reflects this universality, collectivity and communalism to show that the individual is not solely a part

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[815] Girard, *I See Satan*, 10.

[816] Ohaekwusi, *Moral blindness*, 192.

[817] John Caputo, "The Presence of the Other: A phenomenology of the Human Person," in *The Human Person*, ed. George F. McLean (Washington. DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 53.

[818] Crosby, *The Selfhood*, 205.

[819] J. Chukwuemeka Ekei, *Justice in Communalism: Foundation of Ethics in African Philosophy* (Lagos: Realm Communications, 2001), 71.

or an aspect of a whole but an independent but integral member of the community of persons who engages with others interpersonally. "In traditional African ethics, the moral relevance of every human action is not considered only from the individual's perspective as a moral agent: it also incorporates other dimensions, such as the social (communitarian), the cosmic (environmental) and the metaphysical (religious). All these work together to create a comparative balance in the moral sphere."[820] Communalism is central to African philosophy and culture because "the entire African people possess a deep (sense of) community spirit founded on this basic kinship of belongingness."[821] The identity of the African man is realised in this closely-knitted organized structure of life where isolation means extinction and participation is golden. "In a word, the community remains a social fact that is part and parcel of the identity of the African person."[822] Personal identity therefore reflects this communitarian element even in the names people bear. We see in some African traditional societies that individuals' names have community names as appendix. For instance, among the Igbo people of Nigeria, West Africa, we find names like *Mgborie Ihioma* [Mgborie from Ihioma] also among the Hausa people of Nigeria there are names like *Abubakar Tafawa Belewa* [Abubakar of Tafawa Belewa] which not only identifies the individual with the community, but also identifies the community with the individual. Everyone sees each other as sharing some value from the community because everyone is considered a neighbour, a product of the community not a subordinate to it.

In the spirit of African communalism, the community is seen as a parent and everyone as its children. That is why in the African traditional society it is believed that a child does not belong to a single person, as typified in the common Igbo proverb "*ofu onye anaghi amu nwa*" (one person does not beget a child). This shows that the community provides a responsible and responsive background for the wellbeing and growth of every individual and the individual members in turn see one another from the backdrop of this common brotherhood. Little wonder it is prevalent among Africans to use the word "brother/sister" to refer to someone who is not a sibling or a blood relation. In Africa, anyone can be family because "family does not necessarily mean those to whom you are related by blood or by social institution."[823] Africans easily dissolve their individuality into the bond of the community. The individual forms the community just as the community forms the individual.

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[820] Ohaekwusi, *Bauman's Moral Blindness*, 89.
[821] Panteleon Iroegbu, *Kpim of Personality, Treatise on the Human Person* (Owerri: Eustel Publications Nigeria, 2000), 98.
[822] Iroegbu, *Kpim of Personality*, 100.
[823] "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie at Yale University, 2019 Yale Class Day Speaker," filmed 2019, YouTube Video, 28:55, posted by "YaleUniversity," 21 May 2019, https://youtu.be/e9JhU2fXet8

The coexistence of individual members impacts on them the character of identifying with the metaphysical unity of our common humanity and reckoning with the personalistic norm in everyday life. By so doing, the community is at the heart of the individual and the individual is at the heart of the community. "To be an individual is therefore to be able to take part, i.e. to be capable to participate in life and its demands."[824] The moral implication is that the individual in his actions respond to the values of the value(s) of the community. "For it is in the context of being-with, that the individual moral responsibility is offered for acceptance."[825] Hence when the individual takes cognisance of the community values that are centred on the metaphysical unity, he will not be easily overwhelmed by motivations that go against the personalistic norm or influences that reflects features of moral blindness or heartless otherization since he believes in "a somewhat communal dialectics in which the individual is in the community and the community is in the individual…. There is no community without the individual, just as there is no individual without the community. Both are intrinsically involved in each other."[826] This responsible coexisting subject manifests the communalistic values of empathy and kindness, for he sees the other as another self who is a part of and not apart from one another, the community of persons.

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[824] Iroegbu, *Kpim of Personality*, 104-5.
[825] Ekei, *Justice in Communalism*, 112.
[826] Iroegbu, *Kpim of Personality*, 106.

Conclusion

The relationship between religion and violence has been a subject matter for numerous debates since antiquity till contemporary times. It goes to the root of what religion and violence means and to the knowledge of what characteristic elements of both phenomena make this relationship a considerable subject matter. It is true that religion and violence are two complex phenomena. However, although there is no universally acceptable notion of religion, there seem to be a somewhat general belief that man is naturally a meaning-seeking being. In the same vein, there is no consensus as to what violence portends but it is a common belief that violence is evil. This essay therefore explores the realities of religions' link with violence especially in the context of contemporary views and experiences of terrorism. It draws from these realities and experiences, numerous normative implications as it identifies and analyses the various debates and contentious ideas these experiences trigger. These debates are reactions to some profound questions: What is the moral cost of religious identity that necessitates the use of violent means in favour or against religion? What facts and logic justify the claim that religion is inherently violent or the contrary claim that violence is only but an exception and not the rule? Is religion instrumental to the violence? If not, is it distinguishable from those external (natural or social) factors that cause violence? How does contemporary religious terrorism provide a veritable case study for analysing the impacts of beliefs on valuation and value judgements? To what extent does religion play a role in the dehumanizing consequences of the violent denigration of the personalistic norm with special regard to the present day religiously associated acts of terrorism? And in simple terms, what are the moral implications of perpetrating terror in the name of faith?

History betrays the nature of religion with sweet and sour experiences. Religion's interplay with violence belongs to the sour side of these experiences. Although some scholars see the conjunction of religion and violence as uncomfortable, violence has characterised the history of religious traditions. These acts of violence appear to be either cultic or combative and have caused dichotomies in the beliefs and claims about whether these acts are essentially religious or attributable to other complex secular causes in the guise of religion. Of course, religion as a human phenomenon possesses features reflective of man's natural compositions and attitudes. These compositions and attitudes have moral and social implications. "The point is that human organisms appear to transcend their biological nature…. It seeks to make more of existence than mere physical function…. Because we are more than biology, more than physical function, we are open to the possibilities of

understanding ultimate order and meaning for our existence. Humans are creatures who are not satisfied with function: they seek meaning.… To be religious is to be involved in ideas and actions that transcend biological existence to tell a story of ultimate order and meaning."[827] In a bid to actualize this natural quest for order and meaning through religion, man identifies and forms a relationship with the ultimate and with one another. By virtue of these relationships, he creates an identity which arguably includes and excludes, unites and divides. According to Brian Ballard, "religions don't simply make claims about the world; they also offer existential resources, resources for dealing with basic human problems, such as the need for meaning, love, identity, and personal growth."[828] This is a noble natural task in the exercise of one's religiousness which reveals that the overwhelming majority of religious people do not get motivated to indulge in violence. Theorists like Ballard agree that religious conversion can be fostered by the ways religion aid human flourishing. "Plausibly, many people would report coming to faith at least partly because life felt meaningless without God, or because they found loving community within the church, or because their newfound religion somehow helped them get on in life."[829]

However some theorists like Ralph Tanner, Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, argue that in the exercise of religiousness, it is also human to be faced with the temptation of doing evil especially when the notion of ultimacy is absolutized and the idea of community becomes polarized. That is why we proposed three major approaches to the arguments for the reality of religious violence, namely the determinist approach that claims that religion is inherently violent, the dualistic view that religion is partly violent and partly non-violent and the instrumentalist view that religion serves as an instrument used by other factors to perpetrate violence. These approaches reveal some of the characteristics that engender violence in religion such as absolutism, divisiveness, and nonrationality. That is to say that religion is violent because it is absolutist, divisive and non-rational. As arguable as this claim might be, the experiences of various acts of violence that have links to religion reveal some absolutist, divisive and non-rational ideologies and beliefs behind some expression of religiousness. "The move towards absolutizing ultimacy itself leads to the formation of community built around excluding any and all who reject the absolutist picture of ultimacy, as has been argued, the logic of such exclusionary boundary building eventuates

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[827] Wentz, *Why People Do Bad Things*, 13.
[828] Ballard, B. "The Rationality of Faith and the Benefits of Religion" *Int J Philos Relig* **81, 213** (2017) accessed May 23, 2020 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-016-9599-5
[829] Ballard, "The Rationality of Faith", 214.

in resentment, anger, hostility, and violence."[830] There is a social effect in the task of religiousness which brings one's quest for ultimate order and meaning in confrontation with the presence of another who does not belong to my exclusive community. This presence does not only disrupt the order and meaning, it challenges the identity upon which this community is formed by designating a chosen people apart from others and creating a belligerent relationship of "Us-vs-Them" with absolutized exclusivist tendencies that unavoidably provide divinely sanctioned justification for violence toward those outside the boundaries. These absolutist, divisive and non-rational elements corrupt one's conception of the other in a way that motivates an antagonistic relationship with him. As Swartz would put it "violence begins with the very construction of the Other."[831]

The social dimension of religious violence is reflective of Rene Girard's mimetic theory which speaks about the mimetic elements of man's social relationship which has both positive and negative consequences. Mimesis leads to benefits like peer loyalty or openness to God, it could also result in rivalry or violence. "Studies of military psychology have discovered that soldiers fight above all out of loyalty to their platoonmates."[832] The mimetic theory therefore describes man as a social being that is dependent on relations to others. No human being, in other words, is intrinsically complete…. Mimesis, according to Girard, is a fundamental part of man's constitution—and not merely an external addition to an essentially autonomous being. As much as the mimetic theory emphasizes the social character of man, it is nevertheless incongruent with Aristotle's concept of the *zoon politikon*, or "political animal," which by nature tends toward a peaceful and harmonious coexistence with others.[833] Religion in its persuasive identity formation creates a mimetic relationship by which those who belong feel obliged to express loyalty to their sect and seek rivalry with those who do not belong. In this case, violence results from how we identify the other. As Jonathan Sacks would put it, "identity is inescapably plural. That is why it leads to violence. It divides the world into Us and Them. This is the source of war. At extreme times like now it leads to pathological dualism, turning human beings into barbarians, sometimes in the name of God."[834] When religious identity is viewed with a sense of tribal identity, there is a tendency to externalize problems and make scapegoats of those at the radar of one's ethnic prejudice or

[830] Steffen, *Holy War*, 40.
[831] Schwarz, *The Curse of Cain*,5.
[832] Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, 279.
[833] Wolfgang Palaver, *Rene Girard's Mimetic Theory*, 36.
[834] Sacks *Not in God's Name*, 190.

hateful past. This feeling is exacerbated when absolutist and persuasive tendencies come to play in religious matters.

Most anti-religious activists and secularists such as Samuel Huntington, Richard Dawkins, and Sam Harris argue that religion is inherently violent and uniquely dangerous for professing absolutist, divisive and non-rational beliefs. Their claim is that religion is the key source of most violent activities that pose threat to world peace and stability. It gives passionate zeal to most divisive, absolutist and non-rational claims and beliefs in a way that engenders a rare conviction that leads someone to violence. This is because religion by dealing with one's quest for ultimate meaning and order provides one a sense of identity which he values and protects with passionate zeal. What perpetrators of violence do is to profess their beliefs in absolutist, divisive and non-rational ways and since religious beliefs have essential ties to their personal identity, they tend to respond to oppositions as threats to their identity and survival. It is observable that taking the absolutist, divisive and non-rational approach mainly adds persuasive force to some beliefs in order to sacralise them as part of one's religious identity. These violence-prone qualities of absolutism, divisiveness and nonrationality mutually reinforce one another in a way that sustains the spiral of violence; unless there is a break in the chain of reinforcement. For instance when one makes a non-rational claim such as "mask kills" or "black is evil" and gives this claim an absolutist religious character, it takes the form of a religious conspiracy such as "mask is diabolical" or "the devil is black" which characteristically divides between proponents and opponents who disagree with each other on this view with passionate zeal as though it concerns their most basic identity. On the other hand, when people are so passionate about some views, they tend to become divisive and less critical in expressing them; even when they appear to be unintelligible, and they are likely to ideologize these beliefs in absolutist ways that constantly invigorate their passionate zeal. Hence, just as absolutized non-rational claims breed division with passionate zeal, passionately held views are not likely subjected to rational scrutiny but most likely to be divisive and absolutized. This mutual reinforcement reveals a cycle of incendiary tendencies that can lead to violence. This is true because, "absolute claims do not admit of compromise or negotiation; divisive identities make empathy or even impartiality difficult; and passionate beliefs often burst the bounds of rational self-control."[835] What religion brings to this cycle of mutually reinforcing tendencies is the element of identity and ultimate meaning which gives the issue a stronger ontological character that pushes people to

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[835] James Bernard Murphy, "Religious Violence: Myth or Reality? A Symposium on William T. Cavanaugh's The Myth of Religious Violence", *Political Theology*, Vol. 15 No. 6, November, 2014, 480.

fight as though their being and survival depends on these issues. Thus, there are empirical evidences that these qualities when veiled in religious colours have fomented a great deal of violence.

At the level of conceptual analysis, these persuasive qualities of religious belief seem to likely present religion as lacking epistemic rationality. But this is never the case. Thus it is epistemically rational to evaluate a religion. This enables us to know how intelligible the objects of our beliefs are as well as how misplaced our faith in them can be. According to Ballard "faith can be misplaced" if its propositional object is "false", "bad" or "neutral". For him, there are two independent standards of determining the objective fittingness between faith and its object namely: It is epistemically rational to evaluate a religion. This enables us to know how intelligible the objects of our beliefs are as well as how misplaced our faith in them can be. When Ballard spoke of misplaced faith as having false or bad or neutral propositional object, he acknowledged that there are two independent standards of determining the objective fittingness between faith and its object namely: (a) Factual Fittingness: Faith that-p is fitting, only if p is true. (b) Evaluative Fittingness: Faith that-p is fitting, only if p is good. He also applied the same conditions to the task of determining the epistemic rationality of religious faith, namely: Factual Rationality and Evaluative rationality. Factual Rationality: Faith that-p is epistemically rational, only if it is epistemically rational to in some way affirm that-p. And Evaluative Rationality: Faith that-p is epistemically rational, only if it is epistemically rational to in some way regard p as good. This is to show that evaluative rationality is very crucial for determining the epistemic rationality of religion. Of course according to what he calls *Universal Generalization*, any evaluative attitude that can satisfy the evaluative condition on faith is assessable for epistemic rationality.[836] Suffice it to say that the epistemic rationality of the concept of religious violence reveals the evaluative conditions that make religion a subject of moral analysis.

It should be acknowledged that the way people practice their religion is significantly subject to moral evaluation. This is because, "to ask why we are religious the way we are evokes moral questions about human action and motivation, freedom and decision making, and human interaction and self-other relations."[837] Religion is not morality, but morality reflects on the practice of religion, analyses the value of the actions and attends to the reasons for which these religious actions are undertaken, by subjecting religion to careful scrutiny to

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[836] Ballard, "The Rationality of Faith", 215-217.
[837] Steffen, Holy War, 47.

know why people practice their religious beliefs the way they do and the implications of these reasons. Religious violence is considered to be an action undertaken in the process of religious belief. Hence the whole issue of violence in religion is more of a moral issue than religious one. This is because most of those who engage in the act of violence in the name of religion position themselves as responding to a value. That is why the axiomoral aspect of this analysis remains prevalent. Religiously motivated terrorists justify their acts of violence with values they consider to be proud of projecting or protecting. Some justify their killings as meaningful response and reaction to the perception that their cultural and identity characteristics are under the threat of decline or extinction as a result of sudden contact with different ideologies. There are those who hold onto ancient hatred and prejudices as justifications for violence against those they call religious enemies. When Muslims carry out anti-Christian violence to express their animosity and vengeance for the loss they suffered during the crusades, they revive past grievances and rivalries as values worth fighting for.

The obligation to uphold the faith and carry out the violent imperatives of hard texts of the scriptures is often referred to as valuable reason for radicalization and extremism. Those who express extremist and fundamentalist views about the faith consider themselves as professing the pure version of the religion and so feel obligated and passionate to confront any challenge to their parochial ideologies. Some of these ideologues get obsessed with apocalyptic and messianic views as they consider themselves privileged and valuable combatants of salvation and end-time battle, the Armageddon. These ideologies spur believers to embrace a sort of missionary spirit that calls for martyrdom as a passionate strategy for defending the faith. The culture of martyrdom and suicide attacks gained momentum especially in contemporary times but are better regarded as self-sacrifice rather than suicide in order to accord it some spiritual justification even if the actual motives are not religious. Life is a great value but they are willing to sacrifice this value to protect a higher value of religious faith and identity. However it is good to acknowledge that those who justify suicide in the guise of martyrdom do not do justice to what dying for faith clearly entails, because you cannot turn yourself into a "holy" weapon for killing others or indulge in a religious suicide (killing oneself for faith), and still claim the glorious prize of holy martyrdom (being killed for faith). The evil of religious suicide cannot translate to mean the noble task of self-sacrifice in Martyrdom which demonstrates spiritual superiority against evil through offering of one's lives to save others. Suicide missionaries merely demonstrate their fears against oppositions by using their lives to harm others. That is why the culture of

religious suicide cannot be justified with the theology of holy martyrdom. It is good to note that some of the motivations for religious suicide are socio-economic and ethno-political. That is why against the view of those who think that the solution to violence is to abolish religion and replace it with non-religious ideologies, it is clear that in spite of religion's spotty historical record, non-religion and anti-religion has not fared better. Most totalitarian massacres, genocides, concentration camps and gulags were effected by non-religious institutions. We find suicide bombers among psychopaths, ethno-nationalists and religious fanatics.

A lot of explanations have been given to the monstrous acts of violence committed in the name of religion. But the reality that violence is part of man's social expression of disagreement shows that the issue is more about human attitudes and actions. Some of these dehumanizing acts are attributed to psychopathy, hate or aggression. But the fact that religion always stands for the peaceful and non-violent actions demonstrates that dehumanization is not necessarily a product of aggression or psychopathy, it can be caused by numbness of moral sensitivity. Baumeister, in his psychological approach to the issue noted that the evil of violence is like "the myth of pure evil" that can be done by people of all kinds in a way that makes it look normal. This normalization of dehumanization is evident in the evil of religious violence, which as a matter of fact is not an exclusive reserve for monsters but can be perpetrated by people who are mostly ordinary in response to certain circumstances. The depersonalising impact of violence on moral behaviour shows that it is possible for a self-conscious violent action to be imbued with moral insensitivity. Milgram and Zimbardo in their separate psychological experiments set out to prove the idea that you don't need to be a monster or psychopath to commit an extreme evil and still feel normal or even justifiably good about it. This is evident in the analysis of the various depersonalising atrocities in human history like the slave trade, the holocaust, the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides, where the respectable moral maxims and the religious principles that guide social behaviour and human conscience were deactivated by the passion to hurt and kill. Arendt discussed this under the phrase, "banality of evil" when she describes Eichmann's attitude as 'terrifyingly normal'. Bauman described this as moral blindness: a loss of sensitivity caused by the adiaphorizing impacts of the liquefying social systems of the modern culture. Von Hildebrand sees it as value blindness which neutralizes the value-responding capacity in the human agent, making him insensitive to moral values and capable of perpetrating monstrous evil with frightening normality. For Sacks, what makes a normal religious person participate

in such extreme evil in the name of a good God can be attributed to a "pathological dualism" that interprets the self-other relationship as a binary opposition between "Us" and "them", which leads to altruistic evil with depersonalising consequences. Suffice it to say that our perception of values determines the way we treat one another.

We must be keen to acknowledge that the quality of man's response to moral values reveals his attitude and sensitivity towards some moral actions. The whole discussion on religion and violence highlights the centrality of moral values in the intersubjectivity of persons. The idea of religious violence appears to be counterintuitive to known religious values and principles that promote peace and nonviolence. But we cannot win the war against violence in religion without considering those axiomoral elements that make violence an option for religious people. This is because, the various issues that characterises religious violence has a lot to do with the moral dynamics of personal identity and identification within the context of human relations. It must be acknowledged therefore that those who resort to religious terrorism as a means of expressing dominance or resistance have issues with the personalistic norm; their axiological cognition of man which is central to their moral experience is vitiated. Von Hildebrand speaks of the unifying ability of values to engender community among persons. One's perception of moral values plays a very important role in the relationship between "One" and "Others". And this relationship reflects the dynamics of human affectivity which determines the way we act towards others. There is always an axiomoral characteristic in human relationships that demands valuing the other as a person-in-himself even in situations of disagreements. This is the crux of the personalistic norm which stems from the golden rule that is central to the beliefs of every religious tradition. But those who participate in religious violence do not consider the golden rule as a general principle when they undermine the personal dignity of those they hurt.

Wierzbicki is right in his claim that the affirmation of the dignity of all human persons is an axiological truth that extols non-violence as a condition and a crucial test of genuine personalism.[838] This personalistic view presupposes the qualitative character of personal affectivity in human relations. Wojtyla speaks of participation which reveals a sphere of internal experience of the other in oneself and in others, realising a community of one-an[d]-other. He argues that "the person is fulfilled by participation and degraded by alienation" because community provides an axiomoral influence in the constitution of a full person. The heart is at the centre of this faculty of affectivity that determines the way and

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[838] Wierzbicki, *The Ethics of Struggle*, 188.

manner we relate with and treat others either as neighbour or enemy or nothing. The heart is the core of this sphere and since the relationship between "One" and "Other" is an affective experience the heart is central to the personalistic norm. It manifests the affective value responses that revere the dignity of the human person. It is the heart's affectivity that governs the way we fraternize or otherize. When we say "a man is heartless" we portray him as lacking in basic expression of affective value response which manifests in acts of wickedness, insensitivity or hate. Such a person can "otherize" by considering and treating another person or group of persons as essentially different from or alien to himself. Hence the term "heartless otherization" connotes an attitude of insensitivity which stems from a deficient affective value response that results in viewing or treating the "Other"—in a very negative way—as intrinsically not possessing the same human value as "oneself." It captures the internal numbness in one's "centre of affectivity" which manifests externally in viewing and treating another in an undignifying way. This experience reemphasizes in a unique way what Arendt calls "banality of evil", what von Hildebrand calls value blindness, what Bauman calls moral blindness and what Sacks refers to as "pathological dualism." It makes us understand that violence in every form, especially when committed in the name of a good course like religion, usually commands a vitiating effect on one's affectivity and of course moral sensitivity. It is not a surprise that, "the cruellest thing about cruelty is that it dehumanizes its victims before it destroys them. And the hardest of struggles is to remain human in inhuman conditions."[839]

But this moral defect is not a death sentence to religion, human affectivity or morality. The challenges that heartless otherization pose to the acting agent is to make his value judgement void of loyalty to the truth about the good, especially in his relationship with the other who is different. Under this condition, a religious terrorist does not see in his actions the moral characteristic of important-in-itself because he has no positive affectivity towards his victim and does not care about the harm his actions inflict on him whose personal value has diminished or vanished as a result of the motivating passion of the violence. The African traditionalist philosophy of communalism offers a safe corridor for a rediscovery of the sense of belonging that is missing from this moral attitude that makes normal people perpetrate monstrous evil even in the name of God. The African communalist philosophy stems from the closely-knitted community-centred system of traditionalist African society whereby every individual person recognises his/her identity within a tightly organized structure of

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[839] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 208.

commonly shared life founded on the basic kinship of belongingness. In this system, the community exists for the individual and the individual exists for the community. In the context of traditional African ethics, the individual is made to be always conscious of the social consequences of his violent actions against another and to recognise the axiomoral characteristics of human actions in the spirit of "live and let live" and "I am because we are." This moral philosophy advocates for the need to reinforce the organic character of communitarian spirit that considers the moral relevance of every human action from the perspective of the personalistic morality and collective responsibility created by the dialectical relationship between person and community. This African moral "gestalt" of communalism indicates that in so far as the religious believer prioritises the centrality of the human person in his actions towards others the qualitative character of his affectivity would diminish every tendency towards violence and make him realise that acts of violence have essentially moral consequences than religious. By so doing, the religious believer would not be easily drawn to violence, he would rather become a nonviolent ethical warrior fighting against every form of cruelty in the name of God of compassion. "As an ethical warrior therefore, he "must avoid getting crushed between falling in love with the power and thrill of destruction and death dealing and falling into numbness to the horror…. Instead he will have to break away from this conditioned numbness,"[840] by opening up to a "self-other" relationship that correlates with heightened tolerance of both in-group and out-group members, and by practicing the faith with an inclusive moral disposition that is rooted in the golden rule that enables every believer to profess the faith with a personalistic morality that is void of heartless otherization. When this is realised, the religious "One" would thus confess; "I am now in relation to both the team and the enemy. I now think of what was "the enemy" as human beings, so I find it hard to crow about burning them to death."[841]

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[840] Marlantes, *What it is Like*, 61.
[841] Marlantes, 41-42.

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