



THE MEANING OF 'TERRORISM' AND 'EXTREMISM'¹

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[Q]: “We often hear about certain terms such as ‘terrorism’ and ‘extremism,’ and anybody and everybody speaks about this (now). Therefore, what is the correct criterion in regards to this - that is, for the meaning of these terms? Or expressed in another way, when does a person become a terrorist or an extremist?”

[A]: “Extremism is the taking of concessions for which there is no basis or truth. Whereas, terrorism is to transgress upon people by way of unjustly striking or killing them, with no proof (to justify these actions); rather (these actions are committed) upon ignorance and dearth of insight; they are the terrorists who kill people unjustly, without any evidence from the *Sharee'ah*. Thus, they change people's (state of) security, and they cause problems between them and between their countries; those are the terrorists.

As for those who enjoin good and forbid evil according to their ability, then that is not from terrorism... As for the one who cannot (do this), he should do this verbally, (such as by saying) “O servant of Allaah, fear Allaah... This is not permissible for you to do... This is binding upon you to do.” (This should be done) with virtuous speech, and in a good manner, as the Most High said:

¹ Taken from a cassette entitled: *Fataawaa al-'Ulamaa' fil-Jihaad wal-'Amaliyyaat al-Intihaariyyah wal-Irhaab* (See: Muhammad ibn Fahd al-Husayn, *Al-Fataawaa ash-Shar'iyyah fil-Qadaayaa al-'Asriyyah*, *Fahrasah Maktabah al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyyah athnaa' an-Nashr*, p.77-78.)

﴿ ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِّ لِهِمْ بِآلَتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ﴾

“Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in the best way.” [Sooratun-Nahl, 16:125]

And He, the Most High said:

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ﴾

“And by the Mercy of Allaah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you.”

[Soorah Aali-Imraan, 3:159]

If he is unable (to do this), then he should hate the evil in his heart, and should avoid being present at evil places. Those who strike or kill people without any proof from the *Sharee'ah*; they are the terrorists; the ones who spread corruption. They are the ones who diminish security and corrupt societies.

However, a person should not change this evil with his hand, unless he has the authorisation to do so from the authorities. Otherwise, he should bring the affair to (their attention) if he sees something objectionable and he does not have the authority (to change it); he raises the affair to the authorities. Nevertheless, he should advise them, calling to Allaah, and by encouraging people to do good and dissuading them from evil... May Allaah grant us all success.”

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