3 The Worldviews of Islam, Islamism and Islamist Extremism

Islam, Islamism and Islamist Extremism are all internally-coherent, self-contained Worldviews

In the previous chapters, we looked at how the 'presence of the past' is formative of the Islamic attitudes and values that are shaping the world today.

The contention of this chapter is that Islam-derived theologies and Islamist ideologies, which are the contemporary product of the historical and theological processes outlined in the previous chapter, form identifiably different 'Worldviews'. That is to say, they are unified ways-of-being in the world[1] together with ways-of-knowing the world,[2] "in which knowledge and action are knit-up together, and organized into a single view of life and the nature of the universe."[3]

Contemporary Islam-derived theologies and ideologies are internally coherent Worldviews, which cohere internally by the logic of their whole even if they by no means cohere according to external intellectual and social criteria. In philosophical language, they are 'totalities' which require commitment from the Muslim believer in his/her attempt to believe, think and act in a coherent, unified way. Each Worldview has its own theoretical perspectives and suggests a particular way of being-in-the-world. These ways-of-being in the world will range from the personally and socially benign to the personally and socially malign and yet, crucially, they will serve and substantiate and reinforce the Worldview from which this behavior is derived.

The idea of a Worldview

The philosophical idea of a Worldview – Weltanschauung – is derived from nineteenth-century German theological-philosophy and became a feature of the thought of luminaries such as GWF Hegel (1770–1831 CE), Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855 CE) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900 CE). According to Orr (1893), a person's Worldview has a theoretical and practical aspect. Theologically, philosophically and psychologically, the human

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1 Known academically as 'ontologies'.
2 Known academically as 'epistemologies'.
3 Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 15.

mind is unsatisfied by un-integrated, fractured, piecemeal knowledge, but seeks coherence and integrity in its understanding of reality.

> *Worldviews are generated by the mind's aspiration to a unified comprehension of the universe, drawing together facts, laws, generalisations and answers to ultimate questions.*[4]

Practically, Worldviews are generated by the need of humans to live according to a (relatively) consistent response to the world around them, including nature, other people and the transcendent dimensions, if they are to sustain a believable and coherent idea of the Self.

The second key aspect of Worldview theory is that, while each individual must of necessity live and act according to their Worldview to sustain their sense of Self, even if at times with a knowing inconsistency or tension, Worldviews are also shared by collectives such as families and nations. In his explication of Worldview in the thought of Hegel, Vincent McCarthy states:[5]

> *Thus a Worldview is a general shared view which one acquires automatically by participation in the times and society which one forms with one's fellows . . . a worldview is the understanding from apprehending the unfolding of Spirit in the exterior world.*

Critically, in this notion of collective Worldview, a particular Worldview can be absorbed unconsciously by an individual-as-part-of-a collective and indeed the collective quality of a Worldview is essential to its nature as a Worldview – Weltanschauung – rather than merely a view-of-the-world. Thus, for example, the majority of citizens recognize and obey the law, usually not due to an analytical decision about the law's innate justice, but because we are enculturated unquestioningly into a law-abiding Worldview, together with an awareness of the penalties involved in breaking the law.

Embedded within this Hegelian notion of Worldview is the notion that Worldviews have an often unarticulated philosophical substratum that makes all Worldviews, to some extent, philosophical Worldviews.[6] Thus, according to the Belgian philosopher Leo Apostel (1925–1995), a Worldview is a descriptive model of the nature of the world[7] which is comprised of these six elements:[8]

1   An ontological explanation of the nature of the world
2   A futurology, answering the question "Where are we heading?" both in and after this life

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4   Naugle, *Worldview*, p. 9.
5   McCarthy, *The Phenomenology of Moods in Kierkegaard*, p. 136.
6   Vidal, 'What Is a Worldview?'.
7   I.e. an ontology.
8   Vidal, 'What Is a Worldview?'.

3   An ethical framework: "How should we behave?"
4   A praxeology or theory of action: "How should we attain our goals?"
5   An epistemology, or theory of knowledge: "What is true and false?"
6   An etiology: a Worldview should contain an account of its own 'building blocks', of its origins and construction.

These combined 'Worldview components'[9] allow us to integrate as many elements of our experience as possible into a unified understanding of the universe.

Islam, Islamism and Islamist Extremism as Worldviews

This model of the Worldview that draws together facts (and factions), laws, norms, generalizations, answers to ultimate questions and suggests particular behaviors provides the philosophical framework for understanding the differences between different religious phenomena which, on the surface, all look and sound Islamic and yet, in reality, are very different and have their own distinguishing characteristics. I will delineate and refer to these different phenomena as (see Figure 3.1 and Color Plate 1):

1   **Traditional Islam,** which falls within the general category of **Mainstream Islam.**

This is the Worldview of unity-in-diversity (see page 54) generated by the religious practice of those who accept and follow, to the best of their ability,[10] the basic injunctions of the Qur'an and the Customary Prophetic Behavior (*Sunna*) of the Prophet Muhammad, in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances without their aspiring to effect change in the political space.

2   **Activist Islam,** which falls at the intersection of **Mainstream Islam** and **Islamism.**

This is Mainstream Islam as characterized by diversity-in-unity, practiced at least, in part, to effect both transformative personal change and transformative structural change in the public space according to Islamic principles. It is a type of Islamic Worldview that has existed since the Prophet Muhammad as an integral part of the experience of Islam but has never, to my knowledge, been formally categorized.

3   **Ideological Islamism,** which falls within the category of **Islamism.**

This is the first major category shift from Islam as *religious praxis*[11] to Islam as *revolutionary political ideology* directed at overthrowing, rather than transforming, existing political structures and replacing them with an Islamic State governed by what Islamists regard as Islamic Law (*Sharia*).[12] It is

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 9 Ibid.
10 And notwithstanding the limitless ability of human beings throughout history to make moral and intellectual mistakes and to fall well short of our aspirations and ideals.
11 Praxis, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, is the combined force of belief and practice.
12 Islamism is sometimes called political Islam, which I believe fails the capture the essentially modern ideological nature of Islamism. Islamism is also sometimes called political Islamism,
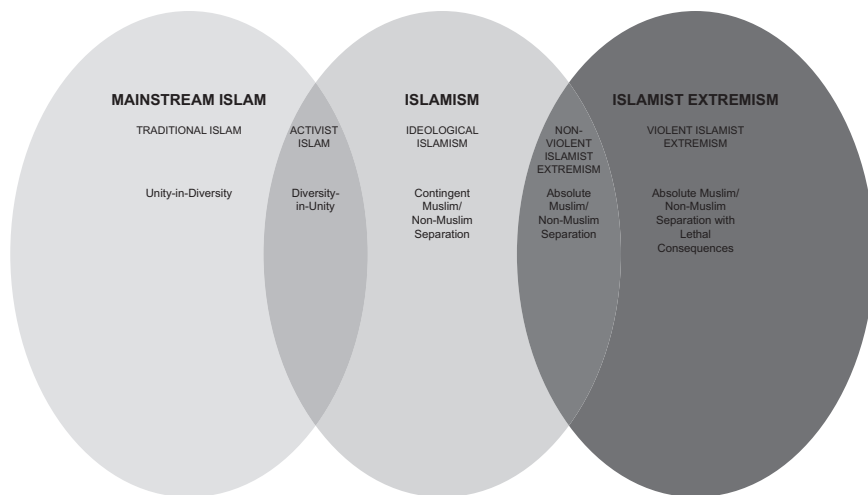
Figure 3.1 Characteristics of the Worldviews of Mainstream Islam, Islamism and Islamist Extremism

For full color version please see Color Plate 2 after Page 5.

characterized by exaggerated separation between Muslim and non-Muslim peoples and ideals, including in the political space.

4 **Non-Violent Islamist Extremism,** which falls at the intersection of **Islamism** and **Islamist Extremism**.

This is Islamist ideology as it sharpens antagonistically into an absolutely divided, Manichean Us vs. Them Worldview that stresses the absolute difference between the 'true' ideological Muslim 'in-group' and the non-Muslim and 'wrong' Muslim 'out-groups', who are afforded a less human or sub-human status.[13] This is the extremist Worldview that begins to suggest that the Islamic State (or equivalent) should be fought into existence.

5 **Violent Islamist Extremism (VIE),** which falls within the category of **Islamist Extremism.**

This is the extreme Manichean Islamist ideology by which the cosmos is constructed as a manifestation of the Eternal Struggle between Islam and Unbelief (*Kufr*). The non-Muslim and 'wrong' Muslim, who do not struggle violently to establish a global Islamic state, are construed as eternal enemies of 'true' Islam and therefore fit to be exterminated.[14]

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which, to my mind, is tautologous and, again, fails to capture the ideological – not political – nature of Islamism.

13 It is sometimes referred to after its principal protagonist Sayyid Qutb as Qutbism.
14 Violent Islamist Extremism is also known popularly as Jihadism or, more academically, as Salafi-Jihadism. The former term runs the risk of conflating what Islamist terrorists do with

Figure 3.1 and Plate 1 suggests that there exist clear qualitative differences – of World-view, including praxis (integrated belief-action) and outcomes in the world – between Mainstream Islam, Islamism and Islamist Extremism. There are also overlapping grey areas between Mainstream Islam and Islamism giving rise to Activist Islam and between Ideological Islamism and Islamist Extremism, giving rise to Non-Violent Islamist Extremism. The reader will note that there are no overlaps, however, between Mainstream Islam and Islamist Extremism.

This does not mean that those people whose Worldview is, on the whole, characterized by Islamist Extremism do not do or say some of the things that Mainstream Muslims do and say – for example, most Islamist Extremists will perform the Obligatory Prayer. Nor does this schema mean that those who follow Islamist Extremist ideologies are not Muslim. They are Muslim insofar as they believe and declare that there is no God except God (Allah) and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. However, contained within this schema is the strong contention that the outlooks and outcomes of the Worldviews of Mainstream Islam and Islamist Extremism in terms of their effects on Self, Other and on the World bear nothing essentially in common.[15]

The Worldview of Mainstream Islam: unity-in-diversity

The fundamental philosophical nature that characterizes the Worldview of Mainstream Islam (in both its Traditional and Activist forms, within the Sunni and Shia traditions) is one of unity-in-diversity. In Mainstream Islam the contingent and apparent difference of the created universe is trumped by its essential unity in its Source: God (Arabic: Allah, the One Worthy of Worship). In the Mainstream Islamic Worldview, differences between objects, people and things are real. Yet

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the noble doctrines of struggling to please God (*Jihad fiy sabilillah*). The latter suggests that Jihadism is connected at the hip to Salafi Islam, which does a grave injustice to the Islam of Mainstream Salafi Muslims.

15 Nor does this schema mean that those who follow extreme Islamist ideologies are not Muslim. They are Muslim in that, and insofar as, they declare that there is no God except God (Allah) and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. They are Muslims insofar as they are sincere in that declaration, but what they follow is not Mainstream.

   In this contention that these phenomena are essentially different, this book also makes a normative claim that is itself not normative to typical academic Islamic Studies: that the beliefs and actions that constitute Mainstream Islam – both Traditional and Activist – Islam are more truly Islamic than those that constitute Ideological Islamism which are, in turn, more truly Islamic than those that constitute Non-Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Islamist extremism, which barely contain any vestige of true Islam at all beyond, perhaps, a basic belief in One God and that Muhammad is the Final Messenger of God.

   In this process of making distinctions, the analogy of the relationship of traditional Labour Party socialism to National Socialism (Nazism) is germane. Both political Worldviews advocate the state taking control of some of the collective means of production, but only Nazism does so on the basis of a racialized Worldview with genocidal tendencies and a war economy. In terms of the outcomes in the world, the outcomes of Labour Party socialism are, amongst other things, the UK National Health Service; the outcome of National Socialism (Nazism) is the Holocaust.

underlying this difference is a more essential unity of being with its source in the Unity of Divine Being.

Essential unity in the Qur'an

Therefore, the most basic principle underlying the Mainstream Islamic Worldview is that the whole universe, as the Creation of God, is essentially one inter-related reality created by One God. This is the most basic Islamic understanding of reality articulated in the Qur'an (e.g. Qur'an 112) and formalized theologically as the doctrine of Divine Unity (*Tawhid*, lit. Things made as One).

The Doctrine of Divine Unity in Mainstream, Traditional Islam

The doctrine of Divine Unity (*Tawhid*) states that God is the unique, sole god of the whole created universe, including every human being who is destined to return to Him to account for his/her actions (e.g. Qur'an 2:156). The fact that the whole of creation has God as its Source and Creator is the determining feature of life on Earth and the unifying fact that underlies the whole of existence. The apparent duality of the universe in, for example, the creation and alternation of night and day and the 'opposition' of the sexes are themselves, in their necessary and intrinsic relationship, signs of the underlying Unity of their Divine Source (Qur'an 3:190). Adam and Eve, for example, are cited by the Qur'an as the father and mother of the whole of humanity which God created "out of clay" (3:59) who, taken together, represent the whole human being.

The primordial unity of humankind is a fundamental philosophical-theological premise of the Qur'an as the Qur'an was sent to all humankind to call us all to belief in One God and to right action. A large part of the Qur'an, for example Qur'an 56:57–74 or 10:45–46, is directed at humankind in general without any distinction being made between believer or non-believer, Muslim or non-Muslim. These General (*'am*) Verses directed at the whole of humanity generally start with the oration, "Oh humanity . . . " and indicate the essential I–Thou relationship that every human being[16] shares with their Creator, God. Furthermore, the essential spiritual covenant that all human beings share with God by dint of being human is specifically alluded to (Qur'an 7:172) as existing even before the existence of created matter.

This is the brother/sisterhood that all human beings share by dint of being from the tribe of Adam (*Banu Adam*). All of us are creatures of God and all of us are accountable before God on the Day of Judgment. In the sense of our essential properties as humans, we all share an essential first-order equality before God regardless of wealth, race, faith or gender (Qur'an 4:1). To exemplify this essential first-order equality, a supplication made by the Prophet Muhammad after every prayer included the statement, "I testify that all your servants are brothers".[17]

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16 Recognized or unrecognized.
17 Al-Qaradawi, *General Characteristics of Islam*.

Although Muslim theologians, philosophers and jurists have differed throughout the centuries of Islam, in the degree to which the Independent Unity of God is differentiated and separated from the dependent unity of His Creation, ranging from the near-monism of some scholars, such as Ibn al-Arabi (1164–1240 CE), to the near-dualism of others, such as Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328 CE), on this aspect of the essential unity of God and humanity they are all, following the General Verses of the Qur'an and the spirit of the *Sunna*, of the Prophet Muhammad agreed.

Real diversity in the Qur'an

Within this essential, first-order unity, Mainstream Islam (Traditional and Activist), following the Qur'an, recognizes natural and necessary diversity:

> *Humanity! We created you from a single man and a single woman and then divided you into races and tribes that you should get to know one another. In God's eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is all knowing, all aware.*
>
> Qur'an 49:13[18]

Thus, the underlying essential unity of existence is also characterized by real, second-order contingent differences. Men and women are different; different nations, countries and tribes exist in the realm of real duality and difference; there exists a plurality of different religions – not everyone is intended by God to be a Muslim (Qur'an 5:48).[19] Nevertheless, these differences are intended by God to be the source of greater mutual understanding and cultural enrichment and as a test to see who is best in action (Qur'an 67:1–2).

Essential unity and real diversity in the Sunna

As the verse above indicates, within this essential created unity it is not our essential properties, e.g. race and sex-gender, that are ultimately our crucial distinguishing features but the moral quality of our behavior. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad's famous last sermon explicitly declared the essential unity and equality of humanity in the eyes of God:

> *Someone who heard the sermon of the Messenger of God in the middle of the days of at-Tashriq narrated to me that he said, "O people! Indeed, your Lord is one and your father [Adam] is one. Indeed, there is no superiority of an Arab over*

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18 My translation of Qur'an is closely based on the M.A.S Abdel Haleem translation (OUP, 2010), which is authorized by Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. Occasionally, I make my own translation of some words if I think that they can be rendered more felicitously in contemporary English.

19 The Qur'an (22:40) explicitly recognizes that churches, synagogues and mosques are all places in which God is legitimately worshipped.

a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by awareness of God. Have I conveyed the message?" They replied, "You have conveyed it, Messenger of God!"[20]

In this sermon the Prophet Muhammad was clear that second-order difference is real but morally neutral, and the quality of ethical behavior is what distinguishes people from each other in the Reality of God.

Mainstream Islamic praxis: the marriage of belief and practice

If the Worldview of Mainstream, Traditional Islam in its myriad denominational manifestations is characterized philosophically by unity-in-diversity, it is also characterized in practice by a necessary unity and consistency of practice and belief. I have termed this unity and consistency of belief and practice as religious seriousness.[21]

Religious seriousness in Mainstream Islam

Mainstream Islam has, from its earliest manifestation by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, been characterized, as a Worldview, by religious seriousness in the connection between religion and outcomes in the world generated by the balanced and inseparable partnership of practice and belief.[22]

In the Qur'an belief and practice are united in intrinsic and inseparable partnership. The phrase used to characterize believers, "Those who believe and do right acts" (e.g. Qur'an, 2: 82–83) is the most repeated of all Qur'anic refrains.[23] The Arabic pronoun for 'and' (*wa*) in this Qur'anic motif indicates an intrinsic partnership, like father-son, not an extrinsic relationship.[24] That is to say, belief and right action in the Qur'an exist in a relationship of essential mutual interdependence where right action is the necessary and natural corollary of sound belief, and sound belief is necessarily reinforced by right action.

Religious seriousness in the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad

The literature recording the actions and words of the Prophet Muhammad is also replete with sayings that show how religious seriousness – a united praxis of belief and action – is an essential characteristic of the Mainstream, Traditional Islamic Worldview in practice.

20 Sahih Al-Bukhari 1623, 1626, 6361; Hadith no. 19774, Masnud of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal.
21 Religious seriousness – seriousness (r) – is modeled on the type of philosophical seriousness – seriousness (p) – advocated by the contemporary philosophy of Critical Realism.
     'Serious' in the Critical Realist and philosophical sense means that your practices and behavior are consistent with your knowledge and belief.
22 There exist multiple occasions, of course, throughout the history of Islam when this balance has not been maintained.
23 Sherif, *A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an*.
24 'Iyad, *Foundations of Islam*.

For example, the companion of Muhammad, Abu Hurairah (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet Muhammad said:

> *Let him who believes in God and the Last day, either speak good or keep silent, and let him who believes in God and the Last Day be generous to his neighbour, and let him who believes in God and the Last Day be generous to his guest.*[25]

In each phrase the connection between belief and sound action is seamless; right action is the inevitable outcome, corollary and proof of sound belief. Conversely, wrong action, such as an absence of practical compassion, is proof enough that the beliefs underpinning it are flawed and unreal, as shown by the famous Prophetic saying:

> *He is not one of us [i.e. a believer] who does not show tenderness to the young and who does not show respect to the elderly.*[26]

The determining feature of human relationships

Thus, in the Worldview of Mainstream, Traditional Islam, the quality of Islam as a religious faith is determined by the subjective quality of Muslims' inter-human relationships.

> *Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. Those who are righteous are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the Angels, the Scriptures, and the Prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travellers, and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and in times of danger. Those are the ones who are true, and it is they who are aware of God.*
>
> (Qur'an, 2:177)

In this passage sound belief and ethical behavior constitute a united 'praxis' – that is a unity of practice and belief – that is both the product of and indicative of true awareness of God.

Similarly, in Chapter 23 of the Qur'an, The Believers, those who believe are characterized as those who *do* or who abstain from *doing* certain actions rather than as those who know or believe certain things:

> *The believers are successful, those who pray humbly; those who avoid idle gossip; those who pay the prescribed alms; those who guard their chastity except with spouses. . . Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their contracts, and who keep up their prayers. They will be the heirs of Paradise.*
>
> (Qur'an, 23: 1–11)

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25 Narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari 6136.
26 Narrated in at-Tirmidhi.

Likewise, Unbelief or false belief is shown, Qur'anically speaking, within the Mainstream Islamic Worldview to be unserious precisely because it tends to be manifest as faulty, unkind and anti-social outcomes in the world.

This idea is shown in exemplary fashion in the Chapter of Small Kindnesses (*Surat al-Ma'un*):

> *Have you considered the person who denies the Covenant with God (deen); this the person who pushes aside the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the destitute. So woe to those who pray, but are heedless of their their prayer; those who are all show and yet who refuse common kindnesses.*
>
> (Qur'an 107: 1–7)

This beautiful and much-loved Meccan chapter describes the outcomes and proof of an unserious relationship with God – both an outright rejection of Him and a hypocritical relationship – as malign social behavior in the rejection of the claims of the most vulnerable in society to compassion and support. The defining quality of false belief is the neglect of the small acts of kindness that lubricate the social mechanics of civilized life.

Mainstream, Traditional Islamic ethics: balance between worship and well-being

When beliefs are uncoupled from social responsibility and right action, they become religiously 'unserious'. They also undermine a core aim within the Mainstream Islamic Worldview to achieve multi-faceted balance and to strike the median position between opposites that exist on a continuum.[27] The Qur'anic verses and Prophetic sayings cited previously as examples of religious seriousness indicate that there exists in Mainstream Islam an essential balance between two basic related core purposes:

1 Worship: God Almighty is worshipped and obeyed.
2 Human well-being: human life is protected and flourishes.

The Religion of Islam is called in Arabic *Deen* al-Islam. The word *Deen* means 'a life transaction' between the Creator and the created. The Worldview of Mainstream Islam as *deen* is structured around unified pairs of concepts, duties and ideas in the Qur'an that reflect these core related purposes of worship and well-being:

Therefore, the entirety of Islam as a Worldview represents a balance of these elements. The Qur'an is clear:

> *Thus We have made you a middle community.*
>
> (Qur'an, 2:143)

27 Michot, *Ibn Taymiyya*.

Table 3.1 Worship and Well-Being

Worship		Well-Being
God	and	His Prophet(s)
Allah		*Rusul*
Next World	and	This World
Akhira		*Dunya*
Belief	and	Right Action
Iman		*Amal salih*
Prayer	and	Poor Tax
Salah		*Zakah*
Rules of Worship	and	Rules of Social Life
'Ibadat		*Mu'amalat*

'Middle' in this verse, according to traditional commentators, means a nation that represents the center point-of-view between extremes.[28] And this center-point includes, according to the primary sources of Islam and its derivative legal infrastructure, the avoidance of extremes, even in acts of goodness and worship according to Prophetic sayings such as:

> *Never be extreme regarding religion. Many nations have been destroyed before you only because of going to extremes in religion.*[29]

> *Abu Hurairah, may God be pleased with him, relates that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "This religion is easy. No one becomes harsh and strict in the religion without it overwhelming him. So fulfill your duties as best you can and rejoice. Rely upon the efforts of the morning and the evening and a little at night and you will reach your goal."*[30]

Mainstream Islam, as a Worldview characterized by unity-in-diversity, is representative of a balance between the realities and rights of God, of humanity and of nature, of this Life and the Next Life, of the individual and the collective, including family and society. Extremes of anything, even of the actions that please God, let alone acts that may harm others, do not fit into the Mainstream Islamic Worldview as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, honed and preserved by centuries of Islamic praxis and scholarship and as understood by millions of Muslims of different theological denominational colors today.

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28 Ibid.
29 Narrated in Sunan Ibn Majah.
30 Narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari.

The Worldview of Activist Islam: diversity-in-unity

This understanding of the nature of Being as unity-in-diversity, together with a praxis of religious seriousness and an ethic of moderation and balance that characterizes the Traditional Islamic Worldview, also characterizes the Worldview of Mainstream, Activist Islam. In addition, in Mainstream, Activist Islam there is acknowledgement, derived from the primary sources of the Qur'an and reflected in its jurisprudential derivatives in the Schools of Law, that imbalance, inequality and injustice also exist as a component of created duality in the world and that these things sometimes demand change.

Indeed, there is no doubt that a commitment to personal and structural change can form a key component of a Mainstream Islamic Worldview. The Qur'an (13:11) advocates transformative (rather than revolutionary) change in a way that explicitly gives primacy to personal/agentic change over structural/institutional change in the cause of changing the status quo:

> *God does not change the state of a people until they change what is in themselves.*

Change of the world in the Qur'anic message begins with transformation of the Self.

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad advocated challenging and changing wrongdoing in the famous hadith:

> *On the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may God be pleased with him) who said: "I heard the Messenger of God (God's peace and blessing be upon him) say,*
> *"Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith."*[31]

It is this Mainstream Islamic Worldview, when it is imbued with the ethos of change, which I delineate as 'Activist Islam'. It is a recognized feature of the Worldview of Mainstream Islam that when wrongdoing, imbalances of wealth and power, or absences of peace and justice exist,[32] it is a corollary of the same Worldview of unity-in-diversity, seriousness and balance as outlined previously that the believer should be the agent of necessary change.

Activist Muslims, such as many of the groups representing the Muslim community in the UK – e.g. TellMama, The Muslim Women's Network UK and

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31 Narrated in Sahih Muslim.
32 At the levels of the embodied self, interpersonal relations, institutional relations and in human transaction with nature.

the Muslim Council of Britain, – also operate on the premise of the essential unity of humanity as stipulated by the primary sources of Islam: the Qur'an and the sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad. This Mainstream Worldview of unity-in-diversity, religious seriousness and a commitment to transformative change can be seen, for example, in the press releases of the Muslim Council of Britain[33] in the advocacy of Muslim participation on religious grounds in causes, such as combating climate change, in which the well-being of all are implicated.

Muslims Make Joint Declaration to Fight Climate Change

18th August 2015

The Islamic Climate Declaration released today calls on 1.6 billion Muslims to work towards phasing out fossil fuel use, as a religious duty to fight climate change. It also calls on all leaders and politicians to do their part for a better future for all.

In common with all the Abrahamic faiths, Islam considers mankind to be stewards of resources endowed by Allah. This implies responsible stewardship of these resources. In particular this leads to the avoidance of asraf (abuse) of God-given resources.

In this context Islamic investments and activities have to have a moral and ethical framework. This clearly lays the foundation of protection of the environment as a key requirement.

Given Islam's emphasis on equality and justice, the present order of predatory capture of global ecological capital would be challenged. Although climate impacts in the UK dwarf those of countries on the front lines, greater heat wave related mortality, flood-induced pauperization and drought are realities for which we will all be preparing.

British Muslims can respond to climate change in a countless number of ways. We would urge caution over public relations-orientated work in this sector, as it is seldom sustainable and recommend genuine grass roots dialogue, creativity and negotiation. Citizens might be moved to become supporters of the community energy agenda and neighborhood-led climate-safeguarding activity.

Dr. Shuja Shafi, Secretary General of the MCB said, "We are encouraged by the Pope's recent encyclical on climate justice and look forward to joining hands and hearts with our sisters and brothers in different faiths to explore each other's ecological traditions and challenge the systems of inequality that endanger humans and non-humans on our common home."

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33 Muslim Council of Britain, 'Muslims Make Joint Declaration to Fight Climate Change | Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)'.

Nevertheless, it is in the nature of community representation and of highlighting the particular contribution that Muslims can make to general causes that Activist Muslims tend to emphasize and justify second-order cultural-religious difference between Muslim and non-Muslim as a difference that is worthy of recognition and respect.

For this reason, I have characterized the Worldview of Activist Islam as one of **diversity-in-unity**. According to this Activist Islamic Worldview, heedlessness of God and the arrogance and prejudices of the human ego, when it is out of line with the spirit, cause political and social injustices that need addressing through peaceful, active engagement with political structures and agencies.

This Worldview characterized by diversity-in-unity in which the particular characteristics and needs of the Muslim community are thematized and given prominence can also be observed, for example, in a press release on the burkini ban by the Mayor of Cannes issued by the Muslim Women's Network UK.[34]

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24 August 2016

Media statement

Banning of Burkinis on Beaches – standing against patriarchy in all its forms

We at Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) are deeply disturbed about the continued banning of the Burkini – an item of clothing some women are choosing to wear on the beach and whilst swimming. The banning sadly highlights the increasing anti-Muslim sentiment across Europe which is clearly at the core of these ludicrous decisions.

While it is true that many countries are at risk of terror attacks, how can the enforcement of dress code, specifically women's dress, lessen such risk? Instead, what it does do is further marginalise minority Muslim communities and works against community integration and cohesion.

To be clear, the Mayor of Cannes' ruling states:

- "Access to beaches and for swimming is banned to any person wearing improper clothes that are not respectful of good morals and secularism."
- "Beachwear which ostentatiously displays religious affiliation, when France and places of worship are currently the target of terrorist attacks, is liable to create risks of disrupting public order."

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34 Muslim Women's Network UK, 'Banning of Burkinis on Beaches – Standing Against Patriarchy in all its Forms'.

- The infringement is punishable with a fine of €38 (£33).
- The ban remains in place until 31 August 2016.

MWNUK Executive Director, Faeeza Vaid said: "Just as the mayor of Cannes described the Burkini as 'a uniform that is the symbol of Islamist extremism', I argue that his ban is secular extremism, and actually gives ammunition to Islamists. As a women's rights activist, I question how can it be okay in 2016 to dictate to women what they wear? Let's be clear: it is NOT okay – and is an abuse of current French laws."

Historically, a number of factors have influenced dress code including: class, ethnicity, work, country of origin and residency, climate, religious interpretations, politics and of course fashion. And as we can see in the photograph above [not included], in many contexts there have existed self-appointed enforcers (most often male) of such dress codes, who validate their patriarchal thinking through law and/or threats of actions, like monetary fines. At the core of these decisions is the control of women's autonomy.

MWNUK urge all human rights activists to stand equally against this direct discrimination of Muslim women, as we would stand for the rights of all women to wear what they choose.

If you, or anyone you know, is being subjected to anti-Muslim hatred, bullying and intimidation, you can call the MWN Helpline for advice on 0800 999 5786. Anyone who fears for their safety should contact the police immediately.

A similar appeal to human rights on the Mainstream Islamic principle of essential human equality and the need for equal treatment can be seen in this article of the Anti Hate Crime charity TellMama:[35]

How could Bob Blackman MP host an anti-Muslim extremist in Parliament?

by TellMAMA | Oct 25, 2017 | News, Opinions |

Serious questions have to be asked! In today's world, due diligence around people, organisations and what they have previously said, are the norm, to ensure that extremists have no platform or legitimisation in the eyes of the public. Yet, on October 18th in Committee Room 12, Bob Blackman hosted Tapan Ghosh, a well-known anti-Muslim extremist in the mother of democratic structures.

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35 TellMAMA. 'How Could Bob Blackman MP Host an Anti-Muslim Extremist in Parliament?'.

How Bob Blackman hosted, and thereby validated Mr. Ghosh, is yet to be looked into, though what makes matters even more unpalatable is that Blackman is a member of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) committee. One of the functions of DCLG is to ensure the integration of communities and to ensure that British values of tolerance are protected, maintained and built upon. How Blackman, who sits on this Committee, could not be aware of Ghosh's anti-Muslim hatred is deeply concerning. For example, Ghosh has spoken about controlling the birth rate of Muslims, praised the genocide of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and even suggested that Muslims should be forced to leave their religion if they come to a western country. Simply put, would the latter view then apply to other faiths or just to Muslims? It is pretty clear that Mr. Ghosh was the 'intolerant' in an event called 'Tolerating the Intolerant'.

Mr. Ghosh's militancy based on his skewed views of Muslims also extended to the creation of a 'Hindu Defence Force' which he allegedly set up in response to 'Muslim violence'. In a Twitter post that the *Times* reported on, Ghosh even stated that,

> "Backwardness is the most powerful 'weapon' of Islam. Rohingyas are glaring example."

This is who Bob Blackman MP hosted and, in doing so, legitimised.

What Do We Call For?

We are calling for the following:

- That Parliament's Sergeant-at-Arms open up a formal investigation into how Ghosh came to be in Parliament and that some serious questions be asked of Bob Blackman MP. The investigation should then be published as a learning tool for other MPs.
- That Blackman be removed from the DCLG Committee that he sits on, until he can explain his actions and apologise for hosting an anti-Muslim extremist in our country's Parliament.
- That all MPs and their offices receive a notice from the Sergeant-at-Arms regarding undertaking due diligence checks on speakers whom they invite in.
- That Blackman contact us and meet with a Rohingya refugee, to listen first hand at the appalling genocide that has been conducted against this defenceless people by Burma's military junta, which itself has been legitimised by Aung Saan Su Kyi.

We leave you with this thought. Just imagine if an Islamist extremist had been hosted in Parliament by an MP. Today's newspapers would, rightly, splash the story all over their front pages. Exactly how is this different?

Essential to the Worldview of Activist Islam is the fact that – in alignment with the model of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community – religious commitment and the necessary requirements of Islam *qua* a serious religious praxis are a necessary predicate for sound political engagement. Politics serves the religious rights of Muslim believers and not vice versa. Political structures, *whatever their complexion*, according to an Activist Islamic Worldview, are benign insofar as they create, enable or at least permit the institutional and social conditions for the core purposes of Islam, namely worship of God and human well-being, to take place. Thus, Islamic principles of essential human equality and freedom of religious expression are often mobilized by Activist Muslims within the overarching aim to serve the Common Good.

Thus, Activist Muslim groups, such as the TellMama and the MCB, have unequivocally and consistently condemned acts of terror perpetrated in the name of Islam not only as criminal and profoundly un-Islamic but, moreover, as detrimental to the interests of the Muslim community, since after every act of Islamist terror in the UK and Europe there has been a marked spike in hate crime attacks on Muslims and a less tangible Muslim/non-Muslim polarizing of society.[36]

Insofar as worship of God and, relatedly, human well-being and justice are significantly compromised, Activist Muslims operating within the Worldview of Mainstream Islam will advocate the necessity for change according to Islamic principles in the furtherance of common justice. We will return to some of these principles of Activist Islam, such as reform (*islah*), advice to rulers (*nasiha*) and the idea of theological Deputizing for God (*Khilafa*) in Chapter 3 and the advocates who can best be delineated by the term 'Activist Islam', including Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905 CE), Mohammad Hashim Kamali (born 1944 CE) and Salman al-Awda (born 1956 CE) in Chapter 5.

The Worldview of Islamism: contingent separation and exaggerated difference

So far we have seen that the Worldview of Mainstream Islam in its Traditional and Activist forms is a religious praxis that is premised upon a first-order and essential identity, unity and equality between human beings of different ethnicities, classes and creeds and posits real second-order, contingent duality and difference between, for example, different nations and faiths that is worthy of both recognition and respect.

By contrast, in the first major paradigm/category shift of my typology, Islamism, as an '-ism', is a political ideology rather than a religious praxis, which, as such, significantly departs from Mainstream Islam. As such Islamism – both

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36 TellMAMA, 'Anti-Muslim Hatred, Terrorism, Media Sources, Far Right Networks & Spike Points'.

Ideological Islamism and Non-Violent Islamist Extremism – invert the first-order unity and second-order difference of Mainstream Islam to suggest the first-order, *essential difference* between the Muslim and the non-Muslim and second-order, accidental similarity between them as human beings. Both these Islamist World-views also invert the Mainstream Islamic primacy of agency over structure and transformation over revolution by advocating the revolutionary overthrow of the existing geo-political world-order and the establishment of an Islamic State.

Ideological Islamism: the inversion of religion and politics

The first of the two Islamisms that I identify – Ideological Islamism – also referred to as Political Islam, inverts the relationship of religion and politics that characterizes the Worldview of Mainstream Islam. In Ideological Islamism, religion serves political aspiration and the desire for the wholesale governance of society by Islamic Law (*Sharia*), whether or not just governance according to the *Sharia* or any other just process already exists in a particular jurisdiction or not.

In other words, theologically speaking, Ideological Islamism inverts the onto-logical and chronological relationship of Mecca and Medina in the Islamic process. As an ideology, it puts the structural and constitutional changes that served the totality of Islamic flourishing in Medina before (rather than after) the necessary religious and ethical changes that preceded it in Mecca. This inversion of the natural dialectical order of Islamic implementation is one reason (out of many) why Islamism is an ideology and not a religious praxis and why it has singularly failed in its core project to establish a viable Islamic polity or state in the modern age.

This inversion of religion-politics and agency-structure and the ideologization of Islam is epitomized, for example, by the motto of the Egyptian and now global Muslim Brotherhood:

> *God is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our constitution. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of God is our highest hope. God is greater!*

As an ideological rather than a religious Worldview, Ideological Islamism is, ironically, given its declared rejection of the values and aspirations, e.g. material-ism, of the West, often characterized by the technologies and aspirations of Western ideologies, e.g. the political party and manifesto, borrowings from Marxist and Fascist ideology interwoven with the texts of the primary sources of Islam (see Chapter 5). As such Ideological Islamism, while superficially and overtly derivative of Islam, is in its nature and spirit as 'Western' as it is Muslim. Ideological Islamists have typically decried the moral decadence and corruption of the 'West' while affirming and aspiring to the basic Western political form – the bureaucratic nation state.

Ideological Islamism is also imbued with the Western spirit of utopianism in that it advocates the deal that the City of God (according to pure, Islamic principles) can be built in this world. This is unsurprising given that Islamism is a direct reaction to Western, Western-inspired and Western-backed political hegemony. It is also due to the fact that its leading exponents, such as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, a charismatic schoolteacher called Hassan Al-Banna (1906–1949 CE)(see Chapter 6), have often not been religiously-trained *Ulema*, but European-style intellectuals whose discourse was born in the intellectual environment, not of classical or even Ottoman Islam, but the colonized or UN mandated contemporary Middle East.[37]

Ideological Islamism: the inversion of agency and structure

As well as the Islamist inversion of religion and politics in its attitude to change, Ideological Islamism is characterized by the inversion of the Mainstream Islamic primacy of and individual over structural and institutional change by giving primacy to structure over agency. In other words, Islamists aim to *overturn* states and the institutions of states so that they become constitutionally and politically Islamic before/instead of attending to change in the behavior and attitudes of religious individuals that would set up the conditions for a more just and righteous society for everybody, which, as we have seen, is the accent of change in Activist Islam.

In Mainstream Islam, the locus of Islamic implementation is primarily the individual, which then has collective implications for the family and for mechanisms of governance. For Ideological Islamists, the locus of Islamic implementation is the State (e.g. Maududi, 1939/1975), which then has implications (often profound ones) for the individual and the way that s/he chooses to lead his/her individual life. Moreover, the Islamic character of that state is deemed by Ideological Islamists to be comprehensive and explicitly ideological:

> An [Islamic] state is . . . universal and all-embracing. Its sphere of activity
> is coextensive with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every aspect of
> life and activity in consonance with its moral norms and programme of social

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37 Thus, Islamism is in many senses a post-Islamic ideological construct. It is an ideological response to the crushing disappointments felt in particular by the intellectual elites in the Arab Middle East after the broken promises of independence of the Arabs' wartime European partners after the First World War and the failure of Arab nationalism and pan-Arab nationalism to rekindle Arab political and intellectual glory after the Second World War, which include the humiliation (from an Arab Muslim point of view) of the creation and consolidation of the State of Israel (1947–1948) out of British-mandated Palestine (1918–1948). Thus, unlike Mainstream Islam which was born out of circumstances of spiritual and political flourishing, transformation and the pulse of expansive freedom, which has since suffered periods of crisis, stagnation and decline, Islamism was born out of circumstances of spiritual and political frustration and betrayal, underscored by highly ambiguous admiration-rejection attitudes to Western intellectual and institutional hegemony.

reform. In such a state no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect the Islamic State bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist States . . .[38]

In order to achieve this utopian purity, the goal of Ideological Islamism is to establish either a national or global Islamic State or Caliphate. In this, again, Islamists embrace (implicitly) the realities of the modern nation-state. The means of achieving this end, if they are specified at all, are usually non-violent. Thus, theocratic statism is usually regarded by Islamists as intrinsically better than and superseding democracy. Nevertheless, Ideological Islamists such as activists from the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamat e-Islami have tended to recognize that an engagement with the political status quo, pluralist democracy in particular, may be a necessary preliminary (evil) to what is regarded as full Islamic governance.[39]

Thus, as we have seen in the quote above, Islamists have tended to suggest the essential incompatibility of Islam with democratic political models because democracies allow for the possibility that governance according to *Sharia* law may not be the outcome of the democratic political process. This incompatibility also exists in Islamist eyes because democratic states, in particular Britain and the United States of America, are perceived as being responsible for the demise of the political integrity – real, inflated and imagined – of Islam, such as the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. Democracy for Islamists such as Maududi, Al-Banna and, particularly, Sayyid Qutb is synonymous with Westernism and Westernism is synonymous with not-Islam.[40]

The Worldview of separation and exaggerated difference

To bolster this notion of the political incompatibility of Islam as a governing ethos with other forms of governance, Islamists tend to point to those Qur'anic texts that stress the difference and separation of humanity into different groups e.g. Qur'an 109. In particular, they begin to emphasize an exaggerated separation between Muslims and non-Muslims who are characterized wholesale as Infidels, (*kafir*, pl. *kuffar*), as indicative of an ontology of the world that is necessarily and contingently, if not essentially and eternally, divided. This impulse to exaggerated contingent difference is exemplified by the writings – for example, Abu Ala Maududi:[41]

Islam, speaking from the point of view of political philosophy, is the very antithesis of secular Western democracy [. . .] Islam has no trace of Western

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38 Maududi, 'Political Theory of Islam', p. 166.
39 The famous joke about Islamists' attitude to democracy, "One person, one vote, one time!"
40 A view shared by the extreme Right and extreme secularists.
41 Maududi, 'Political Theory of Islam'.

democracy. Islam, as already explained, repudiates the philosophy of popular sovereignty and rears its polity on the sovereignty of God and the viceregency of man.

A more apt name for the Islamic polity would be 'kingdom of God' which is described in English as a 'theocracy'. But Islamic theocracy is something altogether different from the theocracy of which Europe has had bitter experience.[42]

Ideological Islamists begin to stress the need for 'pure' Muslims to avoid contact with the society, habits and beliefs of the infidel (*kuffar* or *kafirun*) in a way that is more redolent of Marxist rejection of 'the Bourgeoisie' than Qur'anic injunctions about the just treatment of non-Muslim faith communities. In other words, Ideological Islamism opens the pathways to 'Us' and 'Them' mentalities exaggerated beyond the warrant of second-order difference mandated by Mainstream Islam.

The 'wrong' or deficient Muslim

As well as the introduction of the Worldview of separation and exaggerated difference between the Muslims and the non-Muslim, Ideological Islamism introduces the notion, which will find its most extreme form in Non-Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Islamist Extremism, of the deficient and 'wrong'-Muslim. This is the idea that the Muslim who is not politically engaged in the establishment of the Islamic State is *religiously* deficient as we will see further illustrated in Chapter 6 in the writings of Maududi.

In this rejection of Western-style democracy, the sharpened division between 'Us' and 'Them' and the identification of the ideologically-deficient Muslim, Ideological Islamism betrays its historical roots as the inheritor of communist-inspired Nasserism and pan-Arabism as the ideological vehicle intended to galvanize the Arab Muslim world.[43]

As would be expected, therefore, Worldview of Ideological Islamism has tended to manifest itself as political parties. The Society of Muslim Brothers (a.k.a the Muslim Brotherhood or *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), *Jamat e-Islami* in Pakistan and the trans-national *Hisb ut-Tahrir* (the Party of Liberation) are three obvious examples of Ideological Islamist groups whose goal is the national (and if possible) global implementation of a purified Islamic State as a *replacement* for other existing political settlements, usually, although not always, by peaceful means. The texts characterizing these groups and their pivotal figures will be examined more fully in Chapter 6.

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42 Maududi, 'Political Theory of Islam', p. 160.
43 Rogan, *The Arabs*.

The Worldview of Non-Violent Islamist Extremism: absolute Manichean separation

This tendency of Ideological Islamists to emphasize contingent separation and division between different Muslim and non-Muslim groups sharpens antagonistically among Non-Violent Islamist Extremists into a Worldview con-structed on positions of absolute, first-order eternal and irreconcilable difference between Islam and Unbelief (*kufr*), which includes everything and everyone who is not overtly a Muslim with a politicized agenda to establish a pure Islamic polity.

> *Thus, this struggle [between Islam and Unbelief] is not a temporary phase but an eternal state – an eternal state as truth and falsehood cannot co-exist on this earth.*[44]

In other words, for Non-Violent Islamist Extremists, such as Sayyid Qutb, those Muslims who are not committed to the establishment of an Islamic State or Caliphate are not just 'deficient' Muslims as they are for Ideological Islamists, but are taken beyond the pale of Islam itself into pre-Islamic Ignorance (*jahiliyya*), Apostasy (*irtidad*) or Unbelief (*kufr*).

This means that in this extreme manifestation of ideologized religious difference not only are Christians and Jews no longer respected, as in Mainstream Islam, as People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*), but instead are branded as Infidel (*kafir*), but Muslims are also liable to be described, not just as 'wrong', 'deficient' or 'partial' as in Ideological Islamism, but rather as apostate (*murtad*) by collaboration and association with non-Muslim people and powers. This association (by implication) takes them beyond the pale and rights of the protection of Islam.

In setting up its core characteristic of the absolute Manichean separation of the religious and moral universe into two opposed groups – the 'pure', 'blessed' camp of political Muslims and the 'impure', 'damned' camp of the infidel (*kuffar*) who include the 'apostate', 'collaborating' Muslims – Non-Violent Islamist Extremism is closer to Manichaeism, which gave an ontological and creative status to Evil that was independent of God's active goodness than it is to Mainstream Islam. Non-Violent Islamist Extremism, like ancient Manicheanism, excludes the 'impure' and 'damned' group from the Mercy and Goodness of God and construes the history of the Cosmos as the eternal working out of the absolute struggle between these two opposing camps.

Dehumanizing of the 'other' as characteristic of extremism

In its Manichean Worldview, Non-Violent Islamist Extremism is characterized by its mobilization of dichotomies of 'purity' and 'impurity', and the 'pure'

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44 Qutb, 'Milestones', p. 7.

Muslim in-group and the 'impure', even 'poisonous' (Qutb, 1964) non-Muslim out-group, with whom contact by Muslims acts as a dirty infection to the pristine, purity of Islam.

This, of course, quite apart from giving historical lie to the fact that Islamic civilizations have been at their most productive and vibrant when Muslims were absorbing and processing non-Muslim ideas and cultures, creates the characteristically *extremist* dynamic, whereby the 'Other' is stripped of its humanity and demonized, monolithically, as the cause of all the wrongs and injustices suffered by the in-group.[45] It is in this demonizing and de-humanizing of the non-Muslim and wrong-Muslim out-group that Non-Violent Islamist Extremism is appropriately to be identified as extremism rather than merely exaggeratedly ideologized Islam.

As a corollary of this absolutely divided and Manichean Worldview, Non-Violent Islamist Extremism departs radically from Mainstream Islam by suggesting that the ties of a purified, politicized version of the Muslim faith negate and supersede all other natural ties, such as those of family, kinship and nation.

This encouragement to separation even goes so far as to encourage separation from kith and kin:

> *A Muslim has no relationship with his mother, father, brother, wife and other family members except through their relationship with the Creator, and then they are also joined through blood.*[46]

This, as will be explained in detail in the next chapter, is in blatant contradiction of both Qur'anic teaching and the Normative Prophetic Behavior (Sunna), both of which enjoin the maintenance of ties of kith and kin even in extremis. It betrays the obvious character of Non-Violent Islamist Extremism as an extreme political ideology masquerading as religious praxis.

By establishing the intellectual conditions of the absolute, eternal separation and difference between Islam and Unbelief (*kufr*) and in the demonization and sub-humanization of everything connected with people that are not Muslim, Non-Violent Islamist Extremism sets up a Worldview that begins to suggest that the use of violence against non-Muslims and wrong-Muslims is the necessary practical outcome of the God-given nature of the world.

This theme of the necessary annihilation of Unbelief (*kufr*) as a corollary of the very God-given nature of the Universe is pursued with vigor and internally-coherent rigor as a component within the final category identified by my typology – Violent Islamist Extremism (VIE).

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45 Richardson, *What Terrorists Want.*
46 Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 133.

The Worldview of Violent Islamist Extremism (VIE): absolute, eternal difference and separation with lethal consequences for the non-Muslim and wrong-Muslim out-groups

A shared basic Worldview with Non-Violent Islamist Extremism

Violent Islamist Extremism is, like its philosophical premise in Non-Violent Islamist Extremism, grounded in a Worldview of a total, eternal Manichean separation of the Universe into Islam and Unbelief.

It divides the Universe absolutely into those who are 'blessed' or 'saved' (i.e., the 'right kind' of politicized Muslim) and those who are damned for eternity (i.e., everyone else). In this absolutely divided Manichean Worldview, those who are either non-Muslims or 'wrong'-Muslims have abdicated facets and attendant rights of their basic humanity. The difference between Non-Violent and Violent Islamist Extremism is that, for Violent Islamist Extremists, this absolute and eternal division has, by 'natural necessity', lethal consequences for the 'wrong' and 'damned' out-groups.

Like Non-Violent Islamist Extremists, Violent Islamist Extremists also postulate that the maintenance and manifestation of this absolute Muslim vs. Infidel (*Kafir*) dichotomy is the divinely ordained mechanism that has organized the entirety of human history. In other words, according to Violent Islamist Extremists, everything that happens does so in order to differentiate and manifest the distinction between the Blessed and the Damned and God's plan to elevate the former and eradicate the latter.

The praxeology of Violent Islamist Extremism: absolute separation with lethal consequences for the out-group

While their basic Worldviews are similar, the principal difference between Non-Violent Islamist Extremism and Violent Islamist Extremism (VIE) is practical. For Violent Islamist Extremists, e.g. Abdullah Azzam (1941–1989 CE), Osama bin Laden (1957–2011 CE), Anwar al-Awlaki (1971–2011 CE), etc.,[47] the violent eradication, or at least the violent subjugation, of the non-Muslim and 'wrong'-Muslim out-groups to a puritanical literalist version of Islam, and to those Muslims who espouse it, is the inevitable and logical practical corollary of the very nature of the world as set up by God.

Thus, it is the duty of the Muslim, according to VIE ideologues, not only to identify the salvation of God in the separation of the Blessed from the Damned, but also to be the *agents* of that Divine destiny by bringing about the eradication of the Damned from the Earth as a prelude to their eternal castigation in Hell-Fire. This, again, is an extreme doctrinal departure between

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47 See Chapter 7 for further details of the people, texts and contexts that constitute The Genealogy of Terror.

from Mainstream Islam which, following the Qur'an and a body of the hadith literature, affirms that the Cosmos will come to an end, but also that it is the duty of humans to carry on with their business as usual rather than to look out for it.

Violent Islamist Extremist apocalyptic eschatology

This is why Violent Islamist Extremist groups have tended to be both apocalyptic and eschatological. They believe that their actions are ushering the Final Showdown between Belief and Unbelief that will be the prelude to the coming of the Guided One (*Al-Mahdi*), Jesus[48] and the End of Time. The chaotic and spiraling violence meted out unrelentingly during the Syrian Civil War (2011–present) is due in no small measure to the fact that both so-called 'Sunni' VIE groups, such as ISG and the Al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, and 'Shia' VIE groups such as the Zainabiyoun Brigade and the military wing of Hezbollah have all set out to convince their followers that their own actions have been both fulfilling and enacting the prophecies of the End of Time. This call for Muslims to become agents of the Apocalypse has been both a powerful means for justifying acts of brutality against those who are on the wrong side of history and makes for a powerful recruiting tool.[49]

Both the spokesman of Al-Qaeda, the late Anwar Al-Awlaki, (1971–2011 CE), and the late spokesman of ISG, Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani (1977–2016 CE), gave their messages both of urgency and theological authenticity by framing the actions of violent insurgency as part and parcel of the Divine Plan for the pending Armageddon.

> *So within a short period of time of twenty years, all of this is happening. Does this not tell us that victory is soon? Does it not show us that these areas that Rasoolullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wassallam)* [the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him] *emphasised and talked about in the ahadith are being prepared by Allah 'Azza wa Jall* [May He be exalted and glorified] *for the next stage? Al-'Iraq, Khurasaan,*[50] *Yemen and al-Shaam*[51] *are being prepared for what is coming next. And what is coming next is al-Malhama*

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48 Like in some forms of Christianity, belief in the Second Coming of Jesus is part of Islamic eschatology.

49 In VIE Shia discourse, this apocalypticism has been especially focused around the coming of the Rightly-Guided Messiah (*al-Mahdi*), who is believed in strands of Shia Islam to be the unveiled Occult Twelfth Imam. In VIE Sunni discourse, it tends to revolve around a final military showdown between the cosmic forces of Belief (Iman) and Unbelief (Kufr).

50 Khurasaan or Khorasan was an ancient Islamic territory in and to the northeast of Iran. It comprised principally of the cities of Balkh and Herat (now in Afghanistan), Mashhad and Nishapur (now in northeastern Iran), Merv and Nisa (now in southern Turkmenistan), Bukhara and Samarkand (now in Uzbekistan), and Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa, touching certain parts of Northwestern Punjab (now in Pakistan).

51 Sham means Greater Syria and is the preferred Islamist name for the Levant. Using the names of ancient Islamic territories by Islamists both evokes the days of Islamic glory and suggests the illegitimacy of the modern nation-states that have replaced them.

[Armaggedon] *because Rasoolullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa salam)* [the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him] *talks about these places in reference to al-Mahdi* [the Messiah] *and al-Malhama.*

Al-Malhama is this epic battle that will occur between the Muslim nation and ar-Room and that will be followed by the global Khilafah [Caliphate]. *We are not living in a local Khilafah, we are living in a global village, therefore you either win it all or lose it all; it's not like you can win over localised small area and they will leave you alone – no, the long arm of American injustice will get you wherever you are. So you either win it all or lose it all.*[52]

The Abode of Islam (Dar al-Islam) vs. The Abode of Unbelief (Dar al-Kufr)

In order to make their Manichean, apocalyptic Worldview concrete in the lived world and by abuse of a medieval Islamic geo-political construction, Violent Islamist Extremist (VIE) ideologues have tended to divide the world strictly, inflexibly and absolutely into the Abode of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*), the Abode of Unbelief (*Dar al-Kufr*) and the Abode of War (*Dar al-Harb*), with the last two Abodes interchangeable. The Abode of Unbelief (*Dar al-Kufr*) and the Abode of War (*Dar al-Harb*) are *not*, according to VIE ideologues, such as Abdullah El-Feisal (born 1963 CE), places or countries that have declared an actual military war against Islam, Muslims or a recognized Muslim-majority State. For VIE ideologues, these Abodes can be anywhere (including Muslim-majority countries) where a purified, literalist version of Sharia law is not established without any 'impurities' from Western political and legal systems.

There can only be two possible responses for a Muslim who finds him/herself in the Abode of Unbelief or War: either migration to an Islamic State, which recently has meant the territory controlled by the ISG or the effort to eradicate the people and institutions of Dar al-Kufr.[53]

Violent Islamist Extremists are also committed without wavering or any grey-areas to the fact that the noxious out-group who must be eradicated not only includes all non-Muslims, including those protected by Qur'anic injunction, e.g. Jews and Christians (and in some readings Hindus), but also the 'wrong kind of Muslim' including moderate Sunni Muslims, all Shia Muslims and anyone who associates or 'collaborates' with them and the governments that represent

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52 Awlaki, *Allah Is Preparing Us for Victory*.

53 These constructs are applied without any of the nuance of the classical Islamic jurists who created them and in geo-political circumstances that no longer give any warrant to this geo-political construction, given the nexus of international treaties and declarations of rights of which (almost) all Muslim-majority, Organization of Islamic Cooperation states are signatories.

them. According to Violent Islamist Extremist ideologues, those collaborating Muslims in their refusal to bear arms to establish an Islamic State have apostatized from their Islam. Collaborating apostates include Muslims who in VIE discourse are 'used' as human shields, i.e. civilians, by collaborating Muslim regimes and who are, therefore, the legitimate collateral damage in suicide attacks.[54]

The VIE vilification of Shia Muslims

This core ideological commitment to the eradication of a wrong-Muslim out-group means in the context of the Syrian Civil War and the Islamic State Group (ISG), the special commitment to eradicate Shia Muslims. In this commitment to eradicate an out-group, Violent Islamist Extremism is highly redolent of Nazi racialized ideology in its commitment to eradicate the Jews, by which the cohesion of the extreme 'in-group' is maintained by violent demonization and repudiation of a particularly vilified out-group. The commitment of the ISG to eradicate the 'heresy' of Shia Islam and its out-group adherents was manifest in the Syrian Civil War at such genocidal episodes as the execution of 1,700 Shia air force cadets at the Camp Speicher massacre near Mosul, Iraq on 12 June 2014. At this massacre, Shia recruits were separated out from Sunni recruits and then slaughtered by ISG *en masse*.[55]

In a similar manner to the way that Nazi ideologues pinned the blame for the travails of the Great Depression Germans on 'the Jews', sometimes justifying their anti-Semitism by quoting out-of-context texts from the Christian Gospels such as Matthew 21:12–13,[56] VIE 'Sunni' ideologues blame the travails of the post-colonial Middle East on Shia Muslims working in collaboration with the Infidel powers (*kuffar*) (or in the case of Shia violent Islamist extremism, vice versa). This is done without any nuance or taking of responsibility by the 'in-group' for any of the events of the past or applying any forensic historical or economic analysis.

This is why, on the understanding of Hannah Arendt (1906–1975 CE) of ideologies as "isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain every occurrence by deducing it to a single premise,"[57] Violent Islamist Extremism is an archetypical extremist ideology in which the meaning of every historical and contemporary occurrence is deduced from the premise of the Manichean and eternal 'Muslim vs. non-Muslim and wrong-Muslim' separation of the Cosmos.

The nihilism of Violent Islamist Extremism

In practice, despite Violent Islamist Extremism sharing the rhetoric of Ideological Islamism regarding the establishment of a global Islamic polity, state or

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54 Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism.*
55 Cockburn, 'We Visited the Site of Isis's Worst-Ever Atrocity'.
56 Lovat, *Saving Islam from Jihadism.*
57 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 457.

Caliphate, Violent Islamist Extremist groups, e.g. Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab and Boko Haram, have tended to be in practical terms nihilist and nurtured by an ethos of extreme persecution and victimhood leveled (not always without some justification) at the West. VIE militants have tended to be more interested in laying the conditions for a Global Caliphate by ridding the world of *kuffar* and 'wrong' Muslims[58] and annihilating the Abode of Unbelief (*Dar al-Kufr*) than they have been in establishing a governed 'Muslim' territory, their ultimate agenda being the overthrow of democratic states, often in a millennial prelude to Armageddon.[59]

ISG has mobilized its nihilistic praxis more 'creatively' in the stated aim to establish a functioning state or Caliphate ruled by what they consider to be Islamic law. The ideological appeal of ISG has resided both in its throwing off the shackles of the relative 'moderation' of Al-Qaeda in its mobilization of choreographed and managed savagery (see Chapter 7), amplified through social media, and in its claims to statehood in a way that has never been convincingly achieved by previous Violent Islamist Extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda. Of course, the enduring statism and apocalyptic tendencies of ISG generated a fundamental ideological tension in its Worldview: on the one hand, ISG ideologues are keen to be seen to be ushering in the End of Time and on the other they aim to establish an 'expanding and enduring' Islamist Caliphate. However, ISG ideologues manage these tensions because both the discourse of the Apocalypse[60] and of establishing the Global Caliphate have been effective and necessary for gathering recruits.

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58 McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse*.
59 Ibid.
60 It is likely that with the territorial demise of ISG (2017–2018) in Syria and Iraq, the nihilistic discourse of the Apocalypse will gain ascendency over that of Global Caliphate in ISG propaganda.