I Am a Muslim and I Am NOT a Terrorist

by Hira Khan

"Walk not on the Earth with conceit and arrogance." These simple words found in the Quran seem so basic and easy to comprehend, to follow, and to achieve- yet these same awful actions- conceit and arrogance are an accurate reflection of several people's opinions regarding Muslims all around the globe. Islam is nothing like the terrorism, minority killings, guns, riots, and ruthless executions that society has portrayed it as. It is peace, passionate prayers, love, mercy, harmony, and so much more. Currently, society has depicted Muslims as violent radicals who express nothing more than hostility and hate, when in reality Muslims are just like everyone else, there are the good, the bad, and unfortunately the evil.

Ever since the attack of 9/11, Muslims have been in the limelight, although the attack was depressing and merciless, worldwide media has taken that one terrible incident, and have managed to emphasize the actions of a few horrible people as a "justifiable representation" of the entire religion, and in utter actuality this is completely false. In fact, according to an FBI study recording all U.S. terrorism between 1980-2005, it stated that 94 percent of terror attacks were committed by non-Muslims. A study conducted by the Consumer Product Safety Commision, has discovered that the average American is more likely to be killed by their own televisions or furniture than they are to be killed by a terrorist. To put these numbers in perspective, between 2000 and 2010, 293 Americans died because a television or a furniture appliance fell on them. While only 55 people died of terrorism between 2001-2011. In Europe, Islamic based attacks are relatively minuscule as well, the amount of terror attacks in the last 5 years have been only 2 percent.

We also need to realize that every religion has extremists. No matter how hard we try to avoid them, stopping all the people that attack innocent bystanders in the name of their faith is practically inevitable. In fact, in 2011 Anders Breivik murdered 77 people in Norway to express his deep hate against all Muslims as well as multicultural immigrants to promote his idea of a "Christian Europe." In 2013 there were 399 terror attacks by Israeli settlers,these include causing 93 physical injuries to Palestinian civilians and vandalism of several mosques and churches. Even Buddhists terrorists have killed several Muslim civilians in Burma as well as Sri Lanka-they burned down Muslims homes and businesses. Eric Rudolf executed several terror attacks in the name of Christianity- through 1997- 1998, he bombed 2 abortion clinics in Alabama and Georgia. Rudolf also bombed a lesbian bar in Atlanta. However, this man is still portrayed as a brave Christian who was doing "God's work" by the pro christian terror group, 'Army of God.'

Despite this, I understand why there has been a lasting bias against Muslims, the average Muslim hates these heartless terrorists just as much, because they were the beginning of the hate, they managed to give our religion a bad reputation, and give the word "Islam" a negative connotation, when it literally translates to peace. Nothing like 9/11 had ever occurred, it was a mass murder and for the first time the U.S. was not armed or prepared, this attack shocked and impacted the entire nation- and some people inadvertently have taken that terrible attack committed by horrible people as an accurate portrayal of the whole faith. These extremists have not only killed people of other religions, they have ruthlessly killed those who share the same faith. Recently, 152 Pakistani/Muslim children were killed in a mass shooting, these extremists raided the public school and shot these young, innocent adolescents fatally. So, instead, of pointing fingers at one another- we must join hands in unity to stop these senseless acts of violence and promote peace and universal acceptance to others, despite their religion or race.

In conclusion, society needs to learn that not all Muslims are terrorists, and not all terrorists are Muslims. And that there are only two types of people in the world. Good people who do good deeds, and bad people who do bad. We need to help prevent bias from spreading, and enlighten people how Islam really is, and what they value. We must help them realize that there are extremists in every religion. So

before you point and whisper at that girl with a burqa and hijab, or claim that all Muslims do is cause havoc-remember what Nelson Mandela once eloquently articulated, "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, *or* his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

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