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Attacks during Ramadan aren't sanctioned by Islam

Terrorists who believe their actions during the fasting month will earn them more blessings are misguided

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While doing research to “construct” the mind of the jihadist, I was flummoxed by the upsurge in “jihadi” activities during the holy month of Ramadan. The past few days alone witnessed a slew of attacks in Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq and the UK.

Muslims worldwide fast during daylight hours (no eating, drinking, smoking or sex), offer charity, abstain from solemism, observe tolerance and peace during Ramadan. This was the month when the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It is astounding that jihadis have twisted the true meaning of this month and misquoted the Quran to suit their needs of recruiting new activists and to breed hatred in order to carry out more attacks on innocents. This year, just before the beginning of Ramadan, ISIS beseeched its followers to cause collateral damage and “maximise the benefits” they can get in the hereafter. The results? On the eve of Ramadan, the massacre of innocents in Egypt, followed by the London attack last week.

Jihadis are driven by the honour and solidarity, and they consider jihad to be noble. They cite the Battle of Badr, which was the turning point for Islam, to drive their mission.

In that battle on the 17th day of Ramadan (March 13, 624 AD), Muslims, in spite of being outnumbered by their oppressors, registered a historic victory with divine intervention. Jihadists attribute this victory to Ramadan, and propagate ferocity and fanaticism by falsely evoking God’s name for better rewards in the hereafter. The recruits think that martyrdom during the fasting month is the easiest entry ticket to Jannath (Paradise). Little do they know that they are misguided.

The belief that spiritual rewards await good deeds is being twisted by the jihadis to brainwash believers to their ways. That the attacks are happening in Ramadan only proves that they respect neither life nor faith. Devout Muslims know that there is no justification for killing, holy month or not. The Quran warns of this in 5-32: “If anyone slays a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it is as though he has slain all of humankind; and if anyone saves a life it is as though he has saved the life of all humankind.” Clearly this explains the ostracism of jihadis by Islamic scholars.

The predicament is that the Quran gets misquoted and misinterpreted by miscreants. The language of scripture is poetic and allegorical, leading to “lost-in-translation” issues. It requires considerable education for a Muslim to internalise its verses. When the vast majority has not read – even less understood – it fully, the jihadis have a field day manipulating the innocent.

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The views expressed are personal