

A PROBE INTO ISLAMIC SOURCES VERSUS TERRORISM ATTACKS ON CULTURAL HERITAGES

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Abstract

Terrorism is defined as using violence to establish a fundamental state. Terrorist groups utilize religion and its credos and principles as a means for their goals. This paper seeks to unveil the real face of terrorist groups like ISIL which ruining the cultural heritages and approves that against of their accuse they aren't Muslims. Intent to destroy and despoil the cultural heritage has been conducted by ISIL since 2014 in Syria and Iraq. For example ISIL destroyed buildings include the minaret of the Great Mosques of Aleppo and Mousel and the Al-Madina. Irena Bokova, the director-general of UNESCO requested publicly for the safeguarding of Syria's cultural heritage and announced it as "grave concern about possible damage to precious sites" On 30 March 2012. The Islamic State in Iraq and Levant destroyed the Lion of Al-lāt, the temples of Bel and Baalshamin, the Arch of Triumph and other sites in Palmyra. The group also destroyed the Monastery of St. Elian, the Armenian Genocide Memorial Church, and several ancient sculptures in the city of Ar-Raqqah and Mousel. Since terrorists have introduced themselves as Muslim so the question here is why they destroyed and are still destroying the ancient relics in Syria and Iraq as Islamic countries?

Keywords: Islamic Sources, Terrorism, Cultural Heritages.

1. Introduction

Syria is a country in Western Asia. Syrian territory is neighbored by Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey, and Iraq and more important it is on the east coast of the Mediterranean as a historic marine. Syria makes a great connecting with three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe to each other. It had the highest perspective in the geopolitical and geostrategic since the past in terms of various countries in the Middle East. It reveals clearly Syria geopolitical importance and strategic role in the Middle East and international relations.

Syria is known as "Al-Sham" or Levant in the past. Al-Sham is one the most historic area throughout the world. Damascus is its capital and is one of the oldest cities in the world that in the Islamic era was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. Aleppo is the most populated city in Syria and also one the ancient cities in the middle-east. The oldest settlements in Syria date back to circa 18,000-12,000 BC.

Following World War I, Syria was placed under the mandate of France, under the authorization of the League of Nations; in 1946 the country gained its independence. The year 1949 marked the beginning of a series of military coups. In 1958 Syria united with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic; in 1961 the separation was announced and the Syrian Arab Republic re-established. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria lost the Golan Heights to Zionist entity. From 1971 Hafiz al-Assad was President and he was succeeded by his son Bashar al-Assad in 2000.

From 2011 until now (2016) there is a multi-sided armed conflict with international interventions in Syria. The most important group in this war is ISIS. ISIS or ISIL is a jihadist

group that controls areas within Eastern Syrian. This group is led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The obvious concerns about this group are the ruthless killings and acts of genocide that they have committed. Their violence has had devastating effects on the country's cultural heritage.

Iraq is a country in Western Asia, bordered by Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria. Iraq has a coastline measuring 58 km (36 miles) on the northern Persian Gulf. The capital, and largest city, is Baghdad. The main ethnic groups are Arabs and Kurds; others include Assyrians, Turkmen, Shabakis, Yazidis, Armenians, Mandeans, Circassians, and Kawliya. Around 95% of the country's 37 million citizens are Muslims, with Christianity, Yarsan, Yezidism, and Mandeism also present. The region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, historically known as Mesopotamia, is often referred to as the cradle of civilisation. It was here that mankind first began to read, write, create laws, and live in cities under an organised government—notably Uruk, from which "Iraq" is derived. The area has been home to successive civilisations since the 6th millennium BC. Iraq was the centre of the Akkadian, Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian empires. It was also part of the Median, Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Parthian, Sassanid, Roman, Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, Ayyubid, Mongol, Safavid, Afsharid, and Ottoman empires.

Iraq's modern borders were mostly demarcated in 1920 by the League of Nations when the Ottoman Empire was divided by the Treaty of Sèvres. Iraq was placed under the authority of the United Kingdom as the British Mandate of Mesopotamia. A monarchy was established in 1921 and the Kingdom of Iraq gained independence from Britain in 1932. In 1958, the monarchy was overthrown and the Iraqi Republic created. Iraq was controlled by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party from 1968 until 2003. After an invasion by the United States and its allies in 2003, Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party was removed from power and multi-party parliamentary elections were held in 2005. The American presence in Iraq ended in 2011, but the Iraqi insurgency continued and intensified as fighters from the Syrian Civil War spilled into the country. Out of the insurgency came a highly destructive group calling itself ISIL, which took large parts of the north and west. It has since been largely defeated and only retains small territory. Disputes over the sovereignty of Iraqi Kurdistan continue. A referendum about the full sovereignty of Iraqi Kurdistan was held on 25 September 2017.

In the international stage and politically, Iraq is a founding member of the UN as well as of the Arab League, OIC, Non-Aligned Movement and the IMF. It is a federal parliamentary republic consisting of 19 governorates (provinces) and one autonomous region (Iraqi Kurdistan). The country's official religion is Islam. Culturally, Iraq has a very rich heritage and celebrates the achievements of its past in pre-Islamic times and is known for its poets. Its painters and sculptors are among the best in the Arab world, some of them being world-class as well as producing fine handicrafts, including rugs and carpets Cultural heritage. The UNESCO assumed following shall be considered as "cultural heritage":

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Terrorism

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon and even in the early history it has been used, it cannot be easily defined or explained. But as a simple definition, Terrorism is allocated to a tied that is using ferocity and brutality to attain their points and purposes or it is a planned activity to

achieve specific goals. It is not a random or incident action. Terrorism as a tactic and strategy in different ways described. On the one hand as “Crime” and the other hand as “Holy Duty” .Terrorism has been the most effective tactic for the weaker side in the warfare and conflicts.

Cultural heritage of Syria

The cultural of Syria dates back to the millennium B.C and because of historical stages position. Since the beginning of western civilization in the Greek and Etruscan period, Syria has been the leading source of belief, writing and music. Syria participates in Roman world rule and played role in the spread of Christianity. Through her presence in Spain she was involved in the renaissance of a part of Europe. Many manifestations of Syrian culture also reached the west, carried the Crusaders and Syria also played her part in the early period of Islam when Damascus was the capital of Umayyad.

Cultural heritage of Iraq

Long known as "the cradle of civilization," Iraq is home to more than 10,000 cultural heritage sites, ranging from the 5,500-year-old cities of Sumer—where evidence of the earliest writings in the world are preserved—to archaeological remains of the Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Parthian cultures. Baghdad was one of the Arab world's earliest and greatest capitals, and the rest of Iraq enjoyed a golden age of architectural and political achievements in the middle Ages. More recent monuments, such as Ottoman palaces and public buildings, as well as the work of modern international architects, have great value and significance in Iraq's history. Archaeological sites, both those which have been excavated and those which are unexplored, have suffered as a result of widespread looting since the beginning of the current conflict in the country. Historic buildings in Baghdad and other urban areas have been damaged, not only as a consequence of military activity and terrorism, but also from vandalism and looting. After the start of the war in 2003, WMF and the Getty Conservation Institute launched a joint initiative to rebuild the capacity of that country's antiquities staff, conducting training workshops in nearby Jordan and building a web-based database to record and track the numerous cultural heritage sites in the country. The monuments within Iraq remain at great risk, and catastrophic losses have already been sustained. The inclusion of the entire body of Iraq's cultural heritage on the Watch List for a second time recognizes the impact of this loss, and the importance of protecting this extraordinary record of human history

2. Significance of Study

This research is aimed to show that Holy Quran and Muhammad prophet's hadiths not only refuse and condemn the ruination of cultural heritages, but also care so much on safeguarding from cultural heritages so the groups which destroy cultural heritages aren't Muslims.

2.1 Research Questions

1. How is the vision of Islam into the cultural heritage?
2. What is Islam's approach and perspective into destroying of cultural heritage?
3. And Does Islam confirm or condemn these terrorist treatments?

To answer the proposed research questions, Syria history (particular ancient relics) and Islamic ideology (based on the Quran and prophet's hadiths) are studied meticulously.

2.2 Corpus

The Qur'an and prophet's hadiths are the main corpus of this investigation and the interpretation books of Muslims scientists like Tafsir Al-Mizan (Tabataba'i 1996) made for us more understandable the attended ayahs of Qur'an.

3. Review of literature

Afif Bahnassi, (1983) is defining and describing Syria history and its relation to the west civilization and it goes back to thousands of years. It considered Historical wars in Syria and its function in the regional evolution like Crusades. This paper also has studied on archeology and architecture monuments of Syria like minarets and mosques then the transition of these architecture structures to the European countries and looks them as one of the most valuable historical heritage of humanity. Syria as Islamic country and culture played a great role to develop and broadcast Christianity. So it is undeniable fact.

Ajorlu, H. (2011) explored the geopolitical importance of Syria and eastern Mediterranean. This area has known as a strategic region and impressed all neighbors in all historic periods and this character caused to create a revolutionary wave of protest in recently years. This move has features such as different ideologies, lack of leadership and organization and is being armed. According to these events, take strength of extremist groups and the rise of new military government and other political issues to be considered in this article.

Farihi, D. & Zahiri, S. (2008) recognize terrorism as a political phenomenon that overshadowed the political, economic and social of worldwide and challenging the different parts of societies. Terrorism has many forms since its appearance. Today, because the governments fear the emergence of war and its consequences have turned to terrorist methods more. There are four ways to identify this phenomenon: religious, Psychological – Social, Philosophical and logical-rational. Religious, Psychological–Social, Philosophical were ineffective and inefficient to unveil the definition of terrorism but logical-rational could clarify part of the aspects of this unknown phenomenon.

Jbidi, T. & Mirtaher, S.R. (1999) the definition of international terrorism: the scientific attitude, The purpose of this article is to reach a definition of international terrorism but the explanation of a comprehensive definition of terrorism is hard but in a final conclusion it can be raised in five common elements and distinction points in defining this issue: Repetition, motivation, intention, impression and actors. It is necessary to resolve “Dilemma of definition” in introducing and defining this phenomenon in the international arena. There is no valid politically and academically definition of international terrorism.

Musavi, F. (2004) this article attempts to show the criminal laws and its failure. The fact is that despite the great spiritual value of these monuments are always threatened to damage. Some of the crimes cause monuments to be destroyed their nature and form.

Results

There is an important question about ISIL's works and that is: why this group destroys the ancient place, churches and mosques in Syria. Assuming the church ruin is justified, but ISIL claims that is an Islamic groups, so why do they demolish the mosques? The mosque has a great value in Islam and among Muslims.

There are many ayahs and prophet's hadiths show the importance of the mosque and History in holy Qur'an (The Muslims Book).

These ayahs are explained here with their translations:

(MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987) **قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ**

Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth (AL - E - IMRAN - verse 137) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

(MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987) **أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ**

Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them (who did evil (MUHAMMAD- verse 10) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ (MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987)

Say: "Go ye through the earth and see what has been the end of those guilty (of sin)." (AL NAML - verse 69) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

Prophet's Hadith:

لَيْسَ الْأَعْمَى مَنْ يَغْمَى بَصَرُهُ ، إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَى مَنْ تَغْمَى بَصِيرَتُهُ . كَنْزِ الْعَمَالِ : 1220

The Prophet (SAWA) said, 'The blind is not someone who has lost his eyesight, but the one who has lost his insight.' Kanz al-Ummal, no. 1220

من لم يعتبر بغير [بغير] الدنيا و صروفها لم تنج فيه المواظ

He who do not learn from events (of the past) in his life, preaching will not benefit him.

لا فكر لمن لا اعتبار له

He who not learn from events (of the past), do not have thoughts. Means he cannot understand the relations and connections between things.

As mentioned above the Holy Quran and prophet's hadith (peace be upon him) address to taking lessons from history and narration of ancestors which also find in cultural heritages. Also, another reason for emphasizing on cultural heritage is the importance of science and knowledge. A large part of the cultural heritage of the ancient time is made up texts and scientific works that transfers them to the future generations can play a huge role in teaching and scientific progress of each society. The Holy Qur'an links the past times with the present; because with this relation identify duties and responsibilities of future generations (MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987, p. 137)

In this way one of the most important of Islamic world cultural heritage is the mosque which is so important for Muslims:

Mosque literally means place of prostration (in Arabic: المسجد). Appellation mosque to mosque (in Arabic: masjid is that prostrating represents the pinnacle of humility against God. Therefore, the place of worship in Islam called the mosque.

Mosques are the most important place to worship for Muslims and one of the most significant Islamic heritages. God has ordered to maintain mosques. So, one of the features of the Muslims is maintaining the Mosques and who believes in Allah must preserve these cultural heritages.

The following ayahs highlighted the importance of mosque in Holy Quran and Islam's prophet's hadiths:

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ (MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987)

The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance. (TAWBA- verse 18) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا (MAKAREM SHIRAZI, 1987)

And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): So invoke not any one with Allah. (AL-JIN- verse 18) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

On the base of this ayahs, one of the most important responsibility of every Muslim is building and safeguarding Mosques. Also, Islam emphasizes that groups destroying the Mosques aren't Muslims and they are condemned by the Quranic viewpoint.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا (TABATAB'AI, 1996)

And who is more unjust than he who forbids that in places for the worship of Allah, Allah's name should be celebrated? – whose zeal is (in fact) to ruin them? It was not fitting that such should themselves enter them except in fear. For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world, and in the world to come, an exceeding torment (AL - BAQARA - verse 114) (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ (TABATAB'AI, 1996)

Children of Adam, dress well when attending the mosques (YUSUF ALI, 1938)

Islam's Prophet's (P.B.U.H) Hadiths about mosque:

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله - وقد سأله أبو ذر عن كيفية عمارة المساجد - : لا ترفع فيها الأصوات ، ولا يخاض فيها بالباطل ، ولا يشتري فيها ولا يباع ، واترك اللغو ما دمت فيها ، فإن لم تفعل فلا تلومن يوم القيامة إلا نفسك ،

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) was asked by Abu Dharr how to maintain the mosques, to which he replied, 'Voices should not be raised therein, nor engrossment in wrongdoing. There should be no buying or selling, and all vain talk must be shunned as long as you are inside. If you do not do this, then you will have no one to blame but yourself on the Day of Resurrection.

مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

He who builds a mosque for Allah, Allah will build for him likewise in Paradise.

According to the above ayahs and prophet's hadiths, the mosque is the best place for worshipping Allah, so groups ruining mosques, not only are non-Muslims but also they are guilty.

Islam has been known as a universal and eternal religion. It has not overlooked the necessity of specific location to supply its laws and education and guidance the people. This base which is manifesting the glory of Islam is the mosque.

Regarding the destruction of mosques by ISIL, IRNA and Khabar online news agencies (2016) reported that ISIL has destroyed 1210 mosques across the world (especially in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen) until now. In the following tables, there are the names of some mosques and other Islamic cultural sites that are destroyed in Syria and Iraq by ISIL and other terrorist groups:

1- The destruction of the mosque "Fatima Zahra (SA)" in the province of Raqqa in northern Syria
2- The destruction of the mosque "city of Tel Maruf" in the northern Syrian
3- The destruction of the shrine of Sayyida (SA) Sakina in the suburbs of Damascus
4- The destruction of the shrines of Hujr ibn 'Adi, companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in "Adra" in "Damascus"
5- The destruction of graves "Owais Alqirny", companion of Imam Ali (AS) and "Ammar Yasir", Companion of the Prophet (PBUH), in Raqqa in northern Syria
6- The destruction of monuments "Vabsh bin al-Asadi" one the Companion of the Prophet (PBUH)

1- Destruction of An-Nouri Mosque in Mousel.
2- Destruction of Imam Mohsen Mosque in Mousel.
3- Destruction of Imam Ibrahim Mosque in Mousel
4- Destruction of Al-Omariyah Mosque in Mousel
5- Destruction of Sheikh-osh-Shat Mosue in Mousel.
6- Destruction of Al-Ghetanein Mosue in Mousel.
7- Destruction of Al-Bariqi Mosue in Mousel

In addition, these groups have destroyed some of the Islamic heritages in other countries all around the world.

On the base of the viewpoints of the Qur'an, Mosques are very important in Islam and God has ordered to preserving these place. ISIL introduced itself as an Islamic group and accepted the whole text of the Qur'an. So why do they destroy the mosques? It is clear that ISIL and other same groups are not Islamic groups because all Muslims around the world safeguard the mosques.

Findings

- Terrorism is known as a new factor of the destruction of cultural heritage and it is a big disaster and one of the felonies of terrorists is destroying of the monuments and the mosques in recently years.
- As we considered in some ayahs of Quran and prophet's hadiths; ISIL group is not an Islamic group and they just use Islam as their means to reach their goals. They force others to reach their criminal goals to make a bad image of Islam. Therefore, it seems Islam phobia is their basic goal. Till now, the terrorist actions have made a big black spot in the face of Islam and Muslims. It seems they are not just enemy with Muslims even they are the enemy of each religion. Since we invoked to the reports, they destroyed the religious places like churches and synagogues, they are likely to be merciless with Christian and Jewish. They occupied north of Iraq and committed a lot of felony in Mousel in 2014.
- Unfortunately, the history of Islamic countries, particularly Iraq and Syria are going to be eradicating each day while these countries have a big history and culture and it does not just belong to one country or one nation but every nation has condolence with their history and civilizations. So each guy should be aware and contribute for analyzing the facts of this event to others.
- Today the Muslim world is in dire need of this love and sympathy and the unity is the only way to combat with terrorists.
- The ISIL the same as other terrorist groups has an extremist ideology and we should get information to people about the dangerous of this Ideology.

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