**[Fundamentalism and Terrorism](http://syedabdullahtariq.blogspot.com/2012/04/fundamentalism-and-terrorism.html)**

**Q. Apropos the stigma of fundamentalism and terrorism against Islam, some more clarifications are needed. If terrorism for a noble cause is a virtue, every Muslim will be allowed to use force for imposing his will on another. It is universally feared that the role of a police / judge, if delegated to every individual, would paralyse the entire system of judicature and a state of anarchy is bound to prevail.**  
**With reference to Dr. Naik’s views on fundamentalism and Islam in I.V. Nov 98, I beg to know what are the fundamentals which can never be revised by any generation? If nothing can be changed, what is the intellectual stagnation, as has been described in the same paper?**  
**Your kind reply is sought to clarify the stigma of fundamentalism against Islam. This will also prove helpful to counter a general belief that religions have lost capacity to cope with the needs of modern age.**  
**Faiz Mohd. Khan; Rewa**  
  
**Ans.** Dr. Naik, in the said article, has clearly stated; “It is true that the word terrorist is generally used for a person who causes terror among the common people. But a true Muslim should only be a terrorist to selective people, that is anti-social elements and not to the common innocent people. In fact a Muslim should be a source of peace for innocent people”. I do not think that it should generate any misunderstanding. He does not mean that every individual Muslim should take law into his own hands. For example, if there were quite a few responsible Muslims in an office, anyone would think twice before offering or accepting bribe in their presence. Qur’an declares: **“Whoever becomes a *Kaafir* to the devil, and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.”** (2:256)  
  
A *Kaafir,* in the traditional sense is a disbeliever in Allah, but in the above verse, it is clear that the word *‘Kaafir’* is used in a different sense to emphasize its true and literal meaning. The use of the word above does not create misunderstanding. Similarly, the use of the word ‘terrorist’ carries a different meaning other than its traditional meaning in the said sentence. It has been explained in the article that Islam means ‘peace’ and a Muslim terrorist should generate a sense of peace among masses.   
  
There is no place for terrorism in Islam and the specific use of ‘terrorist’, in the write-up does not signify a La-Robinhood or a lawbreaker.  
Dr. Naik has nowhere written that ‘nothing can be changed’. Only the fundamentals cannot be changed. If the fundamentals of any doctrine are changed, they loses their relevance. If the fundamentals of Islam are changed, they will no more be Islamic. If you deliberate upon the other article you have referred to namely. ‘Muslim intellectual Stagnation’, it is in consonance with, rather than contradictory to, Dr. Naik’s exposition. Sticking to fundamentals does not mean stagnation. Though the principle has been well explained in the two articles, let me elaborate further to remove the misgiving.  
  
Islam is the *Deen* of Nature. The inherent principles of nature remain unchanged but the application of the principles change with time and surroundings. The fundamentals never change. The Creator of nature Himself declared thus; **“And no change will you find in Allah’s Sunnah and no turning off will you find in Allah’s *Sunnah*.”** (35:43)  
  
Allah’s Sunnah, in nature, is the unchanged and inborn laws of nature. The earth was round even when all the people including Aristotle thought it was flat. The gravitation laws were there when no one knew about them. These fundamentals did not change with time. The fundamentals of Deen remained unchanged since the first man on earth. Deen remained one, that is Islam but the way of applying the Deen in different times changed with the change in *Shariah* of different Prophets. Islam has five basic fundamentals. The first of them is *Faith* or *Imaan,* the loyalty towards the Lord of creation. This part includes the faith in messengers of the Lord and His books. Since the teachings of only the last Prophet (Pbuh) and the last word is safe and secure from human interpolation, the strict adherence to their guidance is part of the fundamentals of Islam or peace for man in both the worlds. The next four fundamental pillars are Salat (the prayer) *Zakat* (the poor’s due), *Saum* (staying away from certain things on certain days) and *Hajj* (the pilgrimage). The inherent principles spelled out by the Qur’an and the Prophet (Pbuh) remain unchanged while if the application of those principles does not change with the situation and time, there will be stagnation and the Deen will become 1400 years old.  
  
The Prophet (Pbuh) stressed upon using *Miswak* (the wooden toothbrush) many times a day. The principle he stressed upon was dental care and mouth hygiene. Though the particular *Miswak* of Peelu tree has its own distinct advantages, the insistence upon brushing the teeth by a wooden piece of a particular tree being his *Sunnah,* will make the Deen 1400 years old. Based on the Qur’an and *Sunnah,* the Islamic apparel can broadly be defined as one possessing the following properties;  
1. It must cover the Sat’r (the part of body required to be concealed by Shariah)  
2. It should not display Takabbur (the arrogance and haughtiness)  
3. There should not be undue and wasteful excess in expenditure and  
4. It should not be an imitation of religious identity of another religion. (The last point should not be confused with the area culture of any region). Any costume or attire conforming to the above principles is an Islamic dress. These fundamentals regarding clothes will never change. Naming a particular set of uniform as Islamic dress, is stagnation.  
  
The Qur’an instructed us; “And make ready against them (the enemy) all you can of power and the strength of steeds...” (8:60) Though the horses still have their use in certain battlefields, they have lost relevance in the modern day electronic and nuclear warfare. Steeds may become outdated but the fundamentals spelled out by the word of God can never become irrelevant. The Qur’an has mentioned here a principle of war preparation. To limit it to the specific order of breeding good horses, would mean that word of God can no more cope with modern times. The Qur’an is a living book. It has amazingly used ‘the strength of steeds’ instead of just ‘steeds.’ Applied in certain times and situations, it would mean good horses but applied to some other battlefields, it means ‘horsepower’ behind the arsenal. Surprisingly, the word horsepower has been preferred by physics to describe the quantum of power. God knew it.  
  
The word of God could have nominated a few heads of income and property for *Zakat* to be charged on. It did not, The Prophet (Pbuh) applied the principle of *‘Numu’* (growth) on the prevalent means of income and property and charged *Zakat* on certain heads. The present day business has a wider scope covering a large number of means of growth-oriented property and income. Is it fair that a poor *mohalla* shopkeeper pays the *Zakat* on his business goods worth fifty thousand while a successful surgeon earning millions per year goes Scott free, as his clinic, operation theatre and instruments are supposed to be exempt from *Zakat.* This is stagnation.  
  
The *Shariah* provided a relief in prayer for the traveller by shortening the required number of Rak’ats. The rationale behind the order reveals the unchanged principle governing the order. It was a certain amount of hardship encountered by the traveller, which necessitated the shortening of prayer. As a commoner cannot gauge the amount of hardship, the scholars, by converting the hardship into mileage of journey, based upon the means of travel of a certain time and place codified the application of the law. By sticking to the application of a different time, we have come to a strange situation. A person travelling in air comfort from Delhi to Bangalore is asked to shorten his prayer as he has crossed the journey limit fixed by old scholars for their times. On the other hand a poor man dragging a bicycle in the heat of May-June from Delhi to Hapur (a distance of 60 km) is required to offer the full prayer. This is stagnation.  
  
To sum it up, Islam will fade away if the principle or fundamentals are changed or compromised while if the application of the principles are made static, it will not seem to cope with the pace of time. It is for the sensible and competent scholars to segregate and define the two. As the range is too vide, only the specific problems can be sorted out in a short write-up.