

# Mshari Al-Zaydi: Even This Defender Of The Faith Dimly Glimpses That Islam Is The Problem

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Mshari Al-Zaydi writes for a Saudi-backed newspaper. *Arab News*, based in London. He's one of the best of the Arab journalists trying to make sense of Muslim Arab behavior without, however, dealing forthrightly with what is in the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sira. He knows that there is something wrong with the general atmosphere in which both Sunnis and Shi'a breathe, though he chooses to limit his indignation to the Islamic State and to the "Khomeinist regime" which feed on hatred of one another. Destroy ISIS, he says, and Iran will have been deprived of its rationale for interventions (in Syria, in Libya and, even, one assumes, Lebanon), and the "Khomeinists" can be destroyed. In his penultimate sentence, he refers to the problem of the atmosphere in which Sunnis and Shi'a alike are raised:

"What remains after these obstacles are removed is the ideology of terror itself; in essence it concerns one's reasoning, upbringing, and culture."

But from where do Muslims derive their "reasoning, upbringing, and culture" if not from that overwhelming fact of their existence – Islam, Islam, Islam. Non-Muslims can scarcely gauge the effect of Islam on the minds of its adherents. But Mshari Al-Zaydi can. He surely knows that Islam itself remains, for Muslims and non-Muslims, a permanent problem, based on texts deemed immutable or long ago settled in their meaning, with centuries of commentary to back them up and

prevent the implausible “re-interpretations” that some – it could be Mustafa Akyol, still defending Islam in Turkey, or Ayaan Hirsi Ali, pretending to wonder if somehow Islam can be subject to “reformation” – still suggest is possible. Islam not only explains the violence of Sunni against Shi’a and Shi’a against Sunni, but more importantly, is the source of the violence and aggression (including non-violent aggression, of the most dangerous because least recognized kind, directed at non-Muslims). The duty of Muslims is to engage in the struggle, or Jihad, to make sure that Islam spreads, and then dominates, everywhere.

Mshari Al-Zaydi is coming to that understanding. But he cannot state forthrightly, or even obliquely allude to this publicly? How, given his upbringing, his life, his position, could he? For the highly intelligent Muslim who cannot abandon Islam, the faith – and the need to keep defending it, somehow – has become his mental and emotional burden. He hasn’t the mental freedom of the apostate or, of course, of those of us who were not, thank god, born into Islam and consequently, have no need to twist ourselves into mental knots.