

Chapter One: Introduction

Politics of the Response to Terrorism

The turn of the millennium marks a watershed moment in the history of the world. The tragic event of September 11, 2001, (also referred as 9/11) has become synonymous with the issue of terrorism as most people refer to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on that heartbreaking day. People all over the planet were traumatized to see America, the only super power with its military might being attacked in a manner nobody could have imagined. Around a dozen young men, all belonging to the religion Islam, hijack airplanes and crash it in their intended target. It was a horrific attack no doubt, especially considering over 2,000 people lost their lives that day, as there was no historical precedent like that. Commenting on the damage, Anthony Oberschall provides an important detail about the devastation saying:

What was novel in the World Trade Center and Pentagon suicide attacks was not transnational state-supported suicide terrorism but the extraordinary size of the civilian casualties; the use of passenger airplanes as deadly missiles; the targets on the territory of the U.S. itself and not on a distant Middle Eastern airstrip or military barracks; and suicide terrorists who had lived, trained, and plotted not in a distant desert camp but in South Florida, New Jersey and European cities. (27).

Oberschall comments on the matchlessness of the attacks, where the terrorists strike the United States where it mattered and hurt the most. Many people saw for themselves on television the second American airlines plane hammering the south tower, with smoke already fuming out from north tower and after a few minutes the

collapse of both the towers. Americans and people all over the world were left speechless by what they saw on the tragic morning of 9/11.

Unfortunately, though, the attacks of 9/11 are not the only terrorist strike or violence in history. Terrorism has existed in the world for quite a long time and in the contemporary era has strongly re-emerged to become one of the most publicized forms of violence. In its resurrected form, terrorism has come to be very closely associated with the religion Islam. Terrorism and its link with Islam is one of the most widely discussed and debated issues of present times, yet remains the least understood. Its recent manifestations have been described in countless books, monographs, articles, plays, novels and films. For Jason Franks, it includes both horror and fascination, it is shocking and its unexpected nature has captured headlines for years and presently:

‘Terrorism’ has become the plague of the twenty first century: it is a concept that has seemingly penetrated all quarters of international society, especially in the wake of the September 11th attacks in New York and the subsequent ‘war on terrorism’. Few places on the globe are now unaffected by the hysteria caused by ‘terrorism’. It has given new meaning to ongoing domestic conflicts and redefined wars in all continents of the planet. (1)

But, terrorism is terrorism, regardless of who does it or why. It is planned clinically, calculated and executed ruthlessly. Terrorism, which Charles Townshend comprehends, “is never easy to understand, and least of all in the aftermath of a terrorist attack” (1). Terrorism involves extraordinary violence and is catered to have an audience. It is intended to create massive fear, intimidate people and involves a planned attack for a purpose, often against something or someone.

The scourge of terrorism has become very dangerous for mankind today. After 9/11, it figures topmost in the agenda of present day political discourse, because the word terrorism is embedded into people's everyday vocabulary. Most people have a vague idea or impression about terrorism, but lack a more precise and truly explanatory definition of the word. Though there is no common concrete definition of terrorism, a general consensus is that terrorism is most often an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. Another point, a majority of people agree to be that terrorism is a disapproving and judgmental term. It is a word with fundamentally negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees.

The major issue of this research is, "Critique of the Response to Terrorism in Recent Bollywood Films." After 9/11, the religion Islam is blamed for instigating violence against people in the West. In retaliation to terrorism, namely Islamic terrorism, the Government in America and its Western allies has framed strict laws that put multiple hurdles and obstacles for common citizens. Liberty has been sacrificed at the altar of security. This raises broader questions about the idea and concept of a free democratic and civilized identity of the West. Apart from Government rules and regulations there seems to be politics playing out among the majority population against Muslims and people of South Asian origin. The politics of identity, security, community, power, authority, sovereignty and above all enlightenment, all ideal values of Western societies, are being questioned after 9/11.

This study examines three recent Bollywood films, *New York, My Name Is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight*. The theme of the politics of response is dramatized in these films. A common thread that connects all the central characters in the three films Sameer Shaikh, Rizwan Khan and Tariq Ali is that they are all Muslims residing in

the West. Their normal everyday family life turns into disorder and chaos after 9/11. It happens because primarily they are Muslims and later the politics of vengeance becomes part of their lives. Though they are in any way not involved with the 9/11 occurrence, the event encroaches their life and disrupts it forever. There are also minor characters in these films whose life get altered due to 9/11.

9/11 was a major terrorist strike that has been condemned by almost every Government all over the world. In retaliation to these attacks first America, then Britain and followed by other Western allies have fought two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Geographically both these countries are located in the Middle East and almost in the center of countries with a majority of Muslim population. Gradually the West's war on terrorism has become synonymous to war against Islam, with Christians versus Muslims. The gulf between these two religions is widening day by day. And even in the West, as the three films under discussion show, Muslims are no longer feeling safe. They are being treated as stateless citizens where they have aspired to live. Common people like the three characters have been humiliated and demeaned for residing in the West after 9/11. Thus, this study explores the response to terrorism by looking at the problem of terrorism and its repercussions from the side of the victim (Sameer Shaikh, Rizwan Khan and Tariq Ali) against the powerful State.

In order to do so, this exploration attempts to make the now familiar events of the terrorist strikes unfamiliar. The problematizing seeks to explore some of the key dynamics of terrorism and response to it. Here the theories of terrorism by Talal Asad in *On Suicide Bombing* and Derrida in *Two Rogues* are discussed and analyzed. While Asad asks the reader to think about deeper questions such as why suicide bombing is so much more terrifying than other acts of violence, Derrida's most noticeable argument is that 9/11 is both the result of and response of an autoimmune disorder.

The date 9/11 has also been used extensively in this research. Giving a twist to its numerological naming, W. J. T. Mitchell says that 9/11, “does not name the event” but “is Day One of an event whose days are unnumbered, indefinite, an emergency in which the emergent order has yet to make itself clear” (568).

Suicide Bombing and War

The theories by Asad and Derrida have been premeditated so that it acts as a guide in the analysis of this research. Talal Asad in his book *On Suicide Bombing* argues on two major questions and four issues. The first question, “Is there a crucial difference between someone who kills in order to die and someone who dies in order to kill?” (Asad 40). The second question he raises is, “Why is that suicide bombing produces reaction of particular horror from Westerners?” (54). Asad vehemently opposes the claim that terrorism emanating from Islamic jihad is present day terrorism. He says, “For many Muslims living in the United States, September 11 was the beginning of a long period of anxiety, during which they found themselves associated, occasionally explicitly but more implicitly, with terrorism” (1). He feels that blaming and linking all forms of terrorism to Islam is absolutely baseless.

Another point Asad opposes forcefully is about the phenomenon of the suicide bomber and the reaction against it that follows from Western liberals and media. In suicide bombing, the bomber blows him/herself up along with the intended people and target. Asad does not approve about this new tactic of terrorism and points out those Western liberals who oppose this form of disproportionate approach. He writes that a suicide attack is always shocking and very different from war at a relatively low cost. Therefore, he contends that suicide bombing is, “not only the killing of innocent people but also the intrusion of fear into everyday life, the violation of private purposes, the insecurity of public spaces, and the endless coerciveness of precaution”

(39). Minutely he mentions the biased emotional response to suicide and suicide terrorism. He suspects that the West is horrified by suicide bombing because, “Terrorist acts, create anxiety because they occur at home” (30). This tends to disrupt the patterns of everyday life with an unregulated violence.

Then Asad proceeds on the topic of war and present day warfare. He finds that modern, “war is a legally sanctioned concept, and the hateful killing perpetrated by unlicensed militants is not” (25). Furthermore, this justification is based on the assumption that ‘civilized nation,’ democratic liberalism of the West, has the moral superiority over ‘uncivilized’ opponents or terrorists. He opines:

It is not cruelty that matters in the distinction between terrorists and armies at war, still less the threat each poses entire ways of life, but their civilization status. What is really at stake is not a clash of civilizations but the fight of civilization against the uncivilized. In that fight, all civilized rules may be set aside. (37-38).

Thus, if the act of killing is legally sanctioned by the state, the only power which can punish and commit violence against civilians, it could be a just act of war. The liberal argument says Asad is as follows, “The right to self-defense eventually calls for a project of universal redemption. Another way of putting this is to say that some humans have to be treated violently in order that humanity can be redeemed” (63). Thus, liberal democracies also have a culture of death, and their desires are often contradictory. Democratic societies wage war to secure peace.

The conclusion we can draw from Asad’s argument is that, he does not seem to favor or privilege the suicide bomber. Rather, he condemns but gives equal weightage to suicide bombing and war. His argument is that both means of warfare are intended to take the life of ordinary citizens, but is angry at the way the West

treats the issue of terrorism through its discourse of liberalism. The difference is while suicide bombing is termed shocking, war is a civilized form of aggression undertaken by liberal democratic countries. He is against Western liberal intellectuals who powerfully claim that suicide bombing is an uncivilized or barbaric form of violence, and war must be conducted to civilize the uncivilized people. It does not matter that hundreds or thousands of people are killed in the act of war. The difference is noted by Veena Das as she explains about the biased attitude of American policy planners because:

The attack on the World Trade Center in New York was an attack on civilization or on values of freedom. In the same vein, the world is said to have changed after September 11. What could this mean except that while terrorist forms of warfare in other spaces in Africa, Asia, or the Middle East were leveled against forms of particularism, the attack on America is seen as an attack on humanity itself. (106)

Here, the words ‘values of freedom’ and ‘attack on humanity’ should be noted. They represent the idea of America as the privileged site of universal values. Lastly, Asad also rubbishes the claim that terrorism is a Muslim domination. There have been terrorists belonging to other religions and faith in different times of history. So to thoughtlessly call all Muslims as terrorists is politically incorrect. Asad feels the West valorizes their war on terrorism as an act of civilizing mission without mentioning about the massacres and horror their corresponding wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have caused.

The Biological Phenomenon of Autoimmunity

The other theory studied in this research is the concept of autoimmunity by Jacques Derrida. His contention is that 9/11 is both the result of and response as an

autoimmune disorder and that autoimmunity against terrorism gets deadlocked in a mutual sport of devastation in which the response replicates the wrong. Taking the analogy from biomedical sciences, Derrida in *Rogues* argues and discusses in length the concept of autoimmunity to link it to present day democracy. Normally, autoimmunity is an occurrence in which the immune system inside a living cell turns against it. Making it simpler, instead of protecting the cell, it causes harm or ruptures it from within without the help of any external element. By privileging security over hospitality, autoimmunity undermines its own security and is a significant feature of every immune system.

Transferring the model of autoimmunity to democracy, Derrida feels that it applies very well to current political realities and with events closely connected to post 9/11 world. He points out that a threat to democracy comes from within rather than from without. In a democratic setup, tension always prevails as there cannot be absolute freedom or absolute equality. And as democracy is run on check and balance approach, or becoming self-critical, autoimmunity comes into play here. In this method, the representatives of the people, the Law makers or the people themselves decide on the future of their democracy. He puts forward his thoughts saying:

Auto-immunity, democracy, and deconstruction are entangled with an ethic of automatic self-criticism. That expression of autoimmunity called the right to self-critique and perfectibility. Democracy is the only system, the only constitutional paradigm, in which, in principle, one has or assumes the right to criticize everything publicly, including the idea of democracy, its concept, its history, and its name. (87)

To give a preliminary idea of how Derrida links autoimmunity and democracy, it seems clear that he highlights a risk to which a democracy is always exposed. It is

vulnerable to internal attacks. Democracy may also interrupt itself in order to seek to preserve itself like, “One electoral law is thus always at the same time more and less democratic than another; it is the force of force, a weakness of force and the force of a weakness; which means that democracy protects itself and maintains itself precisely by limiting and threatening itself” (30).

On 9/11, Derrida points out that the element of fear of a strike is a symptom of the past. He says that the seeds of 9/11 terror attacks were sowed in the past by American intelligence agencies on the orders of their democratic politicians. 9/11 is the backlash and suicidal result of America’s Cold War foreign policy horribly gone wrong. As the then USSR invaded Afghanistan during the Cold War, the Americans fought a proxy battle by cultivating and sponsoring the Mujahidin as a political and military strategy. Later, as the USSR left Afghanistan, America set up military bases in the Middle East that was disliked by many Muslims as imposition of American neo-imperialism. Thus, began the steady hatred for America among Muslims which eventually culminated in the catastrophe of 9/11 and later the retaliation of American invasion to Afghanistan and Iraq. Therefore, autoimmunity is also a war from the inside like:

The first and most violent of rogue states are those that have ignored and continue to violate the very international law they claim to champion, the law in whose name they speak and in whose name they go to war against so called rogue states each time their interests to dictate. The name of these states? The United States. (96)

Derrida believes that it is no longer possible to draw distinctions between war and terrorism, or between state and non-state terrorism. He feels that Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden’s terror network, and the thousands of supporting terrorist

networks are the enemies of the new age.

Objective of the Research

The main findings of this research are the following points. First, even today the international community does not agree on a common and concrete definition of terrorism. Both political and academic efforts to find a common ground have failed repeatedly. The meaning and usage of the word terrorism has changed over time to accommodate the political language and discourse of each successive era. Obviously, a lot depends on whose point of view is being represented. In this perspective, Adrian Little comments that:

In contemporary politics, then, terrorism is a useful discourse for democracy because it conjures up a real or imagined threat that needs to be repulsed. But the notion of a threat begs many questions: What is a threat? Who defines it? How serious does it have to be to resort to violence? How do we judge whether it has reached such levels? (145)

Therefore, the study of terrorism has become preoccupied with the constant debate that revolves around explaining and defining what actually constitutes terrorism and how to counter it. Going by the historical timeline, Chaiwat Satha-Anand adds, “Since 1936, there have been as many as 109 different definitions of terrorism provided by different writers. The best approach to understanding terrorism is not to ask what it means, but how terrorism works?” (158). Thus, the misunderstanding over its definition remains.

Second, Asad rightly argues that both warfare and terrorism kill civilians. But due to political power play, he says Western liberals dispute convincingly that terrorism generates hatred and disgust in the West. Terrorism is termed as uncivilized form of warfare whereas the West is noiseless about war. In fact, Asad compellingly

opines that more civilians are killed and property destroyed in war than through terrorism but the bias against terrorism exists. Asad does not endorse terrorism, but he points out that war is equally or more damaging than a terror attack.

Third, Derrida's political observation through the concept of autoimmunity is concerned with the political evolution from the Cold war era to 9/11 to the present war on terrorism. Through his remarks, he says that the current political chaos is intricately linked with the past and they cannot be studied individually in isolation as it constantly creates an unending cycle of repression. He also agrees with Asad pointing out that it is very difficult to distinguish between war and terrorism or between state and non-state terrorism in present day political realities.

Fourth, terrorism is not Islam specific. In the past there have been terrorists who have fought for various political causes belonging to other religions also. So, to only blame Islam and its followers as terrorists is not proper. Donald Black justifies the above argument as he writes, "Terrorists have launched attacks in the name of diverse groups, including Irish Catholics against Protestants of British ancestry in Northern Ireland; Tamil Hindus against Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka; Arab and Berber Muslims against French Catholics and others of European ancestry in Algeria; and Arab Muslims against Jews in Israel" (14). So terrorism is not the patent of Islam.

Lastly, this research is dealing with the response to terrorism especially Muslim terrorism by examining the films *New York, My Name is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight*. 9/11 was a catastrophe, a nightmare. But following that event, overnight along with Muslims, because of similar facial features and skin color, people of South Asian origin are bracketed under one category, as comprising of people involved for the 9/11 annihilation.

The American people start dividing fellow citizens on the basis of ‘them’ and ‘us’ depending on the position regarding the 9/11 attacks, whether one is cheerful or depressed about it. Especially, every Muslim is deemed to belong to ‘them’ because the episode of 9/11 is orchestrated by their fellow brothers of the same faith. The difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’ gradually became irreconcilable into ‘them’ verses ‘us.’ This unseen fault line is drawn between two cultures and religion. Harping on the exclusionist theme, Muneer Ahmed opines that:

Among the enormous violence done by the United States since the tragedies suffered on September 11 has been an unrelenting, multivalent assault on the bodies, psyches, and rights of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian immigrants. Restrictions on immigration of young men from Muslim countries, racial profiling and detention of “Muslim-looking” individuals, and an epidemic of hate violence against Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities in the wake of September 11 recall the long history of racialized U.S. immigration policy. (101)

This divide of ‘them’ and ‘us’ is what the characters in the films *New York, My Name is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight* stand up against. Sameer takes the violent path knowing very well the consequences of it. Just because he was a Muslim, he was apprehended and detained for close to nine months for no fault of his but only on mere suspicion. After being released, his life changes completely. He resents his life and wants revenge for the deep disgrace and dishonor he has been through.

Rizwan Khan stands up against the prejudiced attitude of the white people after 9/11, where all Muslims are labeled as terrorists. His adopted son, Sameer died because the latter’s father was a Muslim and his wife Mandira regrets marrying a Muslim. The name, surname or appearance became enough evidence for them to get

targeted or religiously abused. So one common Muslim by the name of Rizwan Khan valiantly stands up against this discriminatory and intolerant attitude proclaiming his name is Khan and he is not a terrorist.

Even Tariq Ali is not a terrorist. Rather he is a well-respected Muslim police officer at Scotland Yard. He has been tasked with investigating the incident of Police firing on Baqir Hussain. As he starts his exploration, he realizes that things have changed a lot since 9/11 and 7/7 around him. Tariq is confused with the turmoil that takes place in his life during the course of the film. In the end he is left with no choice but to shoot his nephew Zaheer, who was about to blow himself up inside a shopping mall. The point in this movie is that Tariq realizes that it is very difficult for a Muslim to lead a normal life in the West after 9/11.

Significance of Research

The significance of this research is that it acknowledges that the dangerous problem of terrorism exists in present times, especially after 9/11 with no immediate solution in sight. People are divided along religious affiliations and hatred against the other is rapidly snowballing. The divide of 'them' versus 'us' has increased manifold. Islam phobia has created an atmosphere of suspicion between Muslims and the rest. This has to end. Or else, the old saying, an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind will become true. Religious leaders, Politicians, Civil society leaders, Academicians and other concerned people have to come together for a humanistic cum cultural respect and understanding of the problem.

By marginalizing and disgracing Muslims as terrorists, the people in the West are alienating the former more and more. The ariel bombings that take place in Afghanistan, Iraq and parts of the Middle East are killing Muslims by large numbers and unaccountable damage being done by America and its allies. While America and

the West's war on terror demands stronger emphasis on security, the Government has to realize that it has to do it tactfully. The layers of intelligence agencies have to introspect and bridge the gulf against Muslims and not enlarge it. If they look deeply within then gradually over a period of time positive results will come or else it will be a never ending cycle of attack and retaliation.

Chapter Two: The Lethal Act of 9/11

Representation of “Muslim” Terrorism in Recent Bollywood Films

Following the prejudiced events against Muslims after 9/11, it has inspired several filmmakers to explore subjects like terrorism, hate crimes, racial prejudice and misinterpretation of religion based on actual and fictional events revolving around the attacks. Terror and terrorism have become a ubiquitous part of life now that filmmakers cannot avoid it anymore. The Western media has created an impression that the West is under attack from a primitive religion like Islam and thus implants fear among its citizens. In recent developments, Bollywood has taken an active interest in the portrayal of Muslims in their movies while dealing with the theme of politics of representation.

To counter the narrative of the West, this chapter presents a way to look at the harassment, humiliation, disgrace and dishonor faced by Muslims in America and Britain in connection to the movie *New York, My Name is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight*. A comparison of life of Muslims before and after 9/11 is discussed and the contribution of the media in stereotyping Muslims and its effect on the politics is also deliberated in this section. Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer put forward their argument saying that, “some Muslims are willing to die for what they believe, expecting to go straight to paradise” but “equating all Muslims with terrorists would be like equating all Christians with the Ku Klux Klan” (74).

The film *New York* depicts the shock of being a Muslim in America post 9/11 and the problems faced by this religious minority there. It shows the wrong path Sameer Shaikh, the protagonist is forced to take. He chooses this route to revenge his disgrace and humiliation, for being detained illegally and tortured as a terrorist. The movie displays how Muslims suspected as terrorists are demeaned, tortured and

detained which in turn provokes him to take retribution. It shows how an innocent man and his family suffer so much just because they are Muslim. After 9/11 incident, people have developed a perception that Muslims are violent and aggressive. This opinion is to a certain extent fueled by Western media. To counter this propaganda, the film *New York* is made from a non-western point of view that steers clear of stereotypes of Muslims.

On the other hand, the film *My Name is Khan* tries to provide a solution to the religious segregation faced by Muslims in America. Rizwan Khan stands and speaks up positively against bias and prejudice for Islam and Muslims, a religion under fire after 9/11. His one and only message is to tell the President of the United States of America that though his name is Khan, he is not a terrorist. In other words, terrorism is not a Muslim alliance and all Muslims are not terrorists. His point is that, he should not be trademarked or labeled a terrorist just because his surname is Khan. His refrain encourages people to develop a new way of dealing with Muslims and also helps in removing the misconceptions regarding his religious community.

The film *Shoot On Sight* is based on London Police order to shoot suspected terrorists after the July 7th 2005 London bombings, that resulted in racial and religious profiling against Muslims. With the shooting down of an innocent Muslim young man by the name of Baqir Hussain, Tariq Ali is tasked with the investigation to the incident. Being a well-respected Muslim police officer working for Scotland Yard, he comes across many hurdles and obstacles during the course of the investigation, from within his department and outside. As evidence surfaces pointing to Baqir's innocence, as well as the existence of a terrorist cell operating in his own backyard, Tariq is in a dilemma about what decision is correct.

By bringing Muslim liberals and extremists together in one frame, these films

expose the problem of misinterpretation of Islam and exploitation in the name of religion. The films *New York* and *MNIK* are shot in the United States, portraying the predicament between the individual, religion and oppression by the State authorities. *Shoot On Sight* is filmed in London, especially in London underground tube services. It is difficult to show regular American viewers a counter-perspective on terror because they are used to only one point of view. Their filmmakers show people killed in Afghanistan or Iraq and glorify their armed forces. But they cannot accept others showing images of 9/11 as the Western media and the people in general refuse realities that do not fit their picture or narrative. Terror is shown only in one dimension, which plays on clichéd Muslim imagery to create an odd ‘us’ versus ‘them’ divide.

The Resentment of Sameer Shaikh

The characters in the film *New York-Sam*, Maya and Omar are three close friends. They meet up at New York State University two years before 9/11. They are portrayed as young people overflowing with energy, confidence and working hard to succeed in life ahead. The thread that unites the threesome is that they are young Muslims studying in a Western University. But they are not representing the predictable Muslim that we seem to be familiar with. Like any other young people their age, they are seen to be intermixing with their friends at the University without facing any discrimination for being Muslims. They dress casually like any other regular American student and they are friendly with almost everybody. The movie does not show them stereotyping Muslims in any form. The mention of the word ‘Allah’ is not there even once throughout the course of the film. They do not offer *namaaz*, wear *pathan* suits or robes or even the trademark skull cap is not shown, but still the film resonates among followers of Islam.

But suddenly, the threesome are affected by the 9/11 episode in varied ways and in different degrees for being Muslims. On September 11, 2001, all three of them watch the planes crash into the towers in shock and dismay. They are sorry for the loss and mourn along with other fellow Americans. After completion of University, Sam and Maya eventually marry, while Omar parts away from them. Sam is shown as running a successful life with Maya being the dutiful housewife. Then the unwanted happens. Like the destruction of the twin towers, the life of Sam, Maya and Omar get disintegrated. Sam is picked up without any charge by the FBI authorities and put in detention.

Here, the film *New York* boldly accuses the FBI of illegally detaining hundreds of Muslims like Sam. They are suspected to have terrorist links after 9/11 and go through rigorous forms of torture, only to be released months later when no evidence against them could be gathered as many of them are found to be innocent. Thus, it is a film that raises the issue of illegal detention of Muslims in post 9/11 America and how they are being targeted by the investigative authorities. In conversation with Omar, Sameer recounts how he was detained:

Sameer: What are you thinking? How this all American dude like me become a terrorist? Omar, 9/11 changed the world, so how could it spare me? Ten days after 9/11 I was on my way to meet Maya in Washington. On the basis of some photographs I had clicked of the World Trade Center during college and one airline ticket, they tried to label me a terrorist. I never knew then but the FBI had detained 1200 people like me and put them in different jails. We just had one thing in common, our religion. They would beat us and scream at us over and over again. It seemed we would never make it out of here. For

months we lived in that detention center like animals. And finally, nine months later I was one of the four people released by the FBI for lack of evidence. (01:18:33)

In the film, Sameer is victimized for being a Muslim suspect. He has been residing in the United States since childhood. He is apprehended as a doubtful and treated worse than an animal. He is illegally detained and brutally persecuted by the FBI for close to nine months, subsequent to 9/11. He is shamed, disgraced, humiliated and his request for a lawyer is repeatedly turned down by the investigators. The scenes of Sameer's unpleasant torture scenes and ones after that when he is in a state of shock of the whole experience is heartrending. This is another example of human rights abuse in the United States post 9/11.

The Patriot Act allows the United States Government to detain suspect people without a trial because freedom has to be protected, whatever the cost. The three friends pay an enormous price for just being normal common Muslims, or being at the wrong place at the wrong time. It is ethically wrong to illegally torture citizens in detention centers in the name of national security. But when incidents like 9/11 happen, Governments tend to be firm and no one can be blamed. "When times are bad, both people and nations make bad decisions," (02:23:44) says FBI officer, Roshan. Post 9/11, both America and Sam choose the wrong path, he explains. The United States robbed Sameer, the innocent young family loving Muslim of his self-esteem and in retribution, the victimized Sameer selected the wrong path to extract his revenge. In the beginning of the film, Omar is framed and in the interrogation room of the FBI:

Omar: How can you force me?

Inspector Roshan: I hope it doesn't come down to that my friend.

Omar: I need a lawyer.

Inspector Roshan: Forget it.

Omar: This is illegal.

Inspector Roshan: You must remember one thing my brother, you are not talking to a damn policeman, you're dealing with the FBI. If we need to break the law for this country's safety, we do it.

Omar: You're framing me, I am not a terrorist. (00:08:02)

Terrible wrongdoings in the name of investigation happen after 9/11. The film deals with racism and more importantly the inhuman treatment of innocent suspects in the detention centers across United States after 9/11.

These types of misconducts are committed by police officers and the layers of investigation agencies of the American Government. A case in point in the movie where the police abuse other people's basic human rights is the whole frisking episode of Maya by a cop on the road late at night. The image shakes the mind of the viewers of the film. What if it were to happen to any one of us? The plot introduces and takes us to the brutal, harsh world of religious discrimination faced by Muslims and people of South Asian origin. Like Sameer, there are many other people like him who have been detained illegally by the authorities and kept at Guantanamo Bay.

Sam is an example and representative for the thousands of detainees the American Government has arrested and put in top-security prisons. For people like Sam, who are tortured agonizingly, for months and years, it is extremely difficult for them to lead a normal life again. They find themselves isolated and unable to reintegrate back into society. They always remain a suspect in the eye of their neighbors, friends and coworkers. In the episode of Sameer's detention scene, where

he is tied naked on a chair:

Sameer: How can you ... How can you do this to me? Who are you? Give me my clothes back.

Lady Interrogator: Did you take these pictures in August?

Sameer: How did you get these? What's this about?

Lady Interrogator: What specific reason did you have taking pictures of the World Trade Center?

Sameer: These are for my paper on architecture at the university.

Lady Interrogator: They are pretty specific photos for a school paper ... don't you think? And we've got you purchasing an online ticket at the kiosk at Kinkos on 20th street on the 5th of November ... right?

Sameer: Yes, that's for my cousin. What does that have to do with this?

Lady Interrogator: Mr. Sheikh ... we think you are a suspect in a terrorist attack. (01:20:17)

In the second half of the film, Sameer's disturbed and distracted mind is forced to take the wrong path. The physical and mental abuse on innocent Muslims, imprisoned merely on suspicion and their consequent repercussions is portrayed through the path Sameer treads. He is forced to become a terrorist due to becoming the victim of racism and cruelties by the officials.

Sameer has no other choice, for whom the suffering is perhaps more personal and demeaning. The film tries to unmask the hidden monster behind the security agencies, in the film FBI. It portrays the worst atrocities committed by the so-called security forces following the orders of the American Government. It effectively shows

the senseless outlook towards Muslims giving birth to a number of terrorists. Sameer ends up destroying his life by turning to crime or terrorism as revenge against unlawful detention and for destroying his life. Along with him, caught up in all this hatred is his wife Maya and his best friend, Omar. This once again, focuses on how terrorism impacts the lives of all of them and numerous others in a negative way. In another scene in the film, Inspector Roshan shows off his power and that of the FBI in the dialogues below:

Inspector Roshan: This is an FBI interrogation room and it's me who asks questions.

Omar: I want a lawyer.

Inspector Roshan: You're not getting one.

Omar: What?

Inspector Roshan: You've been detained, which means that you may want to talk to someone, but you can't. You're not allowed to. The Patriot Act empowers me to detain a suspect in order to prevent an act of terrorism.

Omar: Terrorism. What does it mean? What do I have to do with terrorism?

Inspector Roshan: We'll soon find out. (00:06:37)

Terrorism needs to be wiped out from this world if people want to have a future. But somehow, somewhere it originates simply because governments and security agencies pursuit poor civilians or minorities as suspects. It then results in a cyclical movement.

In the movie, Sameer is not a terrorist and neither did he have any motif of being one. But he becomes one eventually due to the inhuman treatment he went through as a suspect. In fact, the film highlights why some Muslims became terrorists

after the American backlash that dumped innocent people like Sam in prolonged detention and divested them of all human rights, simply on the basis of their names and religious identity. The implied fact is that torture turns some innocent Muslims into terrorists. Sameer is left with no alternative but to become a terrorist, to seek revenge for the dishonor. It is his inner struggle of being a part of a fight that he did not start. But he was trapped into it because of bad work done by people of his faith. As part of her crusade against illegal detention, Maya interviews a Muslim man for being arrested by the FBI and later released:

Zilgai: They were Americans, FBI. I was blindfolded. After some people came and untied my blindfold. For three month I was dumped in a detention center.

Maya: What did they do to you in detention?

Zilgai: What else, they would forcibly strip us naked and assault us. They would handcuff us to the ceiling and keep us hanging that way for up to 40 hours. Then, they would put a hood on us and urinate on it on our face, they didn't let us go to the toilet. We were forced to relieve ourselves in our clothes, then they would say your mother, your sisters are whores. They would abuse us. (01:01:41)

Sam and many Muslims seem to personify a new, puzzling pattern in global jihad. After the incident of 9/11, a new group of terrorists have emerged that is becoming problematic and a nightmare for the police, investigative agencies and other security departments. Young people like Sam, represent the home grown terrorist. They are outstandingly different from the typecast we seem to recognize. They are not devout, do not belong to one geographical location like West Asia, and have never visited *madrasas*. Instead they are completely and totally opposite to what we stereotype

them to be. They are urban educated in fluent English, come from relatively wealthy backgrounds and easily adapt to western lifestyles. They have diverse views, are mostly bilingual and can easily adapt to any cosmopolitan environment they are brought up in. Their desire for vengeance includes countries they feel is harassing Muslims throughout the world, it could be Muslim countries also. Having been brought up in a liberal environment, they do not like being oppressed or harassed by others. Therefore, terrorism has a crucial part to play in the lives of the threesome.

The Non-Violence Approach and Odyssey of Rizwan Khan

Succeeding 9/11, the heightened security at airports in America and the West is understandable. But, by any parameter, the way in which people affiliated to certain religion or race or colors are treated is condemnable. The police and layers of security agencies are scaring the very people it needs to help. The white population of America needs to realize that terrorizing a group of people all the time will not be beneficial to them in the long run. America and its white citizens need to do some serious reconsideration of how it treats Muslims and people of South Asian origin. They should realize people and their religious beliefs are indeed a source of power.

If anything has to be dropped, it should be the veil of suspicion. Instead of bringing peace and compassion, they bring war and destruction, hatred and disgrace. And that is exactly what they are going to get in return. Despite of all hatred and anti-Muslim feeling in America and around the world, Muslims are not losing their faith. If future attacks on their country or countrymen are to be stopped, then Americans need to enlist the help and respect of those good people who share the name of the faith with the terrorists. They should understand that there are good and sociable people among the Muslim population also.

Similar to the film *New York*, another film that is a part of this research is *My*

Name is Khan (MNIK). This film talks about Muslims living in a distrustful, post 9/11 America, where it becomes insecure for a man whose surname is Khan. Along with the appearance, it is the name or surname that evokes suspicion, anguish and dishonor for people of certain religion or region. The difference is that, while Sam in *New York* is forced to even the score, Rizwan Khan in *My Name is Khan* tries to persuade the American people understand through their Commander in Chief, that all Muslims are not terrorists, which is true compared to the reality and incidents Muslims in America have faced since 9/11.

Rizwan's argument is that there are and can be good Muslims and it is wrong to typecast them under one category. The film has incidents that reflect the reality for most of Muslims and the conditions they have to go through. After Mandira's son is killed due to racial discrimination at school, she accuses and throws Rizwan out of the house that disintegrates their marriage. She feels that her son died because her husband is a Muslim. She feels her son died because she married a Muslim. She then tells Rizwan that she no longer wants him in her life. Being deeply devoted to her, when he asks her what he has to do to be a part of her life, she tells him that he has to tell the people of the United States, and the President that his name is Khan and that he is not a terrorist. In a very rude and angry manner she says:

Mandira: You know Banville?

It has a population of 30,000, and each one of those 30,000 people hate you.

Tell all of them that you are not a terrorist.

Why only them?

Tell every person in America that you are not a Terrorist.

Can you do that? Can you?

No. You can't?

Why don't you tell the President of United States then?

Mr. President, my name is Khan and I am not a terrorist.

So, he can tell all the people that my Sam was not the terrorist son of a terrorist father. (01:27:10)

After Mandira's command, Rizwan takes the words uttered by her seriously and thus begins his odyssey to meet the President of America and convey to him that his name is Khan and that he is not a terrorist. As Rizwan sets on his journey, during his voyage, he is falsely detained as a terrorist suspect and held at an unknown location.

Americans were stunned by the attack on the World Trade Center by terrorists associated to Al Qaeda. As discussed earlier, from then on, Muslims in America are labeled as the 'other.' Labeling or stereotyping is a psychological assault on a person's identity. Post 9/11, the coarse treatment is not on a person but to followers of Islam. They are treated with guilt because of a few people of their religion who were responsible for the incident. It creates a new image for Muslim's and Arabs, thus portraying all Muslims as terrorists. They and their family members are targeted, as they worry about their safety and future in America.

Classified or bracketed as the 'other,' it makes people with a Muslim surname or appearance difficult to assimilate and integrate within American society. In this scenario, Islam as a religion is discredited with people belonging to the faith facing the fate of all forms of racial discrimination and being tagged as 'terrorist' or silent supporter of them. In *MNIK*, Rizwan tries to represent Muslims and to clear the doubt, that his name is Khan but he is not a terrorist. He says he feels angry and dishonored. The tag-line shows incidents that minimize the barrier for showing their cultural identity, lowering their fears and decreasing their tolerance level. In a very angry tone,

Mandira regrets her decision to fall in love and get married to Rizwan as she says:

Mandira: I should never have married a Muslim man.

If Sam had been a Rathod (Hindu), he would have been alive today.

He was a Khan, so, he died.

He died because of you. Because of your surname? (01:25:16)

Mandira is intensely saddened by the demise of her son under mysterious circumstances. Later when she is informed that Sameer may have died due to racial attack at school, she vents her ire against Rizwan, for Sameer's death. Rizwan was physically not responsible for Sameer's death. It was because Sameer had the surname Khan that became the cause of his death.

There is no doubt that the United States is brutally hurt by the events of 9/11. There has been a huge negative image on American Muslims among the common people. It results in the United States becoming a police state, unwelcoming to visitors and newcomers. Visitors, especially Muslims and people of South Asian origin do not feel safe crossing the border or staying in the United States anymore because they can be stopped, questioned, detained or arrested at any moment and time, without any legal notice, only based on mere suspicion. The laws have changed or rather have been created like the Patriot Act that any person suspected as terrorists can be taken into custody for in-definite time until proven innocent. Apart from visitors, Muslims and other Asians who have settled in the United States for many years start to feel like second class citizens in their adopted country. Though, it is found that American Muslims are in no way associated or connected with Al Qaeda, they are still harassed and anti-Islamic campaigns are greater than before.

Rizwan and Mandira's perfect existence gets disrupted, however, after the September 11 attacks on the twin towers in New York City. Their American neighbor Mark goes to cover the war in Afghanistan and eventually dies there. At the same time, the Khan family begins to experience post 9-11 prejudice within their community and Reese begins to turn against Sam as well. One afternoon, an argument between them turns into a racially motivated schoolyard fight between Sam and a number of older students. Reese tries to intervene but is held back and Sam is internally injured that he succumbs to injury. A shattered Mandira blames Rizwan for his death stating that Sam died only because his name was Khan. Recalling the unfortunate incident, Rizwan says that:

Rizwan: Inspector Garcia told us that our son's death may have been a racial attack.

His wounds were proof of that.

He was a Muslim, so he was killed.

But I couldn't understand.

Being a Muslim is not a bad thing, Mandira. (01:23:39)

With deep remorse and regret, Rizwan take the blame for Sam's death because he loves his wife Mandira truly, deeply and madly. To pacify his wife he leaves the house to spread the message to the American people that he is not a terrorist.

It is so because his name is Khan and is always murmuring religious prayers. Some examples are when, he chants his prayers during the fund-raiser for the mourning of people for 9/11 in their hometown. As he is chanting religious couplets, everyone looks at him suspiciously and a sense of hatred is developed against him. Also, in the airport when he chants prayers while standing in the boarding line, co-passengers are afraid and report about him. In one of the opening scenes, the air-port

officials ask Rizwan about his message to the president. They get stunned on listening to the phrase and look at him with sympathy, confused and unable to answer his statement. Also, his refrain raises eyebrows to many organizations in which way a person has to be seen or treated.

Earlier, most Muslims were not under the radar of common Americans or for layers of investigative agencies. There was freedom of speech for all of them and could freely participate in social events. Muslims in America have the freedom to pursue their religion and culture like wearing scarf, *burka*, skull cap or growing long beard. This is depicted in the movie where Hasina, sister-in-law of Rizwan is wearing a scarf over her head. She visits the university, streets and market place without any fear or discrimination. More importantly, there is no racial or religious discrimination and no sight of public hostility, harassment or humiliation before 9/11. Everyone is treated equal before the law. Religion is not a barrier or platform for recognition with respect to profession, trade and business.

Muslims and people of South Asian origin had the same freedom and rights as other citizens of America. There was no special airport checking, screening and interrogation especially for Muslims or people of South Asian Region either in reality or in the movie. Another instance in the movie shows that the '*al-ameen*' electronics owner has no problem in his business and people visited his shop frequently. Also, Hasina has the recognition of a professor/lecturer in the University and she is not recognized as a Muslim. Mandira's salon shop 'Mandira Khan' has visitors of all religions and is doing well commercially. Moreover, the surname 'Khan' does not have any weight, significance and people are least interested whether a person is a Muslim or not. When Zakir takes Rizwan to his office for the first time he explains to his brother the importance of working hard in America:

Zakir: This is our office.

Come in. Have a good look.

What do you think, come this way.

What did I have when I came to America?

Nothing, but today? See for yourself.

I am the biggest dealer for Mehnaz Herbal Products.

Because this is America,

Here, the harder you work, the more successful you get.

I have worked very hard.

Now, it's your turn. (00:24:49)

Subsequent to 9/11, the whole scenario has changed. America has become less friendly to Muslims as targets of discrimination, hate and prejudice have increased. Many or most Muslims residing in the United States have their own personal grievance to narrate after 9/11. The discriminatory attitude by white Americans range from provocative looks, to physical assaults, verbal abuses, apolitical comments and work place harassments. In some places mosques have been burnt and the Quran degraded. Or in other words, life for followers of Islam has become extremely difficult after 9/11. Muslims in the United States complain that their community is singled out by the government for surveillance. Close circuit television cameras are pointed at mosques. Muslims have witnessed the ever-growing marginalization of their communities never before witnessed in a free country like America.

MNIK shows scenes showing that many American Muslims were changing their name and identity to escape religious segregation. There is harassment of Muslims in their workplace which eventually leads them either to quit their job or leave the country. Also, many Muslims stop wearing their traditional dress and shave

their beards so as not to be noticed in public. The American's view towards Muslims changes drastically, like in one scene an American father does not allow his son to sit with a Muslim child. Muslim women wearing *hijab* are targeted which is shown through the trouble Hasina faces. In one scene, a person pulls her scarf at the University and demands her to, "get-out of my country" (01:05:54). Even her husband Zakir requests his wife to stop wearing scarf in public for fear of more humiliation and religious bias:

Zakir: From today, don't wear this now.

Allah will understand.

These people won't.

Never. (01:06:27)

Hasina and Zakir have no choice but to keep quiet about religious intolerance taking place after 9/11. By removing her head scarf, it is as if she has lost her identity. It is a deep psychological assault that Hasina has to go through.

In the beginning of the film, Rizwan is first reported for constantly murmuring religious prayers while being stared at in the airport by nervous bystanders following 9/11. Later he is arrested and taken into interrogation by policeman at the airport. It is not a desirable experience for any person and it reminds Rizwan that because of his religious background, he is not the same as other people around him. He has the disgraceful and outrageous privilege of being frisked at security check for twice as long as the person before and after him. He is randomly picked for a passport check and sometimes taken off the plane. On cross-examination, he does not have enough evidences to prove that he is not a terrorist.

The issue discussed above and that Rizwan faces in the movie has become a reality for many people after 9/11. Muslims and people of South Asian origin

frequently face the problem that Rizwan goes through in the film. Religion, color of skin, a person's surname or any improper behavior is enough for American law enforcing authorities to question the concerned person without any particular reason. It is an extremely dishonorable, embarrassing and degrading experience for countless people who go through this experience at airports in America and other Western countries. The airports which are the entry points to the United States become unwelcoming to Muslims.

Soon after the 9/11 attacks, religious profiling became the norm at American airports where anyone belonging to the Arab or Muslim communities is systematically called out for questioning and sometimes even detained. Federal and State agencies, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, have expanded the use of this degrading, discriminatory and dangerous practice. Common people have been profiled, harassed, despised, attacked, interrogated and permanently controlled at airports. The whole Muslim community feel excluded from the American society. The damage to their civil liberties has been exhaustive and extensive. With 9/11, the whole country is somewhat converted into a virtual detention camp for Muslims by curtailing their civil rights. The argument or excuse is that Muslims cannot be good Americans and that mosques are fronts for extremist jihadist. Dr. Faisal Rehman, a practicing doctor strongly voices his opinion against this form of religious discrimination when he says:

Dr. Faisal: Listen, listen, listen brothers. We are digressing.

I have said it before. I have no problems with Christians or the Jews.

I get angry only when this same grace is not reciprocated towards us Muslims.

My blood boils when Israeli Jews massacre our Palestinian brothers.

Or, when Hindus in India cut our children and women and children to pieces with their swords.

That's when my blood boils. Doesn't your blood boil?

Answer me. (01:48:32)

Many Muslims are profoundly affected by the policies of the United States. Their tendency to regard Muslim communities as the most likely source of terrorism risks marginalizing and alienating them.

With tough counter terrorism measures in place, presently America and the West are less likely to face a large, complex attack similar to 9/11. But they remain susceptible to a smaller, less traceable attack from an individual or small group of personalities in their own country. If future attacks from these people are to be stopped, then the intelligence agencies should stop their unnecessary harassment against Muslims. Instead they should seek help and respect of those good people who share the name and religion of the terrorists. In a rebuttal to the hate speech being given by Dr. Faisal, Rizwan counters him:

Rizwan: You are lying.

Saint Ibrahim did not doubt the compassion of the Lord.

The story is an example of his immense strong faith and belief.

And that's the reason why despite being incited by a stranger repeatedly, Saint Ibrahim did not waver from his path of righteousness.

He didn't listen to the stranger.

He was sure Allah would never allow the blood of his progeny to be

shed and he was right. The Mighty Allah saved Ismail's life.

This story shows that the path of Allah is that of love not of hatred and war.

You are lying doctor. (01:50:46)

With Muslims, Western intelligence agencies feel that there is a good case for using electronic surveillance. Though they frequently monitor mosques and areas frequented by Muslims, sometime incorrect information is also transferred. From the American Government point of view, their country has to be protected, whatever the cost. If that means unnecessarily bullying and coercing Muslims then it is totally wrong. The media both electronic and print is helping to ridicule Muslims and attacking the religion Islam as barbaric, evil and anti-civilization. This is fueling more hatred between followers of Islam and the West.

Towards the end of the film, with great persuasion, Rizwan manages to get media attention, support and is finally able to meet the President of The United States of America. After a long, difficult and tiring journey, he is able to convey his message to the President. He is a firm believer that terrorism cannot be the answer to the problems faced by Muslims, rather it complicates and intensifies them. He holds the view that national identity is as much important as religious identity. Hasina also wears her head scarf in front of her students later and proudly announces saying:

Hasina: For a while now I have been fighting with myself.

I teach you about identity when my own has changed so drastically.

My Hijab is not just my religious identity. It is a part of my existence. It's me. (02:08:12)

She unhesitatingly feels confident to tell her students and the people about her that her Hijab is her identity and she does not have to feel sorry for being a Muslim. For a few

people who bring a bad name to their religion, all must not be looked at from the same angle.

The Misperception of Tariq Ali

The vilification of Muslims has been persistent among segments of the media and political classes since 9/11. The role of the media is huge in present day society and its ubiquitous presence shows its possibilities in disseminating information about present day issues at a rapid pace. Along with transferring information, the media is able to shape and dictate the agenda about people's view on a range of issues. After the 9/11 incident, it was the role media played in galvanizing peoples opinion in support for the war in Afghanistan and later Iraq. The twin wars in the Middle East have broadened the gulf between the West and Islam instead of bridging it. The 9/11 attacks have had a damaging effect on Muslims living in America or the West.

Despite the evidence of the earlier Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre, the United States accepted it to be in retaliation to their overseas interests. But with 9/11, it dawned on the politicians and law makers that their country has to be safeguarded, whatever the cost. The politics of terrorism changed abruptly overnight in seeking to protect the homeland and attack the enemy even if it meant attacking a region miles away from home. The impact on the United States was completely disappointing. Following the above doctrine, it was no longer necessary to wait for terrorist groups to attack the United States again, but the other way round. If it got a sense that the attack was coming, counter terrorism measures would follow and as Brian Martin says:

The September 11 attacks reveal in stark form how counterproductive violence is for promoting justice and equality. They have provided the ideal pretext for massive expansion in apparatuses for 'state security,'

including spying, detention, disruption and torture. By the same token, the US government's military actions will provoke greater support for terrorist approaches. (6)

After aligning in the 'War on Terror' with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, Britain became an enemy of Al Qaeda also. Parallel to 9/11, Britain was attacked on 7, 7, 2005, in London in its subway bombings. Britain paid a heavy price for joining the twin wars and after the bombings, following the United States strengthened its security internally. Rigid laws were framed and the police and other security agencies were given arbitrary powers so that they could use them to protect the homeland. In the name of protecting the nation and its people, civil liberties were and are curtailed and people belonging to a particular faith were the area of focus. Islam phobia was common in Britain at that time and during that difficult phase, many people faced great problems. The general public was the most affected as they went about their daily work. In these troublesome moments, sometimes mistakes do happen and individuals and communities get embroiled in them.

One such incident is highlighted in the movie *Shoot On Sight* (SOS). The film raises important questions about the nature of fear post 7/7 and the impact it had on common people after that dreadful day. The film SOS makes the audience take note of the thorny issue of terrorism and all the complexities associated with it. It deals with religious violence, bomb blasts, radicalism, racism and the hatred of one community against another. It also talks about the problems faced by people of Islam who condemn the bomb blasts and terrorism. After the incident of 7/7, the movie looks at the social environment in which fault lines are drawn in a cosmopolitan city like London.

People who were living, laughing and talking suddenly their behavior changes overnight after the attack of 7/7. The film starts with some text printed on the screen informing audiences about the tough counter terrorism measures taken by the American Government after 9/11. The text also enlightens us that the same policy is now followed in Britain following 7/7, with additional powers given to the law enforcement agencies. It authorizes the use of arbitrary powers to these agencies to use full might if untoward incidents like terrorism have to be averted.

As the sequence begins in the film, a plain clothes policeman is following a person of Muslim faith into the underground rail network. While moving behind the person, he contacts his superiors as to what action he should take? The chain of command instructs him to stop the person wearing the skull cap and carrying a back pack from boarding the train at any cost. As the plain clothes policeman shouts at the man wearing the skull cap to raise his hand to surrender, the latter refuses to do so. But instead it appears that person moving his right hand towards his pocket. Sensing the suspect to be a suicide bomber, the policemen immediately fires at the doubtful person killing him instantly on the spot. On closer examination of the dead body it is shown that the dead person had earphones in his ears and he obviously did not hear the policeman calling him. While investigating the crime scene:

Tariq: You don't like me too much, Inspector.

DI Marber: On the contrary, I have deep a respect for your position, Sir.

Tariq: Not really the same thing here.

I have to say, I don't like your attitude, DI Marber.

DI Marber: I don't like being second guessed, Sir. The suspect turned and looked me right in the eye. He saw the gun and he reached his hand into his jacket. I had a second, may be less to make a

judgment call. In the same situation I would make it again.

Tariq: I am sure you would. (00:55:05)

The fracturing incident of July 7 London bombings happens to be a global issue. It is as if New York has been replaced by London, with only the geographical location changing but the scale of devastation remaining almost the same. With this episode being featured on celluloid as *SOS*, the film raises the topic of Muslim terrorism and religious profiling in Britain after 7/7. The main thrust of the film is how an individual like Tariq Ali gets affected because of the bomb blasts. It was not his war, nor was he involved in any way, but there is a 360 degree change in his life as a result of that devastation and destruction.

After the blasts, the Government of the United Kingdom, like the United States follows a strict code of conduct. Orders are given by the Government to security agencies that terrorism in any form will not be tolerated and terrorist activities and suspects have to be stopped, whatever the cost. Shoot on sight orders is given to Scotland Yard and the police department. In reality, a Brazilian by the name of Jean Charles De Menezes is shot point blank by the police on suspicion of being a terrorist at the London Underground station. The Brazilian was mistaken for a terrorist and shot dead at point blank range by the police at a tube station a week after the bombings. *SOS* highlights this issue and cannily makes the audience think about this problem.

Thus, *SOS* is able to make people contemplate on the theme of terrorism and its fall out. Based on a real life incident, the policeman shoots at the innocent person because he was a Muslim and the police department wants to justify its act in the veil of protecting common Londoners. The killed Muslim male student is identified as Baqir Hussain. As pressure is mounted by the media, that the killing of the innocent

man is religious and racially motivated, a departmental inquiry on the incident starts. A respectable officer by the name of Tariq Ali is assigned the investigation. His immediate job is to calm the crisis in the eyes of the general public. Editors, Angharad Closs Stephens and Nick Vaughan-Williams discuss and write about the high handed approach of the British government in dealing with Muslims. They point out that the British authorities did not claim the suicide bombers of London 7/7 as British Citizens but instead:

How the four suicide bombers were constructed as ‘outsiders’ or ‘others’ despite the fact that these attacks were carried out by Britons. All of the bombers were raised in Britain and schooled in Britain and yet the government worked hard to make these largely typical young British men seem untypical, exceptional and ‘foreign.’(11)

The exclusive theme of the film is that it focuses on the issue and does not deviate from the core dispute. Opinions are divided among audiences on this issue. One group feels tough decisions have to be taken to stop terrorism. Another group feels that facts must be verified thoroughly before action is taken so that mistakes like in *SOS* do not happen.

As Tariq moves ahead with the investigation he gradually realizes that all is not well inside and outside the department. Being a Muslim himself, he is confused between his identity and his duty. Deep inside he knows it is a monumental mistake committed by his department. It is a serious crime, a plain murder. But on the other hand there is pressure on him by superiors in his department to bury the truth and proclaim the innocent dead man a terrorist. This brings about turmoil in his life. His seniors have given him bait in the form of promotion. It is a chance of a lifetime, as Tariq desperately wants that elevation before he finally retires from the department.

With this new conflict in his life, Tariq is totally disorganized. He is tasked with the investigation but subtly told to toe the line of the department, in proving to the public that the Baqir Hussain was a terrorist. He is also advised by his superiors to prove that Baqir has links with terror organizations. But as he proceeds with the investigation, Tariq realizes that a lot has changed since 9/11 and 7/7. There is fear among the common people and hatred for one another. In this charged scenario he realizes that the actual enemy is not the terrorists but people inside his own department. His superiors and peers suspect him of being soft on Muslims. To add more confusion in his life, Tariq's nephew comes to live with him from Pakistan. He is seen to be a closet terrorist who later plans to blow up a shopping mall to the utter surprise of Tariq. *SOS* does not try to give a solution but raises important points that the war is not over yet. His close friend Yunus of many years in London says:

Yunus: Tariq, so much has changed over the years. But certain things perhaps will never change. I used to run down the hill every morning to catch number 8, into town. Same bus, every day. The driver Eddie, nice bloke, he would wait for me, if I was late to show up. I was his regular. There was what, five or six of us. We rode together every day. We were not mates but we knew each other well. A nod, a smile, a few pleasantries. You know Tariq, July 7th was the first day that I missed the bus in years. But I was there the next day, and everything, everything was different. No more smile, just that look. Nothing that happened before that day, none of it matters now. All they see now, all they will see when they look at us are terrorists.

Tariq: You don't really mean that, do you? (01:10:19)

What Yunus tells Tariq in the above dialogue is extremely true. Overnight the behavior has changed to division and suspicion of 'we' verses 'them'. Being based on the aftermath of 7/7 London bombings, the film sharply divides opinions among viewers with strong reactions from both sides.

The tagline of *SOS* reads, 'Is It a Crime to be a Muslim.' Tariq, his friend Junaid, the Imam and Yunus, all comprehend that a lot has changed after 7/7. The perception of the white people against Muslims that they are terrorists and that Islam is a religion which preaches hate. While the Imam represents what the white people think about Muslims, Yunus personally goes through humiliation for being a Muslim. For Tariq, life becomes more and more difficult. Being a Muslim and married to a British white woman, he feels the pressure of his job both at home and office. Tariq is married to Susan, who is a British and Christian, and they have two children, Zara and Imran. Apart from that his fellow Muslims also distrust him as they feel being a police officer he is siding with the white people. Thus he is charged from all sides where everyone feels he is against them and betraying their cause. Tariq is also constantly hounded by the media for being sympathetic to Muslims. But, he is willing to set a certain amount of his cultural identity aside in order to advance his career in law enforcement.

As Tariq proceeds with his enquiry, he meets with the victim's mother, sister and their lawyer, but comes to the conclusion that all sides are not looking for a solution but rather confrontation. Allegations rise of religious targeting by the police against Muslims as well as the constant threat of Islamic terrorism is felt by Tariq. As he is gathering evidence to show which side is guilty in the shooting of Baqir, Tariq senses the possibility of another major terrorist attack in the city by Muslims. On further examination, he realizes that the suspect suicide bomber is none other than his

nephew, Zaheer. This makes him realize that the charges about Islam linked with terrorism is not baseless or not propaganda but a distinct reality. In the concluding scene, Tariq is left with no option but to shot his nephew. His friend Junaid is also caught and put behind bars. At the end, Tariq goes to jail to meet Junaid and sees that the latter shows no regret for what he has done:

Tariq: When did this happen to Jaheer? When did you put him in this path?

Junaid: Allah showed him the path of enlightenment. After his father died you were not around in Pakistan. But I was. I am sorry about Jaheer. He was a great soldier. There will always be casualties because we are in a holy war.

Tariq: It's not my war.

Junaid: It is now. (01:36:28)

Tariq is taken by disbelief that his childhood friend Junaid is involved in coaxing young men like Zaheer to join the 'Holy War.' Tariq also finds his life in commotion, when he is photographed shaking hands with Junaid somewhere in the middle of the film and the photo printed in leading newspapers across Britain. This misinformation creates more disorder for him. He is removed from the investigation, denied the promotion he desperately seeks and asked to go on leave. He finds people and colleagues with whom he has spent a significant portion of his life suddenly looking at him with a suspicious eye. He then remembers the pain Yunus had narrated to him as he is distrusted by his seniors and fellow Muslims.

In due course, proof surfaces that because of misinformation on the part of the police, Baqir had been shot and that he was not a terrorist. Information also comes to Tariq's knowledge that there is a sleeper cell of homegrown terrorists who are planning to blow up a shopping mall. On further scrutiny, it is found that the terrorist

is none other than Zaheer, Tariq's nephew. Immediately Tariq contacts the police and in the right moment he is able to stop Zaheer from blowing up a shopping mall by shooting at him. And when he meets his onetime close friend Zunaïd, the latter seems unrepentant. The involvement of Junaid and Zaheer, is a great personal embarrassment for Tariq, as both of them have close connections to him and both are Muslims. Eventually he resigns from the department as he is totally upset.

Tariq had made many personal sacrifices to reach this position where he is presently. His intelligence, smartness and professional attitude have helped in making him a good policeman at Scotland Yard. But first with the task of investigation and secondly, the involvement of Zaheer in terror related activities, Tariq is torn apart between duty and faith. While being in the police department, Tariq was always following orders. But now as he moves deeper into the investigation on the death of Baqir Hussain, new realizations dawn on him. He steadily realizes how perceptions of things have changed around him, especially for Muslims. In one instance, Tariq has a debate with Junaid regarding the sides of Islam:

Tariq: What have you been filling his head with? That there will be virgins awaiting him in paradise if he kills himself. That there will be songs written in his name. Do not try to influence him.

Junaid: My friend, have you nothing in your life you would kill for?

Tariq: The house of Islam would not be built on violence. But if people like you continue giving it a bad name.

Junaid: One day old friend. One day. You have to decide, are you a policeman who happens to be a Muslim or a Muslim who happens to be a police officer. You cannot be both. (01:25:15)

The film manages to avoid taking sides and does a fine job of simply telling a story

with the issues that are raised being compelling and thinking ones. As Tariq digs deeper in the case, he sees two faces of the world around him.

On the one hand are those who view the followers of Islam with hatred and suspicion. Due to the involvement of few Muslims in present day terrorism, the whole community is targeted. The second factor at play is within the Muslim community itself. There exist intra religious blocs between liberal and fanatics. Yunus in the film represents liberals while Zunaid and Zaheer represent the radicals, with Tariq torn in-between. Along with the above stated problem, Tariq does not get adequate cooperation from the police department during the course of his investigation. PC Andrews who Ali believes to be a racist does not give assistance at all. He becomes upset with his wife for suspecting his nephew to be a terrorist. He feels that his wife's belief is based solely on the fact the boy is a Muslim and he is struggling internally between his faith and his job. On one occasion, Tariq has a heated conversation with his wife as she is suspicious of Junaid's involvement in terrorism:

Wife: I found this in Zaheer's room.

Tariq: So, what are you trying to say?

Wife: Look closer, this is the same shirt.

I know he his your nephew, but I am your wife. I need you to listen to me. I want you to see what I see.

Tariq: See what you see. I know what you see. When you look with those western eyes? Brown skin is the first thing you see. And terrorist is the first word that pops in your head. Sometime I wonder what you see when you look at me? (01:13:06)

Tough questions are raised in the film *SOS* especially when the religion Islam is getting a bad publicity. With 9/11, the lives of common people have changed due to

the concept of terrorism with Muslims eyed with suspicion and distrusted all over the world.

Along with 9/11 and later with 7/7 bombings, there was so much hatred and anger for Muslims all over the world. The gap between Christians and Muslims have widened more and more. One looks at the other with a suspicious eye. This distrust between these two religions is because of terrorism, where each side blames the other. *SOS* has shown different shades or angles of terrorism and the film must be praised for that. It shows how the police or the intelligence agencies work. Through the character of Zaheer, it shows how a person can be gradually brainwashed and recruited as a suicide bomber. Yunus is the voice of the moderate Muslim, who feels that terrorism has no religion and condemns people of his faith who are. In between Zaheer and Yunus is Tariq, who is completely surprised once he gets involved with the investigation. He finds out many aspects of the problem that he was not aware of.

In most terror related films, a formula is followed. Terrorists are usually Muslims, Islam is deemed a bad religion and the faith of the protagonist glorified. *SOS* avoids this formula and the storyline revolves in giving a voice to all the people affected by terrorism. Zaheer is the suicide bomber brainwashed by the Imam while Yunus is the voice of the moderate Muslim. Stuck in between them is Tariq, who is ashamed and confused with his religion as two people close to him are involved in terror related activities. The film also shows the other side when the accused English police officer calls all terrorists as Muslims. Thus, *SOS* gives food for thought to the audience.

Response to Terrorism in *New York, My Name Is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight*

The past has shown that if power is concentrated among a few people than it will be misused. After 9/11 and 7/7, America, Britain and other Western allies passed

rules and laws that gave extra constitutional arbitrary powers to the police and security agencies. Most of the everyday common liberties guaranteed by any constitutional democratic government were repealed or suspended. This put the power in the hands of a few people and once again a minority group was keeping an eye over the majority. With the advancement in telecommunications and artificial intelligence, present day spying devices are used vigorously without the knowledge of the common people. The security agencies are responsible because a lot of power is concentrated with them and they have to report to only a few superiors.

Although there is legislation with check and balance method adopted to check misuse of power, most of the times in the name of national security this power is mismanaged. These agencies have compiled and accumulated personal information which may be used for other means also. Thus Derrida's concept of autoimmunity can be appropriately applied in this context. It is a very thin line that security agencies are drawing and balancing it is a very hard task. But in a democracy, debate and frankness is encouraged not secrecy. This issue is raised by John Brenkman when he says that:

Meanwhile, the USA Patriot Act and the Homeland Security administration created new instruments of internal security that many feel deprive Americans of considerable civil liberties and liberal rights. That these measures made America a homeland in the exact sense of a place from which Americans are estranged, the place from which American rights and freedoms are missing. (52)

A common theme among all the terror attacked cities in the West is that these assaults have been used as an example to suspend basic legal facilities of the common man on the street. People can be randomly arrested under the anti-terror legislation and put in

illegal detention for an indefinite period. On the other hand, some countries are using this fight against terrorism to crackdown on political dissent and rivals. In this way, the main objective of the legislation to curb terror related activities becomes a mirage.

A State that prioritizes security over civil rights and liberties moves towards the path of authoritarianism. It is first and foremost duty of any State to look after its citizens and Dan Bulley writes, “A state’s success depends on whether it is strong enough to control such tension and maintain the safety, security and human rights of its citizens” (89). In the name of safety and peacekeeping, artificial intelligence devices are over used to track and follow suspects, as Governments are happily transferring these powers to intelligence agencies. But, Bulley also critiques the British authorities because, “Britain, as a state, was not only incapable of protecting human rights on 7 July; two weeks later it was actively attacking them, attacking its own immune system” (90). On the basis of suspicion, common people in many parts of the world are monitored all the time. Their phone conversations tapped, emails hacked, bank accounts constantly monitored, movement captured and archived without the knowledge of the person.

This brings us to the question about what Derrida and Asad have raised and as discussed previously in this research. In the West, people have faced religious discrimination especially after 9/11. Over and over again it has been discussed in this research that, all Muslims are not terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims. Using this line Governments through their security agencies and the majority religious group is creating problems for Muslims who have been residing in their land for many years now. The United States and its allies overnight tagged Muslims as terrorists after the demoralizing catastrophe of 9/11. People like Samir Shaikh, Rizwan Khan are detained illegally for days and months under the Patriot Act rules. In his book *State of*

Exception, Giorgio Agamben sheds light on saying, “What is new about Patriot Act order is that it radically erases any legal status of the individual, thus producing a legally unnamable and unclassifiable being” (4). Both of them were not terrorists. Sam had clicked photographs of the World Trade Center days before 9/11 as part of his project work. He had also purchased a plane ticket as he was expecting his cousin to come and visit him.

On the basis of these two evidences, he is captured in a very brutal manner and tortured. There was another way to deal with it also. He could have been called to the local police station and a cross examination could have been done. But filled with rage and anger, the FBI in a very discriminatory fashion kidnaps him and confines him to detention. The scenes of torment in custody are really portrayed well in the movie. Sameer and other fellow prisoners, all Muslims, are beaten mercilessly by the prison authorities and dealt with in an inhuman manner. Most of these prisoners have been brought to prison on the basis of plain suspicion without any evidence. The film shows how terror impacts individuals, with the integrity of Muslims at stake. The word ‘Allah’ has not been mentioned even once in the film and yet it is extremely relevant to Muslims.

Rizwan Khan has been ordered by his beloved wife to go and tell the President of the United States of America, that he is not a terrorist because his surname is Khan. Her son from her previous marriage dies in the movie after being assaulted by seniors at school because of his surname Khan. In order to tell the President his message Rizwan sets off on his journey and on the way he comes across many hurdles. He is a devout Muslim who prays five times a day wearing his skull cap. Most of the time he is shown murmuring passages from the Holy Quran and this puts him in trouble. As the film begins, in the opening scene, while standing in a queue at the airport he is

singled out and taken for intense cross-examination. This grilling makes him leave his flight and he has to go by bus to meet the President. On another occasion, without hearing his complete sentence, only the word ‘terrorist’ is highlighted. Like Sameer Sheikh, he is put in detention in solitary confinement and tortured.

Looking at it from one side, the war on terror demands a stringent security code. It is the duty of any Government to look after the safety and well-being of its people. But there are voices emerging which put the blame on intelligence and security agencies for misusing their power. The Government of the United States has to know what exactly their layers of security agencies are doing. Are they accurately conveying facts and doing their duty or are they distorting realities and framing Muslim people in the name of protecting their country. The trick is to do it in a highly secretive way without giving any hint to the potential suspect. But these powers have been misused so much that people feel that they are constantly under surveillance. Leo Panitch is amazed at the way, the citizens of the United States have expressed little or no regret over the bloodshed and carnage carried out in its name. He writes that:

The United States is now requiring all states to restructure their coercive apparatus to fit America’s strategic concerns. This would seem to reinforce the earlier requirement set by the imperium that they restructure their economic apparatus to fit with Washington’s global gamble. (239)

This threat by the state and authorities is what Rizwan is against. Rizwan goes through unnecessary detention until proved not guilty by the courts. He in fact scolds and reports about a cleric in one of the Mosques that he visits. As the cleric is giving sermons to young people about the sacrifice that the Prophet made, Rizwan intervenes

and clarifies the other aspect of that sermon. He shouts at, reprimands the cleric and goes away from the mosque. This example shows that like in every other religion there are good people and bad people. Rizwan is the good, pious Muslim while the cleric is the bad Muslim. This example counters the theme that all Muslims are not terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims. Due to the misinterpretation of Islam, all Muslims have been given a bad name. This is the reason Rizwan confidently and pompously says that, his name is Khan but he is not a terrorist. Following in his footsteps, Hasina, the electronics shopkeeper, the Motel owner, the professional hacker, the BBC correspondent and a host of others proudly claim what they do, while claiming they are not terrorists.

People were getting used to the harsh methods promulgated after 9/11. But with the London 7/7 underground bombing a new twist developed. On both sides of the Atlantic, more severe rules were framed that made both America and Britain look like a fortress under police control. The American House of Representatives renewed the USA Patriot Act that would make permanent the government's unprecedented powers to investigate suspected terrorists. It also made the act controversial in raising many complicated questions. Foremost among them was, can the State be an actor of terrorism in State sponsored terrorism? Megan Stack in her book, *Every Man in this Village is a Liar* recounts saying, "In Iraq, 4,369 U.S. soldiers have died, and 873 in Afghanistan, and more all the time. That is not counting the deaths of local people who are tallied as combatants, or wading in the question of whether they were or weren't" (251).

DI Marber received wrong information as he accidentally shot an innocent Muslim who dies on the spot. In the mask of counter terrorism operations, the London police make a mistake. But the Police department and he are not willing to admit to

their mistake. To put aside this major blunder, Tariq Ali, a Muslim and a well-respected police officer is put in charge of investigating the case. His superiors cannily put pressure on him to come up with the precise result by offering him the bait of promotion. During the course of the investigation, Tariq realizes that nobody in the department want the truth to come into public domain. The superior officers want Tariq to label Baqir a terrorist, and free DI Marber from the charges. But as he probes deeper, he realizes the hatred white people have against Muslims. His friend Yunus makes him understand this point very clearly. Yunus tells him how the white people have behaved with him before and after the 7/7 bombings. Along with Yunus, Junaid opens the eyes of Tariq when the former coerces the latter's nephew into joining the terrorist organization. Tariq's English wife also raises issues of Zaheer's likely involvement in terror activities, but instead he charges her with racism. When the truth emerges, Tariq has no option but to shoot his nephew.

Thus, the way in which Muslim characters have been portrayed in these films is worth discussing and debating. As deliberated earlier, the event of 9/11 was destructive as well as shattering that should be condemned from all sides. This post 9/11 films made from a non-western point of view steers clear of stereotypes of Muslims. The issue of illegal detention and killing of innocent Muslims raised in these movies have resonance with Muslims all over the world. It takes the audience into the mind of the Western intelligence agencies and how suppression of terror results in more terror. It is a tug of war between the West and radical Muslims where innocent Muslims like Sameer Shaikh, Rizwan Khan and Baqir Hussain or Tariq Ali have to pay a colossal price.

Chapter Three: Conclusion

Terrorism and, West's Arrogance

This research looks into the politics of response to terrorism in recent Bollywood films. The core issue connecting *New York, My Name Is Khan* and *Shoot On Sight* discussed in this research is about terrorism and the way it is dispensed with. The other issues raised are about the politics of identity, security, community, power, authority, sovereignty and above all, enlightenment at the heart of the democratic and civilized identity of the West. The study enables a double reading of how responses to terrorism, by politicians, authorities and the media, invite more terrorism, and how terrorism can also be understood as a response to global inequalities and imperial legacies. (America and the West). Let's conclude this in parts.

First, there is no global consensus on the definition of terrorism. Almost all countries are vocal in condemning this scourge. But when it comes to its classification, countries cannot come to a meeting point over its wording and therefore a simple solution to terrorism cannot be found. That is the reason it becomes complicated and till the present day the United Nations does not have a coherent definition of terrorism. The often repeated line of one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter still holds till the present day. This unclear definition of terrorism makes it extremely difficult to control terrorism.

Second, with the advancement of technology and telecommunications, the acceleration of terrorism has zoomed ahead. This means that there is confusion over what counts as a terrorist act because actions undertaken by nation states in their self-interests can be terrorist activities too. Also after 9/11, America and its allies have been criticized for framing their own rules that suit them while dealing with terrorism. This creates double standards and instead of solving the problem suspicion and

distrust develops. Due to this in many countries of the world terrorism is still killing people and undermining society.

Third, after the ghastly act of 9/11 and 7/7, America and the West have come in direct confrontation and hostility with Islam. While pursuing revenge for the most intense and dreadful attack on American mainland since World War II, the American military has fought twin wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with more disastrous consequences, that time will only tell. It has impacted millions of people, killed thousands, with life and property demolished and wrecked in the Middle East. Moreover, it has completely alienated Muslims against America and its allies. Deep fault lines have emerged between these two religions because of terrorism and the fissure is escalating daily instead of diminishing. And within this hatred for each other, Muslims themselves are divided between hardline hawkish clerics and progressive moderate leaders who push for education and integration.

Also, some observers feel that the 'War on Terror' has somewhat deviated or meandered from its original course. Presently it is being equated with war against Islam. This has given rise to discontent and resentment against the United States and its allies. But others feel that this deep division between Christianity and Islam is essentially flawed. After all there is a significant number of Muslims who are living in the West and their views cannot be discounted. The main issue is not about religion or culture but about politics. The rage and anger is directed against the United States because it is seen as strongly imposing its neo-imperialist ideas in Muslim countries. They see the policies of the United States as being prejudiced against Islam.

Fourth, the issue raised by Talal Asad where he gives equal weightage to the suicide bomber as well as to acts committed by state armies in a war. He passionately condemns both form of conflict arguing that, taking the life of both innocents and

civilians is complete wrong. He makes his readers uncomfortable by asking why suicide bombing is so much more terrifying than other acts of violence and why it is vastly different from war. His next point is why war is glorified and terrorism condemned. Both take lives of innocents, but due to internal politics, differences remain. Another argument he picks is that America's war in Afghanistan and Iraq are horrendous and unjustifiable that will ultimately invite or result in more terror attacks. Endorsing this view Amir Mir says, "the alleged American atrocities against Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq are supposed to be the main motivation for most of the bombers to explode themselves for what they consider to be a noble cause" (262).

Fifth, with the surge in terror attacks taking place, America and the West will tighten their security in their respective countries. Taking the metaphor of autoimmunity, Derrida's argument is that 9/11 is both the result of and response as an autoimmune disorder and that autoimmunity against terrorism gets deadlocked in a mutual sport of devastation in which the response replicates the wrong. Using the biological terminology of autoimmunity, he says that it is about the relation between force and law where priority is given to force over law. He fears that as America and its allies tighten its security apparatus, it is going to erode ideas it is associated with. The universal appreciated ideas of freedom of speech, expression and free movement. The restriction of these rights would be similar to an Al Qaeda win.

Lastly, it has been discussed in the previous chapter how Sameer Shaikh chose the path of violence to resent against illegal detention while Rizwan Khan took the route of non-violence. Tariq Ali is ashamed in the end when he finds out and shoots his nephew Zaheer who is about to blow up a shopping mall. All these Muslim men are victims of politics of identity, power and authority. The intolerant attitude that they face for being Muslims residing in the West makes them go through their

respective crisis and problems as shown in the films. Among these characters, Rizwan Khan stands out as he convincingly and persuasively tells the people of the United States through their Commander in Chief, that though he has a surname Khan, he is not a terrorist.

The findings presented above lead to the conclusion that, after a decade and a half of war against terrorists, Americans are no closer to being able to identify them today than in 2001. The 'war on terror' defies analysis and comprehension with no beginning, middle or end. The cost of the war has been enormous and yet they have not been able to defeat extremism and build lasting stability. The terror network of Al Qaida has mutated and branched out to form splinter terror groups which have become more difficult for intelligence agencies to track. They are constantly planning evil deeds against America and its allies. However, as Derrida has rightly pointed out, that fighting violence with violence will not usher in peace. Inside the deep politics of mistrust between people of two different religions lie inaudible voices that need to be heard. And hurt and repressed sentiments need to be acknowledged. Someone somewhere has to take the initiative and only then will social parameters tell a different story. Only then will the barriers of 'us' versus 'them' be uprooted for betterment of 'all'. Only then, will the universal idea of a modern, vibrant, secular America genuinely hold true.

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