

Should we use the word extremist or is the word absolutist better?

It is believed that many of those who say they order genocide or honour killings in the name of God or faith in an alleged revelation of God and who say they really believe they do right are telling the truth. They show no signs of a troubled conscience before, during or after the terrible deed.

This raises some questions.

How do you know that you believe stealing is wrong that you believe it because it is true? You cannot know that. What proves that you do not know when people believe in terrible morals with the same or more conviction than you!

The extremist is in the eye of the beholder. An extremist Muslim is a moderate Muslim to many. The word needs to be specific. Extremism needs a diagnosis but the way the word extremist is exploited averts that. Often those who should be called extremists are not called it and that is for social or political reasons. Prejudiced bigots do not call their own extremists extremists but heroes and leaders.

An extremist is anybody who holds that a dangerous or wrong doctrine or principle is without error and is absolutely right. There is no room for doubt.

Another word for such an extremist is absolutist. Maybe we should not talk about religious extremists but religious absolutists. The problem after all is not somebody believing they have the right to kill for God but somebody believing it without question.

An absolutist can be an absolutist for one belief or several.

The absolutist wants to believe he is right.

The absolutist wants to believe those who disagree with him are disgraceful.

The absolutist feels free and powerful in having the "truth". There is no truth without freedom and no freedom without truth. So he has his own version of truth.

The belief does not matter to the absolutist as much as these benefits.

A Catholic absolutist may hate a Muslim's absolutism and vice versa. An absolutist is an absolutist but that does not mean absolutists will respect each other. They only love those who think the way they do.

The absolutist may say he is a Muslim or a Catholic. But in fact he is an absolutist before he is a Muslim or Catholic. The absolutism is just manifested and shown in a Muslim or Catholic context. It just happens to be the clothes they put the absolutism in.

That is why the best way to destroy Islam and Catholic faith is by helping absolutists see why they are absolutists and why and what is wrong with being absolutist. Get them to see that and they will start to hear and see that their religion is false.

If you can unmask an absolutist, it helps to know what areas or topics they are absolutist in. Sometimes you have to try to know the person a bit and take an educated guess about what things they are probably absolutist about.

It is hard to tell for the person for example who is an absolutist with the pope or the Bible will disobey them at every turn. Being an absolutist does not mean you will practice what you preach.

You can't tell who is an absolutist by what beliefs they hold, nor by whether they admit that they are absolutist, nor by possible motives for being one, nor by how perfectly they practice what they preach. What else is there? Usually if you ask an absolutist if they care about evidence for their absolute principles they will tell you they have enough and nothing will change their minds. If they do not tell it you can still read them. If you give them evidence that they are wrong and they do not seem to care about it that is a sure sign they are absolutists. They are also selfish if they believe in God for surely they would see evidence as a gift from God directing them to the truth. They are selfish if they present themselves as open to truth to you when they are not!

If people are immune to logic when it comes to how silly their religious beliefs are, please do not think that it is senseless to try and help them see the light and think for themselves. People being immune to say how to do maths means you don't

give up but try harder. Your efforts will bear fruit if not now then in the future. Plus by saying something you are at least making them aware that another point of view exists that contradicts their own. Perhaps the person will repeat the critical arguments you made to others and that will help inoculate them from being drawn into religious irrationality.

A moderate person can be as absolutist or unwilling to listen as one you label an extremist. The problem is people sticking to dogma no matter what. Imagine a world where a man has magical power. He for no reason creates a poison. Some people will use it to kill but perhaps most will not use it at all though they can. The man is as much to blame for the killings as the killers. In the same way, the person who supports even "nice" absolutism is supporting the dark side of absolutism and to blame for the evil deeds of murderous absolutists.