

Doctrine; Ideology or cause: Part two

Destructive Cults versus Religions:

Previously I briefly pointed out certain characteristics common between cults and popular ideologies or religions; at the same time I expressed my disagreement with those who call destructive cults as NRM (New Religious Movements). Here, I will try to explain and show my point of view in more detail, which briefly is as following:

1. There are some experts who argue that some of the popular religions of today started their movement as a cult and gradually have changed into a popular belief. It is therefore possible that today's cults will in the future change into a popular doctrine or even religion, hence we can call them NRM. I agree that there are certain religions, popular ideas or doctrines that started as cults and then changed into what they are now. Also as I don't believe in a static world; I agree that today's cults can change into something else, perhaps a popular belief of tomorrow. But as we don't call a monkey a human because it can evolve into human, or we will not call a shoe an animal because it has been made from skin of that animal; we cannot call a destructive cult a religion or an Ideology, because it was rooted from, or will end in to a faith or an ideology. A thief is a thief unless he repents and changes into an honest person. Therefore we should call destructive cults as they are until they change into something else.
2. Some experts point out similarities between cults and religions and use this as an argument for calling cults as NRM. Yes I agree that there are similarities between cults and ideologies and religions, but to separate **different phenomena from each other we don't stick to similarities but the differences**. Otherwise as the DNA of a man and a worm have some similarities, we can call a worm and as a matter of fact most living creatures, a human. What differentiates a man from a monkey is that few percent difference in their DNA, which means a few million years of evolution. In Farsi we have an expression saying that not all spheres are apples; a ball is a ball and an orange is an orange and neither can be called an apple just because they share certain characteristics with an apple, including being a sphere.
3. Some point out the dogmas that exist in cults and faiths and use this as an argument for calling cults NRM. Ideologies and religions have their own dogma as cults have; the difference is that dogmas of ideologies and religions are around **ideas** while dogmas of cults are around cult **leaders**. Also dogmas of Ideologies and religions are mostly around their **ethereal ideas**, their principles and fundamentals while cult's dogmas are mostly about **behaviours** that have to match what the cult leader dictates. As a matter of fact cults are very tolerant toward their ideas as long as followers follow the dictated behaviour and are loyal and obedient toward the leader. Ethereal ideas such as believing in or rejecting the existence of God, so important, fundamental and dear to religions and secular ideologies, in cults are as optional as a hat for a person, it might come handy in cold winter or on a hot sunny day, otherwise one never feels its necessity. A few years before moving to Paris MEK were calling for the government of 'Hezbollah', and were based on Islam but then in the secular environment of France they announced the separation of church and state as one of their fundamentals. This means both in their view are meaningless as long as Rajavi rules. In cults the leader is important and not the idea.
4. Following the previous discussion about differences between religion's and Ideology's dogmas on one hand and dogmas of Cults on the other hand, I have to point out that: Dogmas of ideologies and religions are ideas based and mostly are ethereal, they are limited, constant and can be numbered,

while Cult's dogmas, as they are leader based and mostly are behavioural, they are changeable and unlimited. In other words, followers of ideologies and religions live in a **colourful world** which of course has a few spots of black and white, while followers of cults live in a black and white world with perhaps a few colourful spots.

5. **Ideas are made to live forever;** some like mainstream religions have lived for millenniums, and most probably will last as long as man exists; other philosophies and ideologies have lasted long enough, perhaps not millennium, but most of them have lived for centuries. Religions and Ideologies, however you like to look at them, God or human made, are both supposed to last as long as civilization exists. This is because, both are idea based and mostly are independent of their introducer or founder or prophet, but not only that, most of them are even independent of class, race, sex and time, as any dependency will shorten their life. On the other hand, most destructive cults as they are leader based have no claim on time; the majority of them don't even call themselves new religion or even a philosophy or an ideology. They come along to serve or materialize the dream of the cult leader during his or her lifetime. Unlike prophets and philosophers who introduce a way for people to live according too, aim for the progress of the human race, and don't expect much change during their life time, cult leaders want to see the fruit of their efforts while they are alive. Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Bin Laden; David Koresh, Jim Jones, Rajavi, ... all came along with a dream, desire, a plan or objective for themselves, under the name of their nation or even the whole of humanity, therefore they wanted to be able to see their dream, during their own life time. This is why they were prepared to inflict death and destruction upon tens and even millions and tens of millions, to see the fulfilment of their dream in a very short time. Compare this to religions of Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, or even ideas of great philosophers. For example while most of them preached equality and brotherhood of mankind, and were against discrimination, it didn't mean that they wanted to achieve it while they were alive; to see the end of discrimination; freedom, absolute justice for all and equality of all human beings. Neither Moses, nor Jesus or Mohammad abolished slavery, because they knew making changes takes time and this is people who have to understand, believe, accept and prepare themselves to make changes and do it on their own.
6. **Religions and ideologies are inclusive while cults are exclusive.** Mainstream religions and ideologies believe in freedom of choice of people in choosing and altering their own destiny. Meaning that followers of Religions and ideologies are free to do and behave as they wish, but should not do certain things such as contradicting Ten Commandments of Moses or committing seven great sins of Islam. This is considered as a price for living in a society or within a faith, selling part of your freedom for what one might gain by living in that society or among followers of that faith. However cults are exclusive, meaning that a cult's followers are not free to do anything but a few aspects of life. They are forced to give up all their freedom and freedom of choice for being members of a cult and if they are given limited freedom, it is restricted to what might be allowed by the cult leader in a different time and situation. This exclusiveness of cults makes them intolerant of public culture, customs and forces them inward and eventually shrinks them in number more and more. This is opposite to main stream religions and ideologies that are inclusive and are mainly tolerant of people's traditions and behaviour, therefore are outward and can attract more people toward them.
7. **Isolation:** Cult leaders want to materialise their dream toy-world, while they are alive; if they cannot become popular and rule their nation, they will force their disciples into total psychological or physical isolation or both¹. They will ask recruits to leave everything dear to them behind, start a new life and change into a completely new person .While followers of mainstream religions, even at their birth, didn't invite their followers to go into isolation or leave their family or run away from their

problems; they wanted to spread their idea, not to create their fantasy 'toy-world'; therefore forcing their disciples into isolation was not helpful but against the interests of faith which needs to grow and be accepted by all.

8. **The difference between mind manipulation of cults and teaching of religions and ideologies:** One of the main differences between destructive cults and main stream religions and ideologies is in mind manipulation of disciples within cults. I have seen some apologists of cults comparing mind manipulation of cults with teachings of religions and ideologies. While mind manipulation might share many characteristics with teaching in general and teaching of a faith or an ideology in particular, the main difference is that the former one will rob or deny the disciple from his or her individuality while the latter one desires to correct it or regulate it. In mind manipulation, mind control or brainwashing, the mind manipulator wants to destroy the character and personality of disciples and substitute them with a clone of the leader. Most of the time as George Orwell calls it, this means to change a person into an 'unperson'; a machine or an 'ant' acting via its cult's instincts. Well this is Cult's desires and hopes but they will not be able to materialize their desires completely and as a result, in most cases the poor disciple will be left with two different personalities; one is their pre-cultic personality which is inactive, in retreat, silenced or sleeping, and the one is their cultic-character which is alive and active. On the contrary in education in general and even in a religious or ideological education, however extreme or restrictive (unless the group has changed into a cult) the aim of the education is not to kill a person's character or their individuality but to change it, to 'correct' it, to 'educate' it. Therefore at the end of education the person is not left with two different contradictory characters or personality but one, however acceptable or 'good' or unacceptable and 'bad'. He or she will have their original personality and character without 'bad' elements or with magnified 'good' characters.

Common factors of destructive Cult's doctrines:

Looking at MEK's literature and the alteration of its doctrine through different stages of its metamorphism one can conclude several points; some of them common between all destructive and extreme cults, some common between Terrorist cults and some common between Religious or Muslim cults.

However different, destructive cult's doctrines or their announced objectives are, materialist, or ethereal, political or non-political, they all have all or most of the common factors mentioned below. Therefore instead of looking at theological or philosophical parts of a cult's doctrine we should know unlike popular beliefs, these parts are not important at all; the important elements for recognising a cult's doctrine are the common factors mentioned below:

- 1- **Black and White worldview:** They all believe in a world of black and white. Of course they claim they are right and good, and everything else is bad and wrong. They cannot see the world and other points of view as colourful and somewhere between absolute right and wrong. They don't believe in any grey area between themselves and their enemy, people and other groups are either with them or against them.
- 2- **Uniqueness and Superiority:** Unless they call their doctrine something new under their own name, all extreme cults claim their ideology as 'the only' 'true', 'real' or sometimes 'progressive' ideology among rival ideologies. If their doctrine is based on Marxism, Christianity, or Islam, they introduce

themselves as the true follower of the founder of that idea or religion, and reject all other interpretations of the same idea. They don't accept any rivalry or any other interpretation of the ideology except theirs; they don't tolerate any opposition toward their worldview, and simply call all other rivals the enemy. They all believe in superiority of their ideology, their path, and their leader; therefore they claim those who follow them are saved and are superior to ordinary people and rivals are doomed. Therefore they all believe in their final victory over everybody else, most of the time with a prophecy of it happening during the life time of the leader.

- 3- **Deceit; Stealth; End justifies the Means:** They all believe, even if they deny it, that in one way or another, the end justifies the means. Sometimes this is called 'heavenly deceit' with the argument that: 'superiority of us over ordinary people and their lack of understanding toward our goals, gives us this right to lie to them even for their good.' As a result, with the same argument, they can deceive even the closest members of the cult as part of their doctrine. Under the pretext of 'correct behaviour, talk or action in special situations' they can easily change the most fundamental part of their doctrine if they feel it doesn't serve their purpose. To achieve what they proclaim, some use violence, even if they pretend to be a peaceful and non-violent group.
Stealth: They might say something while they believe in something completely different. One should never judge them through what they say or how they look or behave, as they can change their behaviour, their look and their claims as they see fit due to the circumstances, time and their audience. They easily can change their colour according to the colour of their surroundings.
- 4- **Survival:** All destructive cults, claiming any doctrine or Ideologies, can change or even reverse all their claims and principles, except two; which they will stick to until the end. The first one is survival of the cult. And the second one is absolute obedience and loyalty toward the leader of the cult and materialization of his or her desires.

Worldview of Black and white:

The first characteristic of all destructive cult's doctrines is the worldview of black and white. Their view is 'right', 'absolute truth', 'just', 'real', 'God's word', ... and everything else is 'wrong', 'lie', 'unjust', 'false', 'devil's word'. Again one might claim that this is a characteristic of all ideologies and religions, even liberal ones, who claim their ideology or doctrine is the most tolerant one, still when it comes to believing in liberal democracy, they claim that their idea is the best thing that has happened to mankind and reject all other forms of governmentⁱⁱ. Yes a Marxist is very dogmatic in being against exploitation of man; as a liberal is dogmatic about freedom in general and freedom of capital in particular. A theist is dogmatic about existence of God; as an atheist is in non-existence of God. All doctrines, ideologies and religions are built on certain dogmas, most of the time ethereal ones. They obviously cannot tolerate any deviation on these fundamentals, as geometry's teacher is certain on unproven geometry's axioms and cannot tolerate it. Believers of any doctrines or ideologies are dogmatic in their fundamentals of their doctrine but they don't live in a 'Black and White' world; as apart from those dogmasⁱⁱⁱ, they are very tolerant of others ideas and behaviours; therefore they live in a colourful world which of course includes spots of black and white.

On the contrary, the world of cults is black and white in its totality, with only a few colourful spots. This means their dogmas are not on principles and ideas, but are behavioural and on every aspect of life. Their dogmas are not on principles but on cult leaders and whatever they say or believe in at the time. Therefore they cannot tolerate anything but perhaps certain very limited behaviours. Their

idea-based principles can change easily, as below you will see how so called principles of MEK changed from being against exploitation to Imperialism, from Imperialism to Reactionaries ... As their real dogma is not an **idea but a person**, they are not limited, meaning that only those who live in the world of imagination of the leader are right in their behaviour, blessed and the rest of the world (even if it has not been expressed openly) are wrong and doomed.

According to leaders with a cult of personality, including Mao, Stalin, Hitler, Bin Laden, David Koresh, Jim Jones and Rajavi, the whole existence can simply be defined as a war between 'right' and 'wrong' as defined by them, which by the way the 'wrong' or 'evil' can change easily in different times and situations.

In one of his speeches about MEK's ideology, Rajavi explains this worldview in these terms: *'the history is a worldwide battle field of war between 'Haq' (Right) and 'Batell' (wrong); battle between 'light' and 'darkness'; .. wherever there is a pharaoh, out bursting {against God} there is a Moses sinking him in the sea of anger of people. Whenever there is a Yazid^v, who has blinded people in ignorance and self destruction, there has been a Hussein; who has taken him down from tyranny; all to help the universe and the history to pave their way toward absolute perfection. Their direction is red from the blood; a harsh road of evolution...^v.*

Rajavi again explains that these two fronts are not equal and in war against each other and everybody has to take a side. He says: *'If these two fronts, evolution and retrogression; revolution and anti-revolution; people and anti-people; progress and reaction; light and darkness were equal, then everything {we do or we believe in} was in vain and in the hollow world; and being responsible is meaningless..^{vi}* He concludes that as these are not equal people are responsible to take a side. Again in another speech he emphasises that the border between 'right' and 'wrong' is very sharp and there is no peace or compromise or grey area in-between. He concludes 'therefore a revolutionary has every right to use any kind of language or any means; to show his anger toward: 'wrong', 'reactionaries'^{vii} ...

'In Al Qaeda's strain of Islam, again; the world is divided in two: the House of Islam (Dar al-Islam), where Muslims rule and the law of the Koran is upheld, and the House of War (Dar al-Harb), which comprises the rest of the world, Between these two houses, there can be no peace until Islam triumphs over all unbelief and becomes the universal religion..^{viii}

Of course neither Al-Qaeda nor MEK stops here as they don't accept anybody else's version of 'Right', 'worshippers of God', or even 'Islam'. They only accept their own version of belief in God or in the case of other destructive cults, any other doctrine therefore eventually the war is between those who believe in their version of 'Truth' and the rest of humanity.

Both MEK and Al-Qaeda don't accept anybody being silent or neutral in this 'war'. Al-Qaeda's ideologues gave every right to Al-Qaeda to kill whoever denies their 'war'. They believe: *'Those who shirk (deny) the struggle are traitors and killing them is justified in religious terms, be they Muslims or not. ^{ix}* Qutb, one of the ideologues of Al-Qaeda used to justify his Black and White ideology and the killing of other Muslims states: *'a vanguard must set out .. marching through the vast ocean of Jahillyya (ignorance)^x which encompasses the whole world. Unless they separate themselves from the*

influence of the Jahillya, they will be contaminated and unable to follow the true path followed by the Salaf'.^{xii} He adds: 'we must free ourselves from the clutches of the Jahili society ... it is not a worthy partner for compromise. Our aim is first to change ourselves so we may later change society.'^{xii}

Almost in the same manner, MEK explains what silence in this war means: *'To be silent before the oppressor is no different than cooperation with him. To be silent before this power-ridden aggressor means only subjugation. On the other hand, rioting and mere shouting at the aggressor will not be effective unless it is based on a well-evaluated plan and program. It is because of the opening of correct and effective means of fighting against the aggressors and injustice, that the vanguard of the movement, the superior, most intelligent, most devoted and bravest sons of the people, {i.e. MEK} have accepted the responsibility of forging this road.'^{xiii}*

This 'black and white' world view is not exclusive of destructive or terrorist cults such as Al-Qaeda or MEK. All Great dictators of the 20th century, with cult of personality; Hitler; Stalin; Mao;... had the same claim. They can have a small cult and claim their ideology is 'Marxism' and still claim they are right and everybody else is wrong. An X member of WDU explains: *'In the WDU, there was always a correct answer for everything. It was a black and white world, even though at times black was white. Never the-less, the party had the answer and the party was always right.'^{xiv} They can claim to be Christian and have a small sect as a branch Davidian of David Koresh and claim the same thing: *'If the Bible is true, then I'm Christ,' Koresh said.' And feel that the whole world is against them; as one of his ex-disciples explains: 'He used paranoia about the imminent attack of the outside world as a means to keep his flock united. Koresh frequently cited passage from Psalm 38. 'Mine enemies are lively, and they are strong; and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.'^{xv} You can even have no ideological preference and still claim the same thing as we can see in 'Children of God': *'Most members of the Children of God, like those in other religious cults, believe the world is rotten. They compare it to the Egypt of the Pharaohs and say that they alone are the true servants of God. At war with the rest of the world.'^{xvi}***

Who are 'others', 'enemies'?

In the case of all destructive cults the enemy is always the whole world, apart from followers and sympathisers of the cult. Though what they claim in public could be totally different from what they believe and teach inside the cult. Therefore who they name as the enemy in public, can change easily as well. For example MEK at one point was claiming that the war is between those who exploit and those who are exploited: Rajavi says: *'There is no third way or middle ground between exploitation and anti-exploitation... there is no relation between the one who exploits and the one who has been exploited. Either they have to fight or surrender themselves.'^{xvii} In another situation, to attract 'Bazzaries' or 'nationalist bourgeois', they claim war is between the coloniser and colonized, or in other words, between Imperialism under leadership of United States and the rest of the world: *'There is no relation between people and Imperialism except 'war' or 'surrender' therefore people and vanguard of the people have every right to be armed ... '^{xviii} Then after the failure of their 20th June 1981 call for the overthrowing of the government, again the enemy changed. This time they forgot about 'exploiters' or 'Imperialism' and announced that the war was between them and the 'Regime of Khomeini'. Rajavi explains: *'The war is between us and the Khomeini Regime ... As I have***

said from the beginning, there are two opposite pillars; two opposite fronts; in war with each other. When one goes down the other one goes up and vice versa. ...^{xxix}

Farhad Khosrokhavar explains Al-Qaeda's enemy as: *'In the case of al Qaeda, the grievance is the West's invasion of the Muslim world and especially the fact that the Islamic holy land of Saudi Arabia was occupied by American troops after the Gulf war of 1991, American attitudes towards Palestine and the way the west behaves towards countries where Islam is repressed, as in Algeria. This kind of grievance can also be seen in cults opposed to what they see as a hostile global society. Examples include the Aum cult which released poison gas into the Tokyo metro to take its revenge on an ungodly society on 20 March 1995, ... The frontier between life and death becomes blurred in all these cases. The taboo on life and the religious and social commandment not to take life - one's own or that of others - disappears. What is new about Al Qaeda are the motives of its members, the way they construct both self and other, or both their community and the enemy group, and the meaning death acquires for those who take their own lives or the lives of others. The religion preached by Al Qaeda and other associations of the same type is often directly inspired by hatred of the West in a situation where the organisation in question, which is part affective and part cultural, is largely dependent upon its Western enemy.'^{xxx}*

Small world and Simplicity of the message:

'Four legs good, two legs bad' George Orwell; 'Animal Farm'

'All problems can be solved either through education or assassination.' Hassan ibn Sabbah^{xxi}

Although cult leaders love to explain the simplest idea in very lengthy speeches, using the most strange and ambiguous words and sentences available; wrapping their words in mystery and 'sophistication'; claiming to understand what they want to say is difficult and needs hard work and the acquirement of different knowledge; their world is still as small and simple as a child's world. Therefore their message at the end of those long speeches is short and simple. A sentence or a slogan like the message of pigs in 'animal farm' of George Orwell: 'Two legs bad, four legs good'. As we saw within the doctrine of MEK and Al Qaeda, complicated and complex ideas such as 'Jihad' and 'Martyrdom' can simply be translated into be ready to 'kill' and 'be killed'. The world of Black and White's ideology is small and its message simple; at the end they reach the simple idea of 'this is good, godly, brilliant and fantastic' and 'that is bad, horrible, and satanic'. This small world of destructive cults, in isolation from wider society with its simplistic slogans, has attractiveness for its followers and recruits. Dr. Taylor in Brainwashing; explains: *'Life in black and white can look so easy to an observer overwhelmed by shades of grey... Some people are driven to simplicity not just by laziness, selfishness, or idiocy, but by fear, fury, or frustration, negative emotions provoked by a threatening world, Natural, or social, disasters can be good for church attendance; weak government can leave space for a popular uprising, economic problems bolster support for extremists. When the environment is unstable whether politically, economically, or physically, the lure of simplicity is heightened.'^{xxii}*

The trick of cult leaders is to make their doctrine or ideology so complex that nobody else, except themselves, can understand it unaided or be able to explain and interpret it^{xxiii}. At the same time they must make their message so simple that it can be understood by the simplest minds around.

Steven Hassan, an ex-member of monies and expert in cults explains: *'They may be so convoluted that it would take years of effort to untangle them. The doctrine is to be accepted, not understood. Therefore, the doctrine must be vague and global, yet also symmetrical enough to appear consistent. Its power comes from its assertion that it is the one and only truth: that it encompasses everything. {A Single formula for solving all personal and philosophical problems of a person.} ... Cult doctrine always requires that a person distrust his own self. The doctrine becomes the "master program" for all thoughts, feelings, and actions. Since it is the Truth, perfect and absolute, {and its message simple} any flaw in it is viewed as only a reflection of the believer's own imperfection. He is taught that he must follow the prescribed formula even if he doesn't really understand it. At the same time he is told that he should try to work harder and have more faith so he will come to understand the truth more clearly.'*^{xxiv} For example it has been said that David Koresh's *'message was highly systematic, rigidly consistent, and internally "logical"; to those unfamiliar with the prophetic portions of the Bible, however, the message, delivered in his typical non-stop style with lengthy quotations from the King James Version, surely must have seemed nonsensical.'*^{xxv} But at the end his message was very simple, he is the new Messiah. He used to call himself 'the lamb' of God; to understand what he meant, and how he claimed to be Messiah, let us to read from 'Why Waco' where James Tabor and his associate tried to explain David Koresh's story: *'According to the book of Revelation, only one person can open this book, a figure called 'the Lamb,' whom Christians have always understood to be Jesus of Nazareth. Koresh, however, had an elaborate set of arguments to demonstrate that a figure other than Jesus was intended here, a second Christ, or Messiah, whom Koresh claimed to be. This second Messiah he found prophesied in many passages in the Bible, but particularly in the Psalms and in Isaiah, where he is called 'Koresh' the Hebrew name for Cyrus, the ancient king of Persia who conquered Babylon. David Koresh, born Vernon Howell, claimed to be this special figure, sent before God's final judgment upon the world to open the Seven Seals of the book of Revelation and thus reveal to the world the full mysteries of the entire Bible.'*^{xxvi}

Uniqueness and Superiority; no tolerance; no opposition:

'In a Party member, not even the smallest deviation of opinion on the most unimportant subject can be tolerated.' {1984; George Orwell}

Though apparently 1984 of George Orwell is not real, made up by his imagination, but as we will see one of the most obvious characteristics of the doctrine of almost all cults is the monopoly of the truth, promise of salvation, and superiority over all other ideologies and similar groups; therefore they cannot tolerate any slightest of deviation.

The founders of great faiths and ideologies were dogmatic on fundamentals and principals, mostly ethereal aspects of the faith, and tolerant of the culture and behaviour of their followers. Contrary to this cult leaders are tolerant over fundamentals and ethereal aspects and contrary to popular faiths they are very dogmatic about behaviours of their followers. For example Al Qaeda can easily ignore many parts of Koran, and strict rules of Jihad, one of the great sins of which is murdering an

innocent person or suicide, but they can be dogmatic about having a look and dress as followers of prophet or having a beard. In MEK the situation is the same; they can not tolerate any deviation on behaviours ordered by Rajavi, such as shaking hands with the opposite sex, but can tolerate not believing in God or Judgement day which are both fundamentals of Islam^{xxvii}.

Strangely I can say Cult leaders, at least destructive cult leaders are very dogmatic as they dictate every aspect of life of their disciples and are very severe in punishing any disobedience and deviation; and at the same time they are not dogmatic at all as they can easily change even the most important or fundamental part of their teaching when they feel it might endanger their interest or not be beneficial anymore.

Uniqueness and Superiority:

Margaret Singer explains: *'Most cults claim their members are the elite of the world, even though individual members may be treated subserviently and degraded. While in the cult, members identify with this claim and display moral disdain toward others. They internalise the group's value system and its sense of moral pretentiousness, intellectual superiority, and condescension toward the outside world. In the cult, members get points for showing moral disdain for non-members and for members who flattered or left the group.'*^{xxviii}

This sense of superiority and being elite can be achieved through isolation from the wider world i.e. shrinking one's world can make him or her big, his or her achievements greater than they are in reality. This is why not only members of cults but even cult leaders, while within their cults they are 'god' or 'semi-god' representatives of god, outside of the cults they are not important at all, and in some cases they are lower than the lowest as they can not conform to the most basic needs and standards of the society at large.^{xxix}

Or this feeling might be injected into disciples through the Ideology of the cult; those who have understood the doctrine of the cult and have accepted it as the way of living are saved and are superior to others and those who have not are damned. In 'Combating cults' we read: *'Feeling of being special, of participating in the most important acts in human history with a vanguard of committed believers, is strong emotional glue to keep people sacrificing and working hard. As a community, they feel they have been chosen (by God, history, or some other supernatural force) to head mankind out of darkness into new age of enlightenment. Cult members have a great sense not only of mission but of their special place in history - They will be recognized for their greatness for generations to come. In the Moonies we were told that monuments and historical makers would someday be erected to commemorate us and our sacrifices. ... This feeling of elitism and destiny, however, carries a heavy burden of responsibility. Members are told that if they do not fully perform their duties, they are failing all of mankind. The rank and file member is humble before superiors and potential recruits but arrogant to outsiders. ... Cult members don't know what outsiders mean when they say you shouldn't try to escape reality and responsibility by joining a cult.'*^{xxx}

And sometimes they are forced to believe they are superior because of their understanding and following of a perfect leader; after all who can go wrong by following a perfect or superior human being, and of course those who follow such a person are superior to others, again in 'Combating

Cults' we read: *'I thought my every action had monumental and historical implications. I strived to be the perfect "son" of the "true parents" (Moon and Hak Ja Han, his third wife, were regarded by members to be the perfect Adam and Eve.) ... Therefore, Moon (being "perfect himself") can spiritually "adopt" members into his "true family" and assign them marriage parents in order to redo their spiritual lineage.) - obedient and loyal (these two virtues were valued above all else).*^{xxxix}

Strangely and of course by coincidence, we too in MEK were brainwashed to believe that we had - been reborn from Maryam, the third wife of Masoud Rajavi and by following these two heavenly creatures we are above all else. We were feeling superior to ordinary people as being called ordinary was the most insulting things you could say to a MEK member.

Another reason for this feeling is suffering. Suffering pain is common among some religious cults; being able to suffer torture and pain, hard work, less sleep and food than necessary, and also in many destructive cults no sex, fun or joy. Of course these things are all painful and certainly not pleasant, but at the same time in cults they can bring a feeling of superiority as ordinary people are incapable of suffering. When someone puts himself or herself in this kind of hardship, they even don't need anybody else to tell them that they are unique and superior, this is the kind of feeling they gain from within. James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher in 'Why Waco' explain this feeling among followers of David Koresh; they say: *'Koresh constantly taught {his disciples} that they must be purified, fortified, and prepared in body, mind, and spirit. They saw themselves as an elite corps that God had chosen for a special perfection and an extraordinary responsibility of ruler-ship in the coming Kingdom of God. ... They saw themselves as a family, as God's true people, in solidarity with all the prophets, disciples, and martyrs through the ages who had stood firm for truth against a benighted society.*^{xxxix}

, While there are no similarities between Bin Laden and Rajavi's cause and message within the cause, and the message of David Koresh and Jim Jones, still one can see that their instructions for their followers, for how should they behave, suffer and feel is almost the same.

Cult members can find a similar feeling of superiority and uniqueness in death and being prepared to die under the title of 'Martyrdom', as hard work and suffering of torture and pain. This feeling is not monopolised by Islamic or Religious cults, even a cult like the followers of Jim Jones with some Socialist tendencies could have the same: Peter Olsson, in Malignant Pied pipers explain: *'In apocalyptic cults, a key and unique element is woven into the core of cult ideology by the charismatic leader. The leader repeatedly holds forth the ideal and noble fantasy of dying together for the grandiose, if not sacred, cause. The powerful ideological 'ace in the hole' of apocalyptic group cult life is for everyone to prepared to die in a mass suicidal act to protest the evils or injustice of the outside world as declared and dramatized by the leader.*^{xxxix}

No Tolerance:

In explaining the Communist party of China in Mao's era, Lifton explains: *'the Party belief that there is only one path to truth -...Thought reform believed that the non-person can be converted into a person.*^{xxxix}

Father Simon, one of the victims of Chinese Brain washing, explains to Lifton: *'if you don't accept them entirely, they consider you an enemy.'*^{xxxv} As a matter of fact this is one of the main slogans of all destructive cults, as it was in MEK during their ideological revolution: 'Either everything or nothing.'

Intolerance toward opposition and deviation, even in minor details of a disciple's life is a common factor among all destructive cults, without any exception. As a matter of fact I can say that if any group can tolerate any rivalry or different interpretation of their doctrine, or any opposition or criticism toward the leader, then that group cannot be called a 'cult' or at least a 'destructive cult'.

Again this intolerance is not only against outsiders and ordinary members but deviation in ideas, strategies or tactics cannot be tolerated even in the highest positions within destructive cults. As in MEK, Rajavi could not tolerate the difference of opinion from two of his closest associates, Yaghobi and Zarkesh. The first one was thrown out of the cult and the second one descended to the lowest rank possible. In Al-Qaeda too, one can see this in the relationship between Bin Laden and Azzam; Rohan Gunaratna, in his book 'Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror', gives a good example of Osama's severely ambivalent conflicts with even his mentor/ father Azzam. Azzam felt that non-combatant women and children should not be killed in the jihad. In his strict Wahhabi fundamentalism, Osama felt that all infidels should die - even women and children. Gunaratna even raises the question of whether Osama held symbolic patricidal urges, as he may have participated in Azzam's assassination!^{xxxvi}

Again one can see the same thing in all destructive cults, for example Koresh was claiming he was a prophet of God and was wondering who other people were worshiping and asked them to join him and accept him as such. In one of his interviews which were broadcast on local radio he says: *'Now Revelation chapter 13 tells us very clearly what our ideology should be ... and all the world that wonders that ... who do they worship? Remember before I said it to you, God said it ... But now in spirit and in truth, let's come up here where I come from. Let's believe in a God on the throne now, all churches ... we're all brethren. But let's get into unity with one God, one truth, one Lamb {Remember he used to call himself the lamb of God}, one spirit, and let's receive the reward of righteousness.'*^{xxxvii}

And when he faced opposition from one of his closest disciples, Breault, he gives a very theatrical performance which again is not his own monopoly among cult leaders: {Koresh faced Breault after leaving the cult} he got down on his knees: *'I remember when Judas betrayed me,' he said, 'I remember how much it hurt me then, the pain! And now it's happening again. I don't know if I can take this! Marc, who showed you the book? Who showed you these things?' He turned his face up toward the heavens, Palms upward. He acted like Christ on the Cross. 'I'm being crucified all over again' he kept saying, Koresh mesmerized most of the twenty-five people in the room. It was frightening to watch. He was putting on the performance of his life.'*^{xxxviii}

Carol Giambalvo explains threat and intimidation and even the attack of the WDU leader against defectors of the cult^{xxxix} and then she explains: *'Such tactics were used against other groups on the Left, against groups within the local labour, peace, and anti-nuclear movements, and against certain former members. Cars were spray-painted. Houses and offices were ransacked. Documents were stolen. Political meetings and conventions were disrupted. People were surveilled and threatened.'*

People were beaten up. In one case, two recently expelled members were beaten up in front of their child. Jobs were put in jeopardy, for example, with anonymous calls to employers identifying a certain person as a child molester or thief. Volunteer political work was put in jeopardy with anonymous calls to organizations identifying a certain person as an agent provocateur.^{xxi}

ⁱ Dr. Martin Ome, University of Pennsylvania psychiatrist and expert on brainwashing, who testified for defence at the Patricia Hearst bank robbery trial, contends that while 'there are many similarities between a Catholic nun's training and that of a Moonie', the two systems are not really comparable. He reminds us that when a young woman becomes a nun, she is not alienated from her family. ... Another important difference between cults and main line religions is the way the sects within Christendom show strong concern for improving a person's life as it is. If a potential convert to most mainstream religions has problems in his daily life, he is not encouraged to run away from those problems and seek refuge in a new life system. ... Most religious sects will tell a potential convert that through belief in God and with God's help he can improve his life.' Carroll Stoner and Jo Anne Parke; 'All Gods Children' The Cult Experience Salvation or Slavery?' Chilton Book Company; 1977; P: 25

ⁱⁱ President Bush and Prime minister Blair could easily go to war against two countries (and if they could even more) and were prepared to see death and destruction of life of millions with excuse of 'fighting against those who are against our way of life or our liberal democracy' and perhaps to export their doctrine under the banner of 'democracy'.

ⁱⁱⁱ Please take note that when followers of Domes day or David Koresh or Osmā Bin Laden believe that they are blessed and everybody else is doomed to go to hell, it is not part of Christianity or Islam and not part of Christ or Mohammad's teaching, but it is part of Cultic characteristics of these cults and cult leaders.

^{iv} The Caliph who fought against Imam Hussein.

^v Masoud Rajavi's speeches in Tehran, 1979; titled: 'Tabayan-e jahan' (Explaining the world) MEK's publication; Ideological Teachings of the organisation of Mojahedin e' Khalq Iran; December 1979; No. one P: 3

^{vi} MEK's publication 'Nashrieh' 17/6/1988

^{vii} Rajavi; discussion about 'reactionaries front' {against MEK} MEK's publication Mojahed no. 111

^{viii} Paul L. Williams; 'Al-Qaeda; Brotherhood of Terror'; ALPHA, A Pearson Education Company; 2002; P: 129

^{ix} Farhad Khosrokhavar; 'Suicide Bombers; Allah's New Martyrs'; Translated by David Macey; Pluto Press; 2002; P: 65

^x Implying that ordinary people are not Muslim but ignorant. If you look at Jahillyya through Islamic history and philosophy, it has a much deeper meaning but let us for now stick to this simple definition.

^{xi} Salaf means ancestor, but here he means Prophet and first few of his disciples. By the way this is why Wahabites don't like to call themselves Wahabii but prefer to be called Salafii instead, including all Al-Qaeda members.

^{xii} Cited from: Jason Burke; 'Al Qaeda; The true story of radical Islam'; Published by Penguin; 2003; P: 54,55

^{xiii} The Statement of The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran; In response to the recent accusations of the Iranian regime. MEK's publication, first edition 1977 by the liberation movement of Iran abroad; reprinted by MEK after the revolution; summer of 1979; P: 17

^{xiv} Carol Giambalvo ; 'The Cadre Ideal: Origins and Development of a Political Cult', CSJ 9-1 1992; Sent: 08 August 1999; This article is an electronic version of an article originally published in Cultic Studies Journal, 1992, Volume 9, Number 1, pages 1-77.

^{xv} Tim Madigan; 'See No Evil; Blind Devotion and Bloodshed in David Koresh's Holy War'; published by the Summit Group; Fort Worth Texas; 1993; P: 139 ,143

^{xvi} Carroll Stoner and Jo Anne Parke; 'All Gods Children' The Cult Experience Salvation or Slavery?' Chilton Book Company; 1977; P: 49

^{xvii} Masoud Rajavi's speeches in Tehran, 1979; titled: 'Tabayan-e jahan' (Explaining the world) MEK's publication; Ideological Teachings of the organisation of Mojahedin e' Khalq Iran; December 1979; No: 1; P: 60

^{xviii} MEK's publication; 'About disarmament'; April 1980; P: 51

^{xix} MEK's publication 'Boltan' no: 233; 19/12/1992

^{xx} Farhad Khosrokhavar; 'Suicide Bombers; Allah's New Martyrs'; Translated by David Macey; Pluto Press; 2002; P: 151; 152

^{xxi} Dr. Haha Lung; 'Assassin; The deadly art of the cult of the Assassins'; Citadel Press; 1997; P: 8

^{xxii} Kathleen Taylor; 'Brainwashing; The science of Thought control'; Oxford university press; 2004; P: 228

^{xxiii} 'David Koresh was saying to his disciples 'that they can't truly understand the Bible on their own without a living prophet. He quotes Amos 3:7 : "Surely the Lord will do nothing, unless he reveals his secret to his servants the prophets." He takes the group to Joel 2:23 which speaks of an early and later 'rain' which in Hebrew is the word teacher. So, he concludes, a later or final teacher is to come, who will be necessary for proper understanding.' James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher; Why WACO? University of California Press; 1995; P: 28

^{xxiv} Steven Hassan; 'Combating Cult Mind Control'; Park Street Press; 1988; P: 79

^{xxv} Marc Breault and Martin King; 'Inside the cult'; A Signet Book; 1993; P: 17

^{xxvi} James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher; 'Why WACO?'; University of California Press; 1995; P: 8

^{xxvii} Whoever in MEK was saying that I doubt the existence of God or Judgement day, couldn't see any harsh reaction or as a matter of fact any reaction at all from his or her superior, while if the same person was violating any rules of the group they could face even harsh punishment and imprisonment.

^{xxviii} Margaret Thaler Singer 'Cults in our Midst'; Jossey-Bass; A Wiley Imprint; 2003; P: 321

^{xxix} Jung Chang says: 'Mao turned China back to the days of the Middle Kingdom and, with the help of the United States, in isolation from the world. He enabled the Chinese to feel great and superior again, by blinding them to the world outside. Nonetheless, national pride was so important to the Chinese that much of the population was genuinely grateful to Mao, and did not find the cult of his personality offensive, certainly not at first. The near total lack of access to information and the systematic feeding of disinformation meant that most Chinese had no way to discriminate between Mao's success and his failures, or to identify the relative role of Mao and others in the Communists' achievements.' Jung Chang; Wild Swans; Published by Flamingo; 1991; P: 347; 348

^{xxx} Steven Hassan; 'Combating Cult Mind Control'; Park Street Press; 1988; P: 80

^{xxxi} Steven Hassan; 'Combating Cult Mind Control'; Park Street Press; 1988; P: 22

^{xxxii} James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher; 'Why WACO?'; University of California Press; 1995; P: 33

^{xxxiii} Peter A. Olsson; 'Malignant Pied Pipers or our time' published by 'Publish America Baltimore'; 2005; P: 46

^{xxxiv} Kathleen Taylor; 'Brainwashing; The science of Thought control'; Oxford university press; 2004; P: 17

^{xxxv} Robert J. Lifton M.D.; 'Thought Reform; A Psychiatric Study of "Brainwashing" in China'; published by Gollancz; London 1962; P: 217

^{xxxvi} Gunaratna, R. - 2002. 'Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror'. Berkley Books, New York. Cited from: Peter A. Olsson; 'Malignant Pied Pipers or our time' published by 'Publish America Baltimore'; P: 140 'In November 1989, Abdallah Azzam was killed by a car bomb in Peshawar, an attack that is often blamed on bin Laden. Though he made no secret of his irritation at Azzam's placement of relatives in key jobs in MAK, there is little evidence to implicate him in the assassination and a host of more likely suspects.' Jason Burke; 'Al Qaeda; The true story of radical Islam'; Published by Penguin; 2003; P: 82

^{xxxvii} Tim Madigan; 'See No Evil; Blind Devotion and Bloodshed in David Koresh's Holy War'; published by the Summit Group; Fort Worth Texas; 1993; P: 248

^{xxxviii} Marc Breault and Martin King; 'Inside the cult'; A Signet Book; 1993; P: 215

^{xxxix} In the next section, talking about the characteristics of organisation of cults, I will discuss this characteristic of cults in length.

^{xl} Carol Giambalvo ; The Cadre Ideal: Origins and Development of a Political Cult, CSJ 9-1 1992; Sent: 08 August 1999; This article is an electronic version of an article originally published in Cultic Studies Journal, 1992, Volume 9, Number 1, pages 1-77.