INTRODUCTION

We human beings exist in this world in a very special way, for unlike the inanimate table, chair, rocks etc. we are conscious beings. We think that we are more capable than those non-living entities. But however much we may take pride in this fact — if we are so powerful then, how is it that we timidly lead our lives in fear, being subject to several threats and terrorist activities day in and day out? We, rational human beings have invented several scientific devices for the welfare of the society; again we have also used our brains (the seat of all the vital functions of human beings) in several destructive activities. Bombs and missiles are often used to kill thousands of innocents. The rate of this arbitrary killing has increased with time; the world has become a turbulent place to live in — and if this continues then very soon human race would be wiped out — the cause of which would be none other than human beings themselves. Perhaps these would mark the advent of Armageddon.

Of late one term that has been very prominent in the society; its meaning seems to be known by all — the intellectual, the roadside dwellers, a small child and even by the illiterates. The term is 'Terrorism'. This indicates the 'terror' which by certain groups performing anti-social activities, — spread in the very society they live. These groups perform this kind of activity to make their opponents hear their claims and to accede to them. Such a psychology is commonly found within a small child at home. When a child desperately wants something to which his parents strongly oppose, then the child becomes all the more stubborn and, finally, indulges into vandalism — so that his parents are bound to fulfil his demands. Similarly through violent acts, the terrorists try to draw the attention of their opponents so that they are compelled to listen to them. In the present time terrorism seems almost as a natural phenomenon, for this is not anything new on this earth. Its means that tactics and strategies might have changed in recent times, but that such activities were also found in the primitive time, and have been gradually continuing through ages.

The notion of terrorism has always brought in violent emotion and greatly divergent opinions and images of it. The popular image of terrorist some 80 years
ago was that of a bomb-throwing alien anarchist, dishevelled, with a black beard and a satanic smile, fanatic, immoral, sinister and ridiculous at the same time.

Dostoevsky in his book *The Possessed* and Conrad in his books *The Secret Agent* and *A tale of ideology and terrorism* provided more sophisticated but essentially similar descriptions. His present day image has been streamlined but not necessarily improved, it certainly has not been explained by political scientists or psychiatrists called in for rapid consultation. Terrorists have found admirers and publicity agents in all ages. No words of praise are fulsome enough for these latter day saints and martyrs, as they feel.

The terrorist (we are told) is the only one who really cares; he is a totally committed fighter for freedom and justice, a gentle human being forced by cruel circumstances and an indifferent majority to play heroic yet tragic roles: the Good Samaritan distributing poison or St. Francis with the bomb. Such a beautification of the terrorist is grotesque, but terrorism cannot be unconditionally rejected except on the basis of a total commitment to non-violence and non-resistance to evil.

The meaning of the terms ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’ was given in 1798 supplement of the Dictionaire of the Academic Francaise as ‘*systeme, regime de la terrur*’. According to the French dictionary published in 1796, the Jacobin had on occasion used the term when speaking and writing about themselves in a positive sense; after the 9th Thermidor, ‘terrorist’ became a term of abuse with criminal implications. It did not take long for the term to reach Britain; Brake, in a famous passage written in 1795, wrote about “thousands of those hell hounds called terrorists”, who were let loose on the people. Terrorism, at that time, referred to the period of French Revolution, that is between March 1793 and July 1794 and it was more or less a synonym for ‘reign of terror’.

We hold the terrorists at fault mostly because they kill innocents, but according to them, the common men are not innocents as they are indirectly involved in the terrorists’ cause. In a democracy public opinion is an important feature, so they can at least stand by the underprivileged and make the Government hear their voice of protest. Instead, they rest peacefully as if it is not their problem. The sociologists state that, in our society there are three types of
people, one who live for all, for both who do and do not live for him. The second category consists of those who live for them who live for him. The third category consists of those who would want that others would live for them, but they would not live for those others. This category would not exist as others would come to know about their attitude and discard them. Again, those who help others who do not help them in return, would also perish as they would fall short of their resources by helping others if they do not themselves receive help. Thus only those would survive who help those who help them. Hence on the basis of such a principle of reciprocal altruism the world moves on with its existence. But the terrorists claim that, the civilians die in terrorism because such a principle of survival is not maintained by them, and thus they ought to perish. In the course of our discussion we would see whether such a claim of the terrorists is tenable.

This work is basically a socio-philosophical study. I have tried to arrange the entire discussion into Eight Chapters and in the Appendix; I have delved with the comparative study of Nietzsche and Freud on violence. In the first chapter 'On Defining Terrorism', we notice the difficulty of giving a straight forward, unanimously accepted definition of terrorism. I have tried to give different working definitions mentioned by several philosophical, political and social thinkers, and have also considered the notion from different perspectives to clarify the nature of the phenomenon. In the process I have shown that terrorism cannot be loosely used to mean any kind of crime, war, guerrilla tactics, revolution of any kind or any form of violence. It is violence of a different nature and somewhat unique. In this Chapter I have also talked about the various kinds of terrorism found earlier and those found today. Most of these definitions and analyses of terrorism which we find are political in nature; however, we would discuss terrorism from different perspectives — its ethical aspect (whether terrorism can be justified from any point of view), its logical aspect (to find out the logic behind the acts of terrorism), its psychological aspect (i.e., the frame of mind which leads the terrorists to act in that manner) and finally, its social and religious aspects, since terrorism, nowadays, is largely seen as being due to social disparity and discrimination, as well as to some religious cause.

In the Second Chapter I have tried to cover a brief history of terrorism starting from its origin, how it was born and gradually its evolution over time, i.e.,
right from before and during the Reign of Terror to the 19th century terrorism in U.S.A., Europe, Ottoman Empire, including the cold war of the late 19th and early 20th century where war was accompanied by terror tactics, in Europe and Middle Eastern nations, followed by the aerial bombardment of civilians in World War II, which was nothing less than terrorism. Here I have mentioned some of the famous instances of terrorism in the mid 20th century which shook the world straightaway, as it entered into the brutal blood shedding events of the late 20th century up to the recent events of the 21st century. After surveying the history of terrorism in a chronological order, I have also considered how terrorism evolved over time, i.e., here I have mentioned the new faces of terrorism, including the latest modern techniques which the terrorists use today to destroy the world. It is seen that, whether the terrorists adopt modern or even ancient strategy, the phenomenon of terrorism cannot be easily wiped off from this earth.

In the Third chapter I have considered the possible and actual causes of terrorism. Here I have tried to trace out the wide range of social, economic, political, ethnic, psychological and religious causes which may perhaps help us to find out some plausible solution to such a deadly problem. I have divided the different causes into three broad categories — i.e., logico-psychological, socio-political and religious, and have also tried to accommodate the other possible causes under these three broad headings.

In the Fourth Chapter I have emphasized on the ethical issues concerning this problem which is the main aim of our philosophical discussion on terrorism, where ethics of terrorism is seen from three major view points: — First, the end and means (of terrorism) where the phenomenon is seen to serve no good nor does it have good means too. Second, it is viewed from the moral perspective, by applying different theories of morality and examining the notion of terrorism in the light of those theories such as the libertarian theory, equalitarian theory, humanitarian theory and individualitarian theory; finally, I come to the conclusion that none of these ethical theories can regard terrorism as morally viable. Thirdly, we bring in the concept of just war and find that terrorism fails to be considered a just war; if it had been so, then its consequences could have been ignored or forgiven. But terrorism violates the major criterion of just war (namely, preventing the killing of the non-combatants or the civilians and giving them full
protection). Hence viewed from all the three ethical aspects, terrorism cannot be rightly called moral at all.

The Fifth Chapter I consider the arguments for and against terrorism. Turning to the arguments that favour terrorism, we find that the terrorists argue that their action is nothing but a response to imperialism or colonialism; that is to say, terrorism, they contend, is the just response when their independence is taken away from them or when they are made homeless. Thus, it is a war, they claim, on national defense. If this were the case then terrorism would have been purely a freedom struggle; but if so, how can their targets be the innocent women and children (who are in no way related to interfering with their freedom)? While we blame the terrorists for killing the non-combatants or civilians they might retort that, it is an unintentional killing or, what is called, a collateral damage which often happens while targeting actual enemy. If they do not recognize the innocents or fail to understand to which party they belong (i.e., to their own or to that of their opponents)—then the terrorists cannot be blamed for such a killing of innocents of the society. Even if these consequences are unintended and further, the attack springs from a just cause, and even if we can differentiate such attacks from terrorism, yet attacks on military targets are also not morally permitted. Like terrorism, such attacks show an indifference to human life that is incompatible with humane, civilized values. We next come to the arguments against terrorism. There are a number of arguments which try to convince us of its badness and ill effects.

The Sixth Chapter talks about a special kind of cause of terrorism which some thinkers, notably Samuel P. Huntington discussed in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. He says that world terrorism is mainly due to a clash between the culture, religion and way of life of the conservatives (the Muslims) on one hand and the libertarians (the Americans and Europeans) on the other. He argues that terrorism originates from such civilizational conflict. Prof. Amartya Sen also mentions that such violence is the result of identity crisis of the minority or their feeling of inferiority, as they are deprived of many rights and privileges. Here I have tried to view this problem from both these perspectives and have also tried to see whether a solution along these lines could be found.
This leads me to reflect on the possible as well as plausible solutions of this phenomenon. This is the aim of the Seventh Chapter where I have tried to analyse all the aspects and also tried to understand why terrorism takes place at all. Hence, some working solutions are also mentioned including non-violence which can act as a miracle, if believed in and acted upon.

In the concluding chapter I have tried to offer, what seems to me, a more practical, stable and permanent solution which might perhaps be treated as the Ultimate Solution of Terrorism. No doubt, human beings are more caring and compassionate towards all other beings. If such a virtue can be indoctrinated in the minds of the terrorists instead of hatred and revenge then they could be changed and the world would no more witness such violence. In fact, care and compassion towards Humanity could perhaps, be the Ultimate Solution of Terrorism.